

# MIND & BODY

FACTS AND FICTION

ALL IMAGES IN THE PUBLIC DOMAIN

## Scientifically Compromised

Ideology, industry, and ego are undermining peer-review and scientific publishing

In the 1950's the tobacco industry began a sophisticated public relations campaign to counteract existing evidence that smoking was harmful to human health.



**“Yes, I’m a doctor—**

“And I advise the smokers among my patients to smoke Girard cigars. In fact, I smoke them myself!”

“There’s nothing unusual about this either. Hundreds of physicians nowadays take the same advanced and reasonable view.

**The Girard Cigar**

*never gets on your nerves*

**The research that scientists publish affects their job prospects, livelihood, reputation, and even friendships.**



“Junk science” can have negative repercussions that harm human and planetary health.

JENNIFER MARGULIS & JOE WANG

**P**eer-reviewed scientific publishing works like this: A scientist or a science team have a scientific question, and they come together to design and conduct an experiment to try to answer that question. The experiment may take months, years, or even decades.

Once the scientists have collected and analyzed the experiment’s results, they write up their findings and draw conclusions based on the already accepted knowledge in the field, their new discovery, and their educated speculations of what is yet to be known.

Then, they send their article to scientific journals within their field of study.

When a journal editor receives the article, the editor reads it carefully and either rejects it or sends

it to other known experts in the field, who weren’t involved with the study, to review the findings and the write-up. Once the experts weigh in, the editor then makes the decision about whether to reject or accept the paper, in most cases, with notes for the authors to revise their submission.

Peer reviewers will often ask the researchers insightful questions or query parts of the findings in the paper. These queries help the researchers refine their ideas, review their findings, and double-check that their data, and their analyses, are correct.

This sometimes quite lengthy peer-review process is to ensure that journals publish scientific articles that make a real contribution to our understanding of the field, whether it’s chemistry, biology, physics, social science, or any other subject.

**2.6 Million Studies a Year**

On the order of 2.6 million scientific stud-

ies are published every year, according to the National Center for Science and Engineering Statistics. The explosion in published science means there may be as many as 30,000 peer-reviewed journals providing scientists an outlet for their findings. The result: It’s increasingly difficult to distinguish between good science and bad science.

Good science is work that has a high level of integrity and transparency, is conducted in an unbiased way, and leads to findings that can be replicated by other scientists.

Bad science is often ego-driven or industry-sponsored: published not for the good of advancing knowledge or helping people, but to mislead the public, often for financial gain. For-profit industries have and continue to use bad science to convince consumers to buy their products.

*Continued on Page 3*

## Buying a Healthier Planet (and Better Products)

Regeneratively grown food nurtures the Earth, delivers higher nutrition for healthier body

MELISSA DIANE SMITH

Improving soil health is an overlooked key for nutrient-dense food and a healthier planet, and we can support farming that has this focus through the products we purchase.

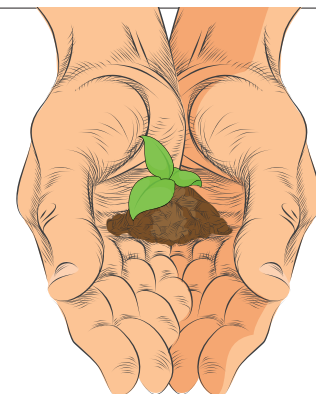
Whether you’re familiar with the term or not, regenerative agriculture is a top food trend this year. It’s of growing interest to consumers, particularly when it’s presented with the benefits that go with it, including improving soil health, producing more nutritious foods, conserving water, and positively impacting resilience to extreme weather events.

Fifty-seven percent of consumers are now aware of regenerative agriculture—up 10 percentage

points from 2019, according to a 2022 report from food and beverage consulting company The Hartman Group. In addition, 75 percent of consumers are aware of soil health as an environmental concern—which is up 13 percentage points from 2019.

A simple definition of “regenerative agriculture” is farming and grazing practices that restore degraded soil.

*Continued on Page 5*



Improving soil health is key for nutrient-dense food and a healthier planet.

GUINGM/SHUTTERSTOCK



## 2022 NTD 8<sup>TH</sup> INTERNATIONAL CHINESE VOCAL COMPETITION



This solar term is named for the white dew on plants in the morning, which offers the perfect amount of water for grains before harvest.

### CHINESE WISDOM FOR SEASONAL LIVING

## Things to Do to Strengthen Our Respiratory, Improve Our Skin

Solar Term: 'White Dew' (Sept. 7 to 22)

#### MOREEN LIAO

A solar term is a period of about two weeks and is based on the sun's position in the zodiac. Solar terms form the traditional Chinese calendar system. The calendar follows the ancient Chinese belief that living in accordance with nature will enable one to live a harmonious life. This article series explores each of the year's 24 solar terms, offering guidance on how to best navigate the season.

#### Solar Term: 'White Dew'

2022 Dates: Sept. 7 to 22

"White Dew" is the 15th solar term and typically marks the single largest daily temperature changes. It begins when the sun reaches the celestial longitude of 165 degrees and ends when it reaches the longitude of 180 degrees. Although it's already the third solar term in the autumn, the heat within earth still remains strong while yin energy is taking over.

The result is a dramatic drop in temperature between day and night.

During this solar term, dew can be seen in the early morning on the plants, and birds begin to adapt for the season. Wild geese and swallows begin to migrate southward, while other birds build their houts in preparation for winter.

#### Living in Harmony With 'White Dew'

- Protect your neck, nose, and mouth by covering them in the early morning and later in the afternoon.
- Gentle exercise is recommended over heavy weight-bearing or vigorous movements, especially for the elderly.
- Go to bed early and get up early. As the ancients said, get up as early as roosters to activate the yang energy and qi.
- Press firmly into the acupuncture point "Qu-Chi" ("pool at the bend," large intestine No. 11, or LI 11). It's located at the end of the joint line when we bend our elbows to our upper arms. It helps those with skin problems, such as dry or sensitive skin, pigmentation, acne, and so on.
- Press firmly into the acupuncture point "Tan-Zhong," which is in the center of the chest, between the nipples. It can help with congested lungs, coughing, or shortness of breath. You can also use a hair dryer to warm the point gently.

• Consider getting moxibustion treatments, as the heat can repel the chill hidden in our bodies and provide an energetic start for the coming spring.

• Drink a cup of warm water every morning, and a mouthful amount of warm water or milk before going to bed. This is surprisingly effective.

• Deep cleanse by inhaling warm steam, with or without essential oils, which helps to loosen and dilute congestion inside our respiratory system and can help to rinse our cells and tissues.

• Burn essential oils near the front door of the house to purify the air we bring in from outdoors. This can also help to calm and balance our senses each time we go in or out.

Epoch Times contributor Moreen Liao is a descendant of four generations of traditional Chinese medicine doctors. She's also a certified aromatherapist, former dean of an institute in Sydney, and the founder of Heritage Formulations, a complete solution for TCM professionals. Visit [ausganica.com.au](http://ausganica.com.au) for details.

### Seasonal Foods and Scents

**Foods to Eat:** Cauliflower, chicken, goose, golden gooseberry, walnut, yogurt, onion, ginkgo berry, potato, pear, tofu, pumpkin, corn, mushroom, coconut, cereal, rice soup, and eggs. Avoid deep-fried foods, pickles, shellfish, and chiles.

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

### FACTS AND FICTION

# Scientifically Compromised

Ideology, industry, and ego are undermining peer-review and scientific publishing

Continued from Page 1

Even more damaging may be the role of ideology—when certain positions become a matter of political position rather than scientific merit.

Three American researchers took advantage of this weakness to troll several journals by getting seven studies published in sociology journals.

One study, "Dog Parks Are Petri Dishes for Canine 'Rape Culture,'" made it into the journal Gender, Place and Culture.

In the process, the researchers learned something disturbing:

"What appears beyond dispute is that making absurd and horrible ideas sufficiently politically fashionable can get them validated at the highest level of academic grievance studies," James Lindsay, one of the researchers, said in a video about the project.

#### Junk Science

Recent history shows how "junk science" can have negative repercussions that harm human and planetary health.

For example, in 1948, a husband and wife team at Harvard University, Olive Watkins Smith and George Van Sicken Smith, published an article that asserted that a synthetic hormone, diethylstilbestrol (DES), not only prevented miscarriage but also

made a normal pregnancy "more normal."

Drug manufacturers copied and distributed the Smiths' study to thousands of medical doctors to encourage them to prescribe DES.

The Harvard research was shoddy at best: They used a sample size of pregnant women that was too small to draw statistically significant conclusions and had no control group. The Smiths also failed to disclose that their research was funded by the drug industry.

Largely based on this junk science, an estimated 5 million to 10 million pregnant women in America took DES. Yet DES was neither helpful nor benign. It caused miscarriage, as well as an aggressive hormone-induced reproductive cancer in teens whose moms had taken it. DES was banned for use in pregnancy in 1971.

A more famous example started in the 1950s when the tobacco industry began a sophisticated public relations campaign to counteract the peer-reviewed science that showed that smoking was harmful to human health.

Though it was known by 1953 that smoking caused lung cancer, industry-sponsored science so effectively muddled the scientific waters that the connection wasn't acknowledged by public health authorities until the early 1990s.

More recently, in the 1990s, when biologist Tyrone Hayes found out that a common pesticide, atrazine, was so endocrine-disrupting that it turned male frogs into females, Syngenta, the company that makes the pesticide, did everything it could to keep this information from the public. Two class-action lawsuits revealed that Syngenta had the goal of publicly discrediting Hayes's reputation in order to make environmentalists question the validity of his research.

Publishing poorly designed studies that couldn't be replicated was an effective strategy to keep the Environmental Protection Agency from regulating Syngenta's \$14 billion a year pesticide and seed sales. In 2014, as reported by The New Yorker, Syngenta was giving research money to 400 academic institutions around the world.

Vested interests and money can compromise even seemingly irrefutable scientific evidence.

PUBLIC DOMAIN

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#### 'Sneer Review'

The research that scientists publish affects their job prospects, livelihood, reputation, and even friendships. Given the explosion of scientific publications, it's easy to see how the peer-review process can go awry.

The Epoch Times spoke with a professor who spent more than 25 years in a top 10 medical school. This scientist asked not to be named, for fear of reprisal.

"I call it sneer review," the scientist said. "There is tremendous bias. Reviewers ignore data that doesn't fit with what they already believe."

The scientist said that certain fields have fewer problems with special interests than others, and certain topics—including the safety of modern medicine and, especially, the safety of vaccines—tend to push ideological buttons.

"The idea in science should be that we just push toward finding out the answer. We have a hypothesis, we ask questions, we test the hypotheses, we collect more data," the scientist said. "That's how we move forward. But when it gets polarized, the sneer-review phenomenon starts to happen. Then it becomes a more ideological confrontation."

"People will try to publish total nonsense for ideological reasons."

#### When Ideology Drives Decisions

When peer-reviewed studies have the potential to harm multibillion-dollar industries, they often get retracted, several scientists told The Epoch Times.

"Follow the silenced science," said James Lyons-Weiler, CEO and director of the Institute for Pure and Applied Knowledge (IPAK). He has published more than 50 peer-reviewed studies on a variety of topics and recently had a controversial study retracted.

It's especially difficult to publish research that calls vaccine safety into question in the first place, Lyons-Weiler said, and these studies are often summarily retracted by controversy-averse editors.

### When peer-reviewed studies have the potential to harm multibillion-dollar industries, they often get retracted.

"They tend to be retracted after critique by anonymous critics," he said. "This is a problematic new development. The journals are retracting based on criticism from anonymous reviewers, instead of publishing the critique and allowing the authors to rebut. That means the critics' comments are not peer-reviewed."

The retraction may happen a week after the science is published, or more than 10 years.

#### Canceling Critics, a Technique to Silence Science

A Danish medical doctor who worked for the pharmaceutical industry for almost a decade, Peter Gotzsche saw firsthand how his bosses would manipulate data that didn't fit their industry agenda. Largely as a result of that frustration, Gotzsche co-founded the Cochrane Collaboration, a nonprofit initiative with an explicit goal to keep bias out of science.

For years, the Cochrane Collaboration was considered the gold standard of unbiased information, and Gotzsche, who himself published more than 50 peer-reviewed articles and eight books, was hailed as a crusader for scientific integrity.

In September 2018, however, Gotzsche was voted off Cochrane's board (six in favor, five opposed, and one abstention). This move led four board members to resign in protest. He was also fired from his position as director

## 30,000 peer-reviewed journals

With as many as 30,000 peer-reviewed journals providing scientists an outlet for their findings, it can be difficult to distinguish between good and bad science.

## 2.6 million

On the order of 2.6 million scientific studies are published every year, according to the National Center for Science and Engineering Statistics.

of the Nordic Cochrane Center and was suspended from the hospital where he worked.

Gotzsche told journalist and documentary filmmaker Bert Ehgartner that he believed his dismissal was because he and two co-authors criticized a Cochrane review that found "high-certainty evidence" that a vaccine against human papilloma virus (HPV) protected women and girls from cervical precancer. Gotzsche criticized the review, pointing out that Cochrane had excluded almost half the trials and ignored glaring safety signals about the HPV vaccine.

A hero of scientific integrity to many, Gotzsche is now being ostracized by his colleagues and characterized as an "industry scold."

"A new scientific truth does not triumph by convincing its opponents and making them see the light," German physicist Max Planck famously writes in his 1950 autobiography, "but rather because its opponents eventually die, and a new generation grows up that is familiar with it."

According to Lyons-Weiler, science continues to move forward even without funerals. IPAK is currently engaged in a second phase of a study to examine the health outcomes of vaccinated versus unvaccinated children. This time, it has the participation of medical doctor, Russell Blaylock, a neurosurgeon who has warned against the toxicity of aluminum in vaccines for more than two decades.

In the meantime, do the problems with peer review mean we should reject new scientific findings? Watch out for the warning signs. Ask the question: Who is David and who is Goliath?

The discerning reader, whether scientist, academic, ethicist, journalist, or layperson, will understand that any asserted scientific "fact" or "conclusion" must be combined with common sense, a healthy skepticism, and a closer look at those who stand to profit.

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 France, and taught post-colonial literature to non-traditional students in inner-city Atlanta. Learn more about her at [JenniferMargulis.net](http://JenniferMargulis.net)

Joe Wang, Ph.D., was a lead scientist for Sanofi Pasteur's SARS vaccine project in 2003. He is now the president of New Tang Dynasty TV (Canada).

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THE EPOCH TIMES

## Take a Walk After You Eat to Manage Blood Sugar

The best way to avoid blood sugar spikes that come after eating is to use up some energy

#### MAT LECOMPTE

Glucose—or sugar—is your body's preferred source of energy. When you move, your body uses up the glucose in your blood as fuel.

It's why going for a walk after a meal makes a lot of sense if you're looking to keep blood sugar under control and avoid the spikes that can arise after eating. Too many of these glucose bursts can boost the risk for high blood sugar and Type 2 diabetes.

A quick and pleasant way to use the glucose you've just eaten is by getting some movement. Your muscles suck up the sugar in your blood to fuel your movement. Every time they contract, they're tapping into that energy.

Research from 2009 suggested that taking a 20-minute walk at a light pace could redu-

ce late blood sugar metabolism and reduce the risk for Type 2 diabetes. Now new research is showing that significantly less movement can be effective.

A study recently published in Sports Medicine found that as little as two to five minutes, or even standing, right after eating could smooth post-meal blood spikes and lower the risk for Type 2 diabetes.

Light exercise can help reduce the development of insulin resistance and subsequently Type 2 diabetes and cardiovascular disease.

Everybody can benefit by reducing the post-meal glucose spike, whether you have diabetes or not. Limiting the post-meal glucose spike can lead to fewer cravings later, less hunger between meals, lower inflammation, and other benefits.

So after you eat, do yourself a favor and go for a walk. If you have time for a light 20-minute stroll around the neighborhood, that's great. If not, walk around your home for a couple of minutes, or even just stand and wash some dishes—all of these actions can offer some benefit.

Aiming for 150 minutes of activity per week can help even more, but timing your exercise after meals is wise if you can't commit to more.

Mat Lecompte is a health and wellness reporter for Bel Marra Health, which first published this article.

Eating and sitting is like winding up a spring and not releasing the tension. When we refuel, we need to move.



PROSTOCK-STUDIO/SHUTTERSTOCK



## ZRINKA PETERS

The health benefits of nitric oxide (NO) may not be as well known as those of popular nutrients such as iron or vitamin C, but that doesn't mean they are less important.

This gaseous molecule is produced in the arteries and other parts of the body and plays an important role in immune function, athletic performance, diabetes management, and more.

Most of all, nitric oxide plays a critical role in maintaining blood vessel health.

Nitric oxide is a vasodilator, which means that it causes smooth muscle cells in the blood vessels to relax, allowing them to widen. This action increases blood flow, improves oxygen and nutrient delivery, and lowers blood pressure. These effects impact every part of the body and make NO a critical factor in cardiovascular health.

Even though NO is produced naturally in the body, the amount present varies significantly from person to person, largely depending on diet and lifestyle.

One of the most effective ways to boost the body's production of NO is by consuming foods rich in amino acids and nitrates. One amino acid, L-arginine, is converted directly into nitric oxide in the body through a process called the L-arginine-NO pathway, while another, L-citrulline, is first converted to L-arginine and then into nitric oxide.

L-arginine is found largely in animal products including turkey, pork loin, chicken, beef, and fish, as well as in certain non-animal sources including pumpkin seeds, soybeans, and peanuts.

L-citrulline is found in a variety of melons, especially red and yellow watermelon and cantaloupe, as well as cucumbers and summer squashes. According to a study published in the journal *Nutrients* in July 2018, titled "L-Citrulline Supplementation: Impact on Cardiometabolic Health," L-citrulline was effective at increasing NO synthesis, as well as reducing blood pressure in study subjects.

Study authors concluded that "L-citrulline supplementation represents an attractive non-pharmacological approach for increasing NO bioavailability, which may have the potential to counteract many of the age- and/or lifestyle-related diseases currently plaguing our society."

Another way to boost nitric oxide production in the body is by consuming foods high in naturally occurring nitrates. Unlike synthetic nitrates, which are often added to processed meats as preservatives and which may pose significant health risks, many vegetables contain naturally occurring nitrates, and these are also converted to nitric oxide in the body.

When mixed with saliva and oral bacteria found on the back part of the tongue, these nitrates turn into nitrites, which are subsequently converted into nitric oxide. Many types of vegetables contain nitrates, but green leafy vegetables including spinach, arugula, and kale, along with beets, rhubarb, celery, and broccoli rank among the highest.

Nitric oxide molecules have a very short half-life—just a few seconds—and NO levels can rise or fall quickly. As a free radical that both builds up and breaks down very quickly in the body, it's important to practice healthy, NO-boosting dietary and lifestyle habits on a consistent, regular basis.

Lou Ignarro, a leading research scientist who was honored with the Nobel Prize in

# Nitric Oxide: The Free Radical You Need

This unstable molecule has a critical role in keeping your blood full of nutrients and oxygen

**Nitric oxide plays a critical role in maintaining blood vessel health.**

Medicine for his discoveries on the function of nitric oxide as an important signaling molecule, said in an interview on "The Ultimate Health Podcast," "As soon as you can digest the ingredients and get the components into the blood, that's when you'll see an increase in NO."

The process also works in reverse, as Ignarro stated: "If you take a delicious, greasy, fatty hamburger, and you eat that, you'll see a decrease [in NO] within 20 minutes to 40 minutes. And that decrease is going to be there two to four hours."

Perhaps not surprisingly, the cumulative effect of a prolonged increase or decrease of nitric oxide will also have long-term effects on health.

In addition to eating plenty of foods that are rich in L-arginine, L-citrulline, and healthy nitrates, the nitric oxide that's produced also needs to be maintained and protected from rapid degradation.

According to Ignarro, this is where consuming plenty of antioxidant-rich foods plays a critical role.

"The antioxidants take away oxidative stress, thereby allowing whatever nitric oxide that happens to be present to increase in amount, because it's no longer being destroyed by the oxidative stress," he notes.

To that end, think about including some blackberries or blueberries—both antioxidant superstars—or other antioxidant-packed foods as a regular addition to your diet, too.

Another way to boost the body's nitric oxide production is through regular exercise.

Nitric oxide is produced by endothelial cells lining the blood vessels, and its production is boosted through exercise. Physical exercise increases blood flow, causing the blood vessels to dilate and transport more oxygen- and nutrient-rich blood, which in turn increases the health of the endothelial cells and boosts nitric oxide production.

Multiple studies have demonstrated the relationship between NO production and physical exercise, including one published in the September 1999 issue of the journal *Circulation*, which concluded that "long-term physical exercise improves endothelium-dependent vasorelaxation through an increase in the release of nitric oxide."

This understanding has spawned a slew of "nitric oxide dump" exercise regimens: short, minutes-long fitness sessions that promise to quickly boost NO—and energy.

According to Ignarro, the nasal mucosa cells also produce a lot of nitric oxide, and inhaling through the nose, instead of the mouth, is an easy way to boost nitric oxide production, as well as to transport this important molecule to the lungs.

Another popular way to boost nitric oxide levels is through supplementation.

Nitric oxide supplements

don't actually contain nitric oxide itself (which, remember, is a gaseous molecule), but are likely to contain L-arginine, L-citrulline, or nitrates, all of which boost nitric oxide production. Athletes have used these supplements for decades to increase blood flow during workouts, with the hope of achieving longer, harder workouts, and faster, less painful post-workout recovery times.

According to Harvard Health, nitric oxide serves to keep the lining of the arteries smooth and slippery, preventing inflammation and blood clots, as well as relaxing the artery's smooth muscle cells, allowing them to dilate effectively.

Understanding NO's role in relaxing smooth muscle cells, and as a blood flow-increasing vasodilator played a pivotal role in the development of the erectile dysfunction drug Viagra, whose main ingredient, sildenafil, intensifies the relaxing effect of nitric oxide. Nitric oxide has also been used to lower blood pressure, and scientists are exploring its potential benefits in treating diabetes and improving heart health.

As science continues to learn more about the importance of this amazing molecule, one thing is clear—most of us could use more of it.

*Zrinka Peters has been writing professionally for over a decade. She has a BA in English Literature from Simon Fraser University in Canada and has been published in a wide variety of print and online publications including Health Digest, Parent.com, Today's Catholic Teacher, and Education.com*

## Foods Rich in Amino Acids and Nitrates



**L-citrulline** is found in a variety of melons, especially red and yellow watermelon.



**L-arginine** is found in some non-animal sources including soybeans and peanuts.



**L-arginine** is mostly found in animal foods like turkey, pork, chicken, beef, and fish.



**Green leafy vegetables** like spinach rank among the highest plant sources of nitrates.

# Buying a Healthier Planet (and Better Products)

Regeneratively grown food nurtures the Earth, delivers higher nutrition for healthier body

ALL PHOTOS BY SHUTTERSTOCK



Eating perennial plant foods helps preserve soil health because these plants establish deep roots and draw carbon into the soil year after year.

contained, on average more magnesium, calcium, potassium, and zinc; more vitamins (including B1, B12, C, E, and K); and more phytochemicals—compounds that provide desirable health benefits beyond basic nutrition to reduce the risk of major chronic diseases.

## Ask local food producers if they practice regenerative techniques.

A comparison between the fatty-acid profile of grass-fed and grass-finished beef and pork from animals raised on one of the regenerative farms and the profile of conventional meat found higher levels of omega-3 fats in the grass-fed and grass-finished meat. This means they also contained a more beneficial ratio of omega-3 to omega-6 fats. Increased levels of several other nutrients have been found in other studies as well.

The authors of the PeerJ study conclude:

"Our preliminary comparisons suggest the potential for regenerative agricultural practices that build soil health to enhance the nutritional profile of crops and livestock, and thereby influence human health and risk of chronic diseases."

## Ways to Shop for Regeneratively Grown Foods

As a consumer, you can use your purchasing power to support regenerative agriculture that builds healthy soil, which, in turn, produces more nutritious foods, conserves water, and helps to regenerate the planet for future generations. Follow these regenerative-focused shopping tips.

## Buy Seasonally and Locally

Purchase seasonal, locally grown foods that have been grown in healthy soil. At farmers markets, ask local food producers if they practice techniques to regenerate the soil, such as no tilling, using cover crops, rotating crops, and adding compost. You can also search for regenerative, soil health-focused food produc-

ers in your area at RegenerationInternational.org and RealOrganicProject.org.

## Look for Grass-Finished Meat

Choose meat that is regenerating the land. Avoid commercial meat from animals that have been raised in unhealthy confined feedlots. Instead, seek out 100 percent grass-fed, grass-finished meat. If the label only says "grass-fed," that most likely means the animal was "finished" in a feedlot on grains. A purchasing guide offered by "Kiss the Ground" suggests looking for these certifications:

- American Grassfed Association (AGA Certified)
- Animal Welfare Approved
- Global Animal Partnership Certified (Steps 4 and 5)

## Choose Regenerative Dairy

Choose dairy that comes from animals that are grass-fed and grass-finished and that are raised by ranchers who use managed or rota-



Composting is a fun way to turn waste into a nutrient-rich soil additive that will bring new life to your flowers and garden.

tional grazing, regularly moving their animals onto different fields.

## Eat More Perennials

Add more perennial plant foods to your diet. Perennials are plants that live longer than two years. Some perennial trees and bushes even live for hundreds of years.

Perennials establish deep roots in the soil, protecting the land and drawing down carbon year after year. Examples of perennials include walnuts, pecans, apples, oranges, asparagus, yams, olives, cacao, coffee, and tea.

In contrast, the farming of annual crops, which only live for one growing season and must be replanted every year, can be destructive to soil if other soil-rebuilding practices aren't used. Annual plants to eat less of include corn, wheat, rice, most beans, lettuce, and potatoes.

## Use Better Oils

Use avocado, coconut, or olive oil. These oils are made from perennial crops, as opposed to oils grown from annual crops, such as corn oil, soy oil, canola oil, peanut oil, and sunflower oil, which should be avoided. Choose organic avocado, coconut, and olive oils from companies that maintain strong environmental commitments.

## Seek Regenerative Products

Be on the lookout for products marketed as produced through regenerative agricultural practices. Two examples are Force of Nature 100 percent grass-fed and grass-finished meat and Serenity Kids-certified organic baby food with ingredients sourced from small family farms that use regenerative agricultural techniques.

One way to know if you're buying such products is to look for the regenerative organic certified (ROC) label. ROC is a revolutionary new certification for food, fiber, and personal care ingredients. ROC farms and products meet the highest standards for soil health, pasture-based animal welfare, and farmworker fairness. ROC encompasses organic farming, then raises the bar, prioritizing improving soil health and building soil carbon.

ROC products include Dr. Bronner's Regenerative Organic Coconut Oil, Patagonia Provisions Regenerative Organic Chile Mango, and Lotus Foods' Brown and White Basmati Rice. Learn more at RegenOrganic.org

## Conclusion

We're just at the beginning of a movement of regenerative-focused producers that's expected to grow dramatically in the coming years.

Consumers can find regenerative products at local farmers markets and ROC products wherever organic products are sold.

These products may be more expensive and harder to find, but being a responsible consumer is more important now than ever. At the very least, you will know your dollars are contributing to the rebirth of our planet rather than its destruction.

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

ALL PHOTOS BY SHUTTERSTOCK

## FOOD AS MEDICINE

# 3 Unusual Green Tea Benefits



Patients with diabetic peripheral neuropathy may benefit from the anti-inflammatory and antioxidant effects of green tea.

Gain even more benefits from green tea's potent compounds through 3 unique forms

Green tea's powers are impressive. This delicious, invigorating tonic can help with diabetic peripheral neuropathy, brain function, and even staying calm under stress. Plus, you may reap even more benefits by trying out three unique forms of green tea.

While coffee is the default stimulating beverage of Americans, two-thirds of the world's population enjoys tea, not only because of its pleasant taste, but also because it's been a renowned health-promoting drink since ancient times. In the United States, black tea is most popular (often consumed iced), accounting for 84 percent of the tea consumed in 2019, while green tea made up just 15 percent.

All tea comes from the leaves of the *Camellia sinensis* plant. The differences in color and flavor are due to different processing methods. While black tea is made from leaves that have been exposed to air, causing them to oxidize and giving them their dark color, green tea is made from young tea leaves that aren't fermented and are withered, steamed, and pan fired.

If health benefits are what you're after, you can't go wrong by sipping on a cup of organic tea of any variety, but it's possible to intensify tea's health-boosting potential even more by consuming it and its constitu-

ents in different forms. These include green tea extract, matcha, and L-theanine. These three compounds are responsible for three of green tea's lesser-known—yet highly impressive—benefits.

## Green Tea Extract for Diabetic Peripheral Neuropathy

Diabetic peripheral neuropathy (DPN) is among the most disabling and common complications of diabetes. DPN is a form of nerve damage that can lead to numbness, tingling, pain, and weakness in your feet, legs, hands, and arms. Conventional treatments, which include antidepressants, opioids, and topical pain relievers, have adverse effects and often fail to provide relief for this long-lasting condition.

Green tea's catechins, amino acids, polyphenols, and other diverse compounds offer a range of properties that may benefit DPN, including hypolipidemic, anti-inflammatory, antioxidant, and even anti-neuroinflammatory effects. In a 16-week study, 194 patients with DPN received either green tea extract or placebo.

Significant improvements were noted in the green tea extract group in terms of both clinical and neurophysiological

parameters. Multiple mechanisms are likely involved in the observed benefits, including:

- Positive impact on insulin resistance and glucose homeostasis
- Reduced fasting insulin levels
- Anti-adiposity effects
- Beneficial effects on lipid and insulin levels (green tea has been found to outperform the diabetes drug metformin for this purpose)
- Anti-inflammatory effects

Green tea extract, which is available in supplement form, is a more concentrated source of polyphenols isolated from *Camellia sinensis*. It contains flavonoids, polyphenols such as epigallocatechin-3-gallate, or EGCG, and vitamins.

Research suggests that absorption of tea polyphenols may be enhanced, and increases in antioxidant levels more significant, when consumed in the form of a green tea extract supplement compared to a green or black tea beverage. In addition to helping with DPN, green tea extract may have anticancer effects, and it lowers blood pressure and benefits cognitive function.

## Matcha Improves Cognitive Function—Even While You're Stressed

Another way to intensify the already powerful beneficial properties of green teas is to consume matcha, a type of green tea made by drying and grinding tea leaves into a fine powder.

Catechin, theanine, and caffeine are among the compounds in matcha known to improve cognitive function, and researchers from Japan have found that daily matcha consumption improves attention and executive function in middle-aged and older adults.

The researchers were curious whether these benefits extended to younger adults as well, so they gave two grams of matcha (in capsule form) to 42 people aged 25 to 34 daily for two weeks while subjecting them to a mild psychological stress known to cause a decline in cognitive function.

Matcha intake led to maintained attentional function during the stressful period, which suggests it may be useful for helping young adults stay productive and focused while going through their daily grind. Attentional function involves the ability to make plans, perform tasks, and function effectively in day-to-day life, and it appears that matcha may provide a boost in this area for those faced with stress.

Matcha is produced from plants that are shaded during key growth periods, enhancing the accumulation of biologically active compounds. This concentrated source of

theanine, catechins, and other compounds is considered "the highest quality tea." In addition to boosting cognitive function, matcha is known to lower anxiety, help to prevent neurodegenerative disorders, and offer anticarcinogenic, anti-inflammatory, and cardioprotective properties.

## L-Theanine Boosts Brain Function

L-theanine is an amino acid found primarily in *Camellia sinensis* leaves and mushrooms. It's particularly prevalent in matcha tea, where its combination with caffeine gives matcha a non-bitter taste and umami characteristic. This particular combination of L-theanine and caffeine is also notable for enhancing concentration and relieving stress, but L-theanine on its own is also revered for boosting brain function.

One Japanese study compared the cognitive effects of a single dose of L-theanine, 12 weeks of regular L-theanine consumption, and a placebo among adults aged 50 to 69. Benefits were found after 12 weeks and even after a single dose.

"A single dose of L-theanine reduced reaction time in the attention task and increased correct answers and decreased the number of omission errors in the working memory task. This suggests that L-theanine may improve working memory and executive function



L-theanine, found in *Camellia sinensis* leaves, is revered for its brain-boosting capabilities.

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



FOOD AS MEDICINE

# Functional Beverages for Your Health

New drinks offer to satisfy thirst and deliver mental and physical benefits

SANDRA CESCA

“Let food be thy medicine and medicine be thy food.”—Hippocrates

With the increased interest in healthy diets to support wellness, people are trying new beverages that contain nutrients that help to calm, soothe, and energize. Manufacturers claim these drinks can reduce anxiety, improve sleep, sharpen focus, and more.

### What Are Functional Beverages?

Functional beverages are fortified with beneficial nutrients that supposedly provide an extra health benefit to the consumer beyond basic nutrition. These are usually non-alcoholic drinks that contain nontraditional ingredients. Beverages that fall into his category include dairy-based beverages, sports and performance drinks, energy drinks, ready-to-drink teas, fortified fruit and vegetable drinks, plant milks, legume-based and grain-based drinks, and enhanced water.

Functional beverages based on fruits and vegetables may contain spices, vitamins, amino acids, minerals, raw dietary fiber, juices fortified with probiotics, enhanced teas, and red wines, which contain the antioxidant and anti-inflammatory phytochemical resveratrol. They may include herbs, mushrooms, or electrolytes. They usually have low sugar content and few artificial ingredients.

Functional beverages have also been referred to as adaptogenic drinks since they contain natural substances that often exhibit adaptogenic action. As such, they have specific health benefits and somehow protect against the negative impacts of stress, according to Mikhail Kogan, a geriatrician and medical director at the Center for Integrative Medicine at George Washington University.

For example, proponents assert that ashwagandha, a shrub, boosts energy and reduces stress; that Rhodiola rosea, an herb, decreases cortisol, the body’s primary stress hormone; and that ginseng and licorice root reduce inflammation and fatigue.

### Health Benefits and Medicinal Properties

Functional beverages have beneficial effects on one or more body functions, in addition to their fundamental nutritional values. They either improve the human body’s general physical condition, decrease the risk of disease progression, or both.

Some functional beverages can also be classified as nutraceutical drinks because they have health-giving additives and medicinal benefits. The food products used as nutraceuticals are categorized as dietary fiber, prebiotics, probiotics, polyunsaturated fatty acids, antioxidants, and other herbal and natural foods. These nutraceuticals help to combat some of today’s major health

problems such as obesity, cardiovascular disease, cancer, osteoporosis, arthritis, allergies, dental problems, and diabetes.

The term “nutraceutical” was coined by Dr. Stephen DeFelice in 1989, a portmanteau of “nutrition” and “pharmaceutical.” DeFelice is the founder and chairman of the Foundation for Innovation in Medicine. According to DeFelice, a nutraceutical is “a food (or a part of food) that provides medical or health benefits, including the prevention and/or treatment of a disease.”

### Risks

Because many of these beverages have medicinal or therapeutic effects on the body, they need to be taken with additional consideration.

For example, people with diabetes should avoid taking ginseng because it can lower blood sugar. Caution should also be exercised by women who are pregnant, breastfeeding, or family planning because adaptogens can affect some hormones.

Functional beverage manufacturing companies should include on their products warning labels and guidelines for consumption.

### Research

There are numerous studies and scientific articles about the effects of various nutritional substances and their possible impact on disease. Much of this research has been done on animals. For example, experimental evidence from animal models suggests that tea plays a significant role in inhibiting carcinogenesis in the skin, lungs, esophagus, stomach, liver, small intestine, pancreas, colon, bladder, and mammary glands. There have also been many observational studies done with humans confirming certain effects of tea, such as improved cognitive performance under stress.

The benefits of functional beverages are often difficult to measure. If the dose is too small, customers might be drinking

expensive flavored water and not getting the adaptogenic effect. If the dose is too much, side effects may result. In addition, the effects and potency of plant-based ingredients can vary widely depending on where and how they are grown, when they are harvested, and what parts of the plant are used.

As functional beverages continue to emerge, additional research needs to move into the realm of clinical trials to confirm the efficacy of these drinks.

For more in-depth information, including current research results of functional beverages’ health and medicinal benefits, refer to the book “Functional and Medicinal Beverages, Volume 11: The Science of Beverages.”

### Market Trends

Currently, North America has the largest market share for functional beverages due to its innovative product launches. Asia-Pacific and Europe come in second and third places, respectively.

According to an article in Forbes, the marketplace for functional beverages has grown

rapidly in recent years and will continue to do so, according to the Whole Foods 2022 Trends predictions. Whole Foods predicts the market will double in the next decade, especially as Gen Z consumers seek health-ier options.

Whole grains such as barley, oats, buckwheat, and red rice can be used to produce functional beverages. In addition to their antioxidant properties, these grains are rich in B vitamins and minerals that facilitate metabolism. Their complex carbohydrates, specifically soluble fiber, help slow and sustain energy release. Grains have traditionally been used globally, especially in Asia, Africa, South America, and parts of Central America, although most grain-based non-alcoholic beverages have been produced in Africa and South America.

Plant-based or nondairy milks are gaining importance as functional beverages globally. They serve as an alternative to cow’s milk in a period when lactose intolerance, cow milk allergy, calorie concerns, and high cholesterol are prevalent.

Product development has started to move away from standard sugary formulations to more functional ingredients. Cannabidiol, adaptogens, nootropics, and allergen-free plant proteins are expected to be future

functional ingredients.

Future market interest includes tailoring functional beverages from fruits and vegetables for specific disease conditions. Fruits such as blackberry, elderberry, cranberry, and blueberry, which are rich in phenols and flavonoids, are prime candidates. It appears that the health benefit of wine is no longer due to just resveratrol. Fruit wines, especially berry wines, have shown positive results for cardiac protection, diabetes, and lowering cholesterol. That said, alcohol comes with heavy downsides including significant neurological side effects.

The main criteria for continued consumers’ approval of high-quality functional beverages are their taste, aroma, flavor, acceptance of new ingredients, and perceived health benefits. For manufacturers, these factors are important, along with shelf life and packaging, for the consumer market to continue growing.

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



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Functional beverages offer added nutritional and restorative benefits.

INTENTIONAL LIVING

# The Difference Between Busy and Non-Busy People

People focused on their life’s purpose are less busy and more productive

JOSHUA BECKER

Have you ever noticed how “busy” has become the new “fine”? As in, when you used to ask somebody how they were doing, they would answer, “Fine.” But nowadays, everybody answers, “Busy.”

Sometimes, people say it just to sound important. But most of the time, the person legitimately means it. They’re busy. There are too many responsibilities and not enough time in the day or energy in the body to accomplish everything they want to do.

Busy has become the default state for many of us. But is the state improving our lives? Certainly not.

Statistics indicate that 75 percent of parents are too busy to read to their children at night. A rising number of children are being placed in day cares and after-school activities. Americans are having a hard time finding opportunity for vacations these days. About 33 percent of Americans are living with extreme stress daily, and nearly 50 percent of people say they regularly lie awake at night because of stress.

That’s a problem. Activity is good, but we can become too busy.

It doesn’t have to be this way. While busyness seems to be the prevailing condition of the human spirit these days, it isn’t true for everyone. In other words, busyness isn’t inevitable.

Some people aren’t busy. They appear calm, collected, and in control—but still productive. They are enviable in the life they live. What do they understand about life that others do not?

### Learning from the Differences

Over the past 14 years of minimizing my possessions and embracing greater intentionality in life, I’ve given lots of thought to the question, “How do we unbusy our lives but continue to pursue a significant and productive life?”

Over the years, I’ve learned a lot from watching others and embracing habits and practices in my own life.

There is a difference between busy and non-busy people. Here are some of the most significant differences I have noticed.

### Unbusy people know their purpose.

Unbusy people have thought long and hard about the legacy they want to leave, the goals they choose to pursue, and the significance they wish to discover.

These purposes may change or evolve over the course of one’s life, but they provide boundaries and a road map for the way they spend their days and time.

Goals shape us and goals move us. When we become resolved in the goals we pursue, we are less likely to allow distractions to remain in our life.

Every day, we are presented with countless choices of how to spend our time, our energy, our effort, and our money. The wisest of us recognize we have the power to choose. But more than that, they know what they should choose, because they are guided by their life’s greatest mission.

### Unbusy people are adamant about saying no to things that don’t align with their mission.

Of course, sometimes, the choices are obvious (I was never good at hockey, woodworking, or automobile mechanics, for example). But the hardest work is done in the trenches.

Staying on mission is about learning to say no to the urgent requests, the popular requests, and the countless opportunities in front of us each day—even good things that we could do. This becomes easier to do, the more we resolve we become about our purpose in life.

What is your purpose? What goals do you have for your life? On what mission do you desire to live? And what plan have you developed to help you get there?

Pursue those with your heart and your life. And learn to say no to all the countless opportunities that will distract you from it.

### Unbusy people know they have choice in life.

One of the most life-changing discoveries you can make in the pursuit of an unbusy life is the reality that busyness is a decision we make. We are never forced into a lifestyle of busyness.

We control our days. Our hours and our schedules are determined by us.

Greg McKeown, in his book “Essentialism,” says it this way: “No one can take away your right to choose. You can’t even give it away if



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When you are clear on what is most essential, it is easy to say ‘no’ to what is not.

you want. You can only forget that you have the power to decide.”

Now, this reality that we always have a choice in life doesn’t mean that there aren’t some external demands that may be placed on our lives. Anybody who has parented a young child knows this to be the case.

But in almost every case, when you get down to it, it’s a decision that we made to put ourselves in that situation. You may have demands on your time from a boss, but your choice to stay in that job is yours. A newborn baby may require your time for a period of time, but what pursuit in life is more significant than raising your child?

You aren’t a victim and you aren’t a martyr. You need to show up in your life. In fact, you are the only one who can. You always have a choice. Unbusy people understand this and walk in that reality.

### Unbusy people say no to almost everything.

Unbusy people know they can achieve more by doing less. Seneca wrote, “Everybody agrees that no one pursuit can be successfully followed by a man who is preoccupied with many things.”

Warren Buffett is credited as saying it this way: “The difference between successful people and very successful people is that very successful people say no to almost everything.” Now, your definition of “very successful” may be different than Buffett’s, but the truth remains the same. If you desire to be successful in your most valued pursuits, you need to say no to the less important pursuits that distract you from them.

Recognize the inherent value in the word no. Learning to say no to less important commitments opens your life to pursue the most important.

Overcome your fear of saying no by reminding yourself, “What my family, friends, and world need most is the best version of me that I can possibly be, accomplishing the most good with the one life I’ve been given.”

### Unbusy people don’t get distracted by unfulfilling pursuits.

You can never accumulate enough of the things that don’t lead to fulfillment. If, by definition, a pursuit can never satisfy our soul and longing for meaning and happiness, it’s a pursuit with no end—it will always demand more time and energy. No matter how passionately we pursue it, we are left empty at the end of the day.

I fear too many of our lives resemble this interaction. We search for happiness, fulfillment, and meaning in the wrong places. We have searched for happiness in a number of society’s greatest offerings and have found most of them lacking—or fleeting.

We have searched for happiness in a bigger paycheck, only to discover we immediately desired an even bigger one.

We have searched for happiness in a job promotion or recognition, only to discover that the accolades don’t last.

We have searched for happiness in bigger homes, only to discover they are accompanied by burdensome mortgage payments.

We have searched for happiness in fancier cars, only to discover they get scratches and dings just like the others.

We have searched for happiness in alcohol and drugs and sex, only to discover the pleasure has disappeared by morning.

We have searched for happiness in large savings accounts, only to discover money can’t solve all our problems.

**Despite all the proven benefits, intentionally setting aside regular time for rest is a practice that has become undervalued and underappreciated in today’s culture.**



Become an unbusy person by removing all inessential pursuits and focus on the things that matter the most.

Statistics indicate that **75%** of parents are too busy to read to their children at night.



The sooner we recognize these pursuits will never fully satisfy, the easier it is to unbusy our lives.

When a pursuit doesn’t provide lasting fulfillment, we have two choices:

First, we can chase after it increasingly harder, hoping it will eventually satisfy us. Or second, we can reject that pursuit altogether.

Choose the latter.

The sooner we recognize these pursuits will never fully satisfy, the easier it is to unbusy our lives.

Surely, lasting happiness and fulfillment can be found somewhere. There is something deep inside telling us that pursuing happiness isn’t an entirely futile endeavor. We just need to start looking in the right places.

And the sooner we recognize that the pursuits above will never fully satisfy, the easier it is to unbusy our lives.

### Unbusy people value the significance of rest.

One of the reasons many of us keep busy schedules is we fail to recognize the value of rest. Rest is essential to our bodies, our minds, and our souls.

Consider the benefits that rest offers: a healthier body, improved life/work balance, less stress, deeper relationships, better opportunity to evaluate life’s direction, refreshed outlook, even increased productivity. Yet, despite all the proven benefits, intentionally setting aside regular time for rest is a practice that has become undervalued and underappreciated in today’s culture. We have become overworked, overstressed, and exhausted.

Yet, setting aside one day each week for rest remains a practice that fewer and fewer people practice regularly (never mind the idea of taking a two-week vacation).

Overlooking the importance of rest certainly isn’t unique to our modern society. But our culture has made it increasingly difficult to take rest without specific intentionality.

Rest isn’t laziness. It’s essential for our bodies and spirit. See it as such and embrace it regularly.

Take time for lunch. Find space in your morning to sit quietly before starting your day. Invest in solitude, meditation, or prayer. Find opportunities for breaks at work in between projects. Begin right away cultivating little moments of space and margin in your otherwise busy day.

I work hard to keep an entire day of rest as an important part of my life and weekly routine. But it’s an upward battle that requires relentless intentionality—we live in a culture that has far too often underappreciated its value.

Schedule rest on your calendar. Then, guard it at all costs.

### The Miracle of Margin

If we are wise, we will take our lives seriously. We will seek to develop our talents and skills and grow in our abilities and potential to be our best.

We will realize, however, that this doesn’t occur in a life that is burdened by an overfilled, cluttered, busy schedule.

As unbusy people, we will create a margin in life by removing inessential pursuits. In so doing, we will live focused on the things that matter most.

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

### History of Functional Beverages

Coffee is one of the original functional beverages.



varieties, is a rich source of polyphenols and flavonoids such as quercetin and myricetin. It has long been known to have cancer-preventing and cardiovascular protective properties.

- Tejate and tejueno are fermented Mexican drinks from pre-Columbian times. They are made from maize (corn) flavored with lime juice or cacao (chocolate) and are an essential source of minerals and micronutrients. Research indicates that these drinks may help with moderating diabetes.
- Cacao originated in Mexico and was used by the indigenous people, especially the Mayans, as a medicinal elixir to cure numerous ailments, including reducing stress, relieving fever, and aiding in digestive problems. It was also believed to be an aphrodisiac and was used in spiritual and ritualistic ceremonies.
- Haria is a rice-based fermented beverage made out of low-grade boiled rice originating in parts of Africa and India dating back to 3000 B.C. This drink helps to protect the gastrointestinal tract.

Tea from China and coffee from Arabia are considered the original functional beverages, with the latter first appearing only several hundred years ago. But there are a number of ancient examples of such drinks, each containing antioxidants and other active ingredients that stimulate, relax, or purify.

- Tea (*Camellia sinensis*), including the green, black, white, and oolong



INTENTIONAL LIVING

# Don't Wait to Be Happy

These are the good ol' days, so make sure you treasure them

MIKE DONGHIA

I occasionally reflect on certain periods of my life nostalgically as the "good ol' days." Of course, I didn't recognize them as the good ol' days while they were happening. They seemed like ordinary days.

I found much to enjoy in each of those seasons, and have no major regrets, but I notice a certain restlessness in myself over the years.

In the moment, I saw each chapter (as good as it was) as a stepping stone to some future success and greater happiness that was just around the corner.

My mind and my energy were constantly searching and longing for something more, instead of enjoying the good things that were already mine.

If only I'd known that I'd someday be wistful for those periods, maybe I'd have drunk it all in a little deeper.

There is good news in all this: You are likely living through the good ol' days right now.

This period of your life, especially if you choose to see what you already have, can be enjoyed in the present in the same way you wish you had enjoyed those in the past.

**Always Striving, Never Arrived**

Let me start with a definition of happiness, since it's a word that's used pretty flexibly in our culture. In this article, I'm talking about a deeper kind of happiness than mere positive emotions—something richer, more profound, and less fleeting. Some people call it joy or contentment, but whatever you call it, we all know it's important.

In fact, practically everyone, if you asked them, would say there is no greater motivation in their lives than to become happier.

Why then are we always chasing happiness and rarely savoring it?

Why does it seem, for so many, to be a future goal rather than a present reality?

If it's as if we're all banking on enjoying blissful happiness in our retirement years, and simply paying our dues now. But research shows that our ability to savor the moment is not only linked to positive emotions, but also to greater psychological well-being.

So then, what are the reasons we kick the can of happiness down the road, and fail to enjoy the good ol' days while we're in them? There are at least three reasons that I've observed in myself:

**We Settle for Cheap Dopamine Hits**

Modern culture encourages us toward passive consumption instead of active creation; distraction instead of engagement. It's much easier to flick through the feeds on my phone or reach for a favorite snack than it is to connect to a friend or stir up gratitude for what I have. But the more frequently I give in to these instant pleasures, the more I crave them and the less receptive I am to life's richer but slower joys.

**We Don't Think We Deserve It Yet**

As crazy as it sounds as I type that, sometimes I don't let myself enjoy what I have because I'm afraid it will make me passive. I feel that I'll have earned the right to savor life when I've achieved a level of success in my own eyes. Or sometimes, I feel "behind" as if I've wasted time already, and now I'm in a rush to catch up. I tell myself that someday, I'll cultivate the ability to enjoy



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the moment, but I worry that I'm creating chains of habits that will be hard to break.

**We're Searching for Something Else**

I remember a particular moment in college when I was feeling uncertain about the future, and thought that if I could find a job I enjoyed and get married to the girl I loved, then I would be perfectly content. I really thought those two things would solve my restlessness once and for all. Well, I did marry that girl, find a great job, and start a family—but too often, I find myself wondering what's next instead of treasuring those wonderful gifts.

**Discover Your Treasure**

There's a short parable in the Bible about a man who is walking through someone else's field and stumbles upon an incredibly valuable treasure.

He proceeds to dig a hole and bury the treasure so that no one else would find it. Then, he goes home and starts selling everything he owns—cashing in his entire net worth—so that he can raise enough money to buy the field containing the buried treasure.

Let's leave aside the ethics of his choice for a minute and focus on his obvious motive.

Once he knew what he had, there was no reason to keep searching. No reason to hesitate. He already discovered something supremely valuable and all he had to do was stake his claim to it.

Imagine if, upon selling everything he had, he decided to start looking for another field to buy—maybe one in a nicer part of town. Or if he became distracted by his newfound cash and started indulging in little pleasures, forgetting about the field altogether.

Why keep looking when you've already struck it rich?

Why settle for cheap thrills, when something better is yours for the taking?

These are the same questions we must ask

**Research shows that our ability to savor the moment is not only linked to positive emotions but also to greater psychological well-being.**

ourselves when we delay, even for a day, in savoring all that is good in our lives.

Why keep searching for something better if you haven't even learned to enjoy what you have?

Why waste away the days and weeks, jumping from one cheap dopamine hit to another, when something deeper and richer is already in your life, waiting to be discovered.

Don't wait another minute to enjoy the happiness that is already yours. These are the good ol' days, and it's time we noticed.

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

Stop searching for more and focus on treasuring what you already have in your life.



This period of your life, especially if you choose to see what you already have, can be enjoyed in the present in the same way you wish you had enjoyed those in the past.

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The rise of polypharmacy is fuelling its own health epidemic.

# Pharmaceutical Adverse Reactions Are Skyrocketing

Drug-based, symptom-focused health care is contributing to an epidemic of overprescription

JOSEPH MERCOLA

Researchers published some shocking statistics about the dramatic rise in adverse drug reactions in the UK in a study published in BMJ Open in July. Many of these adverse reactions were related to the number of prescriptions prescribed to the study participants.

"Polypharmacy," the term for prescribing multiple drugs, is at the heart of an epidemic of overprescription. The issue has been snowballing in the past decade as big pharma continues to develop new drugs. To truly achieve better health, patients need to



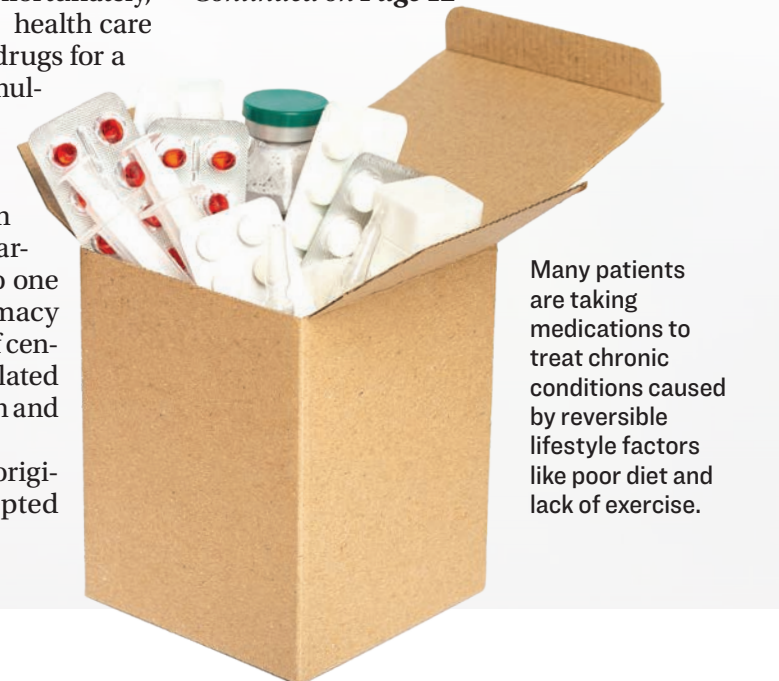
be advised and supported to make lifestyle changes that support health. That's because most of the chronic conditions that people are being treated for arise directly out of factors ranging from a poor diet and lack of exercise to habits such as smoking and drinking. In the case of immediate need, drugs can provide a stop-gap measure, but true healing requires addressing the root causes of the illness. Unfortunately, this rarely happens. Instead, health care providers simply prescribe drugs for a condition—sometimes with multiple prescriptions.

When a patient ends up taking multiple prescriptions, it's called polypharmacy, a term that is used often but with varied definitions. According to one article, the term polypharmacy "was used over one and a half centuries ago to refer to issues related to multiple-drug consumption and excessive use of drugs."

No matter when the term originated, it's commonly accepted

that polypharmacy is the prescription of too many medications. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), "Polypharmacy, often defined as the simultaneous use of five or more prescription drugs, is more common in an aging population where multiple coexisting chronic conditions often occur."

Continued on Page 12



Many patients are taking medications to treat chronic conditions caused by reversible lifestyle factors like poor diet and lack of exercise.

TRUTH and TRADITION

# A NEWSPAPER THE FOUNDING FATHERS WOULD READ

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## Cognitive Rehab May Help Clear COVID-Related Brain Fog

Older adults can experience cognitive recovery through exercises that strengthen the mind

JUDITH GRAHAM

Eight months after falling ill with COVID-19, a 73-year-old woman couldn't remember what her husband had told her a few hours before. She forgot to remove laundry from the dryer at the end of the cycle. She turned on the tap at a sink and walked away.

Before COVID-19, the woman had been doing bookkeeping for a local business. Now she couldn't add single-digit numbers in her head.

Was it the earliest stage of dementia, unmasked by COVID-19? No. When a therapist assessed the woman's cognition, her scores were normal.

What was going on? Like many people who have contracted COVID-19, this woman was having difficulty sustaining attention, organizing activities, and multitasking. She complained of brain fog. She didn't feel like herself.

But this patient was lucky. Jill Jonas,

an occupational therapist associated with the Washington University School of Medicine in St. Louis who described the case to me, has been providing cognitive rehabilitation to the patient, and she's getting better.

**Some medical centers are offering cognitive rehabilitation to patients with long COVID.**

Cognitive rehabilitation is therapy for people whose brains have been injured by concussions, traumatic accidents, strokes, or neurodegenerative conditions such as Parkinson's disease.

Continued on Page 11

After COVID, many experience a decline in cognitive function. (JUDITH GRAHAM) ILLUSTRATION BY BOGDAN FLORESCU/THE EPOCH TIMES



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THE EPOCH TIMES

## Stents Show No Benefit in Treating Heart Failure

Coronary artery stents no better than drugs, researchers find in landmark trial

MATTHEW RYAN

Every year, 60,000 people in the UK are diagnosed with heart failure, and many are treated with stents. It's in a large new study published in the *New England Journal of Medicine* that my colleagues and I discovered that these procedures are unnecessary. Heart failure is where the heart muscle becomes weakened, leading to symptoms of severe breathlessness that may cause premature death. The most common cause is blocked blood vessels that reduce blood supply to the heart muscle. This is known as coronary artery disease.

A person with heart failure is treated with medication and sometimes with specialized pacemakers. Despite this treatment, many patients die prematurely or are admitted to hospital with worsening symptoms.

People with heart failure also sometimes have a procedure to insert a stent—a small metal tube that is used to unblock a coronary artery. Stents are placed into the heart arteries by a cardiologist through tubes inserted either into the wrist or the groin and guided by X-rays. Trials have shown that stents are a very effective treatment for people with heart attacks and angina, but their effects in patients with heart failure have remained uncertain.

Some cardiologists had noticed improvements in patients' symptoms and heart function after stenting, but researchers couldn't tell if these improvements were directly linked to the stents or if they would have happened anyway with medications. Without proper research, treatment guidelines for the use of stents in patients with heart failure varied, with the National Health Service (NHS) recommending against stenting and European guidelines recommending it in certain patients.

In this latest study, the REVIVED-BICIS2 trial, led by professor Divaka Perera, we tested whether treatment with stents helped patients to live longer or to stay out of the hospital. The trial was a collaboration of 40 NHS Hospitals in the UK and ran from 2013 to 2020.

Patients could be included in the trial if they had severely weakened heart muscle and extensive blockages of the coronary arteries. They also had specialized heart scans performed, so that stenting could be targeted to the areas of the heart muscle that were most likely to recover.

A total of 700 patients took part in the study, and half of them were randomly chosen to receive stents while all patients received standard heart failure treatment. The patients attended follow-up appointments for up to eight years so that their health and heart function could be monitored closely.

An average of 3.4 years after treatment, patients who received stents were just as likely as those who didn't have died or been admitted to hospital with heart failure, showing that the treatment wasn't effective.

Heart scans and blood tests also showed no difference in the heart's pumping strength, supporting the main trial findings.

Our study did show that patients who had stents had a better quality

of life in the first year, but after two years, the difference disappeared and patients reported similar health. Although there was no benefit to inserting stents, there was also no sign that stents caused harm.

### More Research Isn't Needed

The results of the trial mean that stents shouldn't be used to treat patients with heart failure caused by coronary artery disease unless they have another condition, such as angina or a recent heart attack.

The design and the number of patients involved in the trial mean that the answer is clear and further research to address this question isn't needed at the moment. We'll spend time looking at the results to try to understand why stenting doesn't work. Although no benefit was shown, the findings are important, as they mean that patients with heart failure won't undergo unnecessary procedures. The cost of stenting procedures can also be redirected to providing other treatments and better care for patients with heart failure.

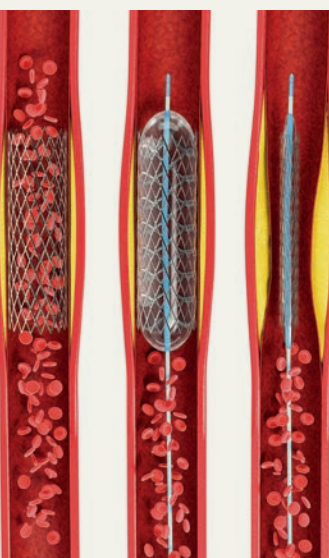
Matthew Ryan is a clinical lecturer at King's College London. This article was originally published by *The Conversation*.

### New Findings Echo Previous Research

The National Institutes of Health in the U.S. funded two earlier studies that showed stents and surgery were no better than medication and lifestyle changes when it came to reducing cardiac events.

That said, those studies did find stents and surgery provided higher quality of life for those with chest pain, though that may have been in the shorter term. The study followed participants for a median of 3.2 years.

The U.S. research focused on reducing the risk for heart attack and death in patients with stable ischemic heart disease. The findings appeared in the *New England Journal of Medicine* in 2020.



People with heart failure are sometimes given a stent—a small mesh tube that is inserted into a coronary artery to hold it open.

ALL PHOTOS BY SHUTTERSTOCK



Stenting has been shown to have little or no benefit in the treatment of heart failure over and above medications.

Post-COVID cognitive decline may reveal itself as confusion, an inability to focus, or forgetting important dates.



ALL PHOTOS BY SHUTTERSTOCK

## Cognitive Rehab May Help Clear COVID-Related Brain Fog

Older adults can experience cognitive recovery through exercises that strengthen the mind

Continued from Page 9

It's a suite of interventions designed to help people recover from brain injuries, if possible, and adapt to ongoing cognitive impairment. Services are typically provided by speech and occupational therapists, neuropsychologists, and neurorehabilitation experts.

In a recent development, some medical centers are offering cognitive rehabilitation to patients with long COVID (symptoms that persist several months or longer after an infection that can't be explained by other medical conditions). According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, about one in four older adults who survive COVID-19 have at least one persistent symptom.

Experts are enthusiastic about cognitive rehabilitation's potential.

"Anecdotally, we're seeing a good number of people [with long COVID] make significant gains with the right kinds of interventions," said Monique Tremaine, director of neuropsychology and cognitive rehabilitation at Hackensack Meridian Health's JFK Johnson Rehabilitation Institute in New Jersey.

Among the post-COVID cognitive complaints being addressed are problems with attention, language, information processing, memory, and visual-spatial orientation. A recent review in *JAMA Psychiatry* found that up to 47 percent of patients hospitalized in intensive care with COVID-19 developed problems of this sort. A new review in *Nature Medicine* found that brain fog was 37 percent more likely in nonhospitalized COVID-19 survivors than in comparable peers who had no known COVID-19 infections.

Also, there's emerging evidence that seniors are more likely to experience cognitive challenges post-COVID than younger people—a vulnerability attributed, in part, to older adults' propensity to have other medical conditions. Cognitive challenges arise because of small blood clots, chronic inflammation, abnormal immune responses, brain injuries such as strokes and hemorrhages, viral persistence, and neurodegeneration triggered by COVID-19.

Getting help starts with an assessment by a rehabilitation professional to pinpoint cognitive tasks that need attention and determine the severity of a person's difficulties. One person may need help finding words while speaking, while another may need help with planning, and yet another may not be processing information efficiently. Several deficits may be present at the same time.

Next comes an effort to understand how patients' cognitive issues affect their daily lives. Among the questions that therapists will ask, according to Jason Smith, a rehabilitation psychologist at the University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center in Dallas, are the following: "Is this [deficit] showing up at work? At home? Somewhere else? Which activities are being affected? What's most important to you, and what do you want to work on?"

To try to restore brain circuits that have been damaged, patients may be prescribed a series of repetitive exercises. If attention is the issue, a therapist might tap a finger on the table once or twice and ask a patient to do the same, repeating it multiple times. This type of intervention is known as restorative cognitive rehabilitation.

"It isn't easy because it's so monotonous and someone can easily lose attentional focus," said Joe Giacino, a professor of physical medicine and rehabilitation at Harvard Medical School. "But it's a kind of muscle building for the brain."

A therapist might then ask the patient to do two things at once, such as to repeat the tapping task while answering questions about their personal background.

"Now the brain has to split attention—a much more demanding task—and you're building connections where they can be built," Giacino said.

To address impairments that interfere with people's daily lives, a therapist will work on practical strategies with patients. Examples include making lists, setting alarms or reminders, breaking down tasks into steps, balancing activity with rest, figuring out how to conserve energy, and learning how to slow down and assess what needs to be done before taking action.

A growing body of evidence shows that "older adults can learn to use these strategies and that it does, in fact, enhance their everyday life," said Alyssa Lantz, a research assistant professor who studies cognitive rehabilitation at the University of Delaware.

Along the way, patients and therapists discuss what worked well and what didn't and practice useful skills, such as using calendars or notebooks as memory aids.

"As patients become more aware of where difficulties occur and why, they can prepare for them, and they start seeing improvement," said Ly-

“We're seeing a good number of people [with long COVID] make significant gains with the right kinds of interventions.”

Monique Tremaine, director, neuropsychology and cognitive rehabilitation at Hackensack Meridian JFK Johnson Rehabilitation Institute

67

PERCENT

of post-COVID clinic patients at John Hopkins displayed mild to moderate cognitive dysfunction at least three months after being infected

ana Kardanova Frantz, a speech therapist at Johns Hopkins University. "A lot of my patients say, 'I had no idea this [kind of therapy] could be so helpful.'"

Johns Hopkins has been conducting neuropsychiatric exams on patients who come to its post-COVID clinic. About 67 percent of them have mild to moderate cognitive dysfunction at least three months after being infected, according to Dr. Alba Miranda Azola, co-director of Johns Hopkins' Post-Acute COVID-19 Team. When cognitive rehabilitation is recommended, patients usually meet with therapists once or twice a week for two to three months.

Before this kind of therapy can be tried, other problems may need to be addressed.

"We want to make sure that people are sleeping enough, maintaining their nutrition and hydration, and getting physical exercise that maintains blood flow and oxygenation to the brain," Frantz said. "All of those impact our cognitive function and communication."

Depression and anxiety—common companions for people who are seriously ill or disabled—also need attention.

"A lot of times when people are struggling to manage deficits, they're focusing on what they were able to do in the past and really mourning that loss of efficiency," Tremaine said. "There's a large psychological component as well that needs to be managed."

Medicare usually covers cognitive rehabilitation (patients may need to contribute a copayment), but Medicare Advantage plans may differ in the type and length of therapy they'll approve and how much they'll reimburse providers—an issue that can affect access to care.

Still, Tremaine noted that "not a lot of people know about cognitive rehabilitation or understand what it does, and it remains underutilized." She and other experts don't recommend digital brain-training programs marketed to consumers as a substitute for practitioner-led cognitive rehabilitation because of the lack of individualized assessment, feedback, and coaching.

Also, while cognitive rehabilitation can help people with mild cognitive impairment, it's not appropriate for people who have advanced dementia, experts say.

If you're noticing cognitive changes of concern, ask for a referral from your primary care physician to an occupational or speech therapist, said Erin Foster, an associate professor of occupational therapy, neurology, and psychiatry at Washington University School of Medicine in St. Louis. Be sure to ask therapists if they have experience addressing memory and thinking issues in daily life, she said.

"If there's a medical center in your area with a rehabilitation department, get in touch with them and ask for a referral to cognitive rehabilitation," Smith said. "The professional discipline that helps the most with cognitive rehabilitation is going to be rehabilitation medicine."

We're eager to hear from readers about questions you would like answered, problems you've been having with your care, and advice you need in dealing with the health care system. Visit [khn.org/columnists](http://khn.org/columnists) to submit your requests or tips.

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

◀ An active social life is one way to engage the mind and maintain cognitive ability.



## Research Affirms the Power of a Light Stroll

For those 80 and beyond, just 10 minutes of walking makes a difference

MAT LECOMPTE

A regular walking routine can help you live longer, even if you're in your 80s and beyond.

New research suggests that walking for as little as 10 minutes per day can extend the lives of people aged 80 and older, reducing the risk of all causes of mortality.

As people get older, they're less likely to meet activity requirements. It may have to do with time, injury, or energy. However, it seems like a little walking may help remedy

all of those issues.

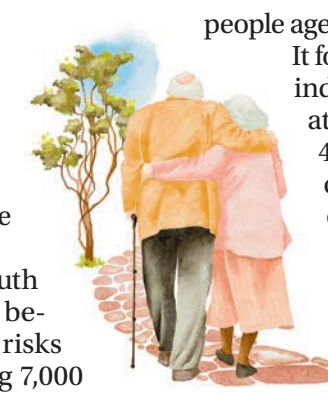
Previous research has shown that activity can boost energy and help relieve joint pain. The new research suggests that walking can also give people more time.

The study, conducted in South Korea, examined the link between walking and death risks from various causes among 7,000

people aged 85 and older.

It found that, compared to inactive individuals, those who walked for at least one hour per week had a 40 percent lower risk of all-cause death and a 39 percent lower risk of death related to heart problems during the five-year study period.

The link was there whether the participants performed any moderate or vigorous activity. Leisure strolls through the



park, therefore, were linked with benefits.

The U.S. government suggests that all adults get 150 minutes of moderate or 75 minutes of vigorous activity per week. However, this new work shows that even an hour of light activity can yield results for adults in their 80s and beyond.

If you're in your 80s and want to live longer—and likely better—try including a short 10-minute walk into your daily routine. If you go longer, that's great. But about an hour per week, divided between days, will be enough to gain significant benefits.

Mat Lecompte is a health and wellness reporter for Bel Marra Health, which first published this article.



# Pharmaceutical Adverse Reactions Are Skyrocketing

Drug-based, symptom-focused health care is contributing to an epidemic of overprescription

Using multiple prescriptions to treat several chronic conditions may cause additional health concerns.



ALL PHOTOS BY SHUTTERSTOCK

Continued from Page 9

The use of multiple prescriptions is almost always to treat several chronic conditions at the same time. Yet this causes side effects, can trigger additional health concerns, and can even lead to death. The results from the featured study demonstrate the depth of the need for deprescribing to affect a real change in people's health.

## Polypharmacy Driving Adverse Drug Reactions

The data for the BMJ Open study came from two physicians who did chart reviews of hospitalized patients over a one-month period. This prospective observational study was published by researchers at the University of Liverpool and Bangor University. They reviewed data from 1,187 patient charts admitted to Liverpool University Hospitals.

The results were an update of the original study published in 2004, which shows that 6.5 percent of hospital admissions were the result of an adverse drug reaction. In the current study, the reviewers recorded the number of admissions that were due to an adverse drug reaction when patients stayed for more than 24 hours. The outcome measures were mortality, multimorbidity, and polypharmacy.

The study also estimated the projected cost to the National Health Service (NHS) in England. The reviewers identified 218 admissions triggered by an adverse drug event, which indicated an 18.4 percent prevalence. Of these, 90.4 percent of the admissions were a direct result of an adverse event.

## Physician training has been highly influenced by donation dollars from pharmaceutical companies.

In this group, the researchers found that, on average, patients with an adverse event were taking more medications and had more comorbidities than those who didn't have an adverse drug reaction. On average, those with an adverse drug reaction were taking 10.5 drugs versus those without a drug reaction who were taking 7.8 medications.

The drugs that were more commonly found to produce drug reactions associated with hospitalization included steroid inhalers, proton pump inhibitors, antihypertensives, anticoagulants and

antiplatelets, diuretics, and chemotherapeutic agents. Of the 218 patients admitted for treatment of an adverse drug reaction, the physician reviewers believed that 40.4 percent were avoidable or possibly avoidable. The average length of stay for these patients was six days.

The researchers believe these events place "a significant burden on patients and healthcare services with associated financial implications." They concluded that "reducing inappropriate polypharmacy should be a major aim" to prevent adverse events.

"Our work suggests adverse drug reactions place a significant burden on patients and hospital admissions. This has

a large associated cost to the NHS (over £2 billion per year [\$2.45 billion]) and further efforts in this area could both improve patient care and save money for the NHS," Rostam Osanlou, a specialist registrar in clinical pharmacology, said in an article the University of Liverpool published on Science Daily.



The creation of big pharma began after Rockefeller and the Carnegie Foundation realized the power behind monopolizing medicine and focusing on symptoms rather than treating diseases from their root causes.

## America's Other Drug Problem

Health Affairs calls overprescribing and polypharmacy "America's other drug problem." According to the CDC, 45.8 percent of the people surveyed from 2015 to 2016 claimed that they used one or more prescription drugs in the past 30 days. The CDC recorded a similar number in the time span from 2015 to 2018 when 48.6 percent said they used at least one prescription drug in the past 30 days.

This percentage dropped to 24 percent for those who used three or more prescription drugs and 12.8 percent for those who used five or more prescription drugs. However, a report from the Lown Institute released in April 2019 shows that polypharmacy has reached epidemic proportions in the United States. According to their data:

- 5 million older adults saw their doctor or were hospitalized for drug reactions in 2018
- 42 percent of older adults take five or more prescription medications
- there was a 200 percent rise in polypharmacy over a 20-year period
- \$62 billion was spent on unnecessary hospitalizations over 10 years
- estimates are that there will be 150,000 premature deaths in 10 years as a result of adverse drug events

These numbers have a staggering impact on patients, especially in light of how drugs may also adversely react with the COVID-19 vaccines and the resulting spike in protein production in the body. Unfortunately, while medication

## Signs You May Be Overprescribed

Patients pay the high cost of polypharmacy in dollars and in quality of life. These signals may show that you're being overprescribed medication:

**You visit multiple doctors.** You might think that with electronic medical records each of the specialists you visit knows the medications you're taking, but that doesn't happen. You may be prescribed one drug by doctor A and a second by doctor B to lessen the side effects of the first.

**You develop a new health condition.** Sometimes these conditions are the result of drug interactions or an adverse drug reaction that goes unrecognized. This can include physical and mental symptoms, such as problems with balance or motor skills, fatigue, anxiety, or unexpected weight gain or loss.

**You're in a high-risk group.** People with higher risk have multiple health conditions and are older than 65 years.

**You have access to good health care.** It's not uncommon for people with good insurance to see multiple doctors who are unaware of all their prescription medications.

**You have trouble keeping up with drug doses.** When you're taking too many medications, it's difficult to remember the dosing schedule.

overprescribing has caused widespread harm, it remains nearly invisible to many public health leaders, clinicians, and policymakers.

Age is also a contributing factor. In 2017, a U.S. Pharmacist wrote that people older than the age of 65 made up 13 percent of the population but used 30 percent of all prescribed medications. By their definition, polypharmacy is only problematic "when the reason for the medication is unclear, when medication is taken to treat side effects of other drugs, when dosing and timing are complicated, and when medications interact with each other."

Data from the United States show that the most common multidrug combinations are to treat metabolic syndrome. In 2019, data showed that 83.6 percent of adults aged 60 to 79 used one or more prescriptions as compared to 59.5 percent of those aged 40 to 59. In August 2021, the National Institute on Aging wrote that they were grappling with the problem of treating people with multiple chronic conditions and still trying to determine the best approach for treatment and improving quality of life.

One study published in August 2021 proposed an expanded role for pharmacists in "medication therapy management and safety monitoring" based on their data that showed polypharmacy in 65.1 percent of the population using data from the CDC's National Ambulatory Medical Care Survey from 2009 to 2016.

## Children Aren't Immune From Overprescribing

While many of the elderly are taking multiple medications, the effects can be felt as far back as before babies are born. One study published in The BMJ in 2013 found that exposure to selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors and non-selective monoamine reuptake inhibitors (tricyclic antidepressants) in utero increased a child's "risk of autism spectrum disorders, particularly without intellectual disability."

In 2014, The New York Times reported that data from the CDC showed that 10,000 toddlers between the ages of 2 and 3 years old were medicated for attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). The medication was given outside established guidelines for the pediatric population.

While these numbers are significant, they're dwarfed by 2014 data from the Citizens Commission on Human Rights, which showed in 2014 that hundreds of thousands of toddlers were prescribed psychiatric drugs and that more than 274,000 children from birth to 1 year old were included in that mix. According to their figures, the numbers of children aged birth to 1 year old on these types of medications were:

- 249,669 on antianxiety drugs (such as Xanax, Klonopin, and Ativan)
- 26,406 on antidepressants (such as



The United States spends more per capita on prescription drugs than any other high-income country.

\$2.45

billion is spent at the National Health Service in England per year treating adverse drug reaction.



The chronic conditions that people are being treated for arise directly out of factors ranging from a poor diet and lack of exercise to habits such as smoking and drinking.

Prozac, Zoloft, and Paxil)

- 1,422 on ADHD drugs (such as Ritalin, Adderall, and Concerta)
- 654 on antipsychotics (such as Risperdal, Seroquel, and Zyprexa)

In the 2- to 3-year-old age group, the commission found 318,997 were on antianxiety drugs; 46,102 were on antidepressants; and 3,760 were on antipsychotics.

"The above are stunning data and, yet, the most egregious element of the ever-increasing number of America's children being prescribed psychiatric drugs, is that the diagnosis needed in order to have the drugs prescribed, is subjective," the commission said in a statement.

## Early Medicine Focused on Eugenics

The history of pharmaceutical intervention and polypharmacy dates back to the start of "modern medicine" and the "father" of it all—Abraham Flexner, who was a schoolteacher and educational theorist from Louisville, Kentucky. The 1910 Flexner Report shaped the development of medical schools and effectively eliminated any practice that the current science or medical community couldn't explain. This included most traditional medicine practices.

The report was issued by the Carnegie Foundation at a time when there were 155 medical schools in the United States. Flexner visited them all in cooperation with leading members of the American Medical Association. The report was written to establish guidelines that sanctioned orthodox schools and condemned homeopathic medical schools.

## 'Polypharmacy,' the term for prescribing multiple drugs, is at the heart of an epidemic of overprescription.

For example, during the 1849 cholera epidemic in Cincinnati, homeopaths were so successful that they published a list of those who were cured and those who died. Only 3 percent of their patient population died while between 48 percent to 60 percent of those under orthodox medical treatment died.

The results of Cincinnati Homeopaths were so successful that they were likely an embarrassment to traditional medical practitioners. The Flexner Report proposed a total restructure of medical education, which especially impacted schools teaching alternative medicine or that graduated predominantly black doctors.

After successfully using the Flexner Report to remove traditional medicine practices from medical schools, John D. Rockefeller secured a monopoly using a smear campaign to discredit and demote homeopathy and natural medicine. Doctors were jailed and some lost their licenses for using treatments that had been effective for decades. Students were taught a system of medicine that was defined by a process of prescribing drugs.

Six years before the Carnegie Institution released the Flexner Report and forced changes on medical schools throughout the country, they opened the Station for Experimental Evolution (SEE) in Cold Spring Harbor, New York. The purpose was to study heredity and evolution, as it fine-tuned the research focus on eugenics.

According to the current definition by the National Institutes of Health, "Eugenics is an immoral and pseudoscientific theory that claims it is possible to perfect people and groups through genetics."

While the company claims that it closed down its eugenics research operation, the SEE eventually merged to become the Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory, with a focus on the emergence of



Reduce the number of medications you are on and lower your chances of adverse drug reactions by making a list of your medications and reviewing it with your primary care provider once a year.

molecular genetics and the "scientific foundation of the revolution in biology and biotechnology."

## Corporate Interests Push Pharmaceutical Intervention

The push for pharmaceutical intervention versus using holistic medicine that stresses lifestyle, nutrition, exercise, and sleep interventions hasn't lived up to the promise of better health. The financial growth experienced by the pharmaceutical industry has also been a large contributor to polypharmacy as physician training has been highly influenced by donation dollars from pharmaceutical companies.

In 2005, an informal survey by National Public Radio found that many medical schools were relying on funding from pharmaceutical companies and other health industries. When pharmaceutical companies weren't happy with the faculty's behavior, they could threaten to cut off that funding. By 2018, pharmaceutical companies were actively and openly seeking partnerships with medical schools and universities.

The creation of big pharma began after the release of the Flexner Report, when Rockefeller and the Carnegie Foundation came to realize the power behind monopolizing medicine and funneling treatment modalities away from the source or cause of the health condition to focus solely on symptoms—by pushing pills to alleviate a symptom.

According to the Commonwealth Fund, the country that birthed modern medicine—none other than the United States—also spends more per capita on prescription drugs than any other high-income country.

## Reducing Your Medication Load

You can take steps to reduce the number of medications you or a loved one may be taking and thus reduce the potential of an adverse drug reaction. Begin by making a list of your current health conditions and all the medications you're taking, including over-the-counter drugs. Review this list with your primary care provider at least once per year and before you're discharged from a hospital or rehabilitation facility.

While you might think this would be standard practice, it isn't. In a commentary on Medscape, Dr. Mark Williams wrote of his patient "Allison," who was admitted to the hospital for altered mental status, likely related to polypharmacy, and discharged to long-term care with "43 prescription medications and an almost equal number of over-the-counter (OTC) drugs."

Consider creating a chart with a list of the drugs that you're taking, who prescribed them and when, why you're taking them, and any side effects from the medication that you may be experiencing. It's also important to use one pharmacy for all your prescription medications. The pharmacist can quickly determine if there are any expected drug interactions between medications that you may be prescribed by several doctors.

Each time a new medication is prescribed, take care to read the insert and check online resources for expected side effects. The bottom line is that you may not need all the medications you've been prescribed to manage your health conditions.

Overprescribing sets up older adults for a downward spiral of increasing side effects and worsening health. A holistic approach is needed to address the key tenets of good health and create real wellness instead of attempting to cover up symptoms with more pills.

*Dr. Joseph Mercola is the founder of Mercola.com. An osteopathic physician, best-selling author, and recipient of multiple awards in the field of natural health, his primary vision is to change the modern health paradigm by providing people with a valuable resource to help them take control of their health.*



If you are ill, identify targeted solutions for your health issues that also align with your values.

# The Body Is the Best Doctor

How to harness your natural ability to heal yourself

JAMES TEMPLETON

The average person who finds out they have cancer is faced with a frightening number of decisions. Those of us who have stood on this precipice know that that scary and mind-numbing.

But don't let the fear paralyze you. Take a deep breath. Understand that you're likely in a state of shock. Recognize that while you won't want to put off treatment indefinitely, you do have time to learn about your options. Cancer is something that often takes years to develop, and it's not likely to kill you next week.

I recently interviewed Dr. Michael Karlfeldt, a brilliant naturopath who has successfully treated thousands of patients and guided them through the process of healing. He uses the analogy of a firefighter who's dealing with a burning building.

## Research finds that people who feel in control of their health experience a better quality of life while dealing with diseases such as cancer.

### What's Causing the Building to Burn?

A naturopath such as Dr. Karlfeldt will look for the fires first. What's causing the building to burn, that is, what's driving the cancer? There are often many answers to this question. Are you exposed to a parasite, pathogen, or other toxin? Are certain foods that you're eating negatively impacting your immune system? What are the causes of the inflammatory markers, and what are the numbers they show?

In other words, what's the root cause of your disease? Cancer didn't just happen in a vacuum; there's always an underlying cause.

### What Tests Does a Naturopath Perform?

It depends on the individual. Do you live in an old house that currently has mold? What kind of diet do you have? What other health issues do you have? What is your emotional state? Tests might include:

- An antibody test with three different panels for food, heavy metals, and pathogens such as Lyme, mold, viruses, and bacteria.
- A urine test (chronic inflammation test) to determine the level of inflammation we're dealing with.
- Nutritional or mineral tests to determine deficiencies or excess overload (lead, copper, fluoride, and so forth).

**Rebuilding the Body** Much like firefighters, a naturopath will assist you in using the body's

natural ability to clear the cause. Then he'll bring in the construction crew to rebuild the body with basics such as nutrition, vitamins, and supplements.

She'll also utilize some of the most cutting-edge treatments available today. Some of the treatments that Dr. Karlfeldt recommends include:

**Photodynamic Therapy:** This therapy is a treatment that uses the power of light to destroy cancer cells. It involves using light-sensitive medicine and a light source to destroy abnormal cells and utilizes a photosensitizer that can be injected into or around the therapy location to pull light to itself as a stronger concentration. By matching the frequency of a laser with the photosensitizer so that it triggers oxidation within the cancer cells, it kills them in a very targeted manner. Research suggests that this treatment is less effective against deep tumors.

**Oxygen Therapies:** These types of therapies are designed to create an oxygen-rich environment within the tumors. Research such as a study by the University of Georgia shows that "low oxygen levels in cells may be a primary cause of uncontrollable tumor growth in some cancers." Oxygen therapies are highly effective when combined with other therapies. For example, a lot of time chemotherapy isn't effective because it isn't combined with oxygen therapy.

**Other Therapies:** High-dose vitamin C IV, mistletoe IV, and other therapies can also be highly effective in treating cancer. Dr. Karlfeldt's recommended therapies also include the innovative platelet-derived nanoparticle delivery system of substances.

### Putting the Fire Out

Research finds that people who feel in control of their own health experience better health and enjoy a better quality of life while dealing with diseases such as cancer, perhaps because they're also more willing to take action in support of their own health.

Being in charge of your own journey isn't only your right, but it's to your advantage. When you're dealing with something as important as cancer, a can-do attitude is paramount. Choosing a health coach or a team of professionals you trust is critical to your success in many ways. Working with someone you trust and are comfortable with helps to reduce your stress, a very important factor in fighting any disease. Just having someone in your corner can confirm the success you're making and put to rest any doubts you have.

*James Templeton founded Uni Key Health Systems in 1992 and now the Templeton Wellness Foundation as a way of giving back and helping others achieve the health and wellness they are seeking.*



# Regenerative Agriculture for Health and Sustainability



Regenerative agriculture gives farmers an edge at a time of fertilizer shortages.

## Nurturing healthy soil is essential to long-term success and food security

DR. ANN CORSON

Soil isn't just dirt—it's the base of every ecosystem, a living and life-giving foundation that teems with billions of bacteria, fungi, and other microbes that fuel a symbiotic ecosystem.

At least that's how it's supposed to be.

Our modern food and agricultural industries are built on monoculture methods, where large farmlands are planted with only one crop. This results in nutrient loss; chemical contaminants from herbicides, pesticides, and fertilizers; and dried and compacted soils that lack biodiversity but host pathogenic species, such as toxigenic molds.

Fortunately, there's a growing movement to restore soil health and rebuild the very foundation of our food system.

Regenerative agriculture conserves soil health and rehabilitates our food and farming systems. It focuses on regenerating topsoil, which can increase biodiversity, improve the water cycle, support carbon and mineral bioremediation, increase resilience to climate change, and strengthen the health and vitality of soil.

It can also increase the quality of our food and reduce the use of chemical inputs that can affect our health.

### A Healthy Soil Ecosystem

The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) stated that soil health, also referred to as soil quality, is "the continued capacity of soil to function as a vital living ecosystem that sustains plants, animals, and humans."

Some definitions of soil health also include its impact on water and air quality, as well as plant and animal health.

The soil ecosystem is a complex community of insects, fungi, and trillions of microscopic organisms. One gram of healthy soil contains 40 million individual bacterial cells. Bacteria are the most plentiful organisms in any ecosystem, as well as the most plentiful organisms on earth.

All organic matter that's added to soil—root exudates, plant residues, manure, and so forth—becomes food for soil organisms. Soil micro-organisms convert this organic matter into nutrients such as carbon dioxide and nitrogen, which plants need for photosynthesis.

Plants depend on soil organisms for essential minerals and nutrients. Soil organic matter sequesters carbon and holds moisture in the soil. Developing and maintaining a healthy soil ecosystem results in improved nutrient content and long-term sustainability of plant production.

Soil can be stressed by intensive plowing, heavy applications of liquid fertilizers, herbicides and pesticides, exposure of soil surfaces to extreme temperatures, and the drying effect of direct sunlight. These soil stressors can compact or erode the soil and deplete its life-giving microbiome.

### Soil and Our Gut

It's little surprise that the health of the human gut microbiome is tied to soil health. Each individual's gut microbiome is different, but

like the soil, the gut microbiome should be diverse and plentiful.

Our microbiome is host to trillions of bacteria, fungi, and other microbes that play a variety of essential roles in our intricate biochemistry, from digestion to hormone production.

Its composition affects the functioning of the immune system, the endocrine system, and the nervous system through the production of neurotransmitters and more.

The gut microbiome, therefore, has a direct effect on physical and mental health. Unhealthy diets, some medications, and environmental chemicals can significantly damage the gut microbiome, leading to negative health effects.

Dr. Axe explains how "the foods you eat, how you sleep, the amount of bacteria you're exposed to on a daily basis and the level of stress you live with all help establish the state of your [gut microbiome]."

## Regenerative agriculture conserves soil health and rehabilitates our food and farming systems.

The quality of the soil microbiome directly affects the quality of the gut microbiome. Healthy and diverse soil microbiomes result in more nutritious foods that lead to healthier gut microbiomes. The complexity of the soil microbiome affects the health of all other creatures in the ecosystem and the food chain.

Likewise, some chemical additives, such as glyphosate (RoundUp), the most widely used herbicide in the world, are known to damage our microbiome and are linked to neurological problems as well.

Those who promote regenerative agriculture understand that we must change our current agricultural system by developing an ecosystem that's rich with diverse plants, animals, insects, and micro-organisms so that we'll be able to ensure that our soils, crops, and animals—as well as we ourselves—will thrive.

### Soil Health Advocates

There are several groups working to improve the health of our soil for those purposes. The Soil Health Institute (SHI), an international nonprofit focused on safeguarding soil health, uses research and best practices to help farmers and others improve the vitality and productivity of soils.

SHI also brings experts and leaders in soil health science together with industry to conduct research and help landowners and farmers understand how to adopt regenerative soil health systems. Doing so can "contribute economic and environmental benefits to agriculture and society," according to the Institute.

SHI has also produced a 60-minute documentary, "Living Soil," which features diverse food production practices by farmers from across the United States who discuss strategies used to improve soil health.

"Our soils support 95 percent of all food pro-

duction, and by 2060, our soils will be asked to give us as much food as we have consumed in the last 500 years," the documentary notes.

"They filter our water. They are one of our most cost-effective reservoirs for sequestering carbon. They are our foundation for biodiversity. And they are vibrantly alive, teeming with 10,000 pounds of biological life in every acre. Yet in the last 150 years, we've lost half of the basic building block that makes soil productive."

In 2014, the Rodale Institute stated that "we could sequester more than 100 percent of current annual CO2 emissions with a switch to common and inexpensive organic management practices, which we term 'regenerative organic agriculture.'"

The Soil Health Academy is another nonprofit organization that believes that the "wide-spread adoption of regenerative agriculture has the remarkable potential to restore the health of our bodies, our farms, our communities, and our planet, as well as the economic viability of our nation's farms and rural communities."

The challenge is that farmers and ranchers need to learn how to use soil-improving practices, the academy noted.

Fortunately, there's a growing list of people and organizations that want to help. The Bionutrient Food Association, the Organic Farming Research Foundation, Farmer's Footprint, and many other groups and formal organizations are working to improve soil health and promote regenerative farming practices in the United States and around the world.

### Making the Regenerative Switch

For farmers that take up regenerative practices, there are significant benefits, including lower input costs and rich soil capable of withstanding restrictions in chemical inputs. That point has particular relevance as many countries around the world face a shortage of fertilizer, prompting concerns about food security.

The NRCS stated that the four principles used to promote soil health are to minimize disturbance by not tilling the soil, maximize soil cover by planting cover crops, maximize biodiversity, and maximize the presence of living roots in the soil.

Determinants of soil health include air, water, soil organic matter, and minerals. Farm-

ers can improve soil health by incorporating cover crops, crop rotation, remineralization, livestock, and natural predators.

Cover crops are planted to cover soil but aren't harvested. They help to aerate soil, promote water absorption and reduce erosion, and protect soil from temperature extremes and compaction. They increase soil quality and fertility by providing nutrients to enhance the biodiversity of soil microorganisms or biomass and build soil organic matter. Cover crops also help to reduce weeds, pests, and diseases.

The Rodale Institute defines crop rotation as "the practice of planting different crops sequentially on the same plot of land to improve soil health, optimize nutrients in the soil, and combat pest and weed pressure." This diversity improves soil health.

Soil remineralization involves the addition of silica or granite basalt rock powder or seawater to soil in order to provide essential minerals that have been depleted by over-intensive conventional farming practices. Modern farming uses just nitrogen, phosphorus, and potassium, while remineralization provides these and other essential minerals as well.

Grazing livestock on farmland also helps build a healthy soil microbiome. Plants develop stronger root systems after being grazed on. The hoofs of roaming animals help to aerate soil while manure adds nutrients.

Feeding soil microorganisms with livestock manure, compost, and other organic plant residues provide for both crop and livestock nutrition. This has been a foundational principle of organic agriculture. The use of natural predators helps reduce plant infections.

Dr. Ann Corson obtained her MD degree from the Perelman School of Medicine at the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia in 1982 and is board certified in family medicine and integrative holistic medicine. Her solo practice in Philadelphia is devoted full time to the treatment of patients suffering from all forms of chronic disease. In 2008, Corson joined Doctors Against Forced Organ Harvesting (DAFOH) to help raise awareness of China's live forced organ harvesting of innocent prisoners of conscience, primarily Falun Gong practitioners. Since 2016, she has been the editor-in-chief of DAFOH's newsletter.



Animals can play an important role in enriching and aerating soil.

### INTENTIONAL LIVING

# 9 Stressors That Are Good for You

Sometimes, the only thing that can help us thrive is a healthy dose of stress



MIKE DONGHIA

Not all stress is bad for you.

In fact, research continues to support the idea that certain kinds of mild stress can be beneficial to your health and well-being in a myriad of complex ways.

It turns out your grandmother might have been right all along—if it doesn't kill you, it could make you stronger.

Now, this effect, known in biology as the hormetic effect, is the result of your body's overcompensation to mild stress. The most well-known example is from lifting heavy weights. Not only does your body repair the micro muscle tears from the trauma of the exercise, it builds back those muscle fibers a little stronger and denser than they were before—leading to an overall increase in size and strength.

### 9 Examples of the Hormetic Effect



**Sun Exposure:** Sunlight is often given a bad rap. But in fact, deficiency in vitamin D—most of which we get from the sun—is a major worldwide health problem. Sensible sun exposure is linked to lower levels of cardiovascular disease and protection against a number of cancer types. Of course, too much radiation from the sun puts you at an elevated risk of skin cancer, so it's important to use common sense and protect your skin during the hottest parts of the day.



**Intermittent Fasting:** There is a growing body of evidence suggesting that occasional food deprivation (between 12 and 24 hours at a time) provides a host of metabolic benefits. The mild stress of being hungry is good for us in ways that chronic starvation clearly isn't. As an added bonus, breaking a fast can make even the simplest meal taste like a world-class dining experience.



**Saunas:** There is now compelling evidence that regular sauna use increases human lifespan. Once again, the hormetic effect explains how the body is able to adapt to short, frequent bouts of intense heat—and, in fact, overcompensate by growing stronger as exposure is gradually intensified.

### The Dose Matters

The problem with stress is when the dose is too strong, or if the stressor becomes chronic. For example, if you do serious weight lifting without proper recovery, your performance will quickly deteriorate and the overtraining will suppress your immune system.

Likewise, if you try to increase the amount of weight you lift too quickly, your tendons and ligaments may not have time to adapt, and you risk serious injury.

The key is in the dose. You want the stressor to be relatively mild with plenty of time for recovery between episodes.

In the rest of this article, I'll share nine examples of the hormetic effect in everyday activities. By adding the right dose of stress to your life, you will be helping yourself to grow stronger, more resilient,



**Intense Exercise:** We know that exercise produces free radicals, raises our blood pressure, and causes oxidative stress—so why are we still addicted to do it for our health? The simple answer is, of course, the hormetic effect. Each of these stress indicators is temporarily raised during the course of intense exercise, but our body, in an effort to maintain homeostasis, adapts in such a way that makes us fitter and more metabolically flexible for the future.



**Learning New Things:** Because of the plasticity of the human brain, it has the ability to adapt and change as a result of novel experiences. Research shows that doing mentally challenging activities, such as pursuing more education, is linked to a reduced chance of developing dementia. In fact, any cognitively difficult task will cause your brain to compensate with new growth and slow down cognitive decline. Learning a second language appears to be a particularly great intervention if you're looking to take up a new challenge.

**Living With Less:** Consumerism is a mindset that is driven primarily by comfort and convenience. Whenever a "problem" arises—such as boredom, hard work, or discomfort of any kind—the consumerist solution is to buy another widget or add another subscription to make life easier. But what if all this easy living was actually making life harder in the long run? If the theory of hormetic stressors is correct, then we actually need limits, constraints, and the challenge of solving our own problems in order to truly grow as humans. It's no surprise that those who embrace a simpler lifestyle end up changing their lives in more ways than they initially expected.

## Research continues to support the idea that certain kinds of mild stress can be beneficial to your health and well-being.

and more fit to face the day.

Of course, you'll want to check with your doctor before making any drastic changes to your lifestyle.

*"It is said that the best horses lose when they compete with slower ones and win against better rivals. Undercompensation from the absence of a stressor, inverse hormesis, absence of challenge, degrades the best of the best." –Nassim Taleb*

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



**Being Social:** For many people, being more social with strangers and more vulnerable in existing relationships is a challenge. We desire the rewards of deeper friendship, but too often we choose the undemanding comfort of our screens instead. Studies have shown, however, that the short-term stress of putting ourselves out there helps us to build a support network that then acts as a protective buffer against chronic stress—which is the kind of stress we really need to worry about.



**Cold Showers:** Another acute stressor that turns out to be good for us is cold exposure. Various types of cold water therapies have been shown to reduce muscle soreness and lower inflammation throughout the body. A simple place to start experimenting is with cold showers. Surprisingly, many people report a feeling similar to a "runner's high" after spending at least 5 to 10 minutes in cold water.

**Facing Your Fears:** The basic concept of exposure therapy is simple—the fastest way to overcome any fear is to voluntarily face it head on. Typically, a gradual approach works best, and it's important to allow yourself to feel the fear and sit with it. If you continue to expose yourself to these mild stressors without retreating, eventually your brain will acclimate to the discomfort and you will feel stronger for having faced your fear. Exposure therapy is so effective, in fact, that it's considered a gold standard for the treatment of PTSD and response to trauma.





STOCK-ASSO/SHUTTERSTOCK

# Patient Mindset Matters in Healing

How we understand—or don't understand—our illness is key in recovering from it

Being attached to your diagnosis might prevent you from considering other lines of treatment.

## BRANDON LAGRECA

Last year, after I published "Cancer, Stress & Mindset," a book about a healing mindset to best empower cancer patients, I realized that there's a more general approach to mindset that applies to all health challenges.

While there may be elements of mindset that correspond to the ebbs and flows of specific disease states, there's also a general mindset that applies broadly. There are also three common obstacles to adopting a foundational healing mindset.

### Not Knowing Enough

This is the simplest (but not always the easiest) block to rectify when adopting a healing mindset. It entails not having the proper diagnosis with which to align one's efforts. Deriving the right course of treatment takes a combination of a patient's insights mirrored by the experience of a trusted health care provider.

For example, let's take someone who wakes up with acute wrist pain. Perhaps it's carpal tunnel syndrome, a median nerve impinge-

ment in the wrist. But it could be thoracic outlet syndrome, a nerve and circulatory obstruction in the shoulder girdle. It might also be cubital syndrome, or ulnar nerve entrapment in the elbow. Each of these diagnoses has differentiating signs and symptoms, and they can be present at the same time.

The trick is finding the right medical provider who can ferret out the proper diagnosis or diagnoses. Dr. Google can help, but that also leads to the next obstacle to adopting a healing mindset.

### Knowing Too Much

This is a harder nut to crack, personified by someone attached to their diagnosis. It matters little if that diagnosis was issued from a medical doctor or from Dr. Google. If the diagnosis is incorrect (or incomplete), but if attachment to it prevents considering other lines of treatment, then knowing too much is a liability.

It can be particularly frustrating for practitioners of traditional medicine when a patient who has been through the medical wringer has arrived at a "conclusive" diagnosis that,

**Deriving the right course of treatment takes a combination of a patient's insights mirrored by the experience of a trusted health care provider.**

although comforting, fails to address the root cause of the disease. Diagnoses such as irritable bowel syndrome, chronic fatigue syndrome, and fibromyalgia are helpful labels to describe a group of symptoms that rarely correspond to successful treatment options.

### Not Knowing What You Don't Know

This is the trickiest obstacle to a healing mindset; it's the diagnosis that eludes patient and practitioner alike. An example of a poorly understood and seldom acknowledged diagnosis is chronic Lyme disease. With limited testing for tick-borne illnesses, it's the rare medical provider who can derive the correct antimicrobial course of treatment based upon clinical presentation alone.

Silent infections get their name by being insidious, often presenting with symptoms months or even years after initial exposure. Environmental toxicants pose a similar burden, not presenting with symptoms loud enough to diagnose acutely, but robbing one of life chronically. I've witnessed patients bear a mysterious and slow degradation in their health over years from undetected radon or mold exposure.

### Think Outside the Box

Healing takes time, and it takes the right trajectory. A healing mindset maps the course ahead, providing guidance on treatment options and lifestyle changes that will most effectively help you arrive at your destination of optimal health. Awareness of the obstacles clears that path so that you don't waste time, energy, and money on medical red herrings.

Now that you understand the foundation of mindset, build upon it with nuanced concepts of healing specific to your needs. Do you need to be empowered to make better dietary choices following a diabetes diagnosis? Perhaps a growth mindset around exercise is at the top of the pyramid for moving through chronic muscle pain. Is the fear of death preventing you from living your life to the fullest after a cancer diagnosis? Ask yourself these leading questions, but only upon a bedrock understanding of a healing mindset.

*Brandon LaGrecia, LAc, MACOM, is a licensed acupuncturist in the state of Wisconsin. He is the author of "Cancer and EMF Radiation: How to Protect Yourself From the Silent Carcinogen of Electropollution" and "Cancer, Stress & Mindset: Focusing the Mind to Empower Healing and Resilience." He shares his thoughts at Empowered Patient Blog.*



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