

THE EPOCH TIMES

MIND &

BODY

THE GOOD BRIGADE/GETTY IMAGES

“

These problems I have never seen in my career. Not to this degree. Anxiety up 300 percent. Depression: 400 percent.

Dr. Mark McDonald, psychiatrist and author, "United States of Fear: How America Fell Victim to a Mass Delusional Psychosis"

Delayed Development?

Teens in the Pandemic Era

COVID-era teens are revealing signs of trauma after 2 years of fear and isolation

BETH GIUFFRE

A high school senior from California described teen COVID-19 mental fallout in a nutshell:

"It's not that I'm mad that I missed the events. I wouldn't have gone to prom anyway. I just feel bad about all the experiences I missed that never had the chance to happen. I wonder what those years would have been like if none of it ever happened."

A grown adult who has already lived a life and whose days are filled with routines that rarely change may be content with missing some time outdoors during lockdowns. But for teens living in one of the most dynamic periods of their lives, growing up in the time of COVID-19 takes a larger toll, according to mental health professionals looking to make sense of the pandemic's effect on teens.

Teens have missed college opportunities, their driver's tests, and countless life-shaping experiences with friends.

This was the longest pause button ever pushed—a purgatory that teenagers used to think only existed in dystopian films. Pandemic countermeasures hurt some

more than others, but no one can really say how much.

Andrea Hussong, professor and associate director of clinical psychology and neuroscience for the University of North Carolina, said in a November interview that teen mental health has been deteriorating since as early as the first few months of the pandemic's onset, with severity varying on the individual teen.

One thing is for certain, according to Hussong.

"Youth in the United States are reporting that the biggest impact of the pandemic is on their mental health," she said.

Some mental health practitioners think the COVID-19 mental fallout in certain teens should be labeled as a "full-blown trauma" and be treated as such.

The current state of child and adolescent mental health is a national emergency, according to a joint statement made by the American Academy of Pediatrics, the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, and the Children's Hospital Association. The organizations are asking for increased federal funding to address mental health care.

Continued to Page 6

▲

Teens have been cut off from their friends and socially isolated during one of the most important socialization periods of their lives.

18 to 60

PERCENT

of children and adolescents scored above risk thresholds for distress according to a systematic review of 36 studies from 11 countries.



How should we deal with a mental health crisis among teens?

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THE EPOCH TIMES



Many school children during the height of the Cold War remember listening to the air raid drills and being told by teachers to "duck and hide."

MEDICALLY CORRECT

Black Rain: What Happens to My Emergency Room in a Nuclear War

PETER WEISS

I remember visiting Hiroshima, in 1985. I went with a doctor buddy of mine. It was a strange and yet fascinating place. Our guide was a lovely Japanese woman who said her grandmother survived the blast and recounted the horrors that followed. Everything around the memorial was now built up, with only the ruins of the Hiroshima Prefectural Industrial Promotion Hall as a remembrance.

I remember as a child during the height of the Cold War, listening to the air raid drills and being told by our teachers to "duck and hide." We would all stop what we were doing and crawl under our desks until the drill was over.

The Russian war against Ukraine is on everyone's mind, and I have had many patients express their concern that there will be a nuclear war. Far too many patients are asking how they should prepare for such a war.

While I feel the news media is scaring people to hook viewers, the fear is real and I suppose the threat is real too, however unlikely.

So, what does an emergency department look like in such a war? If the emergency center is too close to the blast, then there really is no ER, and this would be a very short story.

If not, then it really depends upon several factors, including the size of the bomb and the proximity to the blast. The bomb at Hiroshima was 15 kilotons. An estimated 100,000 people died from the atomic blast and both short and long term radiation exposure. The largest nuclear weapon ever detonated was that of the Tsar Bomba nuclear test on Oct. 30, 1961, on a Russian Arctic island.

"The detonation was astronomically powerful—over 1,570 times more powerful, in fact, than the combined two bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki," the National WWII Museum recounts.

There were no deaths, but windows were reportedly shattered some 480 miles away.

There are five major initial concerns from a nuclear blast. I am sure we could all add another dozen or so to this list.

The first obvious one is the massive fireball, which will obliterate everything in its path. The second is the shock wave, which will outpace the fireball as the blast expands and levels buildings and rips out trees. The third concern is the flash of the blast and the permanent blindness that can result. Then there's radiation. Gamma rays are initially released and will penetrate most anything. They will penetrate into and destroy your cells. Finally, we have the electromagnetic pulse (EMP). This can really affect emergency rooms (as if the prior four concerns weren't bad enough), since an EMP can lead to widespread power outages, including malfunction of many medical life-saving devices.

While the initial gamma rays are a concern, radioactive debris will continue to spread with the fallout. The radioactive particles from the initial blast coalesce and then fall back down to earth as "black rain." This is why it's important to seek shelter quickly and remove or wash off all exposed clothing. It's best to remain in shelter for as long as possible,

at least 48 hours, but the longer the better.

This becomes critical in an emergency department, if it's still intact. Do we remain in place? Do we try to move patients and equipment underground? What about unstable patients? The safest places will be underground with as much concrete protection as possible.

The initial patients seen in the emergency department will be those suffering immediate trauma from debris. Radiation poisoning will come along soon enough and is obviously exposure-related. A critical component of keeping people safe is to decontaminate patients, doctors, and nurses as quickly as possible. This would be head to toe, and done outside the designated safe area. Wash or hose down everyone from head to toe, but remember, the water used is now contaminated with radiation. Remove and destroy all exposed clothing. Removing the outer layer of clothing can remove up to 90 percent of the radioactive dust, according to the second edition of "Planning Guidance for Response to a Nuclear Detonation" interagency guidebook.

While I feel the news media is scaring people to hook viewers, the fear is real and I suppose the threat is real too, however unlikely.

It's very sad that this quote from more than half a century ago is still so pertinent. Albert Einstein once said: "Our world faces a crisis as yet unperceived by those possessing power to make great decisions for good or evil. The unleashed power of the atom has changed everything save our modes of thinking and we thus drift toward unparalleled catastrophe."

Dr. Peter Weiss has been a frequent guest on local and national TV, newspapers, and radio. He was an assistant clinical professor of OB/GYN at the David Geffen School of Medicine at UCLA for 30 years, stepping down so he could provide his clinical services to those in need when the COVID-19 pandemic hit. He was also a national health care adviser for Sen. John McCain's 2008 presidential campaign.



The largest nuclear weapon ever detonated was that of the Tsar Bomba nuclear test on Oct. 30, 1961, on a Russian Arctic island.

Yoga and How It Affects Your Metabolism

This age-old tradition offers a gentle but invigorating approach to physical fitness



SANDRA CESCA

The ancient practice of yoga has become a popular form of gentle exercise for those who shy from the gym or have physical limitations but still want to improve strength, flexibility, and their mental health. While some attend a local yoga studio, there are also apps and Zoom classes to use in your home.

Cardiovascular exercises such as running, swimming, aerobics, and walking stimulate your metabolism, but what about the gentler moves of yoga?

Your metabolism is the complex cellular process by which your body converts food and air into energy. The rate at which this happens is influenced by many factors including age, gender, hormones, and amount of physical activity.

The greatest global health challenge today might just be metabolic syndrome. This is a group of conditions that increase the risk of developing cardiovascular diseases and diabetes. These conditions include high blood pressure, high glucose, excess body fat around the waist, and abnormal cholesterol levels. They are often the result of a sedentary lifestyle, high levels of stress, and a nutritionally inadequate diet. One study has shown yoga to benefit those with metabolic syndrome who carry excess stomach weight or have elevated blood pressure.

It's common for your metabolism to slow as you age. Chronic inflammation and oxidative stress are the result of lifestyle choices and are known to be major causes of aging. Is it possible that regular yoga practice might affect your metabolism and thus your aging process?

Metabolism and Yoga

Breathing affects your rate of metabolism. The breathing practices of yoga such as pranayama can improve oxygen intake, thus warming up the body and speeding your metabolism. This in turn can stimulate and strengthen your endocrine organs, especially the thyroid gland. In addition, twisting and bending poses massage abdominal organs improving digestion, local circulation, and calorie burn while cleansing the body of toxins.

Yoga has been correlated with increased thyroid activity, which in turn can increase or restore metabolism. Certain yoga neck poses stimulate thyroid hormone secretion.

While yoga is an ancient practice, researchers haven't studied its effects for all that long. There are, however, studies that indicate how yoga can slow or even reverse the effects of aging.

In a study published in *Oxidative Medicine and Cellular Longevity* in 2017, 96 older adults participated in yoga for 12 weeks. The practices included asanas, breathing exercises, and meditation. After this period, researchers measured known aging biomarkers and found a reduction in cellular aging along with the potential for promoting cellular longevity.

In a similar study published in *Frontiers in Human Neuroscience* in 2017, researchers found that a three-month yoga retreat reduced inflammation and stress in the body. This residential retreat involved daily meditation and yoga practices and was accompanied by a vegetarian diet. Results found decreases in anxiety and depression as well as in the typical biomarkers for inflammation.

Long-term practitioners of yoga have also shown lower metabolic rates probably due to reduced sympathetic activity and a stabilized nervous system from greater metabolic efficiency.

Yoga has been correlated with increased thyroid activity, which can increase or restore metabolism.



If you are new to yoga, start slowly. Using aids and props such as blankets and bolsters can ease you into the practice.

BANKPHOTOS/GETTY IMAGES



Meditation is an excellent way to strengthen the mind and has been shown to reduce stress and bolster the immune system.

OKEA/GETTY IMAGES

Yoga as You Age

There are many types of yoga and reasons for choosing them. If you have flexibility or injury issues, there is a practice for you. If you wish to improve your energy, your strength, your balance, or to calm your mind, there are practices for these as well. You might even lose weight with a yoga practice as the increase in breathing and heart rate burn calories and can affect your metabolism depending on your diet.

Gentle Vinyasa is a flow yoga that moves you from one pose or asana to another without stopping. These poses are coordinated with your breathing. Each yoga instructor chooses the asanas and the order in which to do them.

Iyengar is precise and slow with a focus on alignment and proper form. It is normally done using many modifications through the use of props. It is great for people with injuries who need to work slowly and methodically. Chair yoga follows basic yoga asanas, only you are sitting in a chair for stability. The benefits include muscle toning, reduced stress levels, better breathing habits, better sleep, and low impact on joints. It improves flexibility for those who have trouble moving through the up and down motions of traditional yoga.

Restorative yoga is especially for those who have injury issues or who have not done yoga and find their bodies stiff and lacking flexibility. It is usually a very slow-paced class in which the asanas are held for a long time, often for two to five minutes. This slow pace affects your metabolism through relaxation and stress reduction.

Yoga Nidra is an ancient meditation technique from India. An instructor guides you through a series of visual and relaxation cues that typically last 20 minutes to an hour. This narration takes you to a state of deep relaxation. This practice can also be used as a sleep aid. Several studies have found Yoga Nidra can have therapeutic effects on conditions such as back pain, rheumatoid arthritis, Type 2 diabetes, and stress.

Best Asanas for Improving Metabolism

Asanas are the numerous poses that are the basis of all yoga practices. Moving smoothly through a series of asanas such as sun salutation or vinyasa are common ways to practice while improving your metabolism.

In addition, twisting poses, backbends, forward bends, and inversions all boost metabolism as they massage and stimulate the endocrine system and abdominal organs, regulating their function, improving local circulation, and cleansing them of stagnant toxins. One of the body's most crucial cleansing mechanisms, the lymphatic system, relies on muscle movements to pump lymph throughout the body and clear away toxins like debris from dead cells.

If you are new to yoga, are experiencing flexibility or balance issues, or are recovering from an injury or illness, start slow with a few simple asanas. Using props such as blankets, bolsters, and eye pillows can provide support and help gain deeper relaxation.

Conclusion

Making yoga a part of your life could improve your metabolism. It also has the added benefit of potential weight loss while helping improve your flexibility and balance. It may help delay aging and reduce the effects of some diseases caused by stressful lifestyles as well as promote mental and physical wellbeing.

Sandra Cesca is a freelance writer and photographer focusing on holistic health, wellness, organic foods, healthy lifestyle choices, and whole-person medical care. Her background includes allopathic medicine, naturopathy, homeopathy, organic and biodynamic farming, and yoga practices.

Asanas for Metabolism, Flexibility, Strength, and Balance

The following asanas are good for improving your metabolism while they stretch and strengthen muscles and improve balance.

Holding yoga asanas for definitive amounts of time builds endurance, and flexibility, and also burns calories, leading to fat burn and weight loss. Begin slowly. For details on how to do these poses, check YouTube.



Utkatasana or Chair Pose is excellent for improving blood circulation and detoxifying your body. Adding a twist to the left and right will also improve digestion.

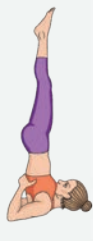
Halasana or Plow Pose

can aid the endocrine system such as the thyroid, pituitary, and adrenal glands. These all help to balance the metabolic system. It puts pressure on your neck, lower back, and abdomen so be careful doing this pose. If you have a neck injury, high blood pressure, or glaucoma, do not do this pose.



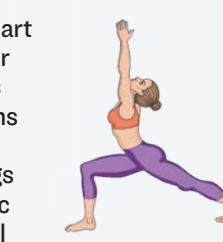
Salamba Sarvangasana or the Shoulder Stand

stretches your upper back and neck. It improves blood circulation and boosts metabolism by stimulating the thyroid gland and delivering increased oxygen to your heart and brain.



Anjaneyasana or Low Lunge

increases your heart rate and helps boost your metabolism. It stretches your hips and strengthens your legs. It is also good for strengthening the legs and opening up the pelvic area, making it beneficial for those who sit long hours at work.



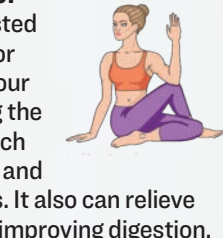
Garudasana or Eagle Pose

helps digestion by massaging your stomach and intestines. It energizes your body as it strengthens your legs.



Marichyasana or Pose of the Sage

is a sitting twisted asana done on the floor or yoga mat. It massages your internal organs including the liver, kidneys, and stomach while helping to detoxify and stimulate their functions. It also can relieve stress and fatigue while improving digestion.



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An Ode to Feeling Uncomfortable

Discomfort is an inevitable part of life and growth, not the antithesis to our well-being we've come to believe



NANCY COLIER

Our culture has developed a new kind of allergy, an allergy to a particular experience—namely, emotional discomfort.

It seems that we're no longer willing or able to tolerate feeling uncomfortable. And furthermore, we've come to believe we shouldn't have to tolerate any kind of emotional discomfort. Any situation that could possibly trigger overwhelming feelings is now viewed as overwhelming, unnatural, and in need of correction.

So then, what's discomfort—this experience that we consider so daunting and unacceptable these days?

To be uncomfortable is defined as being uneasy, awkward, and literally without comfort. When we're pushed out of our comfort zone, feel anything other than happy, or have to exert effort in order to feel okay, we think it means something is wrong. The assumption, in fact, is that our discomfort means we're being wronged and usually that someone else is to blame. We've come to believe that any situation that causes us to feel difficulty, difference, or unpleasantness must be fixed immediately so that we never have to experience such feelings again.

But here's the problem: We need to be able to feel uncomfortable. Discomfort is one of the most important experiences we encounter as human beings. By avoiding and correcting situations that make us feel uncomfortable, we're fixing a feeling that, while maybe not easy or pleasant, is also profoundly necessary to our well-being.

And in the simplest terms possible, life is uncomfortable. Rejecting that basic reality creates an impossible expectation that will make us that much more uncomfortable.

Life, no matter how well we manage and control it, always contains discomfort. There's no way around it; we have to go through it. We're constantly confronted with situations that make us feel uneasy, excluded, unprepared, inadequate, and everything in between. Being uncomfortable is part of being human. Our attempts to eliminate and prevent any situation that might lead to discomfort are worse than futile: They're a waste of energy that deprives us of the impetus for growth.

In this culture, we've built up the idea of discomfort into an enormous and frightening obstacle to our well-being. We talk

about feeling uncomfortable as if it were inherently unjust, unkind, and unbearable. At the same time, the more we try to protect ourselves from discomfort, the more we strengthen the (mistaken) belief that we can't survive it, that we'll be ruined by it. As a result, we're less able to manage it when it does arise—which, in this life, is often.

But the truth is, we can survive feeling uncomfortable. We can not only survive discomfort, but we can be well right smack in the middle of it. The more we get used to discomfort—and dare I say get comfortable with it—the less it will restrain us. Furthermore, we'll become more skilled at managing it.

Trying to make discomfort go away, to create a life in which discomfort never happens, is in fact destroying our emotional resilience; it's creating a situation in which our ability to adapt to difficult situations is atrophying and dying. Such a situation also depletes our trust in ourselves and in our belief that we can handle difficult emotions and that such experiences are temporary.

We need to be able to manage emotional discomfort precisely because the experience of discomfort is never going away. In fact, discomfort is part and parcel of life's most meaningful and rewarding experiences. Mastering a new skill, improving our mind and body, building something in this world—virtually all efforts involving new challenges carry discomfort.

Rather than trying to eliminate, mitigate, or reshape any experience that might trigger discomfort, rather than treating this normal, inevitable human

We assume our discomfort means that we are being wronged and usually that someone else is to blame.

▼ If we limit ourselves to our comfort zone, we will find much of life beyond our self-confined range.

experience as a problem, we would be better off learning to get comfortable with discomfort. Our efforts shouldn't be in condemning discomfort, but rather in building and honing our skills for managing it with greater skill, awareness, and self-compassion.

In truth, it's through the experience of discomfort that we learn to self-soothe. In difficult moments, we develop the skills necessary to take care of ourselves, to bring ourselves back to okay-ness. We build compassion and kindness for ourselves, which is one of the most important things we can ever learn.

Ultimately, feeling uncomfortable is an opportunity to grow and evolve—to change and become more resilient and stronger.

If you landed on planet Earth for the first time and heard us Earthlings talking about what we call "feeling uncomfortable," you would think that we were talking about something menacing and utterly unmanageable. But this is a deep misunderstanding of the simultaneous weight and levity of this particular emotional experience. The weight with regard to its power to change us and help us grow—and also the levity in terms of how vastly capable we are of handling and living through it.

Discomfort isn't the enemy. Our culture has gotten this one wrong; we're far stronger than we give ourselves credit for, and discomfort makes us even stronger. If we want to live in this world, even if we never leave the house, we need to be able to face uncomfortable feelings. The next time you feel uncomfortable or are entering a situation where discomfort may be triggered, think about leaning into it and maybe even look forward to it. Approach the experience as a challenge you can tolerate, without having to change or fix it.

The more you can live with and within discomfort, the more prepared you are to live as a human in this very human (and uncomfortable) world.

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

If we don't get comfortable with discomfort, we will lack an essential trait for a rich and meaningful life—**forbearance.**



Engaging Pursuits for Later Life

Try these 7 activities to keep your brain sharp and your body able

JENNIFER MARGULIS

If you're a Type A competitive person, the word "hobby" may give you hives. And you probably don't like the word "pastime," either. But as we get older—especially after our children are out of the house and we're either retired or considering retirement—we all need engaging pursuits to keep us happy and healthy. The best later-in-life pursuits are those that bring you joy. Creating micro moments of joy throughout the day, as psychologist Jessica Jackson recently told CNBC, helps build mental strength and resiliency to make it easier to react well in stressful situations. And what better way to bring more joy into your life than to do activities that you love? I'm not talking about watching TV, surfing the internet, or getting lost for hours on social media. These activities provide you with some downtime and distraction, but they don't provide a sense of fulfillment. It's actually better for your mental and physical health to limit your screen time.

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Was Ivermectin Unfairly Torpedoed as Treatment for COVID-19?

Medication has become the poster child for conflicted scientific, regulatory issues that surround COVID-19

JENNIFER MARGULIS

Controversy seems to surround virtually everything connected with COVID-19: masking, social distancing, vaccines. Amid this quagmire of controversy, one of the most fraught questions has been

whether the medication ivermectin is nothing more than dangerous snake oil or is actually a safe and effective treatment for the virus.

Ivermectin is considered so safe that it's sold over the counter in many countries, or even distributed free.

'Horse De-Wormer' The mainstream media and conventional medical doctors have generally derided ivermectin, referring to it as a "horse de-wormer." Patients are cautioned against taking it, doctors who are willing to prescribe it report being investigated by their licensing boards and even fired from their jobs. Patients are warned that ivermectin is "dangerous" and "ineffective." According to the FDA, it "has not authorized or approved ivermectin for the treatment or prevention of COVID-19 in people or animals. Ivermectin has not been shown to be safe or effective for these indications."

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By Zachary Brown April 5, 2022. Wykeem Martin, 3525 Hill Avenue, Bronx, NY 10467 Attention: Ms. Wykeem Martin. This is your uncle, Zachary Brown and I'm placing this notice in the interest of the real property located in Mobile, Alabama, address 2717 Banks Avenue, Mobile, Alabama 36617. Your name and my sister's (Alberta Brown) are jointly on the deed of the property. Alberta Brown has deeded her claim on the property over to me and my intentions are to sell the property, but I'm being held up from doing so because I haven't been able to get in touch with you as the joint owner. By way of this notice you have 30 days to step up and confirm your claim as co-owner of the property or forever relinquish any rights thereto. Zachary Brown

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The best food is grown at home.

12 Ways to Save Money on Organic Foods

Try these strategies to cut costs when you shop for organic produce and products

MELISSA DIANE SMITH

Buying organic foods isn't just for the health-obsessed few. Eight out of ten households purchase organic products at least occasionally and the organics sector continues to grow. Purchasing organic items is also easier than it used to be, since they are now available in nearly 20,000 natural food stores and nearly three out of four conventional grocery stores, according to the USDA. However, shoppers are facing a challenge in 2022 as inflation and supply chain issues push up the price of fuel and food. Yet despite these rising expenses, we're seeing a dramatic increase in sales of organic foods. Growing Organic Food Sales Fueled by a desire to boost immunity and keep their families healthy, consumers have embraced the practice of using food as medicine like never before. U.S. organic sales leaped to new highs in 2020, increas-

“Good, healthy food has never been more important, and consumers have increasingly sought out the Organic label. Organic purchases have skyrocketed as shoppers choose high-quality organic to feed and nourish their families,” said Laura Batcha, CEO and executive director of the Organic Trade Association.

Organic food and beverage sales grew 6 percent to \$50.75 billion in 2021—not the record growth seen in 2020, but higher growth than before the COVID-19 pandemic, according to information presented at Natural Products Expo West 2022. Industry analysts say the pandemic changed consumer behaviors: More new customers who were focused on protecting their health bought organic foods in 2020 and continued to buy them in 2021, and the COVID-influenced sales growth in organic foods is expected to continue in coming years.

Organic 101 For products to display the USDA Organic seal, 95 to 100 percent of their ingredients must be organic. Organic foods must be produced without the use of any of the following: synthetic chemical pesticides and fertilizers; genetically modified organisms (GMOs); sewage sludge; irradiation; industrial solvents; and synthetic food additives. In general, organic foods are 10 to 20 percent more expensive than conventionally grown foods, but shoppers will often pay a higher price out of a desire to protect their health, minimize exposure to synthetic pesticides, and help protect the environment. Some shoppers also know about

research that indicates that organic crops, on average, have higher concentrations of antioxidants, lower levels of the toxic heavy metal cadmium, and much lower levels of pesticides than conventionally grown crops.

Ways to Pay Less for Organic Foods To keep the costs down when you buy organic foods, try these budget-friendly strategies. I compiled the following suggestions for my 2014 book “Going Against GMOs,” and I have since updated and expanded them.

Pay attention to store sales. In supermarkets and large natural food stores, there may be up to 1,000 items on sale at any given time, and many of them are organic.

Sign up for store newsletters with deals of the week. You can also look for them in your local newspaper. Plan your shopping around organic items that are on sale that you most want and need, and then create meals around those items.

Capitalize on incredible one-day sales. If you get email or text alerts about these super deals and go to the store on the day of the sale, you can save big.

Join a customer loyalty program with your favorite store. A common feature of these programs is that they offer member-only discounts on different organic products every week or month.

Subscribe to websites that offer organic coupons. There are many from which to choose. A few include PassionForSavings.com, InspiringSavings.com, and AllNaturalSavings.com.

ing by a record 12.4 percent—to \$61.9 billion—according to Nielsen findings released by the Organic Trade Association in 2021. “Good, healthy food has never been more important, and consumers have increasingly sought out the Organic label. Organic purchases have skyrocketed as shoppers choose high-quality organic to feed and nourish their families,” said Laura Batcha, CEO and executive director of the Organic Trade Association.

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Follow the websites or social media pages of your favorite organic food companies. They sometimes offer special coupons or promotions in posts or advertising banners there.

Comparison-shop to find the best deals on organic items. Within the same city or area of town, organic produce prices can vary greatly. By shopping around, you'll get a good idea of which foods are cheaper at certain stores.

Buy your most commonly consumed products by the case. Some stores offer a case discount, and you can sometimes use coupons or sale prices on top of that discount.

Select produce that is in season as much as possible. When it's in season, it's usually much less expensive.

Use assistance programs if you're on a fixed income. It's important to know that many farmers' markets accept Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)/EBT (formerly food stamps); Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) coupons; and Seniors Farmers Market Nutrition Program (SFMNP) coupons or other state-run assistance program vouchers. Find out which programs you qualify for that farmers markets in your area accept. Then use coupons from those programs to buy produce from local growers who don't use synthetic pesticides.

Look for organic products at dollar stores, clearance stores, and local food banks. In recent years, as part of farmer and organic industry programs to make organic foods more easily available to low- and middle-income families, there has been a concerted effort to place more of these foods in discount stores and food banks. Grocery stores will also send near-expired foods to clearance stores, where you can get them at a steep discount.

Grow your own. Start a small organic vegetable garden if you can. If you have only a windowsill, try growing potted organic herbs. It's an effective cost-cutting action to take because these produce items tend to be overpriced in stores. If you grow too much of some foods, trade with neighbors to get more variety.

This article is adapted from information in “Going Against GMOs” by Melissa Diane Smith.

Melissa Diane Smith is a holistic nutrition counselor and journalist who has been writing about health topics for more than 25 years. She is the author of several nutrition books, including “Syndrome X,” “Going Against the Grain,” “Gluten Free Throughout the Year,” and “Going Against GMOs.”



Organic foods can cost 10 to 20 percent more but if you're a savvy shopper you can find some good deals to save money.

Potential Adverse Effects of GE Mosquitoes Unknown

Misinformation and loose regulations plague release of genetically engineered mosquitos

BETH GIUFFRE

“Safe and sustainable.” That’s what Oxitec, a British biological pest control company, calls its genetically modified (GM) or genetically engineered (GE) mosquito pesticide product. The company claims its product is nontoxic to humans and animals and won’t harm beneficial insects such as bees and butterflies. The experiment’s goal is to test the use of GE mosquitoes for reducing the transmission of diseases such as dengue, Zika, chikungunya, and yellow fever. The method of action is post-CRISPR, but uses similar gene engineering technology—inserting a double whammy into the *Aedes aegypti* male mosquito: a lethal gene and a fluorescent gene (for tracking). “The goal here is not to kill mosquitoes,” said epidemiologist Thomas Scott of the GE mosquito projects in Science magazine. “It’s to prevent people from getting infected and sick and dying.” In theory, the experimental pesticide works like this: When GE mosquito strains are released to mate in the wild, the males pass on the lethal gene to their female offspring, which causes female larvae to die before they can develop into biting adults. Male mosquito offspring survive, but male mosquitoes don’t bite. Without the females,

The experiment’s goal is to test the use of GE mosquitos for reducing the transmission of diseases such as dengue, Zika, chikungunya, and yellow fever.

the population will eventually (hypothetically), collapse, wiping out the “invasive” species. But is it really safe and sustainable? We don’t really have real data on the safety part ... but reports from Oxitec say they’ve had success in reducing mosquito populations in one of their trials in Brazil—the problem is, the experiment has also created hybrid mosquitoes that scientists say may cause even more trouble. “The claim was that genes from the release strain would not get into the general population because offspring would die,” said co-author Jeffrey Powell, a professor of ecology and evolutionary biology at Yale University as reported in The Scientist. “That obviously is not what happened.” Residents in the Florida Keys have already been living with millions of the GM mosquitoes that were released in a pilot project in 2021—now the project will be extended for another couple of years in California as a new pesticide treatment in Fresno, Tulare, San Bernardino, and Stanislaus counties. Whether the communities of the test sites like it or not, Oxitec will now be letting off more than two billion genetically engineered male mosquitoes in Florida and California, pending permit approval from state regulators and local abatement districts. The project will take place over a two-year period beginning this year.

Florida and California Residents Worry About Safety On the company website, Oxitec claims their GE mosquito project has received a “warm welcome” from communities in Florida and California. But Florida newspapers tell a different story. Huge billboards were erected in Florida warning the public of the release.

In 2011, a Florida Keys resident and a single mother of three boys launched a petition that gathered 168,000 signatures against the ongoing mosquito trial, which was more than double the population of the Florida Keys at the time. A 2015 survey of Florida Keys residents found that a majority of survey respondents didn’t support the use of GM mosquitoes as a mosquito control method. Reasons for opposition included general fears about possible harmful impacts of the intervention, specific worries about human and animal health impact from the GM mosquitoes, and environmental concerns about potential negative effects on the ecosystem. Some people are not thrilled that Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation granted Oxitec \$1,614,272 in September 2020 for “self-limited mosquito field trials” in Africa and North America. According to Statista, 90 percent of mosquito-borne disease cases occur in Africa. So why North America? Last year, Florida Keys residents made their feelings known, and protested outside a government center in Key Largo over Oxitec’s project. Protest signs said things like “OH HELL NO!” and “GO HOME OXITEC, UR DRUNK.” One resident told Keys Weekly, “I am really getting tired of the Oxitec press releases stating how much the locals are in full support of this trial.” The controversy involving genetically modified mosquito products is not that new—in March 2010, the first field trial began, and Oxitec has already field-tested the GE insects in Brazil, Panama, the Cayman Islands, and Malaysia. Allergenicy and Toxicity Redacted From the Permit The Environmental Protection Agency

(EPA) approved the project with the following statement on its 2020 risk assessment: “EPA finds it is unlikely that the local mosquito population would pose any increased risk to humans or the environment.” The California chapter of Friends of the Earth claims the EPA didn’t publicly release any data from former Oxitec field trials in Florida or Brazil about health effects, “including allergenicity and toxicity,” and the information was redacted from the company’s application for a permit. Additionally, Friends of the Earth said in a statement that the EPA declined to convene an independent, external Scientific Advisory Panel as it does for other new pesticides. They say the danger is in what we don’t know about the safety, and the ripple effect of a possible toxin. No scientist or government agency has yet to connect the dots—or examine the exact way this will affect the Earth’s delicate web of life. “GE mosquitoes could result in far more health and environmental problems than they would solve,” Dana Perls, food and technology program manager at Friends of the Earth and a California resident, said in a statement.

Why Are Floridians Not Worried About Dengue and Chikungunya? In a Boston Globe opinion piece written by Natalie Kofler, founder of Editing Nature and adviser for the Scientific Citizenship Initiative at Harvard Medical School, and Jennifer Kuzma, co-director of the Genetic Engineering and Society Center, Florida residents aren’t worried about dengue and chikungunya fevers because they’re not much of a threat. In a University of Florida Medical Entomology Laboratory webinar Dr. Eva Buckner said there were 25 imported cases and

The experiment has created hybrid mosquitoes that scientists say may cause even more trouble.

Releasing genetically modified insects may have unintended consequences. JULIA WHITE/SHUTTERSTOCK

70 locally transmitted cases of dengue in Florida in 2020, and 371 imported cases and 16 local cases in 2019. The Florida Health Department describes the symptoms of dengue as mild to none, with a typical recovery of one week. Florida Health reports: “While previously present in Florida, the virus was eliminated from the United States several decades ago. Since then, a small number of cases have been reported each year in individuals with recent travel history to a dengue-endemic country.” West Nile virus is the most common and serious vector-borne disease in California. There have been more than 7,000 cases and more than 300 deaths since 2003, according to the California government’s West Nile webpage. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reported 2,400 human infections of West Nile in the United States in 2020, of which 165 resulted in death. Mosquito Reviews, a website that specializes in reviewing mosquito control products, reported that 1 in 150 cases of West Nile can be serious, while studies show dengue and chikungunya are fairly mild diseases with treatable symptoms. CDC statistics reveal that vector-borne diseases have been increasing over time in the United States—with mosquito, tick, and flea disease cases tripling between 2004 and 2016. Actual infections are likely underreported, the CDC says. However, the CDC lists Lyme disease—a tick-borne disease—as the most commonly reported vector-borne disease in the United States. Data from the CDC show that in 2019 there were approximately 34,945 cases of Lyme disease in the United States—a 4 percent increase from 2018. Between 1999 and 2003, the CDC reported 114 deaths from Lyme, as well as

cases of facial palsy, heart complications, arthritis, encephalopathy, and peripheral neuropathy. The most common mosquito-borne disease in the United States is malaria, with 1,936 cases in 2019, followed by dengue, at 1,444 cases, West Nile at 974 cases, Chikungunya at 274 cases, and Zika at 28 cases.

Risks Assessed Behind Closed Doors In the Boston Globe opinion piece, Kofler and Kuzma wrote: “The potential benefits of GM mosquitoes may outweigh their unknown ecological risks. “Herein lies our concern: Risks should not be assessed behind closed doors between technology developers and EPA employees. As designed, the EPA risk assessment process privileges private entities over the American public. “For starters, an external independent group of experts should be convened to review the first GM mosquitoes presented for release. To address the complexity of such a decision, this group should consist of interdisciplinary experts representing diverse identities with expertise in ecology, genetics, vector biology, risk assessment, entomology, public health, ethics, and social science.” One thing is certain, they say: People who live in the areas of release need a say in an experiment that has the potential to affect them and their environment—and not after permits have already been granted.

Beth Giuffre is a mosaic artist and frequent contributor to the Epoch Times. When the youngest of her three sons began having seizures, she began researching the root cause of intractable epilepsy, and discovered endless approaches to healing for those who are willing and open to alternatives.

Social Media Use Lowers Life Satisfaction in Adolescents

2 new studies show social media hurts brains and well-being of adolescent boys and girls



A new study reveals periods of adolescence where children may be at highest risk of harm from social media.

BETH GIUFFRE

Girls and boys may be more vulnerable to the negative effects of social media use during specific windows of their adolescence, researchers found after a large longitudinal study.

The new study, published in *Nature Communications*, analyzed two datasets of 84,000 participants aged 10 to 80 years old.

Tracking the same individuals over the course of a year, researchers at the University of Cambridge, University of Oxford, and Donders Institute for Brain, Cognition and Behaviour found a negative link between social media use and life satisfaction in girls when they're between 11 and 13 years old, and boys when they're between 14 and 15 years old.

While social media use didn't seem as detrimental for the last few years of adolescence, the link between increased social media use and lower life satisfaction reappeared for both girls and boys at 19. At other times in life, the link was not statistically significant.

"With our findings, rather than debating whether or not the link exists, we can now focus on the periods of our adolescence

where we know we might be most at risk and use this as a springboard to explore some of the really interesting questions," Dr. Amy Orben of the University of Cambridge told *Science Daily*.

Though this requires further research, authors suggest the differences in sensitivity to social media could be linked to puberty, which occurs later in boys than in girls. Researchers say it's possible that life changes, such as leaving home or starting work, may make the 19-year-old cohort vulnerable to a decrease in life satisfaction. They also pointed out that social media sensitivities may be linked to structural changes in the brain.

A study from a team of university researchers in the Netherlands, published a month earlier in *Developmental Cognitive Neuroscience*, highlighted the distinct association between structural brain development and social media use in adolescent development.

While most neuroscience research on social media focuses on well-being in general, this study incorporated the specific changes in brain structure and function across the transition from childhood to adulthood. Decreases in brain gray matter volume, or cortical thinning—a sign of brain maturation—continue into the mid-20s.

tion—continue into the mid-20s.

The longitudinal study looked at specific areas of the brain associated with depression and weak impulse control in adolescents three times over a span of five years. The 189 participants were 10 to 25 years old, with an average age of 16. This age range is a time of increased emphasis on social connection. Those with low mental well-being included more females (74 percent) than males (26 percent).

Social media sensitivities may be linked to structural changes in the brain.

According to magnetic resonance imaging results, adolescents with high social media use showed statistically significant differences in baseline cortical thickness in the lateral prefrontal cortex and medial prefrontal cortex areas of the brain—the areas of the brain that allow for social cognitive control of our behavior and actions—and stronger decreases in the lateral prefrontal cortex

and temporoparietal junction—the region of the temporal lobe largely responsible for creating and preserving both conscious and long-term memory.

Mental well-being was significantly associated with differences in structural brain development, they found.

"These results suggest that mental well-being and associated brain development might be more inclined to genetic factors, whereas changes in cortical thickness and social media use are possibly more strongly associated with environmental cues," the authors write.

"Our results show the importance of examining individual differences in brain maturation and provide a starting point to further examine neural mechanisms that could explain which adolescents thrive by social media and which might be harmed."

Beth Giuffre is a mosaic artist and frequent contributor to the Epoch Times. When the youngest of her three sons began having seizures, she began researching the root cause of intractable epilepsy, and discovered endless approaches to healing for those who are willing and open to alternatives.



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