### THE EPOCH TIMES



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



How should we deal with

a mental health crisis among teens?

NATALIASS/SHUTTERSTOCK

### **BETH GIUFFRE**

high school senior from California described teen CO-VID-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 lifeshaping 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.

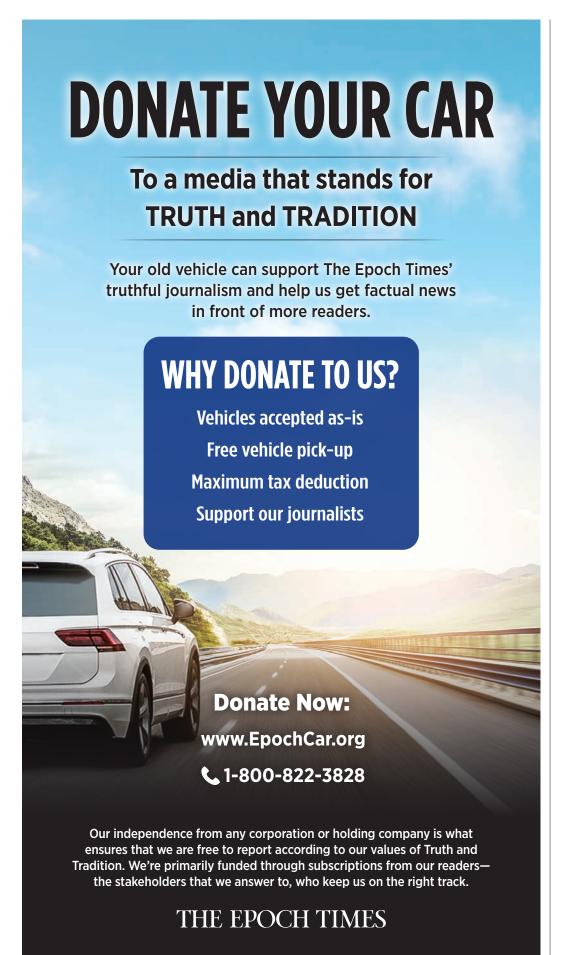
Some mental health practitioners think the COVID-19 mental fallout in certain teens should be labeled as a "full-blown trauma" and be treated as such.

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.

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







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 departnt 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 media is scaring people 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 exposurerelated. 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 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 ca-

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.

The ancient practice of yoga has become a popular form of gentle exercise for those who shy from with the gym or have physical limitations but still want to improve strength, flexibility, and their mental health. While some attend a local yoga stuthyroid dio, there are also apps and Zoom classes activity, Cardiovascular exercises such as running, swimming, aerobics, and walking stimulate your metabolism, but what about the gentler increase

This age-old tradition offers

approach to physical fitness

a gentle but invigorating

**SANDRA CESCA** 

to use in your home.

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 in-

cluding age, gender, hormones, and amount

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 cho-

lesterol 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

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 prac-

tice might affect your metabolism and thus

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 stimu-

late and strengthen your endocrine organs,

especially the thyroid gland. In addition,

twisting and bending poses massage ab-

dominal organs improving digestion, local

circulation, and calorie burn while cleans-

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, re-

searchers haven't studied its effects for all

that long. There are, however, studies that

indicate how yoga can slow or even reverse

In a study published in Oxidative Medi-

cine and Cellular Longevity in 2017, 96 older

adults participated in yoga for 12 weeks. The

practices included asanas, breathing exer-

cises, and meditation. After this period, re-

searchers measured known aging biomark-

ers and found a reduction in cellular aging

along with the potential for promoting cel-

In a similar study published in Frontiers

in Human Neuroscience in 2017, re-

searchers found that a three-month

yoga retreat reduced inflamma-

tion and stress in the body. This

residential retreat involved daily

meditation and yoga practices

and was accompanied by a vege-

tarian 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 sta-

bilized nervous system from greater meta-

or have elevated blood pressure.

your aging process?

Metabolism and Yoga

ing the body of toxins.

the effects of aging.

lular longevity.

bolic efficiency.

moves of yoga?

of physical activity.

Yoga has been correlated increased which can 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.

BANKSPHOTOS/ GETTY IMAGES

Meditation is an excellent

way to strengthen the

mind and has been shown

to reduce stress

and bolster the

immune system.

Yoga and How It Affects Your Metabolism

alignment and proper form. It is normally done using many modifications through the

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

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 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.

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.

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

wellness, organic foods, healthy lifestyle

### 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

use of props. It is great for people with injuries who need to work slowly and methodically.

the up and down motions of traditional yoga.

### Best Asanas for Improving Metabolism

Asanas are the numerous poses that are the basis of all yoga practices. Moving smoothly

### Conclusion

and physical wellbeing.

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

Asanas for Metabolism,

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

Flexibility, Strength, and 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 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.



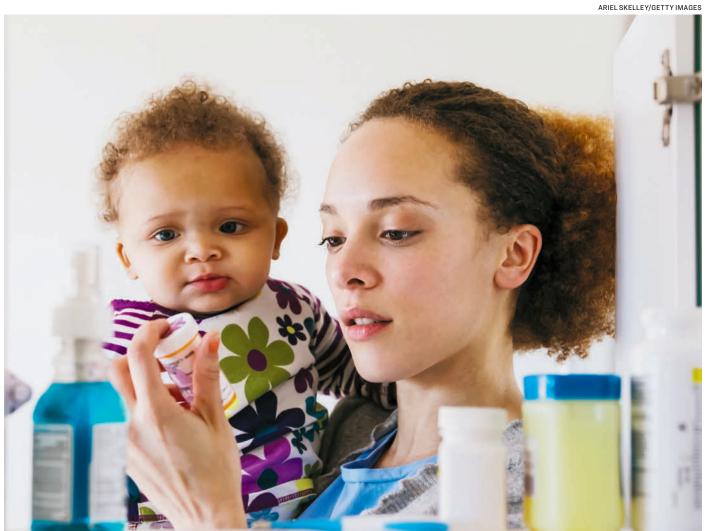
**Garudasana or Eagle** Pose helps digestion by massaging your stomach and intestines. It energizes your body as it strengthens your legs.

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.



ILLUSTRATIONS BY BALEIKA TAMARA/SHUTTERSTOCK



## Beware of These Antibiotic Effects

The discovery of the microbiome has deepened our insight into the side effects

Antibiotic

to obesity,

infections,

and even

colorectal

cancer.

use is linked

gastrointestinal

inflammatory

bowel disease,

The proliferation of

antibiotic resistant

bacteria due to overuse of

the medication has led to

massive Center for Disease

Control and Prevention

(CDC) programs to keep

antibiotics working.

MAGNETCREATIVE/ GETTY IMAGES

Treating antibiotics too lightly has led to health problems in individuals and wider problems for infectious disease control

**MARTHA ROSENBERG** 

efore the discovery that essential symbiotic bacteria live in and on us, antibiotics were viewed largely as innocuous. As the "gut microbiome" (the microorganisms living in the intestines) becomes better understood, so too do the deleterious effects that antibiotics exert on our health. One immediate effect, as many people who have taken antibiotics know, is the "good bacteria" can be killed off in the gut.

The short-term consequence can be diarrhea. The long-term consequences are still being uncovered.

We do know there are several possible effects of antibiotics. A study published in the journal cancer. Early antibiotic exposure is also linked to "childhood asthma, allergies, and airway illnesses," the researchers wrote.

In 2016, Dr. Judy Stone cautioned in Forbes that she was seeing disturbing amounts of strains (including Acinetobacter baumandelirium, confusion, and hallucinations in patients taking antibiotics, especially elderly and hospitalized patients.

"Hallucinations were most commonly associated with sulfonamides (68 percent), quinolones (67 percent), macrolides (63 percent), and penicillin procaine (68 percent). Seizures were most commonly reported in association with penicillin (38 percent) and cephalosporins (35 percent)," she wrote.

These antibiotic side effects may be incorrectly attributed to the phenomenon of "sundowning" in which the elderly may become confused at night or "ICU psychosis" in which patients can become disoriented and paranoid, she said.

### **Antibiotic-Resistant Bacteria**

A more well-known side effect of antibiotics that the Frontiers researchers cite is their contribution to antibiotic-resistant bacteria. The proliferation of antibiotic-resistant bacteria has led to massive Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) programs to keep antibiotics working. Doctors and hospitals have been admonished to only prescribe antibiotics when necessary, and "stewardship" programs have been established at hospitals for especially

important, "protected" antibiotics.

Patients are increasingly told about the dangers of antibiotic over-prescription. They are warned that the drugs fail to address nonbacterial conditions such as viruses and that taking them when unnecessary increases resistant bacteria for everyone. Public health messages warn us that patients expecting and asking for a prescription every time they see a doctor is part of the problem.

Many have heard of MRSA (methicillinresistant Staphylococcus aureus), a deadly "staph" infection that some may remember brought an end to Giants tight end Daniel Fells's season in 2015 and afflicted the Tampa Bay Buccaneers in 2013.

MRSA is hardly the only antibiotic-resistant Frontiers in Cellular and Infection Microbiol-bacterium that's a public threat and thought to ogy in 2020 found that antibiotic use is linked have been created by the over-prescription of matory bowel disease, and even colorectal carbapenem such as carbapenem-resistant Enterobacteriaceae (CRE) are also worrisome, according to research published in Infection and Drug Resistance this year. In recent years, "the carbapenem resistance rate of clinical nii, Pseudomonas aeruginosa and Klebsiella pneumoniae) is of an increasing trend," wrote the researchers. Acinetobacter baumannii was so prevalent in troops returning from Iraq that it was actually dubbed "Iraqibacter."

A carbapenem-resistant Klebsiella pneumoniae bacterium broke out in 2011 in one of the nation's top research hospitals, the Clinical Center at the National Institutes of Health in Bethesda, Maryland, killing six.

Vancomycin-resistant enterococci (VRE) is another resistant bacteria of concern and accounts for many infections in the United States, Australia, Argentina, and the United Kingdom, say the researchers in a new research review published in March in the journal Infection and Drug Resistance.

### Antibiotics on the Farm

Antibiotics have become a staple in animal farming, especially in concentrated animal feeding operations, also called "factory farms." According to the Center for Infectious Disease Research and Policy, about 70 percent of all "medically important antibiotics" in the United States are sold for use in animals, not people. To meat producers, antibiotics serve two

CHICKEN MARYN MCKENNA

> Health journalist and National Geographic contributor Maryn AcKenna documents how antibiotics transformed chicken from local delicacy to industrial commodityand human health threat.

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

together in unhygienic conditions from getting sick, and they cause animals to gain weight with less feed. What is behind the weight gain phenomenon? Scientists think antibiotics improve the extraction of carbohydrates and protein from feed, improve lipid metabolism, and reduce protein loss from intestinal factors. According to the 2017 book "Big Chicken" by

purposes—they help keep animals crowded

Maryn McKenna, Thomas Juke of Lederle Laboratories discovered the growth function of antibiotics in chicken in 1948 and the 1950s the birds were actually soaked in antibiotics to leave a film on them in a process called acronizing. Some of the workers performing the acronizing came down with staph infections.

For years, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has tried to regulate and limit the use of antibiotics in food animals with little success. In 2005, the agency did succeed with a five-year battle to ban Bayer's poultry antibiotic, Baytril, which is similar to human drugs like fluoroquinolone Cipro and thus considered a resistance risk

But in 2008, when the FDA called for a prohibition on cephalosporin antibiotic use in food-producing animals, lobbyists from the egg, chicken, turkey, milk, pork, and cattle industries stormed Capitol Hill. They claimed that they couldn't operate profitably without antibiotics because of the greater feed that would be necessary and the greater space animals would need to prevent disease outbreaks. The FDA caved, even changing the name of the hearing from "Cephalosporin Order of Prohibition" to a "Hearing to Review the Advances in Animal Health Within the Livestock Industry."

The same year, the FDA caught hatcheries injecting a different antibiotic, ceftiofur, at unapproved levels into eggs, and Tyson Foods was found injecting the antibiotic gentamicin into eggs despite its "no antibiotics" claim.

In 2017, the FDA implemented a rule that antibiotics could only be used for illness in livestock and no longer for growth promotion, but according to the Natural Resources Defense Council, livestock antibiotic sales in the U.S. actually grew by nearly 28 percent after the ruling.

Anthrax Attacks Put Cipro on the Map

The fluoroquinolone antibiotic Cipro was introduced in 1987, but many never heard of it until the anthrax attacks that immediately followed the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks in New York City. One week after the attacks, letters with anthrax spores were mailed to news outlets and senators, and five people died, with 17 injured. At the time, Cipro was the only FDA-approved drug for the treatment of inhalational anthrax, and the White House distributed it to staffers. Cipro became synonymous with safety during the unprecedented U.S. biological attack.

But even as Cipro became a household word, questions about its safety arose. A class-action lawsuit was filed against Bayer by those who had taken the drug during the anthrax scare postal employees, those who worked in the Capitol, and those who worked at news outlets that had been targeted. The suit claimed that Bayer didn't warn patients about Cipro's side effects, which could include tendon rupture, hallucinations, and nerve damage.

Over the years, the fluoroquinolones became the poster child for unsafe antibiotics. In 2008, the FDA added a boxed warning on the label about the increased risk of tendinitis and tendon rupture, and in 2011, a boxed warning was added about risks to those with the disease myasthenia gravis.

In 2016, FDA announced that the "disabling and potentially permanent side effects" from fluoroquinolones related to tendons, muscles, joints, nerves, and the central nervous system were so serious that "fluoroquinolones should be reserved for use in patients with these conditions

who have no alternative treatment options." Apparently, knowledge of the antibiotic class's risks didn't reach the highest levels of the U.S. government. Former Secretary of State and presidential candidate Hillary Clinton was reported to be taking the fluoroquinolone Levaquin for pneumonia when she experienced difficulty walking at a 9/11 memorial ceremony in 2016.

By 2021, so many patients reported toxic effects from fluoroquinolones that the term "floxed" became established. According to the Atlantic, more than 20,000 people have reported negative side effects from the drug class and 200 have taken their own lives, FDA data show.

Clearly, antibiotics, while lifesaving for some conditions, are not innocuous and are not to be prescribed or taken lightly. Patients should maintain a degree of caution before taking the drugs for their own health and to prevent the proliferation of antibiotic-resistant bacteria.

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.

### The Key to Having More Energy Is Meaning

diet and exercise may help but to really get yourself going, you may need to address a deeper need

### **JENNIFER MARGULIS**

Many people feel empty, exhausted, and worn out from life. They just don't have the energy they need to do the things life is throwing at them. This listlessness is fairly common.

Research published in the journal Medical Hypotheses in 2018 found that a persistent lack of energy affects between 20 and 45 percent of Americans. According to a 2021 study in the Journal of the American Geriatric Society, lack of energy is a problem older adults frequently ex-

For many, the problem comes down to stress and problems sleeping; for others, it's daily habits; and for nearly everyone, a major factor is that we just don't have things in our lives to get energized about.

### **Stress and Sleep Problems**

A rough sleep can leave you feeling depleted. Instead of bounding out of bed with a spring in your step, you feel sluggish and unmotivated.

There are many reasons people don't get restful sleep, but one of the most common

Data from a recent survey from the American Psychological Association show that fatigue affected 32 percent of respondents, with nearly 90 percent of younger adults reporting that they were experiencing the impacts of stress.

It makes sense that stress and fatigue go hand in glove. Stress triggers our body to prepare for action with hormones and blood sugar to match. That's fine for short bursts, but enduring stress grinds the body down.

And when fatigue keeps us from getting our tasks done, all too often we resort to the worst possible solutions. We spend our days chugging down coffee or sugar or super-sized energy drinks.

Some people take energy shots and down powdered packets. Energy drinks are a big business now, with about \$134.2 billion in worldwide sales each year, according to Statista.

To fix our energy-depleted selves more naturally, conventional wisdom tells us all we need to do is to get more advice, of course. But, according to Dr. Maggie Yu, those recommendations often miss the deeper need we have for meaning KARLTAPALES/

### No Longer a Parent, Not Yet a Grandparent

and purpose.

A functional medical doctor based in Portland, Oregon, Yu has struggled with not having energy. At 52, she recently found herself with an empty nest. When both her young adult children, ages 18 and 21, moved out of state, she felt profoundly unmoored. She was no longer a parent and not yet a grandparent. Unsure of who she was now that she no longer had children at home, Yu felt like she had

"I lost my purpose. I got really depressed," Yu said. "It's lonely. There's a shift."

What Yu was experiencing was similar to what some older adults often go through when they stop working. Retirement is a life change that usually involves loss of routine, social connections, colleagues, status, accomplishments, and aspirations. According to one meta-analysis



Dr. Maggie Yu found friends and engagement in breeding rare aquarium fish and aquatic plants. done by scientists in Spain, nearly 30 percent of retirees suffered from depression.

While some older adults enjoy a higher quality of life after they retire, others find that when they lose their professional connections and no longer have a 9-to-5 job to report to, they become unsure of who they are and how they should spend their time.

Many of us blame our lack of energy on aging. But, as Johns Hopkins Medicine says, "getting older doesn't automatically mean less vibrancy and vigor, or lower energy levels—no matter what our youthobsessed culture would have you believe."

I know people who are in their 70s, 80s, and even a few in their 90s who are brimming with energy. I wrote about some of them in a recent article about getting fit as we get older. What's their secret?

As a holistic-minded doctor, Yu tries to get to the root causes of her patients' ills. A lack of energy can often come from a sedentary lifestyle combined with the ping pong effect of a diet high in refined sugars, empty calories, and processed and artificial foods. A lack of high-

> quality sleep can also leave you fatigued. But Yu believes the real reason adults of any age lose their energy is that they aren't participating in activities that give meaning to their lives and that help others at the same time.

### A Purpose-Filled Life

There are three things that sleep, eat healthier food, and When fatigue keeps us really feed your energy, Yu exercise more. That's all good from getting our tasks told me: your purpose, your done, all too often we creativity, and giving life to resort to the worst

possible solutions. In other words, a common root cause of not having enough energy, according to Yu, is not liv-

ing a purpose-filled life. This means the best way to have more energy is to find activities that are purposeful, creative, and life-giving. She advises people who are feeling low energy to ask themselves: "What would

be educational to me? What would spark my curiosity? What would be life-giving to others or to myself? And what creative endeavors would I enjoy?"

For Yu, the answer to those questions led her to discover several new interests: Though she still works full-time as a doctor (albeit remotely from a home office), she decided to learn how to train animals, breed rare aquarium fish, raise aquatic plants, and also study the chemistry and science behind proper skincare. The rescue dog she is training (though she's a self-described cat person) and her aquarium fish energize her in unexpected ways.

"We have the skills, we have the wisdom, we have the experience," Yu said, referring to older adults learning new skills. "Why not?"

The average life expectancy in 1900 was about 47 years old. Today, most Americans will live until their late 70s. "Now we're living longer and being more physically active. It's a new age," said Dr. Cammy Benton, an integrative family physician based in Huntersville, North Carolina. "People are having two entire careers. They retire from one and start another at age 50. We can live longer and have new choices and have more energy to boot. It's all about your mindset."

The Feng Shui of Fish

We gain more

energy when we

spend time doing

things that bring

meaning to our lives.

of Americans are

lack of energy.

affected by a persistent

A common

root cause of

not having

enough

energy is

not living a

purpose-filled

Yu started becoming interested in fish when her daughter got a fish tank while Oregon was under lockdown. She studied rare breeds, discovered that some fish had gone extinct outside of aquarium breeding, and joined several Portland-area fish clubs.

"There's education involved, competition involved, volunteerism, giving and sharing. If you want money you can sell fish," Yu said. "Spending three hours cleaning fish tanks is life-giving in my mind, because they're living beings that are dependent on me. It's really therapeutic."

The Chinese tradition of feng shui involves arranging your living space to create balance with the natural world. In feng shui, when you harness energy forces, you establish harmony between yourself and your environment.

Having water inside the home is important in feng shui, Yu told me. In Asian cultures, indoor falling water can bring luck, joy, and prosperity into your life.

Now Yu has seven fish tanks in her home and breeds six kinds of fish, which she shares with her local aquarium clubs so younger people can get fish for free or at low cost. As much as she is learning from the Greater Portland Aquarium Society, she has also become a mentor there.

And Yu's interest in aquarium fish blossomed into an interest in aquatic horticulture. She says breeding and propagating aquatic plants is another pursuit that can give you energy.

Yu's solution to wanting more energy was to discover new interests that involved learning chemistry, caregiving, and helping others. She said she has been teaching herself what she needed to know by watching YouTube videos, listening to podcasts, and attending meetings of other enthusiasts.

Jennifer Margulis, an award-winning journalist and book author, is a frequent contributor to The Epoch Times. Find out more and sign up for her weekly emails at www.JenniferMargulis.net

### **TRY A TRAMPOLINE**



Yu has another trick to get more energy: She spends time every day on a small bungee-style trampoline. This was Louise Hay's trick as well. Hay, founder of Hay House Publishing and the bestselling author of "You Can Heal Your Life," did a hundred jumps on the trampoline every day.

But you don't have to jump into the air, Yu said. You just stand on it and bend your knees so you're moving your body

she said. "It's very energizing." In addition, trampolining and other balancing exercises are good for the vestibular system inside the brain, helping to improve your balance and depth perception, which are two things that tend to get off-kilter when you age. "If you're older, get a trampoline with a

up and down. "It moves your lymph around like crazy," handrail," she said.

And while you're bouncing, you can brainstorm other new activities you'd be excited to try.

**Antibiotics** have become a staple in animal farming. especially in concentrated animal feeding operations.



# If you're feeling listless,



# Delayed Development?

### Teens in the Pandemic Era

Continued from Page 1

"Rates of childhood mental health concerns and suicide rose steadily between 2010 and 2020 and by 2018 suicide was the second leading cause of death for youth ages 10-24. The pandemic has intensified this crisis: across the country we have witnessed dramatic increases in Emergency Department visits for all mental health emergencies including suspected suicide attempts," the statement reads.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) released a new report on than one in three high school students felt sad or hopeless during the pandemic. One in three students also reported using alcohol and other drugs more during the pandemic.

Psychiatrists say the struggle teens are facing may be greater than many people

"I'm seeing the effects of these government shutdowns, lockdowns, closures, social distancing measures, quarantines, masking, shutting down schools, just now coming to fruition," Dr. Mark McDonald, a child and adolescent psychiatrist and author of "United States of Fear: How America Fell Victim to a Mass Delusional Psychosis," said on a recent The Defender Podcast hosted by Robert F. Kennedy Jr.

"My concerns now are actually worse than they were a year and a half ago. I just saw it as a temporary disaster. We're now seeing this as an ongoing problem."

Can the long-term effects of COVID-19 countermeasures be considered a fullblown mental health crisis?

A poll conducted by Ipsos in mid-March found that one in four Americans said they've returned to their normal, "pre-CO-VID life," but the long-term effects of the lockdown and the way it reshaped some of our core ideas as a society remain largely unknown, including its lasting effects on children. McDonald isn't optimistic.

"We're going to start to see more and more April 1 based on a survey on adolescent evidence and reports of lingering chronic behaviors during COVID-19. It found more trauma, injuries, ongoing abuse of children iust like now we're seeing with the speech problems, like we're seeing with the drug problems, like we're seeing with the lack of socialization with children—anxiety and depressive disorders—all these problems that we just ignored ... are now coming back and rebounding much, much worse than they were in 2020," he said.

> Studies confirm McDonald's warning. A recent JAMA systematic review of 36 studies from 11 countries found that "school closures and social lockdowns during the first COVID-19 wave were associated with adverse mental health symptoms (such as distress and anxiety) and health behaviors (such as higher screen time and lower physical activity) among children and adolescents."

The review found that 18 to 60 percent of

thresholds for distress—particularly anxiety and depressive symptoms—and two studies reported greater social media use.

An August 2021 global meta-analysis of 29 studies published in JAMA found estimates of elevated adolescent depression in Europe to be 20.5 percent, as the prevalence of depression and anxiety had doubled compared to pre-pandemic estimates.

children and adolescents scored above risk

Week 16, 2022 THE EPOCH TIMES

A University of Manchester analysis of the teen experience during COVID-19 suggests that parents and educators need to be talking to their teens. Not all mental illness problems will lead to an impairment, the study suggests. Yet because of the fact that "most youngsters do not misbehave, and instead hide their feelings," the internalized feelings can be easily overlooked and can develop into full-blown disorders.

The effects of COVID-19 on teens come amid a broader social trend of social isolation in the entire culture that's occurring alongside a rising tide of stress, depression, anxiety, and mental illness.

### **Isolation**

For teens

living one

of the most

dynamic

periods of

their lives,

growing up in

the time of the

**COVID takes** 

**STUDENTS** 

high school students

felt sad or hopeless

during the pandemic,

according to the CDC.

More than 1 in 3

a large toll.

There's no meme in the virtual universe that encompasses the kind of disappointment teens faced when their schools remained closed.

"It's just devastating," McDonald said. "I have so many children in my practice who are unable to spend time with their iriends at sleepovers because they can't separate from their mothers. I have children who have punched through plate glass windows with their fists at age 8 out of frustration because they can't go outside.

"I have autistic children who were completely fine psychologically. They have autism, but that doesn't mean that they're mentally ill, and these autistic children, by and large, have suffered the most."

An October 2020 study by Bellwether Education Partners estimated as many as 3 million K-12 students were "missing" in one way or another. The study noted, for instance, that 15 to 20 percent of Los Angeles English learners, students in foster care, students with disabilities, and homeless students didn't access any of the district's online educational materials from March through May of 2020.

In Washington, back-to-school family surveys found that 60 percent of students lacked the devices and 27 percent lacked the high-speed internet access needed to successfully participate in virtual school.

In Miami-Dade County, Florida, 16,000 fewer students enrolled in the fall of 2020 compared to the previous year.

The BBC reported almost 2 million pupils are regularly missing school in the UK, saying that "almost 1.8 million children missed at least 10 percent of school in the autumn [of 2022] term in England," which is a rate almost twice as high as before the pandemic, according to National Health Service numbers.

The scale of missing students is massive, according to the Bellwether study.

"The pandemic has also isolated children and youth experiencing abuse, neglect, or acute mental health needs, cutting them off from teachers and other school staff trained to spot warning signs," the study reads. "Early local reporting suggests widespread decreases in child abuse reporting, increases in child deaths, and more older children being killed."

### **Excluded**

One senior from central California (who wished to remain anonymous) transitioned to homeschooling school went virtual.

"It was boring because there was nothing to do, and my mom took me out of school, so I couldn't be there with my friends," he said. The teen worked more than usual at the local surf shop. He spent more time at the beach.

But when his friends said most teachers weren't enforcing the masks, his parents tried to re-enroll him in high school, but the school flagged his incomplete vaccine record, which was acceptable in seventh grade, but not in high school.

He said the only thing that would make his life better again is "going back to school," yet California's strict school vaccine laws won't allow him to do so. His mother worries that the damage to his social life may be more

I'm seeing the effects of these government shutdowns, lockdowns, closures, social distancing measures, quarantines. masking, shutting down schools, just now coming to fruition. Dr. Mark McDonald,

psychiatrist and

author, "United States

of Fear: How America

Fell Victim to a Mass

Delusional Psychosis'

than just boredom and stress.

A YouTube interview posted by Melbourne Ground described the escalation of boredom and stress in Australia.

Two Melbourne teens who had lived through six COVID-19 lockdowns in two years said they felt deeply affected by stayat-home orders, including losing the motivation for homeschooling and overdoing their social media and phone usage.

"I have lots of friends who I've seen turn to drugs and alcohol over lockdown. I've really seen a change in people. They've got nothing," one teen said. "When we were at school two or so years ago ... that's what people would] do for the day; they'd go home and sleep and go to school the next day. When they're at home all day, it's not healthy, you know."

The other teen said, "I've never been a person who gets depressed much, but recently, I've begun to feel the effects of the lockdown. I've started to feel depressed. We shouldn't feel like that—we're just kids."

McDonald said he's personally seen an increase in drug use among his clients.

"I lost two patients for the first time in my career, "he said in The Defender interview, choking up.

"Two patients, underaged, due to fentanyl overdoses. One of them took the Fentanyl when he was at home because he couldn't go to school, because he was under [Los Angeles Mayor | Eric Garcetti's 'Safer at Home' policy. Safer at home and he died, and his parents were right there in the house when he died. They didn't know he had taken the fentanyl until they found him face down, green, in a pile of his own vomit, not breathing.

"These problems I have never seen in my career. Not to this degree. Anxiety up 300 percent. Depression: 400 percent. ... Every single mental illness, every behavioral problem, including substance abuse in the older kids, is going through the roof."

### **Suicide Attempts**

Communities were shocked when 15-yearold Stockton, California, teenager Jo'Vianni Smith committed suicide by hanging herself because of what her mother, Danielle Hunt, said were the circumstances presented by the COVID-19 pandemic. Hunt told local station KTXL that her daughter showed no signs of wanting to take her life, but may have had difficulty dealing with the state's stay-at-home order, which had only been in place for a few weeks into the U.S. lockdowns.

Isolated stories made it sound as though suicides were on the rise during the pandemic, but statistically speaking, the numbers have been consistent. Global suicide trend data from 21 countries didn't see an increase in suicide rates during the early months of the pandemic.

Suicide attempts have risen, however. The National Vital Statistics System lists suicide as the third leading cause of death among U.S. adolescents aged 15 to 19, which means that stagnant suicide rates don't make teen suicide less of a risk.

In an article, a University of California-Davis doctor said in 2021 that youth suicide was already at a record high and that parents should be vigilant as the challenges "teens normally face have been amplified by isolation and distancing during the pandemic."

CDC data reveals that emergency department (ED) visits for adolescent suicide attempts soared during the summer and winter of 2021, especially among girls. There

was a 31 percent spike in suspected suicides by children aged 12 to 17 in the summer of 2020 compared to 2019.

"During February 21 [to] March 20, 2021, suspected suicide attempt ED visits were 50.6 percent higher among girls aged 12-17 years than during the same period in 2019; among boys aged 12-17, suspected suicide attempt ED visits increased 3.7 percent," The report reads.

As the suicide and suicide attempt data continue to be scrutinized, the teen response to COVID-19 will continue to be examined.

"I think we do need to treat some teens for trauma," said Jennifer Thomas, a licensed marriage and family therapist. "Teens were left out and told what to do. No one is asking what it's like for them. Some were doing okay, but some on the other end were consumed with worry. Some committed suicide.

"Because I'm in this field, I know these tragedies were happening before, and I don't mean to minimize it, but it wasn't being paid attention to. Now that mental health issues have escalated for some teens, we can be more aware."

Thomas said the best word to describe the effect of COVID-19 fallout on teen development is "stunted."

Thomas said her Sacramento, California, practice has grown since the pandemic—in fact, the calls are overflowing. She said it's been difficult and gut-wrenching keeping up with all the people who need help, especially when she hears of their hardships parents losing jobs, teens forced to come home from college, increases in anxiety disorders, and obsessive-compulsive disorder. A part of the problem teens face is that the people that they rely on are also suffering amid the fallout of the pandemic.

"Adults are going through their struggles. Teachers are going through their struggles, too," Thomas said.

### How to Move On

Should certain teens be treated for trauma? According to the joint statement by the American Academy of Pediatrics et al., the answer is an urgent yes.

Thomas thinks that many teens do need help and that it's the parent or caregiver's job to learn how to best communicate with them. Sometimes she reserves sessions just for that purpose. Hussong reserves hope for teens as we come out of the pandemic. While COVID-19 upended their teen life, life continues, even if it does so differently.

"Development is not so much delayed by the pandemic but reshaped by it. Rather than asking high school seniors to 'go back to normal'—which returns them to their sophomore years—we need to ask them and the systems that serve them to recognize their new development path," Hussong said For his part, McDonald has been going

out of his way to alert the public that teenagers need more help. In an interview with Jesse Lee Peterson, he said parents need to do much more than recognize their teens' reshaped path: They need to call for a return to normalcy.

"It's up to us adults to fix this, because children are not going to be able to fix this themselves," McDonald said.

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.

### 3 Reasons Why You Feel Stressed When Trying to Relax

If relaxing makes you feel stressed, there are several things you can do to help yourself unwind

### **JOLANTA BURKE**

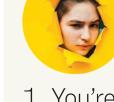
Have you ever tried to relax, only to find yourself overwhelmed with feeling stressed and having negative thoughts? Turns out a lot of us experience this—which is why some have coined it "stresslaxing."

Even though stresslaxation is a new term, it describes relaxation-induced anxiety which has been studied for years. This is shown to happen to between 30 percent and 50 percent of people when they try to do relaxing things, causing symptoms of stress, such as rapid heart beat or sweating.

It's paradoxical, given people who experience stresslaxation may need to do something relaxing to de-stress. This can turn into a destructive, vicious cycle where they can't alleviate the stress they're experiencing—which could result in having more negative emotions and panic attacks.

Not everyone will experience stresslaxation. Some research even suggests people who have anxiety may be more prone to it. Here are a few of the other reasons why it happens—and what you can do to get over it.

On the bright side, even if relaxation causes anxiety, it can still have a positive effect on mental health—and may even help you grow as a person. The most crucial thing is finding a relaxing activity you enjoy. Whether that's cooking, gardening, or even running, it's important that it helps you switch off from your day's stress.



1. You're Denying You're Stressed

Pretending that a problem doesn't exist-also known as denial—is one of the least effective coping strategies for stress. In the case of stresslaxing, this might be denying you're stressed to begin with. Short periods of denial can actually help us adapt to change. For example, denial

can help a person cope

with their emotions after

experiencing the death of someone close. But when denial is used frequently to deal with daily stressors, it can leave people feeling perpetually stuck in a rut. When you're in denial,

your body continues sending stress signals in order to prompt you to take action and resolve your problems. This is why attempting (and failing) to relax instead of actually addressing the causes of your stress can make you feel more stressed out. Here's how to fix this: Acknowledge that the

stress symptoms can be **helpful.** Your body is trying to alert you that a problem needs fixing, so it's activating all its physiological resources to help you do this. For example, an increased heart rate helps your body carry more oxygenated blood to your brain, so that your brain

can come up with a solution quickly to the problems that are causing you stress. Write down your deepest thoughts and feelings associated with your stress. This will help you understand the source of your stress so you can tackle it. For example, meditation daily won't change the cause of your stress is you're overworked. In this case, actually speaking with a manager or colleague to adjust your workload may be necessary to relieve your stress.

Think outside the box. When we're stressed, we might only think certain activities (such as meditation or exercise) can help us relax. But speaking to friends or family, or using an app or online resource can also be great ways to address your stress and help you

2. You're Worrying About What Other People Will Say

Most of us have something we're passionate about whether that's our work or even a hobby. But the reason you're motivated to do these things is important. Some people pursue their passion because they want to-whether that's to improve themselves or learn a new skill. But

others may only pursue their passion because they want recognition from other people. People with certain personality types may be more prone to obsessing over their passion. Others may simply follow a certain pursuit to get praise from their colleagues or even to prove their worth to friends or family. The problem with pursuing

a passion for the wrong reason is that it can cause a person to push themselves to the limit—which could mean working despite being sick, or not taking time off to de-stress. This can make it difficult and stressful to relax-like you're wasting time that could be spent pursuing your passion when you try doing relaxing things. You might even be worried that people will think badly of you for taking time off. Ultimately, this can

negatively affect well-being. For people who feel like this, taking a short "mental break" from what you're passionate about may be helpful. The break doesn't have to be long, nor does it have to involve doing something you necessarily see as relaxing. But taking even short breaks may help you to eventually feel that it's okay to take time away from your passion every now and again to de-stress and relax.



3. You Can't Make Up Your Mind

When making a decision, some people can't help but explore all possible options available to them-known as maximizing thoughts. This can even happen when trying to pick something relaxing to do. Even after picking something, you may instead think about the other options, wondering if something else would've helped you feel more relaxed. So instead of

you're stressing yourself even more. Unfortunately, maximizing leads to self-blame and regret, no matter what

relaxing your mind,

option we choose. It's also sometimes associated with lower well-being. For a person who has a habit of maximizing, they may be thinking of all the other things they have to do that day instead of actually relaxing—which may lead to feelings of stress.

through this: Limit the number of decisions you need to make on the day you want to do something relaxing. Or even plan when you're going to do something relaxing (such as watching a movie or meditating) and for how long you're going to do it. This may make it easier to

Here's how to work

relax when the time comes as you'll know you aren't putting other things off.

ALL PHOTOS BY SHCHUS/SHUTTERSTOCK

Remember why you're trying to relax. Your health is important, so remembering this may help you feel less stressed while trying to do a relaxing activity.

Jolanta Burke is a senior *lecturer at the Centre* for Positive Psychology and Health at the RCSI University of Medicine and Health Sciences in Ireland. This article was first published on The Conversation.

**MINDSET MATTERS** 

## An Ode to Feeling Uncomfortable

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



Week 16, 2022 THE EPOCH TIMES

### **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 uncomfortable 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 encounter as human beings. By avoiding uncomfortable, we're fixing a feeling that, new challenges carry discomfort. 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 experione of the most important experiences we ences. Mastering a new skill, improving our mind and body, building something in and correcting situations that make us feel this world—virtually all efforts involving

> 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.

condemning discomfort, but rather in discomfort, building and honing our skills for managing it with greater skill, awareness, and self-compassion. In truth, it's through the experience of lifediscomfort that we learn to self-soothe. forbearance. In difficult moments, we develop the skills necessary to take care of ourselves, to bring ourselves back to okay-ness. We

experience as a problem, we would be If we don't get better off learning to get comfortable with comfortable

we will lack an

discomfort. Our efforts shouldn't be in with

things we can ever learn. Ultimately, feeling uncomfortable is an opportunity to grow and evolve—to change and become more resilient and

build compassion and kindness for our-

selves, which is one of the most important

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 tol-

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.

erate, without having to change or fix it.

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 limit ourselves to our much of life beyond our

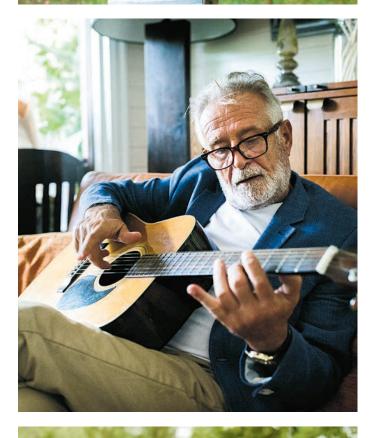












# **Engaging Pursuits for** Later Life

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



fyou'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, surf-

ng 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.

Continued on Page 13





BUDI FAYANDA/SHUTTERSTOCK

### 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** 

THE EPOCH

TIMES

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

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

### '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."

Continued on Page 11



### Classifieds

212-244-3395 Ext 1067 advertisenow@epochtimes.com

### **Home Grown Kansas Beef** From the Rattlesnake Creek Basin To Your Door 21 Day Dry Aged Shipped to the lower 48 states Rattlesnake Meat Company

**Topsoil Magazine** Creating healthier lives from the ground up. Farmers tell their stories from bee-keeping to composting.

www.rattlesnakemeats.com

### TopsoilMagazine.com **Final Notice Before Legal Action** 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

### **Seeking Producer/Investors** For Industry Professionals: Digital Reading of Original Script, NOTHING PRIVATE, about the daughter of a CIA operative who investigates her father's death uncovering a conspiracy far greater than she thought she'd prove -- her safety & sanity put at risk while working with Washington insiders.

VIEW: www.carolbrammer.com, INQUIRIES: carolannbrammer@gmail Part time job offer

This is an official request for Professional consultants who will stand as our regional representative to run logistics, Book/record Keeper for the company. We are only looking for individuals or companies from the USA. for more details contact Robert Edward at larrysmithinc912@gmail.com

### **Business Opportunity**

Hey it's me again., Jimmer here. Got connections to Wall Street investors - earn yourself a 7 figure commission. Attn: M&A VPs. My business plan will make \$1 trillion in 6 months. Phone: 916 214 9460. See my pitch at <u>JIMCARR.BIZ</u>



800-795-5289

mypillow.com (Rates Expire on 04/30/2022)



### Why are we America's fastest-growing media?

See it yourself for just \$1\*.

ReadEpoch.com

Jeffrey Barke, a medical doctor based in

southern California, in an email. "I have not

seen a single adverse reaction to ivermectin.

It's a safe drug. And when used early in the

course of COVID-19, ivermectin ... works." However, Barke continued, it is difficult

"Unfortunately, many brand-name pharmacies are refusing to dispense this safe,

potentially life-saving medication. It's easier

for me to prescribe oxycontin than ivermec-

Barke is not alone. Many doctors all over

the world have anecdotally reported get-

ting good results using ivermectin, espe-

cially when administered at the first signs

Getting accurate data on ivermectin's ef-

ficacy (or lack thereof) is tricky, however,

because many places where it is being used

to seemingly good effect, including Mexico

City (where nearly 200,000 kits with iver-

mectin were distributed) and Delhi, haven't

According to Dr. Robert Malone, an inter-

nationally recognized physician and bio-

chemist and one of the original inventors

of mRNA vaccination technology, who has

been running placebo-controlled trials.

tin," he wrote.

of infection.





### All About Eye Floaters

This optical phenomenon usually isn't anything to worry about

### **KRISTEN FISCHER**

There's a video floating around the internet—and it's all about floaters. As in, those funky things you sometimes see in your vision. The TED talk video got a lot of attention, highlighting questions many people who experience floaters have.

Floaters are spots that you may see in your vision from time to time. They can look like strings or may appear as black and grey specks. When you try to focus on them, they may dart off. Sometimes, they just disappear off to the side of your

For the most part, you shouldn't be alarmed about floaters. At the same time, it's good to know when they may signal a more complex health issue.

### What Causes Floaters?

Typically, eye floaters are a result of changes that occur in your eye. According to the Mayo Clinic, they occur when tiny fibers in the vitreous (the jelly-like substance in our eyes) clump up. That can create shadows on your retina, and those shadows are what people see—

"Most of us will develop floaters as we get older," Dr. Chirag P. Shah, an eye doctor at Ophthalmic Consultants of Boston, told The Epoch Times. "They are evident as dark or gray specks in our vision that tend to float with eye

"Floaters tend to be most noticeable when looking at a bright white screen or blue sky, and less noticeable when the lighting is dim or dark."

Dr. Inder Paul Singh, an eye doctor at The Eye Centers of Racine and Kenosha, told The Epoch Times that floaters typically show up when there's a plain bright background in front of you or if it's bright outside.

"When there is a complex your vision, only to scoot background, the brain has a harder time focusing on

the floaters because it is interested in so much information from the background," Singh said. "When the pupils are dilated, such as at night time, the floaters are harder to see.'

He said floaters aren't always small little spots or "bugs," as the TED video

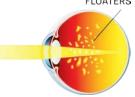
"Typical floaters can also be larger clumps and 'clouds' of collagen," he said. "If they are in the center of the visual axis (over the macula), they can decrease quality of vision.

"Since floaters can be caused by opacities in the vitreous that are small dots, strings, or large clouds, patients will often see defined darker black or gray spots or lines in their vision that will often move. Or if the opacities are large, there can be clouds or blur spots that

often move in and out of the vision." There are different types of floaters, Shah said. Many people start developing small floaters in their 20s as the vitreous gel in their eyes starts to shrink. When we're older, the vitreous gel often completely separates from the retina—a normal, acute process called posterior vitreous detachment.

This happens in about 60 percent of people by the age of 60. A ring-type opacity forms from where it was attached to the optic nerve, Singh said. This comes with a small risk of retinal

DISTURBED VISION



Floaters cast shadows on the retina at the back of your eye.

tear or detachment.

### Floater Treatment

It's important to recognize that floaters, even if not serious, can affect daily functioning, Singh said.

"Although they do not cause structural damage to the eye if untreated, they can make it difficult to perform certain daily

### Floaters are spots that vou mav see in vour vision from time to time

For many years, the only treatment for floaters was having a surgery known as a vitrectomy. This removes the gel from the eyes. But due to high risks, the procedure is largely reserved for those with severe symptoms.

Over the past decade, laser YAG vitreolysis has gained popularity. The in-office procedure has no postprocedure restrictions.

> "This can work very well for the smaller and more localized floaters," Singh said. The procedure can be helpful for some patients and some floater types, but it isn't widely accepted or performed because of

limited data, Shah said. "Only a few clinical trials have evaluated this procedure," he said. "Personally, that seem to float across I recommend most patients avoid vitrectomy due to the small risks, and try to adjust to their floaters."

### Red Flags

Floaters are those little

squiggly lines or dots

away if you try to look

Seeing a ton of floaters seemingly all of a sudden? If that happens and/or if you lose peripheral vision or see flashes of eye doctor.

"Most of the time, floaters are benign and do not reflect a serious eye health issue," Singh said. "However, they can be a sign of a retinal tear or detachment or even inflammation."

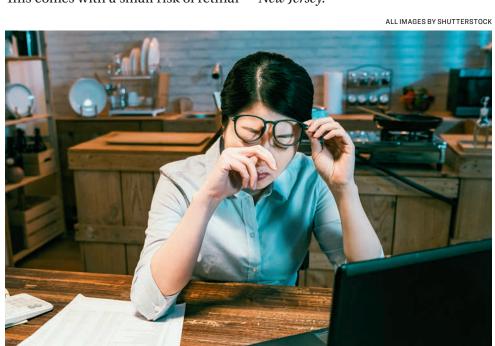
If floaters occur from a retinal tear or detachment, there often are multiple floaters that appear suddenly at one time, like a "shower of floaters," he said.

"Also there may be flashing lights that are more constant and do not go away,"

If the floaters are from the vitreous pulling away from the retina and not from a detachment or tear of the actual retina, then the flashes tend to last just a second or two and usually go away quickly after they start. If the floaters are from inflammation, then they usually have other symptoms, such as pain, redness, and light sensitivity.

Another time to call your doctor is if you notice a dark curtain across your visual field, Shah said.

Kristen Fischer is a writer living in New Jersey.



Floaters are rarely a problem. You're more likely to have vision issues from sitting in front of a

# Was Ivermectin Unfairly Torpedoed as Treatment for COVID-19?

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

Dr. William

Dr. Satoshi Omura.

Continued from Page 9

### Safe Antiparasitic

At the same time, ivermectin is a wellknown antiparasitic that hundreds of millions of people, mostly in Africa and Asia, have taken since it first became available in 1981, according to research published in the Proceedings of the Japan Academy. It has been especially effective at combating a disease called river blindness, which is caused by Onchocerca volvulus worms and transmitted via blackfly bites.

In fact, ivermectin is considered so safe that it's sold over-the-counter in many countries, or even distributed free. The two scientists who developed the drug, Drs. William C. Campbell and Satoshi Omura, shared the 2015 Nobel Prize in Medicine with another scientist who developed an effective way to fight malaria.

When the COVID pandemic was raging, scientists naturally sought drugs that could be repurposed to C. Campbell. fight the SARS-CoV-2 virus. Ivermectin made the list of potential treatments because it exhibited antiviral capabilities, and some doctors in the HPV vaccine developing countries had noticed that pa-

tients on preventative ivermectin for para-

### **Positive In-Vitro Results**

sites fared better with COVID.

One particularly promising study, published by a team of researchers in Australia in June of 2020, found that a single dose of ivermectin was able to reduce replication of SARS-Co-V-2 by 5,000-fold in vitro (that is, in test-tube experiments).

However, it was initially thought that very high doses would be required for the drug to be effective against viral infection in humans. Yet small clinical trials began re-

porting surprisingly good results. Indeed, some of these early trials reported in the Cochrane review was what was left effective treatment for both mild cases of out. Their review didn't include an analysis COVID-19 and more severe, hospitalized of at least 49 other studies that could shed patients. It seemed that the drug's anti-in- light on this issue. According to the authors: flammatory effects might be more important "We identified 31 ongoing and 18 studies than its antiviral capacities when it came to treating people with COVID-19.

In an article dated May 1, 2021, award-winning journalist Michael Capuzzo reported that President Donald Trump was treated with ivermectin when he contracted CO-VID. (When I contacted him to confirm this information, Capuzzo wrote me back that he couldn't reveal his source but that it was someone close to the president.)

Rogan tested positive for COVID in September of 2021, he threw "the kitchen sink" at it. Among other treatments, he took ivermectin, which he has since credited with helping him recover from the virus in just a couple of days.

### A Controversial Cochrane Review

All the positive buzz about ivermectin abruptly ended, however, with a Cochrane review published in July 2021 that was categorically critical of the drug. Making headlines around the world, the review concluded that, "Current evidence does not support Meta-Analysis," statistician Michael Bousing ivermectin for treating or preventing of COVID-19 unless they are part of welldesigned randomized trials."

A closer look at this research reveals, however, that the conclusion makes claims beyond the data amassed by the study itself. The language of the review studiously avoids any determination about ivermectin's effects, repeating the words "We are uncertain whether" and underscoring the "uncertainty" that ivermectin can do what some of the trials argued it could do a whopping 38 times.

The Cochrane review was a meta-analysis: a study that combines and examines data from other studies to essentially act as one The studies included in Cochrane's metaoverarching study. The analysis included 14 randomized controlled trials with a total of only 1,678 participants. N = 1,678 is a very low number.

Despite that, several of the included studies indicated very good results from using iver- Clinician Views on Ivermectin mectin (including a reduction of all-cause mortality of 40 percent compared to that of the placebo group and a reduction of the need for invasive mechanical ventilation of treatment protocol," wrote

45 percent) to combat COVID-19.

The reviewers dismissed these promising results with the claim that they were "very low certainty" because of potential bias and that the number of participants, 185, in the trial was so low. It's true that the results didn't reach statistical significance, but that alone is not an adequate reason to discard the results

### **Biased Unbiased Research?**

Cochrane has long been considered the gold standard in international unbiased research. However, in recent years, their research has often been sponsored by entities with conflicts of interest.

In 2016, Cochrane received \$1.15 million from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, prompting concerns among Cochrane's board that taking the money would compromise Cochrane's mission. The furor resulted in the firing of one board member and the resignation of four others, and many believe the Gates funding significantly affected the quality of Cochrane's subsequent reviews, most notably of the safety and efficacy of

In 2018 article, "Cochrane—A sinking ship?" published in the British Medical Journal, science reporter and a researcher Maryanne Demasi, Ph.D., lamented Cochrane's shift towards a commercial business model approach and "away from its roots of independent, scientific analysis and open public debate.'

The ivermectin review was funded by the United Kingdom, but was carried out by members of the German research project CEOsys (COVID-19 Evidence-Ecosystem). Both are government entities that, like the U.S.'s Centers for Disease Control, have staked public health—and their credibility—on a vaccine solution.

What may be most important awaiting classification until publication of results or clarification of inconsistencies."

At the same time, another meta-analysis, published four months earlier, in March of 2021, included 18 randomized controlled trials that showed very positive results for ivermectin intervention. But many of the studies were not yet published, and this meta-analysis included one retracted trial. However, the scientists address the diffi-When popular podcaster and comedian Joe culty of combining disparate study designs into something that can justify a cohesive conclusion, mentioning the fact that metaanalyses "are prone to confounding issues." Indeed, they are.

While it's generally accepted that metaanalyses, such as Cochrane routinely performs, are the "gold standard" in data-driven research, many critics point out that they are actually quite easy to manipulate as well as prone to compounding the errors of the underlying studies.

In their 544-page book, "Introduction to renstein and his team outline some of the more significant problems associated with meta-analyses:

"The goal of a meta-analysis should be to synthesize the effect sizes, and not simply (or necessarily) to report a summary effect," they explained. "If the effects are consistent, then the analysis shows that the effect is robust across the range of included studies .... If there is substantial dispersion, then the focus should shift from the summary effect to the dispersion itself."

analysis were by no means consistent, yet that fact was largely ignored in the analysis when it should have been the main topic

"I have treated hundreds of COVID patients successfully with Ivermectin as part of a larger

Some of the early trials reported effective treatment for both more severe, hospitalized patients.



Other countries have used ivermectin to treat COVID-19 with some success.

PRADEEPGAURS /SHUTTERSTOCK

**MILLION** In 2016, Cochrane received \$1.15 million from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, prompting concerns among Cochrane's board that taking the money would

compromise its mission.

Ivermectin is an overthe-counter drug easily obtained in many countries around the world.

mild cases of **COVID-19 and** 

worked as a vaccine developer and government public health insider for more than 40 years, "prophylactic use of ivermectin saves lives. Analyzing data from a controlled study done in Brazil of over 223,000 people in an article on Substack, Malone concludes: "The results of this study clearly demonstrate that prophylactic use of ivermectin must be initiated immediately for people in high risk categories in the United States and worldwide."

### **Confounding Factors**

At the same time, results from two recent clinical trials, one in Malaysia and one in Italy, found that adding ivermectin to the normal course of therapy seemed to show no benefit and also no harm.

Yet another meta-analysis, just published on March 21 of 2022, examined studies done on ivermectin and COVID-19 to analyze why some showed that patients receiving ivermectin did better than controls, while other studies showed no benefit. According to these authors, the difference in how COVID-19 patients on ivermectin did varied depending on whether the patients lived in an area in which a certain type of worm was prevalent or not.

It may seem counterintuitive, but this study found that people in areas with widespread infection from nematode worms of the genus Strongyloides didn't get as sick from COVID-19. Perhaps because their immune systems, busy fighting parasitic worms, did not overwhelm them with cytokine storms.

We don't think of worm infections as beneficial. But this research dovetails with results of a recent study from Ethiopia published in the Lancet. Of the 751 patients who were infected with SARS-CoV-2, those who had intestinal parasites (either worms or protists) tended not to progress to severe disease. Eleven patients in this cohort died. But none of deaths occurred in people who had parasites.

Juan Chamie, senior data analyst for the Front Line COVID-19 Critical Care Alliance, a non-profit organization founded by medical doctors that is dedicated to developing effective treatment protocols to prevent the transmission of COVID-19 and to improve outcomes for sick patients, has been tracking the use of ivermectin to combat COVID across the globe since May of 2020.

Chamie has compiled all the data into a striking series of charts, published on the

FLCCC website, that show that localities that introduced ivermectin as a part of their treatment protocols saw significant drops in their COVID rates, perhaps

If Chamie's analysis is correct—and that's a very big if—the outright dismissal of a low-risk, inexpensive, potentially preventive treatment with a long record of safety could be the single most deadly, not to mention unethical, policy error of this pandemic.

Jennifer Margulis, Ph.D., is an award-winning journalist and author of "Your Baby, Your Way: Taking Charge of Your Pregnancy, Childbirth, and Parenting Decisions for a Happier, Healthier Family." A Fulbright awardee and mother of four, she has worked on a child survival campaign in West Africa, advocated for an end to child slavery *in Pakistan on prime-time* TV in Paris, and taught postcolonial literature to non-traditional students in inner-city Atlanta. Learn more about her at JenniferMargulis.net



# Japanese Honeysuckle: An Antiviral Immune Booster

# That Combats COVID

Researchers discovering that Chinese medicine was right about healing effects of this fragrant anti-inflammatory plant

### **EMMA SUTTIE**

he smell of honeysuckle is almost intoxicating. Its sweet vanilla-like aroma makes you stop, close your eyes, and breathe deep. Although many of us may be familiar with honeysuckle's sweet-smelling flowers, not all of us may be aware that it has powerful healing capabilities too.

Honeysuckle includes about two hundred species that grow worldwide. They grow primarily in temperate regions and are native to SouthEast Asia. All species of honeysuckle belong to the genus Lonicera and the family Caprifoliaceae. In the temperate regions of the United States, they generally produce their fragrant flowers from late spring through

Honeysuckle, which is popular throughout Asia, was reportedly brought to the United States from Japan as an ornamental in the early 1800s. It has thrived, so much so in fact that it is now considered an invasive species.

Honeysuckle is known not only for its beauty and sweet smelling flowers, but for its abundant healing properties. The species commonly used in medicine and Chinese medicine in particular, is Japanese honeysuckle, or Lonicera japonica, which comes from eastern Asia.

Japanese honevsuckle is also known as the golden and silver honeysuckle because its flowers open white and within a few days fade to yellow, creating a beautiful mix of white and yellow flowers resembling gold

Different parts of the honeysuckle plant treat various health conditions, but the flowers and stems are the parts most often used in medicines.

### **Japanese Honeysuckle** in Chinese Medicine

Chinese medicine has used Japanese honeysuckle for healing purposes for thousands of years. In China it is known as"jin vin

is sweet, and it is in a class of herbs that clear heat and remove toxins. Jin vin hua explicitly targets the lungs, stomach, and large intestine. In Eastern medicine theory, toxic heat is

responsible for many bacterial and viral infections, high fevers, skin conditions that are red, swollen and painful, and many bleeding disorders. Toxic heat is considered heat that has progressed to a more severe stage, so jin yin hua is very helpful in treating a whole host of conditions with toxic heat as their cause. Jin yin hua is used in Chinese medicine to

treat a wide variety of conditions that include: • Viral infections (considered toxic heat in

- Chinese medicine) like mumps and encephalitis (inflammation of the brain) • Upper respiratory tract infections, cough,
- sore throat, fevers and pneumonia Digestive disorders like ulcers and dysenteric infections (an infection of the intes-
- tines causing diarrhea with pus or blood) • Skin infections like carbuncles, breast abscesses, and mastitis when used externally as a poultice

In Eastern medicine, different parts of the Japanese honeysuckle plant are used depending on the condition and their preparation varies depending on the severity of the disease and the constitution of the patient.

For example, herbs are always used with caution with children and the elderly as their bodies are not as strong as those of adults. Children are still developing and have sensitive digestive systems. Often elderly patients have different health conditions and may be on medications, so using herbs that are gentle on the body is advised. Of course, each patient is evaluated individually, but these are examples of some general rules of thumb when it comes to herbal medicine.

The parts of the Japanese honeysuckle plant used in Chinese medicine are:

- Charred honeysuckle flower (dry-fried or baked at high temperature until scorched). This method allows the herb to penetrate deeply into the body, to the blood level.
- Honeysuckle flower dew is a fluid distilled from the flowers. This preparation method is considered more gentle on the stomach and is the preferred use for children's con-
- Honeysuckle fruit is used with caution as most honeysuckle berries are

Chinese herbal medicine is also playing an important role in treating COVID-19. Japanese honeysuckle's abilities to treat viral infections and infections of the upper respiratory tract are well documented, and researchers in China are working it into their long term treatment strategies. Studies have shown that Japanese honeysuckle has been used in response to COVID-19 and has effectively reduced the incidence of severe or critical events, improved clinical recovery, and helped alleviate symptoms like cough and fever.

In another study, published in the journal Cell Discovery, researchers have discovered that a decoction or tea made from Japanese honeysuckle can directly target SARS-CoV-2 genes and inhibit viral replication. The same study also confirms that honeysuckle de-

> coction is able to suppress SARS-CoV-2 infection. These findings are hopeful as they give us more options in dealing with the virus.

### The Science of Japanese Honeysuckle

Research has discovered that Japanese honeysuckie has antiviral, antibacterial, antiseptic, anti-inflammatory, antioxidant, and hepatoprotective properties (which protect the liver from damage). It has also been shown to lower blood lipid levels and have a normalizing effect on blood pressure. Science is only now beginning to discover the range of Japanese honeysuckle's healing capabilities, but is affirm-

ing what Eastern medicine has hua." The flower is considered cold; its flavor known for millennia-that Japanese honeysuckle is powerful medicine.

Below are just a few examples of how research-backed insight into Japanese honeysuckle's healing potential.

### **Anti-Inflammatory**

Different parts of the

honeysuckle plant

treat various health

conditions, but the

flowers and stems are

the parts most often

used in medicines.

Inflammation is at the root of many of today's most pernicious diseases like arteriosclerosis, cancer, diabetes and Alzheimer's disease. Science is discovering that many herbal medicines have robust anti-inflammatory actions and is beginning to study them in the hope they can be used to treat many of our modern

Honeysuckle is even showing some promise and could someday be used in the treatment of cancer, and studies demonstrating its extensive anti-oxidant and anti-inflammatory actions may help to reduce your cancer risk.

### **Antiviral & Immune Booster**

kill viruses and tumor cells.

Japanese honeysuckle is known as a potent antiviral, and is used in Eastern medicine to treat viral infections and boost the immune system. In a 2018 study, honeysuckle berries were shown to boost the immune systems of immunocompromised mice where they acted as an immunomodulatory agent and significantly increased activity of natural killer cell activity. Natural killer cells are a type of white blood cell that act to

There are also some promising findings that suggest this herb may be useful in treating diabetes, a disease that affects 1 in 9 Americans, a staggering 37 million people or 11.3 percent of the population. A 2015 study found Japanese



honeysuckle's anti-inflammatory and antioxidant properties have anti-diabetic effects. After four weeks of taking Japanese honeysuckle (Lonicera japonica) orally, rats with Type 2 diabetes had reduced their blood glucose levels and improved insulin resistance.

Honeysuckle

is known not

only for its

beauty and

flowers,

but for its

abundant

properties.

Honeysuckle has been

treasured in Japan for

its fragrant and colorful

honeysuckle have been

imported to the United

States for that reason

and are now growing wild

in forests and meadows

in many states.

Dried honeysuckle

wonderfully fragrant and

flowers make a

beneficial tea.

flowers. Many species of

healing

sweet smelling

In another study, published in the journal Planta Medica, the anti-inflammatory properties of Japanese honeysuckle were shown to reduce diabetic neuropathy. In fact, after eight weeks of oral treatment the rats in the study showed improvement in all their diabetesinduced abnormalities. The study concluded that Japanese honeysuckle is able to inhibit the inflammatory response and halt the progression of diabetic neuropathy.

### **Contraindications**

There are a few things to consider if you are interested in using Japanese honeysuckle for medicinal purposes. It is always advisable to do so under the direction of a health care practitioner or qualified herbalist. Here is a list of things to be aware of.

- Bleeding: Japanese honeysuckle can thin blood and slow blood clotting so be careful if you are on blood thinning medication and avoid it if you are planning to have any surgical procedures.
- 2. Berry Toxicity: The berries of many of the honeysuckle species are toxic and can cause gastrointestinal issues, so their ingestion is not recommended.
- 3. Pregnancy and Breastfeeding: Since Japanese honeysuckle is in a class of herbs that in Chinese medicine are considered very moving and have a dispersing action, they should be avoided if pregnant or breast-
- 4. Poisonous for Dogs: Every part of the honeysuckle plant is highly toxic to dogs. They are attracted, like we are, to the honeysuckles' fragrant flowers.

### **Final Thoughts**

Japanese honeysuckle is both a beautiful plant and powerful medicine. Its well-documented use in Eastern medicine provides us with a wealth of information about its healing properties that, thankfully, science is now beginning to explore for treating a variety of conditions and diseases. Perhaps in the not-so-distant future, Japanese honeysuckle will move from our gardens to our medicine cabinets.

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 and practiced 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 teas

## Engaging Pursuits for Later Life

It's never too late to take up a new pursuit earning new skills

is a fun way to

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

### Continued from Page 9

Consider this: A study published in November 2021 by a team of researchers at Harvard and Northwestern universities found an association between depression and the use of social media in parents and grandparents.

What you really want are real-life activities and pursuits that get you out of your house or apartment, teach you new skills, help you make new acquaintances of different ages, and keep your brain and body active and engaged.

If you feel shy about starting something new at age 60, 70, or 80, channel your inner Trudy Smith. An introvert by nature, Trudy Smith had always wanted to paint, but felt too abashed to even try it. She let her husband's dismissal and her own self-doubt keep her from picking up a paintbrush.

But all that changed when she was 85 years old, and she started painting for the first time. Then, at 102, Smith had her first solo art exhibit, as reported by ABC South West in Australia. She died at age 103, living about 20 years longer than the average Australian.

### One of the hardest things when you're older, besides ignoring your own inner critic, may be figuring out which activities or hobbies to pursue.

Or the late Charles Eugster, who didn't start doing weight training until he was Olympic archery scene. If you're trying turned 95, according to Today.com.

"Learning a completely new sport is something extremely beneficial for your body and your mind," Eugster, a retired dentist who had dual British and Swiss citizenship, told a reporter in 2016. "You have to develop new synapses in your mind in order to do completely new movements under pressure."

### **How to Decide What to Try?**

One of the hardest things when you're older, besides ignoring your own inner critic, may be figuring out which activities or hobbies to pursue.

Close your eyes. Think back to when you were a small child. What are some of the things you loved to do back then? If taking a mud bath was one of your favorite games, consider learning about horticulture, growing indoor plants, and geology.

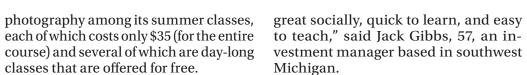
If you loved to draw before you started to feel like you weren't "good" at it, you can take up painting or another art form.

If sorting and counting coins was something you spent hours doing, the American Numismatic Association will help you find a local coin collecting club.

Another way to ascertain what you want to try is to browse through the course offerings at your local community center, community college, parks and recreation department, and Osher Lifelong Learning Institute (OLLI). Maybe it will be bird

watching, or perhaps you'll decide it's finally time to learn to play chess or even Dungeons & Dragons. My local OLLI

is offering kayaking, crocheting, gentle walking, space exploration, improv, and



Gibbs, who considers himself an ath-But if none of the course listings and offerings catch your fancy, ask your friends lete, has been playing pickleball for five and acquaintances who the best teachers are. There's nothing like an excellent "It's kind of infectious for people who teacher to spark your interest in an activstart playing. Once you start playing,

ity you never thought you would enjoy. you get hooked on it pretty quick. Even the noise of it is kinda fun, the popping You can also ask people you like to of the paddle," he said. "I got my butt spend time with what interests they may have that they could introduce you to. kicked by a 75-year-old the first time I played and I thought, 'This is a cool 7 Hobbies to Try game!' and it's for all ages. There are all

If you have no immediate idea of a new

interest or hobby you might want to take

up, why not give one of the seven ideas

below a try and see if they're something

concentration. It's an intrinsically fun

activity, but also a meditative one, once

you learn to nock the arrows and shoot

sport for social engagement. Popular

with the aged 60 and older set, pickleball

Think back

to when you

were a small

child. What

are some of

loved to do

back then?

the things you

you enjoy?

a Shot

**Give Archery** 

Archery enjoys

worldwide popu-

larity, especially

in Bhutan, where

it's the national

sport, and Korea,

which dominates the

several in a sequence.

Pick Up Pickleball

Like a cross be-

tween tennis and

ping pong, pick-

leball helps im-

prove hand-eye

coordination, re-

flexes, and balance

isn't as hard on your

"It's engaging and

physical enough,

but not too demand-

knees as tennis.

ing, and also it's

while also being a fun

you can improve." The USA Pickleball Association (www. usapickleball.org) has all the information you need to get started, as well as a list of more than 8,000 known pickleball locations to help you find a game.

different levels of skill, so you can play

with people who are better than you and

### Have a Go

at Rowing Outdoor rowing is a great activity for formerly sporty types who like competition, but

archery for the first time later in life, the best way to begin may be to take a lesson pete against younger or two. When you learn the correct form, athletes. Rowing gives you a wholebody workout, improves flexibility, tones shooting arrows won't hurt your joints, but it will help tone your upper body, immuscles, and improves stamina. prove your posture, and exercise your As a SportyOverForty article states,

> while it can be strenuous, rowing puts a lot less impact on your joints than sports such as jogging. A great upper body and core workout,

> rowing with a crew involves coordinating your movements with other rowers, which is also good for your brain.

As with other physical activities, rowing encourages the growth of the hippocampus, that seahorse-shaped area of the brain that's involved in learning and memory, according to researchers at the University of Oxford. USRowing. org can help you find a club near you.

### Try Tai Chi

Chinese and other Asian martial arts foster strength training and flexibility while also improving mental re-

silience and balance. These martial arts tend to be gentle, go-at-your-own-pace activities that are easy to learn via online videos or in-person classes.

If you're suffering from a lot of joint and other pain, one study published in the Journal of Rheumatology found that just 12 weeks of tai chi helped improve symptoms related to arthritis in older women who participated in the program, and a systematic review published in 2016 found that some people experience immediate relief of back pain from doing tai chi.

The benefits of tai chi led an international team of scientists to conclude that "clinicians may consider Tai Chi as a viable complementary and alternative medicine for chronic pain conditions."

### **Have Fun Foraging** Miner's lettuce, anyone? Dandelion tea?

Another interest that involves both the

brain and the body is foraging for food and wildcrafting. This involves

going into the woods with an experienced naturalist or mushroom

hunter who will teach you about edible plants.

Think of it as botany with a bonus: You'll be spending time outside, walking slowly, and learning to identify plants that you can take home, cook, and eat. Also, many wild edible plants are chock full of vitamins, minerals, and phytonutrients. Look for clubs in your

### Learn Another Language

A lot of adults

regularly are of benefit as well, of course. As Grundy told a reporter from Discover, there are consistent scientific findings that people who are bilingual live four to six years longer without symptoms of dementia compared to people who know only one language.

### **Make Some Music**

Other forms of learning can also create positive structural changes in the brain, which may help counteract de-

clines in cognition as we age. A 2009 study published in the Journal of Neuroscience found that children's brains changed structurally and became more neuroplastic after just 15 months of musical training.

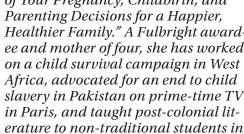
Another study published in the same journal in 2015 further shows that musical training for adults offsets declines in auditory processing that most of us experience as we age.

Convinced yet? If so, it's time to close the computer, turn off the TV, lace up your sneakers, and embark on some new

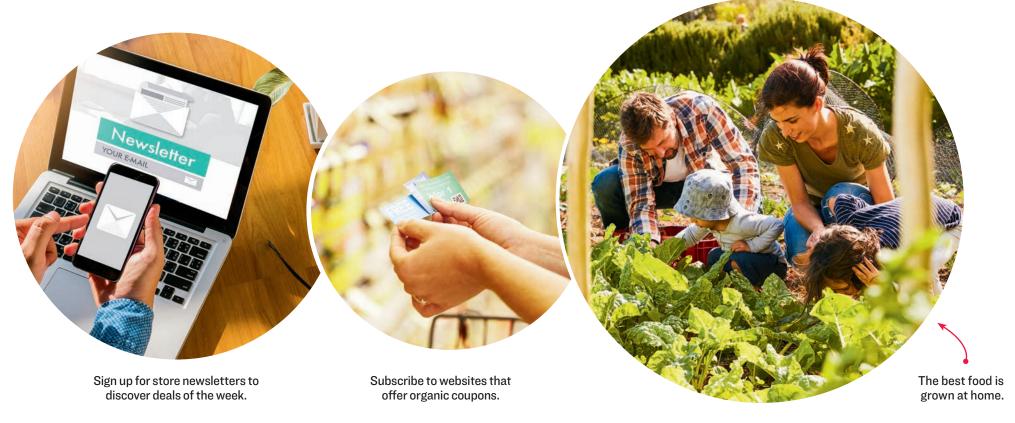
Jennifer Margulis, Ph.D., is an awardwinning journalist and author of "Your Baby, Your Way: Taking Charge of Your Pregnancy, Childbirth, and Parenting Decisions for a Happier, Healthier Family." A Fulbright awardee and mother of four, she has worked on a child survival campaign in West Africa, advocated for an end to child slavery in Pakistan on prime-time TV in Paris, and taught post-colonial lit-

inner-city Atlanta. Learn more about

her at JenniferMargulis.net







# 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**

uying 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, increasGood, healthy food has never been more important, and

consumers have increasingly sought out the Organic label.

Laura Batcha, CEO Organic Trade Association

ing by a record 12.4 percent—to \$61.9 billion—according to Nielsen findings released by the Organic Trade Association

"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

In general, organic foods are 10 to 20 percent more expensive than conventionally grown foods, but shoppers will often pay a **Subscribe to websites that offer organic** ment. Some shoppers also know about ralSavings.com.

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 ex-

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 memberonly discounts on different organic products every week or month.

higher price out of a desire to protect their **coupons.** There are many from which to health, minimize exposure to synthetic choose. A few include PassionForSavings pesticides, and help protect the environ- com, InspiringSavings.com, and AllNatuFollow the websites or social media pages of your favorite organic food companies. They sometimes offer special coupons or promotions in posts or advertising ban-

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

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

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 (SFM-NP) 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

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



### 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"

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 Stan-

islaus 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 Allergenicity and Toxicity Redacted 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 Kevs 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.

### 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

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

Florida in 2020, and 371 imported cases The and 16 local cases in 2019. The Florida Health Department describes the sympexperiment toms of dengue as mild to none, with a has created typical recovery of one week. Florida Health reports: "While previhybrid ously present in Florida, the virus was mosquitoes eliminated from the United States several decades ago. Since then, a small number that scientists of cases have been reported each year in individuals with recent travel history to a say may cause

even more

Releasing genetically

may have unintended

modified insects

JULIAWHITE/SHUTTERSTOCK

consequences.

trouble.

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.

70 locally transmitted cases of dengue in

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.

ALL PHOTOS BY SHUTTERSTOCK UNLESS NOTED OTHERWIS

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

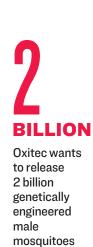
and Kuzma wrote: "The potential benefits of GM mosquitoes may outweigh their unknown ecological risks.

"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.



in Florida and



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 matura-

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 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 wellbeing 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.

