

THE EPOCH TIMES

MIND &

BODY

HEALTH AND DIGESTION

(FOOD) RYANJLANE/GETTY IMAGES; (PILLS) OASISAMUEL/SHUTTERSTOCK

1 in 10

AMERICAN ADULTS

have a diagnosed food allergy.

SOURCE: PREVALENCE AND SEVERITY OF FOOD ALLERGIES AMONG US ADULTS, JAMA NETWORK OPEN, 2019

Are You Suffering From Food Allergies or Sensitivities?

There are steps you can take to diagnose and alleviate this common source of discomfort and illness

Common painkillers and antibiotics can affect the immune system and gut microbiome.

Heavily processed foods can cause inflammation and many trigger a mild immune response.

ASHLEY TURNER

If you're over the age of 20, chances are you've noticed it seems like almost everyone you encounter these days has some form of food sensitivity. Your local restaurant likely has menu items specifically marked gluten or dairy free, and your grocery store has significantly more allergen and food-sensitivity options available, if not an entire section dedicated to these products.

It's certainly not all in your head. Food allergies and sensitivities are becoming increasingly more common.

Food Allergy and Sensitivities Are on the Rise

Food allergies and sensitivities are becoming somewhat of an epidemic in the United States. The most concerning aspect of this

is the sudden increase in the past three decades of people who have a diagnosed food allergy or sensitivity.

Current data shows that 1 in 10 American adults and 1 in 13 American children have a diagnosed food allergy. However, that number is likely significantly higher as many individuals live with a host of uncomfortable symptoms that could be from an undiagnosed food allergy or sensitivity.

Current statistics show that food sensitivities and food allergies are found in more than 20 percent percent of the population of industrialized countries. This is a high number, and it's likely to be even higher due

Food allergies and sensitivities are becoming increasingly more common.

to a large number of cases gone unreported or undiagnosed.

While food allergies and food sensitivities are very common, they certainly aren't normal.

Are Food Allergies and Sensitivities the Same?

While the terms food "allergy" and "sensitivity" often get used interchangeably, there is a significant difference between the two.

Food Allergy: True food allergies are mediated by IgE. This elicits an immediate reaction, which is often quite severe. Many individuals experience trouble breathing, swelling, hives, or itching immediately after exposure to a food allergen.

Continued on Page 4



MOUTH TAPING

can be especially helpful in revealing whether someone has trouble sleeping with their mouth closed.

A Small Piece of Tape May Drastically Improve Your Health

Mouth taping may have become controversial lately, but advocates say it can improve breathing and sleep

AMY DENNEY

"Try taping your mouth at night."

It's not the kind of advice you'd expect to hear at a dental checkup. But it's something Dr. Mark Burhenne suggests every day in his practice.

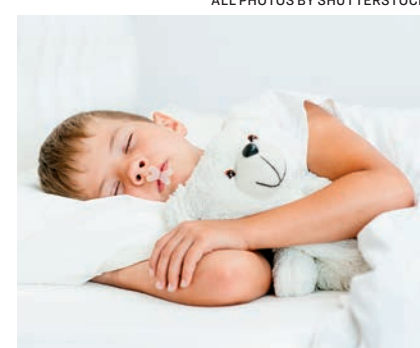
Author of "The 8-Hour Sleep Paradox," Burhenne has recommended mouth taping for a dozen years. It's a cheap, easy way to find out if his patients are struggling with sleep or breathing and then to guide them toward solutions for sleep apnea, either in his office or through referrals.

Mouth taping, which can be done with medical tape or branded products, ebbs and flows as a social media challenge. Recently it's gotten the attention of mainstream media and doc-

tors, who are flat-out saying, "Don't do it" Burhenne says this binary thinking does a real disservice to people who want to explore health deficiencies.

"(Doctors) are afraid this is misinformation that it will kill someone and it will mislead them into thinking all they have to do is tape when they have sleep apnea," he said. "Does it reverse sleep apnea? No. This is not going to treat sleep apnea."

Continued on Page 2



Mouth taping can help encourage nose breathing during sleep.

ALL PHOTOS BY SHUTTERSTOCK



I LOVE SHEN YUN
SHEN YUN SHOP


Holiday Gift Guide

Curated for him & for her,
free gift included*

ShenYunShop.com | TEL: 1.800.208.2384

*On all Collection orders over \$1,000.

A Book That Has Inspired the World




“I have indeed experienced all the miracles. No matter what your experience or what background you have or what country you are born in, you will benefit from Falun Dafa.”
Martin Rubenis
OLYMPIC ATHLETE

“Falun Gong has taught me how to be considerate of others and how to improve my relationships by handling conflicts constructively. [...] It has given me incredible relaxation, mental clarity, and freedom from stress.”
Shiyu Zhou
PH.D., USA

Zhuang Falun is the main text of Falun Gong (also called Falun Dafa). The book expounds upon profound principles of Truthfulness, Compassion and Tolerance. It addresses the long-forgotten term “cultivation,” the origins of illnesses, karma, the role of moral character on a path to spiritual perfection, and more.

The book was a national bestseller in China in the 1990s, and has been translated into over 40 languages. Find out why it has captured the hearts and minds of tens of millions of people in over 100 countries worldwide!

Order Your Copy
FaYuanBooks.com




Nose breathing has significant physiological differences from mouth breathing, including ensuring a more restorative sleep.

How we breathe during the day influences how we breathe when we sleep, meaning practice will re-establish habits.



Mouth taping, which can be done with medical tape or branded products, ebbs and flows as a social media challenge.

SHORTNESS OF BREATH

30%
of asthmatics and

75%
of those with anxiety suffer from dysfunctional breathing.

SOURCE: BREATHING RE-EDUCATION AND PREVENTION OF SLEEP APNEA: A REVIEW, JOURNAL OF CLINICAL MEDICINE, 2021



Sleep disordered breathing can break the healthy cycle of restorative sleep.

Obstructive sleep apnea is a chronic sleep-related breathing disorder in which the upper airway collapses.

Chronic mouth breathing influences musculoskeletal development, creating a small palate and increases the chances of obstructive sleep apnea.

oxygen but tend to have lower blood oxygen levels, affecting air exchange balance that takes place in the lungs and leading to low energy, brain fog, and trouble with memory. The balance, or exchange of gases, is the goal. “We wouldn’t be alive if it wasn’t for carbon dioxide,” Burhenne said. “If you breathe through your mouth, you’re going to breathe in too much oxygen.”

Breathing Exercises

In addition to restoring nasal breathing, McKeown trains clients with a wide variety of exercises to recruit the diaphragm in the breath, slow respiration, and increase chemosensitivity.

This forms the foundations of Buteyko breathing techniques, but McKeown emphasized that breath work ought to be tailored to the person and their unique anatomy and struggles. The Buteyko method was introduced in Russia in the 1950s by Dr. Konstantin Buteyko, who is credited for identifying dysfunctional mouth and upper chest breathing patterns.

The good news is that how we breathe during the day influences how we breathe when we sleep, meaning practice will reestablish habits. The goal is to breathe through the nose with a technique that is light, slow, and deep. Deep doesn’t mean big and expansive through the chest but describes how far down the breath goes, utilizing the diaphragm, a thin muscle deep in the trunk that partitions the chest and abdomen.

“We all assume we can breathe properly. We’ve never been taught how to breathe. We really need to learn how to,” Burhenne said. “Some doctors will say it doesn’t matter what part of the lungs you breathe from. Mouth breathing doesn’t engage the diaphragm or lower lobes of lungs.”

Here are a few exercises McKeown uses:

- Place one hand on your chest and one just above your navel. Put slight pressure on your body with your hands and then soften your body against the pressure. Snoring causes air turbulence, so imagine breathing in an opposite way, slow and soft.
- Breathe in such a way that you are trying to hide the fact that you are breathing but not by holding your breath. (If you do this right, it should make your saliva more watery, a sign that your nervous system feels more relaxed.)
- Slow your respiratory rate down and as you do, imagine the top of your head becoming very relaxed, then the back of your head, jaw, shoulders, arms, and all the way down the body.
- Practice air hunger, which improves chemosensitivity, by taking in about 30 percent less air. Do this for about four minutes but stop if you feel like you are suffocating.

Another breathing goal is to put the tongue in its proper location, which is up against the palate with the tip of the tongue resting behind the top teeth. A lazy tongue slips and blocks the nasal passage that runs behind the throat.

“You don’t want your throat collapsing at the slightest pressure,” McKeown said. “If your mouth is open, you’re not likely to have your tongue resting at the roof of the mouth.”

How We Became Mouth Breathers

Despite being common in older adults, mouth breathing often has roots in childhood. Chronic mouth breathing influences musculoskeletal development, creating a small palate and increasing the chances of obstructive sleep apnea.

“Children who are mouth breathers, their



Benefits of Functional Nasal Breathing

- Better sleep breathing
- Reduces chemosensitivity to carbon dioxide
- Normalizes respiratory rate
- Improves muscle tone
- Increases lung volume
- Increases stores of oxygen and carbon dioxide
- Increases heart rate variability
- Improves vagal tone/easier to bounce back after stress
- Puts tongue in correct position

tongue is not resting on the top of their mouth. As a result, they tend to develop narrow v-shaped maxilla,” McKeown said. “There’s not enough room for their tongue, causing overcrowding of teeth. But the real problem is there is not enough room for the child’s tongue and that encroaches on the airway and causes dysfunction for the rest of their life.”

McKeown is determined to use holistic tools, because it’s unlikely telling someone to stop mouth breathing will correct their behavior.

“Cognitive training isn’t going to change respiratory physiology, and we have to change physiology. And we have to regulate the autonomic nervous system,” he said.

Teaching people of all ages how to properly breathe is essential for self-regulation, and it matters because mouth breathing, anxiety, and sleep all affect one another in ways that are mostly subconscious.

Breathing, however, can be manipulated, trained, and practiced in such a way that it can influence the body subconsciously. This somatic method can impact habits better than cognitive behavioral therapy alone.

While most of us might relate this to something like a panic attack—you can’t talk the body out of having one but you can breathe your way out—it applies to any kind of physical or emotional trauma the body experiences. “Mouth breathing is trauma. The mouth is simply not for breathing,” McKeown said. “If we breathe hard and fast, we are telling the body things are not good, we aren’t safe. When we have some control over our breathing, we have some control over the mind.”

That’s why it’s important to proceed with caution with mouth tape, so it doesn’t create additional trauma.

There are tapes specifically designed for children that put gentle pressure on the jaw to stay closed without sealing the lips. Mouth tape should always be applied soft enough that it will fall off if your mouth opens.

The Danger of Continued Mouth Breathing

In addition to the disrupting of sleep and contributing to disorders rooted in breathing difficulties, mouth breathing can also dry out the mouth, cause damage to the upper airways, give you bad breath, and cause tooth decay.

Those are the reasons Burhenne will sing the praises of mouth taping and continue to incorporate breathing into his dental practice. “Imagine breathing through your nose for six hours straight. How calming that would be, how it humidifies the nasal membranes, how it opens up the nasal passages, it humidifies the air, it’s gentler on the lungs, it changes mouth pH, lowers cavities, increases saliva, which remineralizes and fixes teeth,” he said. “Breathing is important. You need to learn as quickly as possible what your status is.”

For him, mouth taping is like the stress test for sleep. And because nasal breathing coaxes a more relaxed state by dropping respiratory and heart rates, it plays a role in overall health.

“It is a fix to your whole poor sleeping and apnea and relationship with your spouse? No,” Burhenne said. “But having said that, if you breathe properly, things come easier—less brain fog, less headaches, less joint aches. You feel better. You can sleep better.”

A Small Piece of Tape May Drastically Improve Your Health

Continued from Page 1

Obstructive sleep apnea is a chronic sleep-related breathing disorder in which the upper airway collapses and blocks the nasal passageway, causing a wake cycle as breathing unconsciously switches to the mouth. It’s more common as you age and with thickening of fatty tissue in the neck and tongue. Hormones, various diseases, anatomical abnormalities, obesity, and lifestyle habits such as drinking and smoking also are risk factors.

When Burhenne suggests taping to patients, he asks them to text him the next morning about whether it improved their sleep. He said it can shorten the diagnostic process, which sometimes involves different specialists and lengthy tests.

“The patient who can’t keep it on, we know in one or two nights they have a problem,” he said.

Patrick McKeown, international breathing coach and creator of Oxygen Advantage, has been mouth taping since 1998, but he also acknowledged it doesn’t stand alone as a treatment for breathing dysfunction because it doesn’t address the root cause.

Most of his clients breathe by mouth as a result of anxiety or asthma, which are sometimes exacerbated in part by mouth breathing. McKeown helps them establish nasal breathing during the day by working on congestion and habits, improving tolerances for carbon dioxide, and training them to recruit the diaphragm to support the breath.

“It’s unfortunate medical doctors haven’t embraced the importance of nose breathing and breathing exercises to help people with asthma,” he said. “There’s a role for medication. It’s also very good to give people simple tools to help their condition.”

The debate lends itself to controversy because very little research on mouth taping has been done, though anecdotally many doing it rave about improved energy, athletic performance, mental clarity, and recall. Certainly, not everyone will find that slapping a piece of tape over their lips will solve all of their breathing-related health problems. Instead, the reason those doing it experience success is really just because nasal breathing is functional breathing.

“We aren’t just taping everybody willy-nilly,” McKeown said. “The benefits of keeping the mouth closed during sleep far outweigh what would happen if the mouth is open.”

Who Should Mouth Tape?

Not everybody needs to use tape, and nobody should try to correct sleep apnea by exclusively taping. A key indicator that it could help you, McKeown said, is if you wake up with a dry mouth in the morning.

Dysfunctional breathing impacts nearly 10 percent of the population, but it affects 30 percent of asthmatics and 75 percent of those with anxiety, according to a 2021 article in the Journal of Clinical Medicine. In adults 50 and older, 43 percent of men and 27 percent of women have sleep-disordered breathing because

upper airway muscles get weak as we age. Mouth breathing, McKeown said, makes obstructive sleep apnea worse.

And just because you use a continuous airway positive pressure (CPAP) machine, doesn’t mean you’re exempt from mouth breathing. Twenty years of data suggest that only 34 percent of patients are adhering to proper use of the device, according to a 2016 article in the Journal of Otolaryngology - Head & Neck Surgery. This review of studies on CPAP pointed out that the many techniques for improving compliance have had no effect, suggesting CPAP can no longer be considered the gold standard of sleep apnea treatment.

Breath training is beneficial, McKeown said, and it should always be considered prior to long-term use of mouth tape.

Step one is to make sure congestion isn’t the main problem or that mouth breathing hasn’t become habitual. This applies to adults and children.

“The main thing about mouth taping is to make sure you can breathe functionally through the nose first of all,” he said. “The more you breathe through your nose, the better it works.”

If your nose is too congested, McKeown said:

- Take a normal breath in and out through your nose.
- Pinch your nose to hold your breath, and move your body or gently nod your head up and down.
- Hold your breath for as long as you can—until you feel a strong air hunger.
- Release your nose and inhale as calmly as possible.
- Rest for 30–60 seconds and then repeat six times.

“You establish you can breathe through the nose during wakefulness,” McKeown said. “When they’re feeling comfortable breathing in and out of their nose after a week of practice, we’ll have them tape their mouth when they sleep.”

Another person who may struggle with mouth tape is someone who has a low tolerance to carbon dioxide. They might experience distress over the sensation of air hunger if they don’t first build up their chemosensitivity, or tolerance for carbon dioxide.

Burhenne said he was taught in dental school that carbon dioxide is toxic, something he’s been challenged to see completely differently. Those who mouth breathe take in more

Are Pain Pills Making Your Arthritic Knees Worse?

New research raises questions about the risk and benefit of common pain killers

MAT LECOMPTÉ

Countless people pop over-the-counter (OTC) pain medications to help them cope with joint pain to make it through the day.

But that short-term relief could come at a long-term cost, according to some new research.

A new study led by Johanna Luitjens, a postdoctoral scholar in the Department of Radiology and Biomedical Imaging at the University of California-San Francisco, suggests that OTC pain medications like aspirin, Aleve, or ibuprofen may make arthritic knee pain worse.

The work found that participants who

took non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs, regularly for four years showed worse results concerning knee synovitis, which is inflammation of the knee.

The researchers also found that cartilage composition was worse in the NSAID users compared to the controls. NSAID pain medications block the production of bodily chemicals that cause inflammation and are typically taken to provide some short-term relief from arthritis pain.

The most common NSAIDs are aspirin, ibuprofen (Motrin, Advil), and naproxen sodium (Aleve), and are available over the counter at virtually every pharmacy and grocery store.

Researchers looked at data gathered from more than 1,000 participants in a federally funded long-term observational

study of knee arthritis. Participants entered the study between February 2004 and May 2006.

They then compared 277 people who were prescribed NSAIDs for at least a year and compared that with 793 people who weren’t treated with the drugs. All participants also received MRI scans on their knees.

The results may reveal two possibilities. One is that the NSAIDs may not effectively control inflammation in knee arthritis while also causing the cartilage to weaken.

On the other hand, people taking NSAIDs may tend to be more active, thus putting more wear and tear on the joints.

A randomized-control study would be the best way to determine the effect of

Pain medications such as aspirin, Aleve, or ibuprofen may make arthritic knee pain worse.

NSAIDs on knee pain and structure.

In the meantime, the best ways to prevent or control knee arthritis are to maintain a healthy weight, be active, and build muscle around the joint.

Mat Lecompté is a freelance health and wellness journalist. This article was first published on Bel Marra Health.



Common over-the-counter pain killers may be leaving some people worse for wear, new research suggests.

YURIY KLYMENKO/SHUTTERSTOCK

HEALTH AND DIGESTION

FINDING THE CAUSE

More people are suffering from certain food allergies and sensitivities for a host of reasons. Different tests and dietary approaches can help resolve them.

Are You Suffering From Food Allergies or Sensitivities?



ALL IMAGES BY SHUTTERSTOCK UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED

Continued from Page 1

Food Sensitivity: Food sensitivities usually include an IgA-, IgG-, or IgM-mediated immune response to a food. These can be much more difficult to diagnose because symptoms can manifest themselves in a wide variety of ways. We'll discuss this more shortly, but symptoms can range from gastrointestinal issues to nasal congestion, skin irritation, or even having an effect on your mood. The response to food sensitivities is often delayed and can take up to 72 hours to manifest.

Food Intolerance: Food intolerances arise when the body lacks specific enzymes to properly handle certain foods. Our body requires certain enzymes to digest different types of food, and when we lack that, an intolerance can manifest itself. You likely know someone with a lactose intolerance, which is a very common food intolerance. In the case of a lactose intolerance, the individual's body lacks the enzyme lactase that allows them to digest lactose (the sugar in dairy products).

Perhaps you didn't know that some of these symptoms are linked to food sensitivities. They include:

- Acne
- Brain fog
- Congestion or runny nose
- Constipation
- Depression
- Diarrhea or loose stools
- Fatigue
- Flare of autism or autoimmune symptoms
- Gas or bloating
- Headaches or migraines
- Heartburn
- Immune system impairment
- Insomnia
- Inflammatory bowel disease
- Irritable bowel syndrome
- Joint pain or inflammation
- Malabsorption of vitamins and minerals
- Rashes, eczema, or swelling
- Sinus infections
- Weight gain

There are limitations to the elimination diet, especially if symptoms are related to an infection or deeper problems.

Why Are Food Allergies, Sensitivities Increasing in Prevalence? The increase in food allergies and sensitivities isn't linked to one specific cause, but rather a combination of many things our bodies are fighting against.

Medications and Antibiotics: Common medications such as Tylenol and ibuprofen as well as antibiotics deplete glutathione, which is vital to a well-functioning immune system and gut microbiome.

Glutathione is an antioxidant that fights cell-damaging molecules in our body. It helps us to break down nutrients we consume, repairs DNA, activates important enzymes, and inactivates toxins. If the glutathione in your body has been depleted by too much-repeated use of these types of medications or too many rounds of antibiotics over the course of your life, it's likely that your body will have a negative response to food in some form.

Furthermore, these medications cause intestinal permeability, which contributes to the development of immune responses to foods.

Environmental Toxins: It's no surprise to know that environmental toxins that we encounter every day can be part of the "toxic load" our bodies are trying to keep up with.

It's estimated that the average individual encounters at least 700,000 different toxins (though many believe that number to likely be as high as 2 million) every single day. These toxins are in cleaning products, bottled water, skincare and makeup, per-

Chemical Culprits

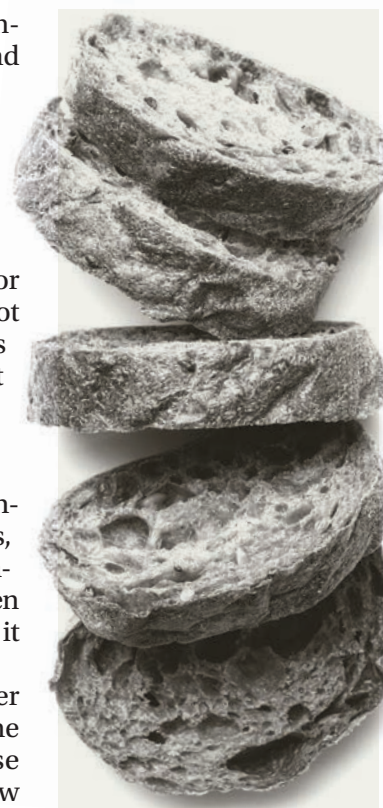
There are endless sources of toxic chemicals in the man-made environment, including particles from fabrics and furniture, cosmetics, and household cleaners. Some of these are impossible to avoid, but others can be easily and cheaply replaced.



Painkillers and antibiotics deplete glutathione, an antioxidant with several key roles in the body, including DNA repair.

Common Food Sensitivity Symptoms

When certain foods are continually consumed over a long, or even short, period of time, the immune system becomes dysregulated and symptoms occur. Many think of food sensitivities mostly affecting the gut and manifesting gastrointestinal symptoms, but in reality, they can also affect the skin and brain, and have systemic implications.



Common Food Sensitivities

While there are a wide variety of foods that people may have sensitivities to, the most common are:

- Gluten
- Conventional dairy
- Eggs
- Corn
- Soy
- Nuts
- Nightshades

If you have a weak microbiome, these foods can cause inflammation in your body which triggers a wide variety of symptoms as we've discussed.

If you're unsure what foods you're sensitive to, try a rotational diet of limited foods for periods of time.

different bacterial strains in the gut that are responsible for various tasks including immune function, managing inflammation, assimilation of nutrients, and ensuring proper barrier function. Furthermore, the microbiome can influence metabolic health, cardiovascular health, liver health, hormone health, among others.

Identifying food sensitivities helps us remove inflammation and immediate symptoms quickly, but the stool test tells us why these symptoms are occurring. Consider tests that look for:

- Intestinal permeability (leaky gut)
- Calprotectin
- Pancreatic elastase 1
- Bile acids
- Cholic acid
- Chenodeoxycholic acid
- Deoxycholic acid
- Lithocholic acid
- Acetic acid
- Butyric acid
- Propionic acid
- Valeric acid
- Total SCFAs
- SS-glucuronidase
- Bacterial species involved with SIBO, IBS, IBD
- Fungal species
- Parasites and worms
- Viruses

Gluten Cross-Reactivity

If you've removed gluten from your diet but are still experiencing symptoms, you may be dealing with gluten cross-reactivity. This happens when your body notices a food you are consuming has a similar protein sequence to gluten. Essentially, your body says, "Hey! I recognize this, and I know it's bad," producing the same immune response as it does with gluten.

This is most commonly seen with naturally gluten-free grains such as:

- Corn
- Rice
- Oats
- Millet

However, you may be experiencing these symptoms while being entirely grain free. Conventional dairy products and yeast can also produce the same inflammatory reaction symptoms. Current data shows that 50 percent of people with a gluten sensitivity are also sensitive to conventional dairy.

The Elimination Diet

The elimination diet removes foods that are known to drive inflammation and symptoms as well as a careful reintroduction period to rule out food reactions.

This plan is designed to remove potentially problematic foods in order to decrease inflammation in the body, rebalance the gut flora, soothe the gut lining, regulate blood sugar, modulate the immune system, resolve nutrient deficiencies, and bring overall healing to the body. My book, "Restorative Kitchen," is an extensive cookbook and guide for an elimination diet.

There are limitations to the elimination diet, especially if symptoms are related to an infection or deeper problems in the gut that have not been properly dealt

with. If you start an elimination diet, it's important not to see it as a "quick fix," as it can take time to truly heal your gut. You may start seeing improvement in your symptoms right away, but for others, it takes more time. It's important to remember that a diet like this, though it has its challenges and limitations, will ultimately bring so much relief and healing to your body if you are patient as you heal from the inside out.

Rotational Eating

Another strategy to identify food allergies and sensitivities is with rotational eating. Rotational eating is essentially consuming foods from a specific food group that has biological similarities, and then taking a break from eating them for several days (at least three) before consuming again. This gives time for you to record any symptoms or reactions your body might be having to the food group, while also helping your body to have time to process food groups that might be inflammatory. It's essentially a "time out" for your immune system to allow it to regulate itself properly, instead of being constantly inundated with inflammation-triggering foods.

When you're doing a rotational eating plan, making an extra concerted effort to eat seasonally will help with this. We aren't designed to eat the same 20 to 30 fruits, vegetables, and meats year-round. Shopping at your local farmers market, produce stand, and developing relationships with any local farmers in your area will make eating seasonally much easier. Even when you're not doing rotational eating, your body will thank you for making the effort to consume food with the seasons.

Dealing with symptoms that seem to constantly come and go and change often can be incredibly frustrating and discouraging. You might feel like you eat "healthy," but still have sensitivities. Following some of the strategies we discussed today can make a big difference in helping you eliminate food triggers and begin your journey to healing. However, as we mentioned earlier—it's important to also work with a trusted practitioner who can help you identify the root of the problem.

While walking the road to identify and treat your food allergy or sensitivity symptoms can seem like a long one, when you allow your body to heal, you will be so grateful you did! Health is wealth, friends.

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

We may be exposed to as many as

700,000

DIFFERENT TOXINS

every day, (though many believe that number to likely be as high as 2 million).

Cinnamon: A Medicinal Powerhouse in Your Spice Rack

Cinnamon can inhibit bacteria, improve digestion, help prevent Alzheimer's, and more

DAVID CHU & SUMMER LAWSON

Cinnamon is the second-most popular spice after black pepper in the United States, especially during fall and winter. People enjoy using cinnamon to elevate the taste of food. Did you know the cinnamon in your favorite gingerbread latte was once considered a rare, high-end, luxurious item that only noble pharaohs could enjoy?

In ancient China, cinnamon was widely used for treating multiple diseases. Recent studies have found that cinnamon has anti-inflammatory, antibacterial, antioxidant, and anti-tumor effects. It reduces the risk of diabetes and Alzheimer's disease.

What's Cinnamon?

Cinnamon is the dried bark of cinnamon

trees. It belongs to Cinnamomum camphora (L.) Presl spruces. Cinnamon has been used worldwide for thousands of years. It was documented even in the Bible and ancient books of Egypt and China.

In Egypt, people would incorporate cinnamon for preservation and religious rituals. Among Europeans in the Middle Ages, having cinnamon showed off your societal status if you could afford it.

In ancient China, according to the book "The Divine Farmer's Classic of Materia Medica," which is an important classic in traditional Chinese medicine (TCM), cinnamon carries a spicy, warm, nontoxic flavor. In TCM, cinnamon is a medicinal herb for warming the spleen, kidney, heart, and liver meridians and unblocking veins. Cinnamon is also a natural pain killer and is

widely used for treating multiple diseases.

TCM has discovered that there are 12 meridians in the human body, including lung meridian, large intestine meridian, stomach meridian, spleen meridian, heart meridian, small intestine meridian, bladder meridian, kidney meridian, pericardium meridian, triple heater (san jiao) meridian, gallbladder meridian, and liver meridian.

Meridians are responsible for transporting "qi" (vital energy) and "blood" throughout the body. Qi and blood circulate to maintain balance and stability in various tissues and organs. Therefore, warming the meridian could benefit the transportation of the qi and blood and help keep us healthy.

Due to its multipurpose nature, cinnamon is one of the most popular herbs that TCM doctors use to adjust overall wellness.

The Superpower of Cinnamon

Several scientific studies have found that cinnamon has anti-inflammatory, antibacterial, antioxidant, and anti-tumor effects. It regulates blood glucose, reduces cholesterol, balances the immune system, and benefits the cardiovascular system. The study also pointed out cinnamon can reduce the risk of diabetes and Alzheimer's disease.

Dr. Lin Yipu, a YunDing Traditional Chinese Medicine Clinic clinician, said that cinnamon has six scientifically proven effects.

Cinnamon also increases fullness and inhibits appetite to improve weight loss.

Promotes Metabolism

Many office workers like to add a little cinnamon powder to their coffee for its fragrant aroma. Not only can cinnamon add an additional boost to their coffee because of its metabolic promotion, but cinnamon also increases fullness and inhibits appetite to improve weight loss.

Lowers Blood Lipids and Fights Diabetes

A study found that consuming 200mg of cinnamon per kilogram of body weight for six consecutive weeks significantly decreased the concentration of triglyceride (TG) and the total cholesterol in the subject's blood.

The polyphenols in cinnamon boost lipid metabolism and inhibit liver lipid peroxidation.

Inhibit Bacteria Growth

Studies show that cinnamon has various antibacterial properties and has been shown to act on Staphylococcus aureus, Escherichia coli, Salmonella typhoid, and some fungi as well.

Anti-Inflammatory, Anti-Cancer, Anti-Tumor Effects

The research results show that cinnamon has anti-inflammatory effects. It reduces inflammation by activating Peroxidase body growth living receptors and inhibiting COX-2 and NF-kappaB activities. Meanwhile, inhibiting the production of these two substances in the body could prevent the development of cancer cells.

Improves Digestive System

Cinnamon improves appetite, relieves bloating, boosts digestion, and stimulates gastrointestinal and bowel movement. Simultaneously, cinnamon oil protects the gastrointestinal from free radical damage while reducing the risk of gastric

ulcers. Other valuable properties of cinnamon oil (which is often called oleum cinnamomi); it inhibits Helicobacter pylori's growth and reduces the risk of chronic gastritis and stomach cancer.

Potential to Treat Dementia and Parkinson's Disease

Research has found that cinnamon can enhance brain-derived neurotrophic factors BDNF and NT-3 in the brain, thus protecting cells and slowing down oxidation, which is expected to be one of the treatments for Parkinson's disease. In addition, cinnamon can reduce abnormal Tau protein aggregation and nerve fiber formation in the brain, thus achieving the goal of preventing Alzheimer's disease.

Adding Cinnamon to Your Daily Diet

(1) Combining cinnamon and dessert is the most common way that people enjoy cinnamon. Add cinnamon powder in dessert makings, such as cinnamon rolls, apple pie, muffins, and cinnamon on French toast.

(2) Season breakfast porridge, soup, barbecue, curry, and other dishes with cinnamon.

(3) Add cinnamon sticks to drinks, whether coffee, black tea, hot cocoa, or even red wine. Or you can sprinkle cinnamon on your pumpkin latte.

"Although cinnamon has many benefits, if consumed excessively, like many other things, it might cause side effects," Lin said. "The amount of coumarin in cinnamon is relatively high. Overconsumption for an extended period may cause hepatotoxicity, which is liver toxicity. It will injure the liver and kidneys. Therefore, it's best to consume cinnamon within 6g (0.2 ounces) daily."

Who Should Avoid Cinnamon

Lin also said that patients with yin deficiency and intense heat in the body, are pregnant, or have hemorrhagic diseases should avoid cinnamon, as it might cause more significant dryness, heat, and bleeding.

Pregnant women should be careful of overeating cinnamon as it can be toxic to both mothers and babies.

Cinnamon is also a natural blood thinner, so anyone on blood thinners should consult their physician before taking cinnamon in any significant amount.

NEW AFRICA/SHUTTERSTOCK



Cinnamon adds a warm and welcome flavor but that's just the start. This medicinal herb has a long list of therapeutic effects against multiple ailments.

The Magic of Christmas

The mystery of Santa Claus has an influence on how children see the world

TATIANA DENNING

"May you never be too grown up to search the skies on Christmas Eve." —Unknown

(Warning: Santa Claus spoiler alert.)

Many of my early childhood memories are now cloudy and faint, as if lingering in some kind of ethereal, dream-like world, partially hidden in a shroud of mist and mystery. But there are a handful of events that I can still see so clearly, so vividly, that it's almost as if I could reach out and touch them. Christmas Eve, just days after I'd turned 6 years old, is one of those memories.

Believing in Magic

It was a cold, crisp night, the kind of night where your breath creates puffs of mist that warm your nose when you talk. Like most of my childhood Christmases in West Virginia, the ground lay covered in freshly fallen snow, glistening under the cloudless, star-laden sky.

And like every Christmas Eve, we had to go to bed extra early. After all, we couldn't risk Santa Claus passing over our house because we hadn't been in bed when he tried to deliver our presents! So after setting out milk and cookies to give Santa some much-needed energy, and writing a note of greetings, my younger brother Leo and I, each clad in our new Christmas pajamas, scampered off to bed, he to the bottom bunk, and I to the top.

We could hardly contain our excitement. How long would it be until Santa arrived? What special surprise would he have in his bag? What if our parents forgot to leave the door unlocked? (We didn't have a chimney, so it was Santa's only option.)

As I lay there, I wondered what it must be like for Santa and the elves, working so hard all year long at the North Pole, preparing for this one, big night.

"They must be as excited as we are!" I thought.

Similar to the claymation cartoon "Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer" that we loved so much, I pictured them hitching up all the reindeer to the sleigh, then using a special kind of magic to fit on all those presents. And the kind of magic it took for Santa to deliver presents to all the kids across the world in a single night, well, I couldn't even

comprehend it. Santa was truly magical!

A Fortunate Sighting

As I lay deep in thought, gazing out the window beside my bed, I suddenly saw it. "No," I thought, "I must be seeing things." But after rubbing my eyes and looking again, I realized that my eyes were not, in fact, deceiving me. There, off in the distance, I saw it as clear as day—the blinking of Rudolph's red nose, as he and Santa delivered presents.

"Wow!" I thought, "what lucky kid has Santa at their house already?" I figured that Santa's sleigh must be on the rooftop, with Rudolph and the team waiting patiently for his return.

With Santa being so close, I knew I had to get to sleep, and fast. But I was so awestruck, so excited, that I couldn't stop watching Rudolph's blinking nose. I mean, how fortunate could I be, seeing Santa and Rudolph in action? It wasn't easy to just close your eyes and ignore such a rare sighting. So I decided that as soon as Rudolph led the sleigh away, I would close my eyes. But, after some time had passed and Rudolph still hadn't moved, I started to get a little worried. Was something wrong? Santa sure was taking a long time at one house. How would he make it around the world if he spent so much time at one place?

Then, I realized, "Maybe Santa is waiting for me to go to sleep so he can come to our house!"

Reluctantly, I closed my eyes. I knew I had to do the right thing and go to sleep before Santa could visit. Still, I couldn't help peeking a few more times. But sure enough, Rudolph still hadn't moved. I knew they were waiting for me to fall asleep, and thankfully, sleep finally came.

The next morning, before the sun was even up, Leo and I, full of anticipation, ran into the living room. And we weren't disappointed! There, under the soft glow of the blue lights on the Christmas tree, lay colorfully wrapped presents in a plethora of shapes and sizes.

My brother and I went to the table, and as we'd hoped, Santa had eaten most of the cookies and milk we'd left for him. To our joy, we saw that he'd even written something on our note!

For many children, Santa Claus is one of the earliest and most impactful figures with a magical presence in their lives.

"Ho, Ho, Ho!" the note read, in scribbled writing. "Santa must have been in a hurry" I thought, "or maybe he needs handwriting classes." But no, of course he was in a hurry—it only made sense that he would be.

When I told my family about what I'd seen the night before, they shared in my enthusiasm and excitement, asking questions about my amazing experience.

I have no recollection of even a single Christmas present I received that year. I guess that's because they paled in comparison to the happiness of seeing Rudolph's blinking nose. In fact, it left such a deep impression on me, it remains one of the best memories in my memory bank to this day.

A Surprising Revelation

It wasn't until years later, while riding the bus home from school one day in fourth grade, that I learned the adult truth about Santa Claus.

As I listened to a couple of kids talking about it in the next seat over, I could hardly believe my ears. I still remember the disappointment I felt as it dawned on me that maybe all the magic that I so deeply, so surely, so wholeheartedly believed in, might not really exist after all. At first, I wasn't sure if I should be upset with the kids for telling lies, or upset with myself for doubting that Santa existed. My mind simply couldn't accept it.

Yes, I knew there were other Santas. I mean, we had our picture taken with them every year, but we knew they were just Santa's helpers. The real Santa Claus lived at the North Pole and was busy preparing for Christmas, so of course he needed helpers. But, doubt had crept in. I couldn't even bring myself to ask my parents if what I'd heard was true. It took months for the cold, hard reality to finally sink in. Over the next few years, I still wondered if maybe some form of Santa really did exist.

Why the Spirit of Christmas Is Good for Your Health

While I realize that whether

or not to tell your child there's a Santa Claus has become somewhat controversial, personally, I'm grateful that I was able to experience such a firm belief in magic, and wouldn't change it for the world.

I also realize that the reason for celebrating Christmas—the birth of Jesus—sometimes gets lost in the commercialization and overspending that now takes place. But I believe that, in its best state, the spirit of Santa, that magic, helps remind us of the good things in mankind, things that upright religions also promote, things such as selflessness, thinking of others first, sharing and giving to others, love, warmth and caring, joy and happiness, gratitude, peace and goodwill toward others, and having a deep sense of belief and faith.

While Christmas could undoubtedly use some rebalancing, maybe the reason communities are transformed into something wondrous and magical, that we have a sense of hope and possibility, and that our mood is elevated this time of year, is that we focus more on these good things—thinking of others first, being kind, and performing acts of giving and charity.

In fact, a meta-analysis in Psychological Bulletin found that, by regularly thinking of others and doing kind things, our personal sense of happiness and well-being is improved. Researchers found this is especially true when we do small, random acts of kindness in our day-to-day life. The elderly even saw an improvement in their health as a result of showing kindness toward others, researchers found.

The Mayo Clinic believes that acts of kindness are so important that they've even created an online program you can join called Kickstart Kindness. They state, "Kindness has been shown to increase self-esteem, empathy and compassion; decrease anxiety and stress; and improve mood and relationships."

And according to kindness scientist Dr. David Hamilton, being kind releases the feel-good hormone oxytocin. This hormone, in turn, "causes the release of a chemical called nitric oxide in blood vessels, which dilates (expands) the blood vessels. This reduces blood pressure and therefore oxytocin is known as a 'cardioprotective' hormone because it protects the heart (by lowering blood pressure). The key is that acts of kindness can produce oxytocin and therefore kindness can be said to be cardioprotective."

The amazing benefits of kindness, something inherent to the spirit of Christmas, are almost like a type of magic in themselves.



Children have been left with relatively few benevolent myths and fables.

I'm grateful that I was able to experience such a firm belief in magic, and wouldn't change it for the world.



Leaving a treat for Santa is a time-honored tradition in many homes.

GESHAS/SHUTTERSTOCK

Keeping Magic Alive

Believing in something beyond what we can see, beyond what many think is possible—in essence having faith, or what some might call believing in magic—opens up our mind to a myriad of possibilities. And it reminds us that there are things greater than ourselves, things that we may not be able to see with our eyes or hear with our ears, but that do, in fact, exist.

This even has implications for the advancement of society, suggests Dr. Jacqueline Woolley, professor and chair of the department of psychology at the University of Texas-Austin. "Believing in impossible things such as Santa Claus may exercise children's counterfactual reasoning skills," she says. "This kind of thinking—engaging the border between what is possible and what is impossible—is at the root of all scientific discoveries and inventions, from airplanes to the Internet," she writes in an essay for HuffPost.

Whatever a parent chooses to teach their child about Santa, in my view, the important thing is to keep alive a sense of magic, of possibility, of faith—and of course the reason for celebrating Christmas, the birth of Jesus, and all that that implies. For those who are religious or spiritual, this theme of faith and a belief in a sort of magic carries over into a belief in the Creator, a higher being that we can't directly see, but that we can see evidence of.

As the conductor in "The Polar Express" said, "Seeing is believing, but sometimes the most real things in the world are the things we can't see." Just because someone can't believe something, doesn't mean it isn't true. At the end of the day, faith is an act of trust.

For a young child, belief in things such as magic and the unseen comes naturally. They have no skepticism, no cynicism, and none of the ideas that we adults have formed about how the world works and how things should be. Perhaps if we can reconnect with that place that exists in all of us, that place where Santa Claus is possible, we can broaden our hearts and minds.

Maybe by bringing a little magic into our lives, having faith in humanity and in something greater than ourselves, and helping one another by giving of ourselves unconditionally, we can carry the magic and spirit of Christmas with us every day, and help make the world a better place.

As Kris Kringle from "Miracle on 34th Street" said, "Oh, Christmas isn't just a day, it's a frame of mind."

Tatiana Denning, D.O., is a preventive family medicine physician. She believes in empowering patients with the tools, knowledge and skills needed to improve their health by focusing on mindfulness, healthy habits, and weight management.

MINDSET MATTERS

Awe-Inspiring Tutorials Can Ease Health Worker Burnout

Brief, free mental exercises can help health care workers recover and recharge, a new study finds

SARAH AVERY

Watching tutorials that inspire health care workers to contemplate awe, gratitude, and kindness can promote enduring improvements in mental health outcomes such as depression and emotional exhaustion, researchers report after conducting a clinical trial. The quick, daily intervention they tested provides a timely and cost-efficient way to address health worker burnout, which escalated during the COVID pandemic. "Emotional exhaustion was bad among

health care workers even before the pandemic, and it's worse now," said study senior author Bryan Sexton, director of the Duke Center for Healthcare Safety and Quality.

"This issue affects not only health care workers, but also patients. There is clearly a need for accessible, evidence-based approaches that address the problem." For the study, published in Frontiers in Public Health this month, Sexton and colleagues analyzed the content of a variety of interventions that help people recover after emotional upheavals.

The essence of those approaches is to acknowledge difficulties while nudging people out of gloomy thoughts by directing them to think or act in positive ways, such as identifying personal reasons for gratitude, offering kindnesses to others, or recalling awe-inducing moments such as beautiful scenes from nature.

"We call it skills, not pills," Sexton said.

Most of those interventions tend to be long and tedious, making follow-through difficult for people who are already exhausted. Sexton's team refined the reflective activities into two- to seven-minute modules that participants joined on their phones daily for 10 days.

"We wanted our intervention to provide bite-sized, simple things people can do that have

benefit right away," he said. "Our goal was to strip this down to the barest minimum and still have impact."

The researchers tested the intervention—called WISER for Web-based Implementation for the Science of Enhancing Resilience—among about 480 health care workers. They randomly assigned the participants to a group that received the intervention immediately, or to a second group that waited two weeks. The wait-listed group served as the comparison to measure how the intervention group responded after one week.

Each evening at 7 p.m., participants received a text message with the day's educational video, including simple and engaging reflective activities lasting less than 10 minutes. Every module included a prompt for doing three good things, and other modules included activities to cultivate awe or gratitude, perform acts of kindness, or strengthen relationships. The researcher assessed whether the in-



Life on the frontline of the health care system can be taxing. Burnout is common but researchers say an exercise in awe and gratitude shows promising results.



ALL PHOTOS BY SHUTTERSTOCK

tervention affected emotional exhaustion, depressive symptoms, work-life integration, happiness, emotional thriving, and emotional recovery.

Upon analysis, five of the six well-being outcomes were improved by one week, and all outcomes were improved after one, six, and 12 months.

"These modules demonstrate that a few minutes a day can have a tremendous impact," Sexton said. "It's getting people to pause and reflect on the good, or the hopeful, or the grateful, inspired, or amazing."

"Remembering something jaw-dropping like a beautiful sunset, or what a grandparent or mentor or coach did for them that makes them feel grateful—these are non-triggering instructions that really do a lot to help people recharge. But equally important, they are simple and easily implemented with minimal time and no cost."

The National Institute of Child Health and Human Development and the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality funded the work.

This article was originally published by Duke University. Republished via Futurity.org under Creative Commons License 4.0.

MINDSET MATTERS

Whose Job Is It to Fulfill Your Needs?

An excerpt from "The Emotionally Exhausted Woman"

NANCY COLIER

An excerpt from psychologist Nancy Colier's newly released book, "The Emotionally Exhausted Woman: Why You're Feeling Depleted & How to Get What You Need." (New Harbinger Publications, 2022)

Most of us believe, at least at some level, that it's someone else's responsibility to figure out our needs—and not just figure them out, but also satisfy them. But in reality, if you're no longer a child, then that responsibility, that privilege, is yours and, to some degree, yours alone.

This isn't to suggest that your needs won't be taken care of by others. They will be, at times. But contrary to what you perhaps wish were true, and certainly the fantasy you've been sold, it's no one else's mandate—not your

partner's, friends', family's, employer's, or anyone else's—to intuit your needs, nor to fulfill them (or to fulfill you, for that matter). It's lovely when it happens, but the task of taking care of and sustaining yourself ultimately belongs to you.

When you take on this responsibility wholeheartedly, without resistance or resentment and without imagining it should be otherwise, then you are ready to live self-care in its most mature incarnation.

Most self-care strategies focus on action: what you need to do, how you need to advocate for yourself and behave differently in the world—so that you can get your needs met. Action is good and, of course, necessary. But to go straight to action, to start doing self-care before being self-caring, is skipping



DOMZEALE IMAGES/SHUTTERSTOCK

Nancy Colier is a psychotherapist, interfaith minister, thought leader, public speaker, and the author of "Can't Stop Thinking: How to Let Go of Anxiety and Free Yourself from Obsessive Rumination," "The Power of Off," and the recently released "The Emotionally Exhausted Woman: Why You're Depleted and How to Get What You Need" (November 2022.)

MINDSET MATTERS

Perfectionist Teens Reported More Depression, Stress During COVID-19

DANIELLE S. MOLNAR,
DAWN ZINGA & MELISSA BLACKBURN

Perfectionists are sometimes thought of as superheroes: people who are high achievers and seem to always have it all together.

Perfectionism is different from simply trying to do a good job or even seeking excellence. Rather, perfectionism refers to rigidly requiring nothing short of absolute perfection and being highly self-critical.

Our recent study, published in the journal *Child Development*, examined how perfectionism is affecting teens' mental health and stress levels in the age of COVID-19.

Exacting Standards

While research shows some forms of perfectionism are related to small achievement gains, it also reveals perfectionism is commonly associated with experiencing more health problems along with relationship difficulties.

People higher in perfectionism even show signs of dysregulated immune system functioning.

Perfectionists don't fare any better with respect to their mental health: Research indicates perfectionistic individuals report higher levels of depressive symptoms, stress, disordered eating, and anxiety compared to their less-perfectionistic peers.

Perfectionistic people are particularly susceptible to experiencing these adverse consequences when they're stressed or faced with difficult and uncertain situations, because they tend to be unable to or at least reluctant to adapt to changing situations.

Perfectionist teens already suffer under the heavy weight of their own expectations, but the upheaval of COVID made it even worse.

Thus, there's good reason to be highly concerned about perfectionists during the continually evolving pandemic that has been exceptionally stressful for most people.

Perfectionism as Personality Trait

When measuring perfectionism as a personality trait, psychology researchers identify different "flavors" of perfectionism.

Self-oriented perfectionism refers to requiring perfection from oneself. People high in self-oriented perfectionism demand perfection from themselves and are incredibly hard on themselves when they don't meet those demands.

Socially prescribed perfectionism refers to the belief or perception that others require perfection. Individuals who are high in socially prescribed perfectionism think others demand perfection from them, are critical of them, and believe that they'll never measure up to others' expectations.

These forms of perfectionism are commonly observed in teens, a group that experiences relatively high levels of perfectionism. Research published in the journal *Psychology in the Schools* shows that approximately 1 in 4 youth are highly perfectionistic.



ALL PHOTOS BY SHUTTERSTOCK

Perfectionism is commonly associated with experiencing more health problems along with relationship difficulties.

1

in

4

YOUTH

are highly
perfectionistic.

SOURCE: PSYCHOLOGY IN
THE SCHOOLS, NOV. 2014,
PG 899-921



Perfectionism is commonly associated with experiencing more health problems along with relationship difficulties.

Lack of Closure, Opportunities

It's important to focus on how young people are doing during these difficult times. Unlike adults who have already gained their sense of independence, the pandemic and its accompanying restrictions have held teens back in a state of suspended reality.

For example, many teens have completely missed out on significant developmental milestones such as graduations and proms, leaving them feeling lost due to a lack of closure on important chapters of their lives.

Government-mandated lockdowns that were put in place to slow the spread of COVID-19 forced young people into isolation where they were often separated from friends and family for extended periods of time. School closures also led to substantial interruptions to young people's schooling, which is associated with gaps in educational achievement.

It isn't hard to imagine how difficult gaps would be for young perfectionists who often define themselves by their ability to achieve.

Effects of Lockdowns

Our study shows the significant effects lockdowns have had on the self-reported mental health of teens.

We assessed 187 adolescents' levels of perfectionism, anxiety symptoms, stress, and depressive symptoms before the pandemic began and then again during the first and second government-mandated lockdowns that took place in Ontario, Canada.

Results showed an interesting pattern of change with respect to depressive symptoms and stress levels. Depressive symptoms and stress decreased slightly from before the pandemic began to the first lockdown and then increased dramatically from the first to second lockdown.

Although we cannot be sure, one possible explanation for these findings is that teens were able to take a much-needed break from their busy and possibly over-scheduled lives during the first lockdown, which resulted in some relief of depressive symptoms and stress.

However, by the time the second lockdown occurred, teens may have been feeling demoralized and hopeless as the pandemic continued to take its toll on everyone, resulting in higher levels of stress and depressive symptoms.

How Perfectionists Fared

A key finding is that teen perfectionists are not faring as well during the pandemic compared to their non-perfectionistic peers. Teens who demanded perfection from themselves (self-oriented perfectionists) were more depressed, anxious, and stressed than those who didn't tend to demand perfection from themselves over the course of the pandemic.

Results also showed that when teens experienced higher than their typical levels of self-oriented perfectionism, they were also more anxious but not more depressed or stressed.

Teenagers who believed that others demanded perfection from them were more depressed and stressed than those who didn't have such beliefs during the pandemic.

We also found that when teens experienced more of these beliefs than usual, they were more depressed but not more anxious or stressed.

Struggles Behind the Mask

Taken together, these findings support the idea that perfectionistic teens are more vulnerable to mental health problems and greater stress compared to their non-perfectionistic peers during the pandemic.

It's important to recognize that although teen perfectionists often appear to be doing well on the surface, they aren't superheroes who are impervious to hardships.

Instead, they're young people who are often in distress and struggling behind their mask of perfection and in need of support during these difficult times.

Danielle S. Molnar is an associate professor of child and youth studies and the Canada Research Chair (Tier II) adjustment and well-being in children and youth at Brock University in Canada. Dawn Zinga is a professor of child and youth studies, associate dean, graduate studies and research in the faculty of social sciences at Brock University, and Melissa Blackburn is a doctoral candidate of child and youth studies at Brock University. This article was originally published by The Conversation.

THE
EPOCH
TIMES

TRUTH and TRADITION

A NEWSPAPER ABRAHAM
LINCOLN WOULD READ

SUBSCRIBE TODAY

ReadEpoch.com