

# THE EPOCH TIMES

# MIND & BODY

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## KNOW YOUR BODY

### Resolving Chronic Diseases

# AT THE Cellular Level

What you eat—and when you eat it—  
can alter the mitochondria that power  
**90 PERCENT** of cellular activity



#### MITOCHONDRIA

are aptly called the cell's 'power plants' and 'energy factories.'



Cells with malfunctioning mitochondria will become starved of energy.

Intermittent fasting and a ketogenic diet can produce fewer free radicals and give our mitochondria a break.

FLORA ZHAO

Mitochondria have received increasing attention in recent years, as they have a big impact on one's quality of life and rate of aging. Protecting mitochondria can slow aging, prevent chronic diseases, and even fight cancer.

#### Mitochondria Are the Power Plants of the Cell

Mitochondria are organelles in cells. They are very small, typically be-

tween 0.75 and 3 square microns in cross section, and cannot be seen under a microscope unless stained with a dye that can permeate cells.

The number of mitochondria in each cell varies, ranging from a few hundred to a few thousand. Cells with higher energy demands, such as liver cells and cardiac muscle cells, tend to have more mitochondria.

Aptly called the cell's "power plants" and "energy factories," mitochondria create adenosine triphosphate (ATP), which is the body's fuel, acting as the energy currency of every cell. Mitochondria use oxygen to further process glucose and fatty acids from food, generating ATP, which powers metabolic processes. The organelles produce 90 percent of the energy the body needs to function.

It's imperative that mitochondria function stably, because our bodies cannot store ATP. At any given moment, a person has about 250 grams of ATP in their cells, which equates to 4.25 watts, or the energy stored in a single AA battery, and a healthy person will generate up to 1,200 watts of energy per day.

Mitochondria also control the life cycle of cells.

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## COVID-19

### Causes and Treatments of Long-COVID Mental Health Problems

Low-cost drug treatments and free natural methods can improve conditions for the two main causes of long-COVID mental distress

MARINA ZHANG

"If I could take one symptom away from all of [my long-COVID patients], I think that would be depression," said Dr. Joseph Varon, chief of critical care and the COVID-19 department at the United Memorial Medical Center in Houston.

Beyond the physical tribulations and social instability that this condition can bring, long-COVID patients feel that the one thing not being adequately addressed is the

mental health toll inflicted by the disease.

#### Long-COVID Mental Problems: 2 Main Causes

##### 1. Physical Symptoms

One thing that Varon has observed in his long-COVID patients is that, although everyone is affected differently, they're all depressed and anxious as a result of the disease.

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Being in the presence of nature can activate the parasympathetic nervous system's repair and recovery process.



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PH.D., USA

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Kiwi's high vitamin C content helps protect cellular DNA, reduce oxidative damage, and enhance the body's immune response.

## FOOD AS MEDICINE

# The Medicinal Effects of Kiwifruit's Potent Vitamin C

Kiwifruit can help heal nasal allergy, lower blood pressure, and prevent cancer

CHERYL NG

Hay fever (allergic rhinitis) is an annoying medical condition that once plagued my colleague Zac. Recently, he shared an interesting recipe with me—and drew my attention to kiwis (Chinese gooseberries).

Zac's nasal allergies started in secondary school, where he regularly endured a stuffy nose, sneezing, and puffy eyes. One of his teachers, who suffered from the same malady, told Zac about a decoction of kiwifruit that could help. Zac didn't follow the teacher's advice.

A year later, a diet he was on called for eating two kiwis a day. Since then, Zac has had no recurrence of his allergies, which made kiwifruit stick in his mind.

Hay fever is mainly caused by exposure of the nasal mucosa to allergens that cause the body's cells to release histamine and other mediators, triggering an allergic reaction. A study published in the November 2017 edition of *Nutrients* showed that vitamin C helps reduce histamine levels and thus reduce the symptoms of nasal allergies.

A three-ounce serving of kiwi contains 100 milligrams of vitamin C. According to 2001–2002 National Health and Nutrition Survey data, the average intake of vitamin C is 113 mg per day for adult males, 85 mg per day for adult females, and 77 mg to 99 mg per day for children and adolescents aged 1 to 18. Thus, a 3 1/2-ounce serving of kiwi provides at least 70 percent of one's daily vitamin C requirement.

## Anti-Cancer Effects

Kiwifruit also has anti-cancer effects. Research published in 2020 in the journal *Nutrition and Cancer* found that eating kiwis as part of a daily diet may be related to direct and indirect anti-cancer effects.

The direct anti-cancer effect is caused by vitamin C, which protects cell DNA, reduces oxidative damage, and enhances the body's immunity. Kiwis also contain fisetin and ursolic acid, which are toxic to cancer cells and can inhibit cancer cell proliferation and promote cancer cell apoptosis.

The indirect anti-cancer effect is that the dietary fiber and pectin in kiwis can promote bowel movement and increase the number of lactic acid bacteria in the intestine, thereby reducing the risk of cancer, especially colorectal cancer.

## Lower Blood Pressure

Kiwis are rich in potassium, which helps maintain normal blood pressure and prevent cardiovascular diseases, though it isn't ideal for people with poor kidney function. In a 2015 study published in the journal *Blood Pressure*, 118 patients with normal hypertension or primary hypertension were divided into two groups for an eight-week trial. The results showed that patients who ate three kiwis a day had lower blood pressure than those who ate an apple a day.

The fruit is also rich in calcium, an important element that can enhance sleep quality and improve the stability and relaxation of the nervous system, thereby reducing insomnia.

## Nature of Kiwifruit

Kiwifruit is also called Chinese gooseberry, and its rhizome (underground plant stem) can be used as a Chinese herbal medicine for its anti-cancer properties. When it comes to kiwis, some may think of New Zealand—but the fruit's real origins are in China. The first kiwis brought to the island nation can be traced back to 1904, when a New Zealand school teacher, Isabel Fraser, returned from a visit to China with seeds. Kiwifruit was then widely planted and sold across the country.

In traditional Chinese medicine, food is considered to be either cold or hot in nature—and kiwifruit, despite its many nutritional benefits, is considered to be “cold.” Traditional medicine holds that when people eat cold foods, they increase the cooling effect on the body, while eating hot foods will increase the warming effect on the body. Balancing one's intake of cold and hot foods can best serve the body. Thus, kiwis should be eaten in moderation; boiling them to make a decoction can reduce their cooling effect.

## A DECOCTION WITH KIWIFRUIT

Hong Kong Yan Chai Hospital shared a decoction of kiwifruit, which has the effect of moistening the lungs and relieving coughs, invigorating the spleen and appetite, clearing away heat, and promoting body fluid. It's suitable for lung cancer patients with symptoms such as dry cough, dry mouth, and gradual weight loss.

### SERVES 2–3

### INGREDIENTS\*

- 3 to 5 pieces of snow fungus
- 4 kiwis
- 200 grams (7 ounces) pork shank
- 30 grams (1 ounce) lily
- 30 grams (1 ounce) apricot kernels

6 grams (0.2 ounces) chuan bei (tendrillleaf fritillary bulb)

### PREPARATION (ABOUT 2 HOURS):

Soak the snow fungus in clean water, remove the hard stalks, and cut them into small pieces. Remove the peel of the kiwis and cut them in half. Put the pork shank in boiling water for a while, then cut it into smaller pieces for later use. Rinse the lily, apricot kernels, and chuan bei with water and soak for about 15 minutes. Put water and all the ingredients except the pork shank and the kiwis into a pot. Add the pork shank when the water starts to boil, turn the heat down to low, and cook for 1 to 1 1/2 hours. Then add the kiwis and cook for another 15 minutes. Salt to taste and serve.

## FOOD AS MEDICINE

# Could an Enzyme

## in a Traditional Japanese Dish Hold the Key to Treating COVID-19?

Natto, a popular Japanese breakfast food, contains an anti-clotting, anti-spike protein powerhouse called nattokinase

EMMA SUTTIE

Japan is a country famous for the health and longevity of its citizens and boasts people with the longest life expectancy on Earth. It's also home to the world's largest population over 65 (at 28 percent) and some of the world's lowest rates of cardiovascular disease and stroke. So what lessons can we learn from the Japanese that may help us thrive long into old age?

Part of the answer may lie in one of Japan's traditional foods—called natto. Natto is made from fermented soybeans and has been part of the Japanese diet for hundreds of years. Natto was traditionally eaten for breakfast—often with rice and a raw egg. It has a strong odor and slimy consistency, making it unappealing to most people outside Japan.

Many Japanese believe natto is a superfood and include it in their diets due to its health benefits, which include lowering blood pressure, improving circulation, and reducing the risks of heart disease and strokes.

## Research Shows Natto Inhibits SARS-CoV-2 Viral Infection

Some exciting research has shown that an enzyme from natto inhibits the ability of the virus that causes COVID-19 to infect cells.

A study demonstrating natto's effects on the virus that causes COVID-19 was published in July 2021 in the *Biochemical and Biophysical Research Communications* Journal. The research examined whether natto impairs infection by viruses. The specific viruses tested were severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2), the virus that causes COVID-19, and bovine herpesvirus 1 (BHV-1), a similar respiratory infection in cows. Results using cells showed that when treated with natto extract, both SARS-CoV-2 and bovine herpesvirus lost their ability to infect cells in vitro.

The researchers also found that the natto inhibited infection by mutated strains, such as the Alpha variant.

Additionally, when the researchers heated the natto to 100 degrees for 10 minutes and applied it to both viruses, they found that the viruses regained their ability to infect cells. The experiments concluded that heating natto deactivates its neutralizing properties, and the viruses regain their ability to infect cells as expected.

## What Is Natto?

Natto is made by soaking whole soybeans, cooking them via steaming or boiling, then adding the bacterium *Bacillus subtilis* (a bacteria found

in plants and soil) and allowing the mixture to ferment. This fermentation process gives natto its pungent smell and characteristic stringiness and is likely the reason for many of its health benefits.

Natto is traditionally a breakfast food eaten with rice but now is available in a wide variety of products, from sushi to donuts. Many Japanese eat natto on a daily basis, and a typical Japanese grocery store has dozens of varieties and brands of natto to choose from. Natto is often sold in small plastic containers that come in packs of three. Eating one a day can give you all of natto's health benefits—it's high in protein, packed with dietary fiber, rich in manganese, and an excellent source of vitamin K2.

## What Is Nattokinase?

In 1980, Hiroyuki Sumi, a Japanese researcher from the University of Chicago Medical School, extracted an enzyme from natto, naming the novel enzyme nattokinase. Sumi and his team discovered that nattokinase could dissolve blood clots because of its ability to break down fibrin—making it a potent fibrinolytic enzyme.

Fibrin is a protein in our bodies that helps blood to clot after an injury. Once the wound begins healing, plasmin helps break up the fibrin that makes up the clot. These two work together, achieving a delicate balance to ensure the body heals properly and clots don't stick around. As we age, the amount of plasmin the body produces decreases, which can lead to strokes and other problems due to excess clotting.

Nattokinase dissolves blood clots by breaking down fibrin. Since Sumi and his team's discovery of nattokinase, many animal and human trials have demonstrated nattokinase's powerful ability to dissolve blood clots, which may help account for Japan's low rates of cardiovascular disease and stroke.

A review published in 2017 in the *International Journal of Molecular Sciences* looked at nattokinase as an oral anti-clotting agent for the prevention of cardiovascular disease. It notes that nattokinase has been studied extensively for this purpose in Japan, Korea, and China but that nattokinase's anti-clotting abilities had only recently been recognized by Western medicine. The review concludes that nattokinase exhibits “exceptionally potent” anti-clotting activity and that various human and animal trials have demonstrated that nattokinase improves blood circulation and helps decrease the risk of a variety of cardiovascular diseases without producing any adverse side effects.

In animal and human clinical studies, no adverse effects have been reported when healthy human volunteers consumed nattokinase (10 mg/kg) daily for 28 days. Participants didn't show significant changes in their urine, blood pressure, or pulse. At present, the recommended dosage for nattokinase is two capsules (100 mg/capsule) daily. In human trials, nattokinase taken orally was considered very safe at the prescribed dosage.

## Nattokinase Degrades Spike Protein

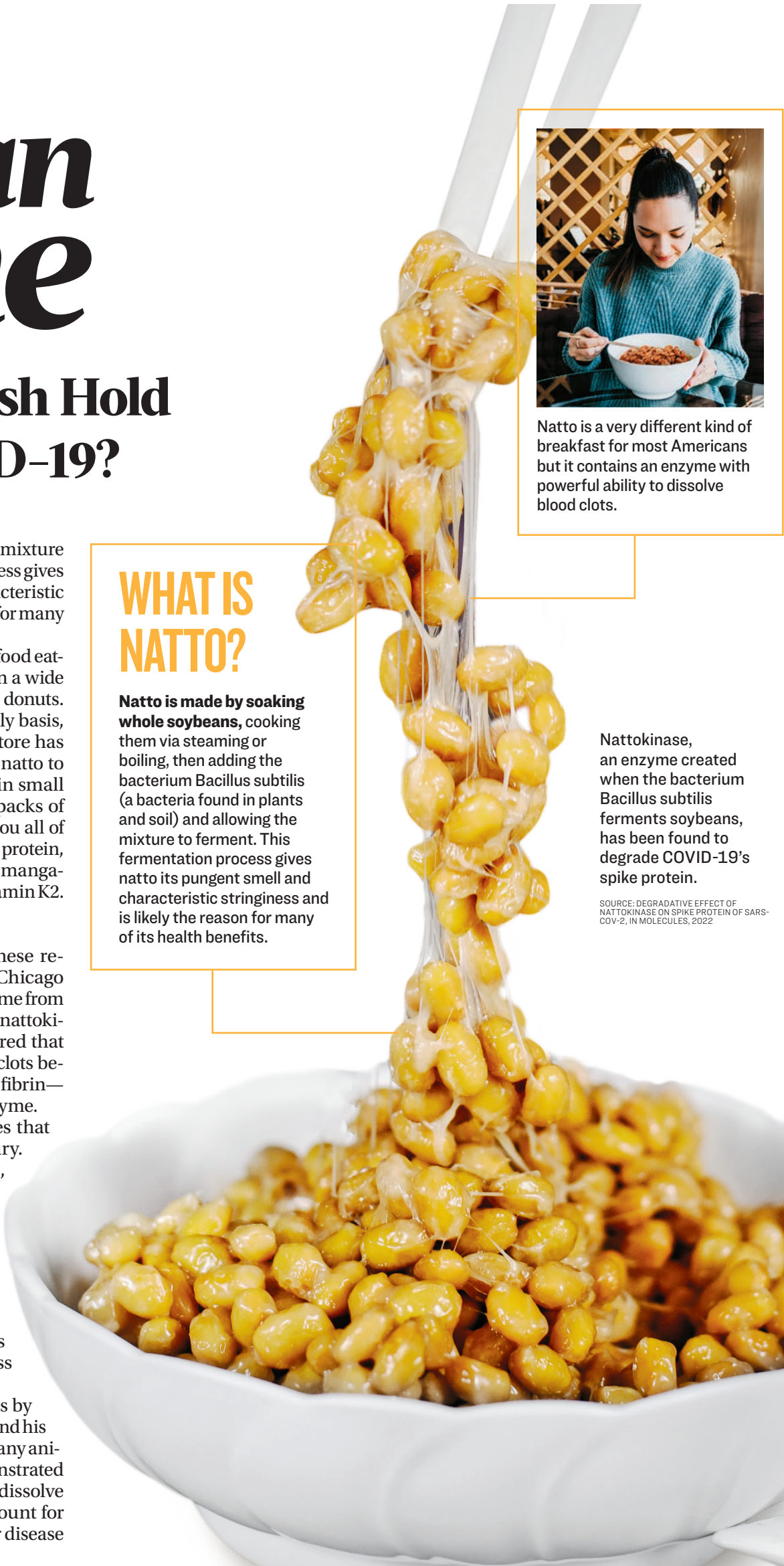
In a second study looking at viruses in vitro, scientists have

## WHAT IS NATTO?

Natto is made by soaking whole soybeans, cooking them via steaming or boiling, then adding the bacterium *Bacillus subtilis* (a bacteria found in plants and soil) and allowing the mixture to ferment. This fermentation process gives natto its pungent smell and characteristic stringiness and is likely the reason for many of its health benefits.

Nattokinase, an enzyme created when the bacterium *Bacillus subtilis* ferments soybeans, has been found to degrade COVID-19's spike protein.

SOURCE: DEGRADATIVE EFFECT OF NATTOKINASE ON SPIKE PROTEIN OF SARS-CoV-2, IN MOLECULES, 2022



shown that nattokinase destroys the spike protein on the surface of both corona SARS CoV-2 virus cells and bovine herpes virus cells that allow them to infect host cells.

## Natto is made from fermented soybeans and has been part of the Japanese diet for hundreds of years.

In the study titled “Degradative Effect of Nattokinase on Spike Protein of SARS-CoV-2,” published in *Molecules* in July 2022, researchers demonstrated that nattokinase degrades the spike protein on the surface of SARS-CoV-2—the virus that causes COVID-19. The researchers showed that nattokinase degraded spike protein in a dose and time-dependent manner. The study concluded that nattokinase and natto extracts have potential effects on inhibiting SARS-CoV-2 host cell entry via spike protein degradation.

The study authors also note that the introduction of heat blocked the ability of nattokinase to degrade the spike protein on the surface of the viruses, corroborating findings in the first study.

It's important to note that both studies on nattokinase and its effect on viral infection were conducted on cells in vitro and not in living bodies. These studies also focused on the spike protein's degradation in terms of infection. Still, this information could be helpful for people suffering from symptoms of long COVID thought to be caused by an

abundance of spike protein or by those who have received the vaccine and would like a way to remove or destroy spike proteins they may have in abundance.

More research is needed to know if these mechanisms could be replicated in humans. But, the data is compelling, and further research will allow scientists to understand the implications for human subjects.

## Final Thoughts

Although the research on nattokinase and its effect on COVID-19 is still in its infancy, the ability of nattokinase to degrade spike proteins combined with its anti-clotting properties makes it an exciting topic for further study.

Some researchers and clinicians theorize that symptoms of long COVID may be at least partially due to the blockage of vessels by microclots, and that the spike protein might be the trigger—which is supported by a recent Harvard Medical School study. If this is the case, nattokinase could be a potential treatment for those suffering from long COVID and its extensive list of symptoms.

Nattokinase's anti-clotting prowess and ability to dissolve spike proteins could also be helpful with the clotting problems many doctors have observed in those who took the vaccine, and could be a way to dissolve those blood clots before they can do irreparable damage to tissues and organs.

Researchers will be studying nattokinase in a lab setting this year to help find the answers, but these initial findings suggest that this humble Japanese dish may hold the key to unlocking some of the most critical health obstacles we face. At the very least, it's a nutritious food that boosts the microbiome.



COVID-19

# Causes and Treatments of Long-COVID Mental Health Problems



## Impeding Recovery

The spike protein is triggering neurological changes that further stress and depression, making recovering that much more difficult.

## Prioritizing Health

Successful recovery from long-COVID requires a proactive approach emphasizing physical as well as mental health.

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Long-COVID symptoms and physical deterioration are major contributors. Cognitive impairments—colloquially known as brain fog, fatigue, malaise, and debilitation—can impact a person’s employment and social well-being, further leading to stress and mental health problems.

“They get so concerned that their cognitive functions are not [at their] best, and that they have sleep difficulties,” he said.

People who have been suffering for a long time may face a crippling hopelessness that is difficult to recover from.

Psychiatrist Dr. Adonis Sfera relayed a story about his friend, who’s a surgeon in his 30s. Since contracting long COVID, he hasn’t been able to work for two years.

“He told me that walking makes him very tired and [he] feels depressed, thinking that he may never recover enough to be ‘like before,’” he wrote in an email to The Epoch Times.

Hannah Camp Johnson, who developed long COVID in August 2020, had to give up on reading, which used to be one of her favorite hobbies, as she would forget the book’s content soon after reading it. Seeing a progressive worsening in her symptoms that’s gradually spiraling out of control, Johnson said she has been battling with thoughts of suicide.

### 2. Brain and Mood

COVID-19 may also directly or indirectly in-

terfere with the human brain.

“Some viral proteins can interact directly with human neural pathways involved in the processing of mood, sleep, or anxiety,” Sfera wrote in the email.

The feelings of anxiety, depression, loneliness, or helplessness may also be due to the biological imbalance that the disease causes.

Interestingly, he said these COVID-19 findings further support the concept that “the distinction between the body and the mind is imagined, not real,” as viral infections, which are something biological, can also affect the mind.

He pointed to data on post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) rates. Being infected with viruses such as SARS-CoV-2, human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), and Ebola were associated with PTSD rates of 30 percent or more, which is almost double the rate of 16 percent in military personnel and war veterans, who are likely to have trauma from experiences such as combat. Sfera interprets that to mean that, apart from the psychological stress causing the mental problems, the viruses may be impacting the brain and directly wreaking havoc on mood.

The SARS-CoV-2 virus may also contribute to premature aging and the breakdown of endothelial cells—the inner lining of all blood vessels. This would affect the blood supply to the local organs, and if the endothelial cells in the brain are affected, it can potentially cause cognitive and mood disturbance.

**It’s very important for people to connect to and trust their body during recovery—trust that the body will ‘doctor itself’ given the right conditions.**

Sfera gave the example of tryptophan, which is an essential amino acid that individuals obtain through their diets. The body uses tryptophan to make serotonin, a neurotransmitter that can regulate a person’s mood.

Making serotonin from tryptophan requires angiotensin-converting enzyme 2 (ACE2), which is a receptor that regulates and maintains blood pressure.

But since SARS-CoV-2 binds to ACE2 receptors to infect cells, COVID-19 infections can block and deplete ACE2 activity, in turn blocking tryptophan absorption and the formation of serotonin.

“This is sufficient to induce depression and anxiety, even in the absence of psychological stressors of being ill, isolated, hopeless, or in pain,” Sfera said.

Tryptophan also activates a protein in the gut that regulates the composition of gut bacteria. When tryptophan is absent, this protein isn’t activated and can lead to diarrhea, inflammation, irritable bowel syndrome, and other gut-related symptoms.

However, this same protein is also involved in regulating circadian rhythm and sleep, which may explain the exacerbation of sleep and circadian dysfunction in long-COVID patients, Sfera noted, as well as experiences of confusion or brain fog.

### Affordable Antidepressants May Help

The possible biological imbalances from the

damage of COVID-19 suggest that a restoration using antidepressants may help some patients both mentally and physically.

Early in the COVID-19 pandemic, an inexpensive antidepressant called fluvoxamine received a lot of media attention for its broad antiviral and anti-inflammatory abilities. Research suggested that fluvoxamine could be used in early treatment to prevent COVID-19’s progression to severe disease and hospitalization. However, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration later published a statement asserting that there was insufficient evidence for the use of fluvoxamine in COVID-19.

Nevertheless, Sfera has found the drug to be very helpful in acute COVID and long-COVID mental health symptoms. He speculates that the drug not only helps patients mentally but also boosts their physical recovery.

The drug is approved to treat anxiety and depression as a selective serotonin reuptake inhibitor.

Studies have shown that fluvoxamine is anti-inflammatory, can reduce blood clots by preventing platelet aggregation, and can prevent severe allergic responses because of its inhibitory nature.

Other reports suggest that the drug may be able to reduce inflammation in endothelial cells and, therefore, prevent their aging and deterioration. Fluvoxamine may also prevent neural death in the brain.

Beta-blockers, which are usually pre-

scribed for high blood pressure, have also been suggested to help with symptoms of anxiety by blocking chemical messengers that activate the fight-or-flight response.

They may also help regulate cognitive functions by resynchronizing the circadian rhythm, helping insomniac patients to get a more restful sleep.

It should be noted that with all medications, there are potential side effects. Fluvoxamine may induce mental changes such as increased irritability and depression, twitching, and constipation, as well as other potential side effects. Beta-blockers may cause a person to feel tired or even cause problems with sleeping, including nightmares.

### Beyond Drugs: Healing the Mind to Aid Physical Recovery

The biological and mental aspects of a human being work in a cycle. Just as biological changes impact the mind, the reverse can also happen, where the mind acts on the physical. Therefore, when people are in a healthy headspace, they may see improvements both mentally and physically.

Varon said that among his recovered long-COVID patients, a common factor they shared was positive thinking and trusting that they would get better.

Psychiatrist Dr. Chloe Saunders, who’s a doctoral candidate and researcher at Aarhus University, related this way of thinking to the placebo effect—a beneficial effect produced by a patient’s belief in the treatment rather than the drug or procedure itself.

Since human bodies have their own mechanism for repair and rejuvenation, Saunders said it’s very important for people to connect to and trust their body during recovery—trust that the body will “doctor itself” given the right conditions.

A trusting bond between a patient and their doctor can reap similar benefits for the patient.

Board-certified internist and nephrologist Dr. Richard Amerling told The Epoch Times that a good doctor would be able to make patients feel better “just by being present.”

When a patient perceives that a doctor is actually caring about them, “they actually start to improve physically [and] emotionally,” he said.

A major difficulty for some patients is forming this trusting bond, and they may need assistance.

“It’s quite inaccessible for a lot of people,”



Health can be supported by active creative pursuits like dance, which can strengthen the body, enliven the mind, and enrich the soul.



Yoga is a mindful practice that can help you tune into your body and get into a more restful, mindful state that supports healing.

Saunders said. “They’ve never been taught how to do it. Things like trauma, body image, or body dysphoria get in the way of that as well.”

Mindful activities can help people to become grounded in their bodies. Saunders suggests types of meditation that train listening to the body with compassion, intentional gentle movement such as yoga, being in the presence of nature, “forest bathing,” or even taking a walk.

When done in a relaxed and peaceful state, all of these practices have been shown to activate the parasympathetic system. Known as the “rest and digest” system colloquially, the parasympathetic system helps with repair and recovery.

Saunders advises mindful activities under the sunlight in the morning and also before bedtime, encouraging making these activities a daily routine.

“The body needs this time to be in a relaxed state in the parasympathetic system,” she said.


The modern lifestyle takes the body out of its cycle of needing quality rest and rejuvenation. People work hard during the day and overstimulate with screen entertainment during times of rest, which means that the body and mind aren’t getting a good break.

This is why for the many who have never practiced mindfulness, reconnecting to the body may seem foreign and even intimidating, but Saunders believes that with guidance, everyone can unlock great benefits from grounding within their body.

The establishment of trust in recovery also includes counseling, forming support groups, or breaking mental habits that may cause mental stress.

As with all things, moderation is very important regarding the amount of bonding with others, as well as sensitivity to the body’s changes.

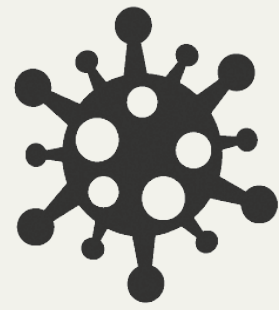
Some patients may hyperfocus on certain symptoms, which can cause distress and may feed into a vicious cycle if the body doesn’t recover as fast as intended. This doesn’t mean that patients should be unaware of their symptoms, but studies show that patients’ failure to notice signs of recovery is correlated with poorer recovery.

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

## The Mind-Body

**COVID’s spike protein** interrupts key neurochemical reactions that affect mood.

**Mood and mental states** further affect our biochemistry and impact the body’s immune system and recovery process. This can create a negative cycle of stress and illness.



The same process works in reverse. Taking care of our mind helps the body, and vice versa.



Staying well in the face of disease threats requires tending to both mind and body.



### KNOW YOUR BODY

# Resolving Chronic Diseases at the Cellular Level

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As cells decline in function, they enter a phase of destruction and clearance, also known as apoptosis. This process can also be used to recycle cellular elements and is essential to the ongoing repair and recycle aspect of our cellular cycle. Mitochondria determine which cells need to undergo apoptosis; in those cells, the mitochondria release a substance that activates the enzymes responsible for the process, causing the cell to dissolve into components that can then be recycled or expelled.

This entire process requires sufficient ATP; if these energy needs aren’t met and the apoptosis mechanism fails, cancer cells can multiply and grow indefinitely.

Mitochondria also maintain the stability of calcium in the body and generate heat.

### Mitochondria Are Susceptible to Damage

Mitochondria are fragile. Their function can be affected by factors such as viral infection, inflammation, certain nutrient deficiencies, chemical toxins, heavy metals, and radiation.

They are also susceptible to oxidative damage from within—that is, damage caused by free radicals, which are a byprod-

uct of mitochondrial metabolic processes. For example, mitochondria produce more energy when we eat, and more free radicals are generated as a result.

All of these factors will damage mitochondria or interfere with their ability to self-repair. When the mitochondria sense these threats, they will shut down the energy factories and alert the cell nucleus of the danger. At this point, mitochondrial function shifts from energy production to cellular defense.

**Cancer cells can multiply and grow indefinitely because the apoptosis mechanism has failed.**

Dr. Michael Chang, founder and attending physician of the Healed and Whole Clinic in California and author of the book “Mitochondrial Dysfunction: A Functional Medicine Approach to Diagnosis and Treatment,” emphasized in an interview with The Epoch Times that the two functions of mitochondria—producing energy and regulating cell death—are mutually exclusive, and they

can perform only one of the two functions. If the energy-generating mechanism in mitochondria changes or malfunctions, it spells trouble.

Cells with malfunctioning mitochondria will become starved of energy. The symptoms that people experience can vary greatly depending on the cell type, and range from mild fatigue, sleep disturbances, decreased stamina, mood swings, and muscle and joint pain, to severe fatigue, brain fog, anxiety, depression, and heart and respiratory problems. Age-related degenerative conditions, such as hearing and vision loss and skin wrinkles, are also linked to mitochondria. Some other common diseases involving mitochondrial dysfunction are diabetes, cardiovascular disease, neurodegenerative disease, chronic fatigue syndrome, fibromyalgia, and infertility.

According to Chang’s estimation, about 50 percent of his patients have mitochondrial dysfunction, and the symptoms are diverse. The first is often fatigue, which might be followed by hormonal imbalance, which occurs because cells lack the energy to function properly. Many people also develop brain fog, because the brain needs a lot of energy to function well. Some people also show symptoms of cardiac dysfunction, such as heart failure.

## Ways to Prevent Mitochondrial Dysfunction

### 1. Avoid Factors That Damage Mitochondria

This is the first thing to keep an eye on if you want to keep your mitochondria healthy. Avoid:

- Toxic metals
- Persistent organic pollutants
- Some medications, such as paracetamol, antibiotics, NSAIDs, and statins
- Alcohol



Stress and negative emotions can also affect the health of mitochondria, and they should be dealt with promptly.

### 2. Take Supplements That Mitochondria Need

Coenzyme Q10 is a key co-factor required for the functioning of mitochondria and an important component of cellular respiration. It is also a powerful antioxidant that affects cell signaling, metabolism, and energy transport. Many clinical trials have proven that coenzyme Q10 promotes energy production and reduces fatigue.



In a Spanish study, patients with fibromyalgia were randomly divided into two groups, one of which took 300 milligrams of coenzyme Q10 per day for 40 days. Compared with the placebo group, the coenzyme Q10 group experienced a reduction in fibromyalgia symptoms, with a 52 percent reduction in pain, 47 percent in fatigue, and 44 percent in morning tiredness.

A meta-analysis published in August 2022 showed that taking coenzyme Q10 alone, rather than in combination with other supplements, could significantly reduce fatigue.

### 3. Routinely Adopt a Ketogenic Diet

Ketogenic diets consist of getting calories from fat rather than carbohydrates. The diet switches the mitochondria from burning glucose to burning ketone bodies, which produces fewer toxic substances in the form of free radicals.

Ketone bodies are a cleaner fuel for mitochondria. Furthermore, cancer cells cannot metabolize ketone bodies. Therefore, the ketogenic diet may be used to cut off the rations of cancer cells so that cancer can be reversed.

### 4. Practice Intermittent Fasting

Thomas N. Seyfried, a well-known scholar in cancer research and a professor of



biology at Boston College, told The Epoch Times that cancer is not a genetic disease, but a metabolic disease; it’s the result of cellular metabolism disorder.

The mitochondrial metabolism of cancer cells is different from the efficient aerobic respiration used by normal cells. Cancer cells power themselves with fermentation, meaning that they obtain energy through an oxygen-free process such as by decomposing glucose and glutamine. This means they produce much less ATP.

Chang mentioned in his book that diabetes can be reclassified as a metabolic disorder rather than an endocrine disease. This is because the root of the problem is not insulin resistance, but mitochondrial dysfunction. When mitochondria fail to function properly, the rate of fat oxidation and energy production will drop, resulting in fat accumulation in our muscles and liver. These fats are converted to lipid peroxides that are toxic to cells and thus further damage the mitochondria. Decreased mitochondrial function in beta cells also slows insulin secretion, leading to impaired glucose tolerance, hyperglycemia, and eventually Type 2 diabetes.

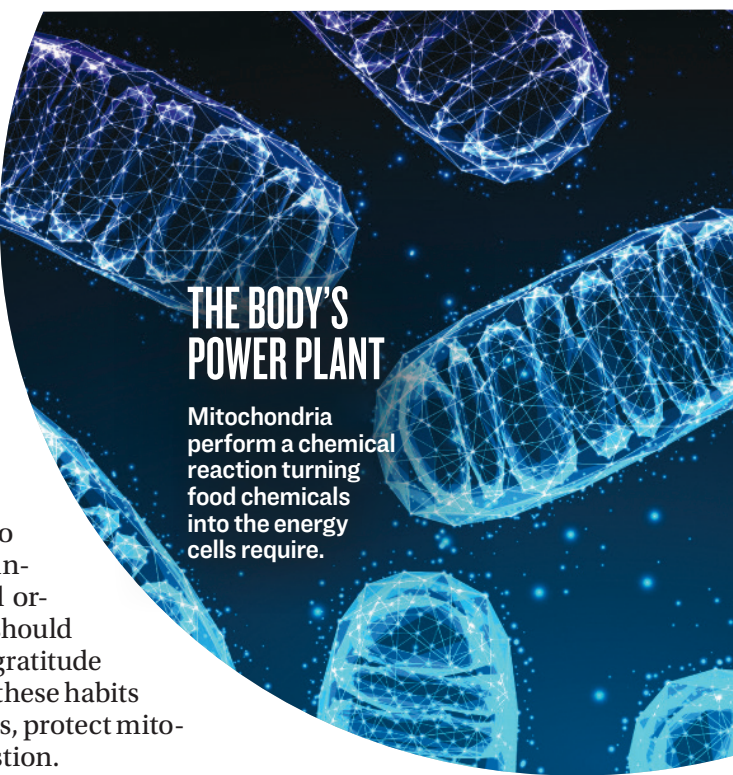
Intermittent fasting is good for mitochondria because if one is constantly eating, the cell organs have to keep creating and burning fuel. Chang described it as like leaving the car engine running all the time and producing a lot of exhaust even though you are not traveling. Mitochon-

dria build up damaging free radicals when they are constantly working. During fasting, blood doesn’t rush to the digestive tract to aid digestion; the gut can rest, and its cells have a chance to repair themselves. In addition, fasting can stimulate cells and mitochondria to start autophagy—essentially cleaning—and form new mitochondria.

In addition, Chang suggested that when we do eat, we should choose unprocessed, natural, and organic foods, and that we should relax and eat slowly with gratitude at mealtimes. Practicing these habits can reduce internal stress, protect mitochondria, and help digestion.

### 5. High-Intensity Interval Training Helps Mitochondria

Chang said that high-intensity interval training is more beneficial to mitochondria than low- and medium-intensity exercise. Exercises like a long jog on a treadmill can have specific benefits for the heart



### THE BODY’S POWER PLANT

Mitochondria perform a chemical reaction turning food chemicals into the energy cells require.



and cardiovascular system but are not necessarily ideal for the mitochondria. Chang explained that this may elevate stress hormones and also exhaust the mitochondria due to prolonged work.

Another helpful practice is getting short bursts of high and low temperatures, such as in saunas and cold baths, which can stimulate mitochondria and boost their function.

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When it comes to brain health, matter becomes mind and we get that matter through the food we eat.



BRAIN HEALTH

# Using Brain Scans and Lifestyle to Resolve Mental Illness

For those facing mental health issues, there are powerful remedies besides one-size-fits-all drug treatments

DANIEL G. AMEN

When people ask me how brain imaging can affect mental health care, I tell them about one of my favorite patients, Jarrett. As a little boy, he was hyperactive, restless, impulsive, and highly vocal, and he wouldn't pay attention. His behavior was so disruptive that other kids didn't want to play with him, and he didn't have a single friend. Diagnosed with ADHD as a preschooler, Jarrett seemed to be on a bad path, and his parents were distraught.

Jarrett's parents took him to five different doctors, who prescribed five types of stimulant medications for ADHD. But none of them worked. In fact, they made things worse by triggering extreme mood swings and episodes of rage that frightened his siblings. Jarrett's conduct got so out of control that one physician suggested antipsychotic medication. That was the last straw for his mother, who decided to bring Jarrett to see us at Amen Clinics, which I founded over 30 years ago.

In that time, we've used brain SPECT (single-photon emission computed tomography) imaging—a well-researched tool that measures blood flow and activity in the brain—on tens of thousands of patients with emotional, behavioral, learning, and cognitive problems. Our database of more than 225,000 brain scans relating to behavior shows us that as psychiatrists, we aren't dealing with "mental" health issues but rather brain health issues that steal people's minds. And this one idea changes everything.

When we scanned Jarrett's brain, it clearly showed overactivity in a pattern we call the "Ring of Fire." His brain was working way too hard. It's no surprise that the stimulant medications weren't working. Using stimulants on an overactive brain is like pouring gasoline on a fire. Our published research shows that stimulants make this brain pattern worse 80 percent of the time.

We took a very different approach to treating Jarrett. Nutritional supplements to calm his overactive brain, a host of brain-healthy daily lifestyle habits, and parent training led to significant improvements in his behavior. He started making the honor roll. The rages disappeared. And he finally started making friends.

Today, Jarrett is doing well in college and



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training to be a firefighter because, as he said, "On somebody's worst day, I want to make it better." If no one had ever looked at his brain, Jarrett could've been doomed to a very unhealthy path.

### How Do You Know Unless You Look?

Psychiatry remains the only medical specialty with practitioners who virtually never look at the organ they treat. Cardiologists look at the heart, oncologists scan the body for cancerous tumors, and orthopedists take X-rays of bones. Psychiatrists guess. Even if you're struggling with anxiety, depression, ADHD, OCD, PTSD, or other issues, your doctor is not likely to look at your brain.

That's insane! The repercussions of "brainless psychiatry" have contributed to alarming statistics:

- Almost 25 percent of Americans are taking at least one prescription mental health medication.
- More than 337 million antidepressant prescriptions were given in 2021.
- Twenty-seven percent of doctor visits result in a prescription for benzodiazepines (anxiety medication).

Things have only gotten worse due to the pandemic. These statistics seem dire, but there's hope.

### What Brain Imaging Reveals About Mental Health

Brain imaging is changing the way we think about mental health. There's a growing understanding in the field of psychiatry that mental health is really brain health. And experts, as in the journal *Radiology*, have validated the use of brain imaging in psychiatry. In 2021, the Canadian Association of Nuclear Medicine endorsed brain SPECT imaging for the assessment of:

- Neuropsychiatric disorders, such as ADHD, bipolar disorder, depression, OCD, and PTSD
- Suspected dementia, such as Alzheimer's disease, frontotemporal lobe dementia, vascular dementia, and mild cognitive impairment
- Traumatic brain injury
- Substance abuse
- Strokes

To clarify, brain imaging isn't used as a

stand-alone diagnostic tool. The data must be analyzed in conjunction with other elements of a comprehensive psychiatric evaluation, such as neuropsychological testing and patient history.

Brain SPECT imaging can help identify the root causes of psychiatric symptoms and prompt psychiatrists to ask better questions to get to the source of a person's symptoms.

To put it simply, SPECT scans reveal three important things:

- Regions of the brain that work well
- Regions of the brain that are working too hard, indicating abnormally high blood flow
- Regions of the brain that are not working hard enough, indicating low blood flow

In general, when the brain is working too hard or not working hard enough, it's associated with a wide range of emotional, behavioral, and cognitive health problems.

Our brain-imaging work at Amen Clinics has also shown that mental health problems are not single or simple disorders. They all have multiple types, and each requires a targeted treatment plan. For example, giving everyone with ADHD the same treatment may help some people but make others worse. Think of how the standard ADHD treatment exacerbated Jarrett's symptoms. Knowing which type you have can help determine the most effective treatment.

### You Can Change Your Brain and Change Your Life

One of the most exciting things we have learned from our brain-imaging work is that you're not stuck with the brain you have. You can change your brain and life for the better.

Every day, your brain is changing. Either it's getting healthier and helping you think, feel, and act better, or it's getting unhealthy and making you feel sad, mad, anxious, forgetful, or stressed. In large part, it depends on your daily thoughts, diet, supplements, and habits.

*Daniel Amen, M.D., is an adult and child psychiatrist and founder of Amen Clinics with 11 locations nationwide. A 12-time New York Times bestselling author, he is considered one of the most influential experts on brain health. His new book, "Change Your Brain Every Day," will be published March 2023.*

# 11 DAILY HABITS THAT BOOST BRAIN POWER



THE EXCITING NEWS IS that you can boost your brain health and mental well-being by adopting the following daily habits.

**1 Boost blood flow.** Engaging in regular exercise (anything you love that gets your heart pumping) and practicing meditation or prayer have been shown to improve blood flow.

**2 Engage in new learning.** To keep your brain active, learn something new. Take piano lessons, play a new sport, or learn a language. And don't retire! A 2021 study found that holding off on retirement decreases the rate of cognitive decline.

**3 Reduce inflammation.** Avoid foods that increase inflammation (such as sugar, refined carbohydrates, trans fats, artificial sweeteners, and gluten). Instead, consume prebiotics (apples, beans, cabbage, psyllium, artichokes, onions, leeks, asparagus, and root veggies) and probiotics (fermented foods like kefir, kombucha, and unsweetened yogurt, or supplements).

**4 Know your family history.** Find out whether your relatives have had any emotional, behavioral, or cognitive problems. You may also want to consider genetic testing.

**5 Protect your head.** Wear a helmet while biking or skiing, hold the handrail when you walk downstairs, and don't text while you're walking or driving. If you've had a head injury, consider hyperbaric oxygen therapy (HBOT), which uses pure oxygen to accelerate the healing process. A brain SPECT imaging study in *Plos One* involving 56 people with mild traumatic brain injuries found that treatment with HBOT resulted in improved brain activity levels as well as significant improvements in cognitive function and quality of life.

**6 Shore up your immune system and treat infections.** Boost your vitamin D level and lower your stress. One of my favorite evidence-based immunity-boosting stress-management techniques is laughter. Watch a comedy on TV.

If you're struggling with fatigue, brain fog, and other issues related to long COVID, you may want to consider HBOT. A 2021 study on 10 people with long COVID found that 10 sessions of HBOT produced improvements in fatigue, cognition, attention, executive function, information processing, and verbal function. Other clinical trials are underway to assess the benefits of HBOT for long COVID.

**7 Limit exposure to toxins.** To avoid toxins, quit smoking and limit alcohol consumption. Use an app like Think Dirty to check if your personal care products or household cleaners

contain toxins, and eliminate those items from your home.

**8 Seek treatment for mental health issues.** Seeking treatment is not a sign of weakness; it's a sign of strength. Look for a professional who understands that brain health is the key to mental health and uses the least toxic, most effective treatments.

For example, neurofeedback is a noninvasive, interactive treatment that allows you to strengthen and retrain your brain to enhance emotional, behavioral, and cognitive health. A 2016 review of scientific studies on neurofeedback showed that its benefits include better memory, improved focus, decreased anxiety, enhanced mood, less anger, and reduced stress.

If you're struggling with the effects of past emotional trauma, a psychotherapeutic technique called EMDR (eye movement desensitization and reprocessing) can have a powerful effect. A 2014 review of 24 randomized controlled trials found that EMDR can be beneficial in the treatment of emotional trauma and adverse life experiences. Some evidence even shows that it's more effective and produces results more rapidly than traditional psychotherapy.

**9 Support your hormones.** To promote healthy hormones, avoid smoking, chronic stress, processed food, caffeine, and alcohol.

**10 Eat a brain-healthy diet.** Eat organic colorful fruits and vegetables (especially berries and leafy greens), sustainably raised fish and meat, low-glycemic foods, high-fiber foods, nuts and seeds, and healthy fats (avocados, coconut oil, olive oil). As I like to tell my patients, only love foods that love you back!

In addition, it's critical to take nutritional supplements to support optimal brain health. I recommend that everyone take a multivitamin, omega-3 fatty acids, probiotics for gut health, and vitamin D (if your levels are low). Other supplements with scientific evidence of their benefits are GABA to help calm anxious brains; saffron to boost moods; rhodiola, ashwagandha, and green tea extract to support focus and energy; and phosphatidylserine to support memory.

**11 Make sleep a priority.** Adopt a good sleep hygiene program—such as keeping your bedroom dark, cool, and quiet—and try hypnosis to promote more restful sleep.

When you learn to love and care for your brain every day, you boost your mood, memory, focus, mental clarity, and sense of calm. Are you ready to make brain and mental health a daily practice?

MOMO PRODUCTIONS/GETTY IMAGES



When you take the focus off of yourself—and instead offer loving kindness to others—it can resolve feelings of anxiety.

### Us Versus Them

Social media is like a playground for comparisons: He makes more money than I do; she has a nicer car. While the study didn't look specifically at social media, Gentile said

the results demonstrate that comparison is a risky strategy.

"It is almost impossible not to make comparisons on social media," Gentile said.

"Our study didn't test this, but we often feel envy, jealousy, anger, or disappointment in response to what we see on social media, and those emotions disrupt our sense of well-being."

Comparison works well when we are learning something or making a choice, Gentile said. For example, as children, we learn by watching others and comparing their results to ours. However, when it comes to well-being, comparison isn't as effective as loving-kindness, which consistently improves happiness.

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

### MINDSET MATTERS

## Feeling Anxious? Being Kind Can Change That

Research finds practicing loving kindness can boost happiness, regardless of personality type

ANGIE HUNT

Rather than focusing on ways to lift your own anxiety, focus on wishing others well. New research suggests that could do the trick.

"Walking around and offering kindness to others in the world reduces anxiety and increases happiness and feelings of social connection," said Douglas Gentile, a professor of psychology at Iowa State University.

"It's a simple strategy that doesn't take a lot of time that you can incorporate into your daily activities."

Researchers tested the benefits of three different techniques intended to reduce anxiety and increase happiness or well-being. They did this by having college students walk around a building for 12 minutes and practice one of the following strategies:

- Loving-kindness: Looking at the people they see and thinking to themselves, "I wish for this person to be happy." Students were encouraged to really mean it as they were thinking it.
- Interconnectedness: Looking at the people they see and thinking about how they're

**Students who compared themselves to others felt less empathetic, caring, and connected than students who extended well wishes to others.**

connected to each other. It was suggested that students think about the hopes and feelings they may share or that they might take a similar class.

- Downward social comparison: Looking at the people they see and thinking about how they may be better off than each of the people they encountered.

The study, published in the *Journal of Happiness Studies*, also included a control group in which researchers instructed students to look at people and focus on what they see on the outside, such as their clothing, the combination of colors, textures, as well as make-up and accessories. Researchers surveyed all students before and after



WISE HABITS

HENRIK SORENSEN/GETTY IMAGES

# Mastering the Art of Letting Go

Surrendering ideas of how things should be—including ourselves—can free us of a certain kind of suffering

LEO BABAUTA

One of the keys to living a life of calm and purpose is letting go.

If you'd like a more peaceful life, it's powerful to look at what disturbs that peace and practice letting go of whatever you're holding onto that's causing you anxiety and frustration.

a

If you'd like a life of purposeful focus, it's powerful to examine what's standing in the way of that ... and let go of whatever is blocking you.

Letting go can seem quite simple, but it isn't necessarily easy. We have attachments that we cling to tightly, and we don't want to let them go.

In this article, I'll share the deeper part of the practice of letting go. Then, I'll talk about how you might practice.

**The Heart of Letting Go**

Why do we cling to something that creates resistance in us to our purposeful action or disturbs our calm?

It's usually because of some kind of idea, notion, or narrative we have in our minds. Let's look at some examples:

- We often think it's something outside of us—that person over there did something that upsets, frustrates, or annoys me. But the other person isn't the real cause—they're just doing something. The real cause is that we have the idea that they shouldn't be the way they are.
- Sometimes we think we're the problem—we shouldn't be so lazy, or undisciplined, or something like that. We blame ourselves, feel bad about ourselves, and then try not to think about it. But what if the cause of our feeling bad is that we don't accept ourselves as we are?
- We might think that the problem is with the task or activity—we're resisting because we don't like that task. But what if the cause of resistance is that we think the activity should feel some other way than it does?

You can see in these examples that I'm pointing to an idea that things should be different than they are. People will resist

It's about freeing ourselves from the attachment to an idea that's causing some kind of suffering (frustration, resistance, feeling bad).

Being free doesn't mean we don't take action—we just do so from a different place.

this because they want things to be different than they are. They want change. And that's understandable, we want to change what we don't like. But what if we accepted what things are and then created change from a different place—from wanting to create, play, or explore?

**How to Let Go of Notions**

All of this stems from a having an idea of how things should be that's different than how they are. There may be nothing wrong with this idea—but it's just an idea. And to the extent that it's causing difficulties, we can see how it would be helpful to let it go.

Imagine that you're frustrated with yourself, someone else, or a situation you're facing. Imagine that this frustration or feeling stems from an idea that things should be different than they are.

Now imagine letting go of that idea. You're just left with the experience of this moment, just as it is.

Notice how freeing that can be. It's not about letting someone “off the hook” or letting go of accountability or commitment to change. It's about freeing ourselves from the attachment to an idea that's causing some kind of suffering (frustration, resistance, feeling bad).

We're freeing ourselves by letting go of the idea we're holding onto.

The key realization is that the idea is just an idea. It isn't that it's wrong or bad, but it's a mental conception, rather than reality. We can use mental conceptions when they're helpful, but let go of them if they aren't.

Our idea of other people, of ourselves, of any situation is simply a notion. What if we freed ourselves by realizing that we've created this notion and we don't need it right now? It can simply evaporate if we let it. Our conception of how things should be can become cloud-like, with little influence on our movement through life.

Try it right now: Whatever you think you should be, whatever you think someone else is, is just a notion you've created. Can you let it go in this moment and see what you're left with?

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

## How to Practice

**First**, notice when there's difficulty and feelings of frustration, resistance, self-blame, annoyance, or anxiety. Noticing these feelings is key to being able to play with them.

**Second**, without needing to judge how you're feeling, could you simply be with it? For example, if you're feeling frustration, could you just let yourself feel the frustration as a physical experience in your body (as opposed to getting caught up in the narrative of frustration)? Give yourself compassion if you can. But there's nothing wrong with feeling what you're feeling. Often it's useful to simply let ourselves feel the emotion, rather than trying to fix it.

**Third**, if you'd like to free yourself, you can let go of the notion that's causing the difficulty. It's usually an idea of how you think things should be. What if you could just let it evaporate, and let yourself be free? Play around with it.

**Fourth**, you might just experience the moment free of the notion. Just pure experience. Is there something in this moment you can be curious about? Be grateful for? Can you feel the wonder of this moment?

**Fifth**, once you're free, you can take action if any is needed. For example, you can take on the task that you're resisting, once you're free of the idea that the task should feel different. Or you can have a conversation with someone, once you've let go of your frustration with them. Being free doesn't mean we don't take action—we just do so from a different place.

Would you like to take on this freeing practice?



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COVID-19

# Long COVID and COVID-19 Vaccine Injuries

## What's the Difference?

Ongoing research into long COVID overlooks the potential of vaccine injury, but many clinicians are seeing distinctions

MARINA ZHANG

The COVID-19 pandemic is almost over—at least, officially. Yet many long-haulers and the vaccine-injured see no end in sight as they wake up every day to debilitating symptoms.

Critical care pulmonary specialist Dr. Pierre Kory, who shares a private practice treating both long COVID and COVID-19 vaccine injuries, told The Epoch Times that his clinic has treated more than 200 of these patients since February 2022.

He has only gotten “five or six off of medicines completely.” For most of them, it's a chronic illness that needs chronic medication.

While long COVID has received plenty of media coverage and research, long-lasting post-vaccine symptoms rarely have been mentioned. Some may wonder if post-vaccine symptoms even exist. Kory and the many doctors who treat

these patients say yes: Vaccine injuries do exist, and the illness looks quite similar to long COVID.

**Long COVID Versus Vaccine Injuries**

Long COVID is defined by persistent symptoms after a COVID-19 infection, while vaccine injuries are symptoms that manifest due to vaccination.

As early as 2020, a preprint study reported on more than 200 post-COVID symptoms that had persisted for several months, with the most common symptoms reported after six months being fatigue, post-exertional malaise, and cognitive dysfunction. The preprint paper was later published in The Lancet in August 2021.

It's not unusual for a viral disease to take a person out for a few weeks or months. The Epoch Times previously interviewed several long-haulers who hadn't seen improvements for months or even years.

Across the United States, long-COVID clinics have popped up one after another, yet many long-haulers feel that their problems are not being addressed.

Compared to long COVID, COVID-19 vaccine injuries receive significantly less media coverage and research.

Continued on Page 12



COVID vaccines have been associated with neurological, cardiac, autoimmune, and immunological issues. ORPHEUS FX/SHUTTERSTOCK

“The other plight of the long hauler and the vaccine injured is that the majority have normal tests.”

Dr. Pierre Kory, critical care pulmonary specialist

The spike protein appears a likely culprit behind both long COVID and vaccine injury, though via different mechanisms.

## 5 Surprisingly Simple Ways to Detoxify

Help your body eliminate toxins and follow some simple steps to avoid them in the first place

SAYER JI

Given what we are exposed to through food, air, and water, detoxification has become a modern-day necessity. Without the daily activation of effective physiological pathways designed to remove naturally occurring environmental toxins and the byproducts of metabolism, we're bound to get sick.

That becomes especially true as man-made chemical toxicants continue to spread.

So what are some simple, effective ways to rid our body of its daily toxic burden?

1. **Pop a Probiotic**  
Of course, you don't have to “pop

a pill” to get a probiotic. In fact, it's preferable that you ingest either a probiotically cultured food such as kombucha, yogurt (preferably plant-based), or cultured veggies. You'll also support your resident microbes by eating more raw fruits and vegetables grown in truly healthy soil, as the Earth's microbiome is where “good bacteria” come from.

How will getting enough probiotics in your diet help? Fascinating research indi-

cates that probiotics actually help us break down food compounds such as gluten and casein as well as chemicals such as pesticides and Bisphenol A, which can harm our bodies and which our own detoxification pathways struggle to eliminate. It's kind of a wonder that so-called “germs” can help save us from ourselves in this way!

Continued on Page 14

Apple pectin was found, in animal studies, to prevent the plutonium-239 from absorbing in the gastrointestinal tract.

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Peas are not actually a bean, but they are low in calories, high in fiber, and rich in probiotics. They can also help ease bowel movements.

#### FOOD AS MEDICINE

## Eating Beans Can Benefit Vascular and Gut Health

These cheap, nutritious seeds add satisfying fiber, flavor, vitamins, protein, and amino acids to your diet

#### AMBER YANG

Beans, belonging to the legume family, are tasty, easy to prepare, nutritious, and a satisfying (though incomplete) substitute for meat.

Beans have many health benefits for the human body. Chen Tsung-Yü, a Taiwanese nutritionist, offers his excellent knowledge of beans.

#### Nutrients in Beans

Rich in protein, beans also contain estrogen-like compounds, such as soy isoflavones and goldfinch isoflavones, which can help improve symptoms of menopause, such as night sweats, hot flashes, skin problems, and psychological stress caused by estrogen deficiency. These compounds can also improve blood lipids and remove free radicals.

#### Bonus Value of Natto and Black Soybeans

In Japan, natto is a popular breakfast food made from fermenting soybeans. The fermented beans have easily absorbed nutrients and a powerful ant clotting enzyme called nattokinase that's credited with helping keep Japan's rates of cardiovascular disease low. Nattokinase has even been shown to degrade COVID-19's problematic spike protein. Natto also contains vitamin K, which can help maintain cardiovascular health. The lipase, cellulase, and amylase enzymes in natto help to promote gut health. Overall, natto is an excellent enzyme food for the elderly, people who eat out often, and people who have irregular meals.

**When combined with rice, beans offer a full range of essential amino acids and create a complete protein.**

Black soybeans are also worth highlighting. They contain higher amino acid content and higher nutritional value than green or yellow soybeans. Black soybean water is sometimes recommended as a treatment to relieve edema. Chen suggested that eating black soybeans can also replenish dietary fiber.

#### Beans for Body Builders?

Are bean products suitable for people who want to gain muscle and lose fat?

Chen said beans are cholesterol free, which can promote cardiovascular health, and are useful for exercise such as body-building.

According to the protein digestibility corrected amino acid score, the digestible indispensable amino acid score of soybean is 0.91—a nearly full score. In other words, after digestion and absorption, a high percentage of soybeans can be converted into amino acids required by the human body—another boon for working out.

Chen said the intake of animal proteins and plant-based proteins should be balanced.

Although beef contains more protein than beans, it has more saturated fat, so people who have poor cardiovascular health could choose beans as an alternative, as they're lower in fat. Eggs are a great

source of protein. Chen encourages people to consume more eggs and bean products. When combined with rice, beans also offer a full range of essential amino acids and create a complete protein.

#### Are Beans Suitable for Diabetics and Males?

Because beans contain large amounts of starch, would eating them induce a surge in blood sugar that could be dangerous for diabetes patients? Chen said it depends on the type of bean. Non-starchy beans won't induce a rise in blood sugar and may be the best choice.

Since beans contain estrogen, are they suitable for men to eat? Chen believes that although beans are rich in estrogen, there's no evidence that their consumption increases estrogen in men, and he gives men a green light to eat them.

#### Are GMO Soybeans Harmful to the Body?

Genetically modified soybeans are a current hot topic of public concern. The FDA approves products made from genetically modified organisms (GMO) as safe for human consumption, and in 2020, 94 percent of soybean crops were GMO. However, the long-term effects of GMO foods have yet to be determined. Chen said that currently, labels on the food packaging indicate if the product is genetically modified. People can also ask restaurant staff about ingredients before ordering meals.

Chen reminded people who make soy milk at home to cook it well and to remove the foam that forms during the process. After removal of the foam, the soy milk should be simmered for another 15 to 20 minutes to ensure that the saponin and any suspected protease (two compounds that can cause gastrointestinal discomfort) are removed.

## Beans Can Be Divided Into 3 Types

- 1. Protein Beans:** Soybeans, black beans, black beans with green kernels, lentils, mung, pinto, kidney or red beans, and edamame kernels are all rich in vitamins and protein, with every 50 grams of fresh beans containing 7 grams of protein—equivalent to the protein content of 30 grams of meat.



- 2. Starchy Beans:** Besides being high in protein, mung beans, kidney or red beans, and pinto beans are rich in starch content and contain an array of nutrients.



- 3. Other “Beans”:** Peas are considered a vegetable, and string or green beans are actually a fruit. Both are low in calories, high in fiber and probiotics and beneficial for healthy bowel movements.

# Is Inflammation Behind Your Chronic Conditions?

Medical research implicates this misdirected immune response in a growing list of diseases and chronic conditions

#### MARTHA ROSENBERG

Long before COVID-19 put intense focus on the immune system, research into the wide effects of inflammation on human health was growing.

More than 10 years ago, research in the journal EMBO Reports found that while inflammation “[had] long been a well-known symptom of many infectious diseases,” research increasingly suggested that it was “also intimately linked with a broad range of non-infectious diseases, perhaps even all of them.”

What is inflammation? It's normally a foundational immune response and takes place whenever the body is injured or identifies a foreign invader, like a pathogen. That's acute inflammation. But in a culture where people constantly eat unhealthy food—which can look like poison to the body—or experience ongoing stress, be exposed to environmental toxins, or take problematic drugs, people can also suffer ongoing inflammation, also known as chronic inflammation.

When the body encounters a virus, bacteria, or toxin, or suffers an injury, it provokes the immune system to unleash inflammatory cells and cytokines. In acute inflammation, the process will end, but in chronic inflammation, symptoms like abdominal and chest pain, fatigue, and fever can persist and be linked to such conditions as asthma, Alzheimer's disease, rheumatoid arthritis, cancer, and Type 2 diabetes.

#### Inflammation May Lurk Behind Many Diseases

According to EMBO Reports, it was cancer research that first highlighted the role of inflammation in disease progression. The role of inflammation in colon cancer was especially eye-opening, wrote the authors, because of its connection to the expression of “toll-like receptor 4 genes” (TLRs) that trigger an acute inflammatory response that alerts the immune system to microbial infection.

The problem, observed the researchers, is that “bacteria are constantly replenished through food intake, and therefore cannot be permanently cleared by the immune system; this can lead to persistent chronic infection maintained by TLRs.”

Research now suggests that inflammation is not just behind cancer's “initiation, promotion, malignant conversion [and] invasion,” wrote the authors, but also behind its “final metastasis.” It is sparked by “DNA damage caused by reactive oxygen species that are produced by immune cells.”

Other diseases are now linked to inflammation, including central nervous system conditions like amyotrophic lateral sclerosis or ALS (in which inflammation is thought to be involved in the death of neurons) and asthma, in which glucocorticoid receptors sometimes do not bind to corticosteroids and thus fail to mute immune response.

In rheumatoid arthritis, the inflammatory cells can attack joint tissues, leading to joint damage, pain, and deformities. And research in Frontiers of Immunology associates some depression with “increased inflammatory activation of the immune system affecting both the periphery and the central nervous system.”

#### How Is Inflammation Treated and What Can Patients Do?

When inflammation is due to physical injury, it can be treated with rest, ice, and wound care, says the Cleveland Clinic. In cases of viral or bacterial infections, it will pass with the resolution of the illness or “invasion” that triggered it.

Chronic inflammation typically requires lifestyle changes, but your doctor may prescribe anti-inflammatory medicines sold over the counter called NSAIDs (nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs) or corticosteroid shots.

Many experts now feel that lifestyle factors are the real key to resolving inflammation.

“There is growing evidence that diseases with an inflammatory component can be treated through physical exercise, rather than pharmacology,” wrote the EMBO authors. “The positive effect of exercise on inflammatory processes has long been known.” Lifestyle issues like carrying too much weight, smoking, drinking to excess, not



Chronic inflammation has been linked to conditions like rheumatoid arthritis, Alzheimer's disease, Type 2 diabetes, and cancer.

It was cancer research that first highlighted the role of inflammation in disease progression.



Eating an anti-inflammatory diet can help to tamp down chronic systemic inflammation.

dealing with stress, and not exercising can all contribute to inflammation.

**Supplements to Combat Inflammation** Medical sources suggest several supplements help treat chronic inflammation, including:

- Vitamin A
- Vitamin C
- Vitamin D
- Fish oil supplements
- Anti-inflammatory herbs, such as turmeric, ginger, and garlic

#### Anti-Inflammatory Foods

Sometimes a little flavor can go a long way. When it comes to turmeric and its active compound curcumin, the EMBO authors write that clinical evidence suggests that the spice, endemic to Indian cuisine, has proven effective against inflammatory bowel disease, likely by “scavenging free radicals, increasing anti-oxidants, and influencing multiple signaling pathways.”

Additionally, those at risk of inflammation would do well to follow a Mediterranean diet and emphasize foods that have anti-inflammatory properties, including:

- Oily fish, such as mackerel, salmon, and sardines
- Leafy greens, such as spinach and kale
- Olive oil
- Tomatoes

By the same token, they should avoid fried foods and fast foods that can trigger inflammation, including:

- Cured meats with nitrates, such as hot dogs
- Highly refined oils and trans fats
- Refined carbohydrates, such as sugar, pastries, and white bread

#### Nutrients Are Key

Dr. Barry Sears, a leading expert on inflammation, wrote in the journal Frontiers in Nutrition: “The initial acute inflammatory response is protective as it alerts the immune system to respond to the injury. However, if the initial inflammatory response is unresolved, this leads to chronic low-level inflammation. This unresolved inflammation results in tissue damage that transforms the otherwise protective initial inflammatory response associated with many chronic disease conditions.”

To heal from such inflammation, wrote Sears, one must increase “diet-controlled nutrients or their metabolites to activate AMPK and enhance SPM.”

AMPK, or activated protein kinase, is a phylogenetically conserved fuel-sensing enzyme that is present in all mammalian cells. It helps cells manage their energy, especially from glucose and fatty acids. SPMs, or specialized pro-resolving lipid

mediators, help lower inflammation.

#### Conclusion

Better insight and treatment of inflammation can have a critical effect on major diseases and milder conditions.

For example, researchers at Carnegie Mellon University attempted to link stress, inflammation, and the risk of infectious disease by looking at glucocorticoid receptor resistance, which is known to have a role in other inflammation-related diseases such as asthma.

“[The] inflammatory process upregulates immunity to the cold virus and is responsible for well-known cold symptoms such as increased mucus production in the nose,” notes the article in EMBO Reports discussing the study.

“The implication is that stress does not necessarily increase the probability of infection, but it does amplify the symptoms. This suggests that anti-inflammatory rather than anti-viral mechanisms might constitute the most effective remedy for many upper respiratory infections.”

The findings suggest a link between pro-inflammatory cytokine levels and the expression of symptoms, which should be good news for any patients dealing with inflammatory conditions. Why? Because, as the authors write, “there is ... hope of establishing a common framework for understanding a variety of conditions previously considered to be unrelated, through the underlying inflammatory mechanisms.”

In his writings, Dr. Barry Sears has flagged three dietary approaches that can address inflammation and accomplish these goals:

- 1) Following a highly defined, calorie-restricted anti-inflammatory diet, since “calorie restriction has been the most successful therapeutic intervention to improve healthspan (defined as longevity minus years of disability) in virtually every species studied.”
- 2) Adding SPMs, which are hormones that control the resolution of residual inflammation. They are a “superfamily” of resolvins, maresins, and protectins, all of which will address inflammation, Sears writes. Our cells make SPMs out of polyunsaturated fatty acids. In layman's terms, eat more omega-3 fatty acids.
- 3) Activating the master switch of metabolism, AMPK, which is controlled by the AMP (adenosine monophosphate, a nucleotide found in cells) and ATP (adenosine triphosphate, an enzyme found in all cells). This system sets in motion a broad cascade of positive gene transcription factors that switch metabolism from anabolic to catabolic to restore ATP levels, Sears observes.



Lifestyle changes are the best way to resolve chronic inflammation but your doctor may also suggest anti-inflammatories like ibuprofen or naproxen.



Amyotrophic lateral sclerosis and asthma are two among the many diseases linked to inflammation.





COVID-19

# Long COVID and COVID-19 Vaccine Injuries

## What’s the Difference?

Continued from **Page 9**

In the literature, the term “vaccine injury” has long been used with previous vaccines, including flu vaccines, polio vaccines, MMR (measles, mumps, and rubella) vaccines, and many more. Such injuries have mostly been documented as vaccine adverse events, meaning untoward health events associated with the vaccine, but they may not actually be vaccine-related. It’s up to the doctors during diagnosis to decide whether a patient’s symptoms are related to a vaccine.

Neurological, cardiac, autoimmune, and immunological manifestations have been reported with all forms of COVID-19 vaccines.

**There Are No Diagnostic Tests for Long COVID and Vaccine Injuries**

There has been controversy over whether some of the current long-COVID cases are actually vaccine injury events.

Currently, there is no approved diagnostic test for either long COVID or vaccine injury. Existing clinical tests often yield normal results, even though many patients report discomfort and sickness.

These two conditions also have similar

clinical presentations, making it even harder to tell them apart.

Doctors, therefore, need to look at a patient’s medical history and determine the events that led up to the symptom onset to come to a diagnosis.

**The unfortunate situation now is that most people have both been infected with COVID-19 and vaccinated, complicating diagnosis and treatment.**

The criteria for diagnosis mostly pertain to whether the chronic symptoms were preceded by a COVID-19 infection, in which case the illness is likely long COVID; if symptoms were preceded by vaccination, the patient may have a vaccine injury.

Some doctors have developed their own diagnostic methods.

Dr. Sabine Hazan, a California-based

gastroenterologist and CEO of Progena-biome, uses gut bacterial composition as supplementary information in her diagnosis and treatment.

She told The Epoch Times that she sees differences in microbiome composition between these two groups of people, which helps her make a diagnosis, though more research is still needed to confirm.

**Long COVID and Vaccine Injury Likely Have Same Cause**

Both long COVID and vaccine injury have been theorized to be caused by spike proteins, though by very different mechanisms.

In long-haulers, the COVID virus and its spike proteins likely entered through the lungs as part of the infection. If the infection is not cleared, some of the virus—especially its smaller spike proteins—may enter the blood vessels and cause systemic damage to the body.

With the vaccines, the individual gets a dose of mRNA or DNA shot into the deltoid, bypassing the lungs. The mRNA or DNA enters the cells in the deltoid and induces the cells to start producing spike protein, which may enter the blood vessels and cause systemic damage, according to current studies.

Since the spike protein can traverse and damage multiple organs, doctors theorize that spike protein-induced injuries are a multisystem syndrome rather than a disease.

The distinction of spike protein-injury syndromes is important, as it highlights that the condition is systemic and can be related to many organs and body systems.

There are also spike protein injuries that involve only a single organ, such as myocarditis and pericarditis. While these adverse events may also be caused by vaccine spike protein, treatment is more straightforward, since only the heart is affected.

Systemic spike injuries may lead to inflammation, impairments in the gut microbiome, mitochondrial dysfunction, allergic reactions, activation of latent viruses, blood clotting, and injuries to other organs.

The impairment of these mechanisms can therefore cause a collection of symptoms including cognitive problems, migraines, fatigue, malaise, breathing problems, rapid heart rates, neuropathic pain, and seizures.

Some doctors hypothesize that, compared to long-haulers, people who experience vaccine adverse events have a higher amount of spike protein in their bodies. A hypothesis paper reasoned that in infection, the virus tends to be restricted to the lungs, while the vaccine introduces its content straight into the muscles..

**Differences in Symptoms Onset**

Though spike protein invasion routes all have similarities, their differences may lead to different symptom progressions.

There tend to be two major groups of long-COVID patients. The minority progresses from acute COVID-19 into long COVID without a period of symptom alleviation in between.

Kory said that most of the long-haulers he sees experienced a period of recovery or symptom alleviation for a few days to weeks before progressing into long COVID. This has also been observed in research.

Board-certified internist Dr. Keith Berkowitz, also the founder of the Center for Balanced Health in New York, told The Epoch Times that some of his patients developed long COVID after a mild or asymptomatic infection. This has also been reported in peer-reviewed studies, and other doctors have seen this trend.

Since COVID-19 infects the lungs, many long-COVID patients develop persistent shortness of breath caused by systemic pneumonia. Because the vaccine bypasses the lungs, pneumonia is seen less in vaccine-injured individuals.

There are also two major groups of symptom onset of vaccine injuries.

One group of people experiences symptoms within the first few minutes to hours of receiving the vaccine. These responses are likely due to sensitivities to the vaccine contents, which include lipid nanoparticles in the mRNA vaccines and polyethylene glycol (PEG).

The second group of people develops symptoms later, within days or weeks of vaccination. Since it takes time for cells to make spike protein, it may take a longer time for the vaccines to start causing

| Comparing Symptoms | Symptoms caused by spike protein. | Permeates through the muscles. | Systemic pneumonia. | Tend to have more neurological symptoms. | May experience symptoms immediately. |
|--------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------|--|--------------------------------------|
| Long COVID         | ●                                 |                                | ●                   |  |                                      |
| Vaccine Injury     | ●                                 | ●                              |                     | ●  | ●                                    |

damage. A preprint study on mRNA lipid nanoparticles in cell culture found that cells need around three to seven hours to start to make spike protein carried in the lipid nanoparticles, though the duration may vary when applied to the human body. Another study detected spike proteins in the plasma one day after vaccination.

Clinicians noticed other minor differences between patients who were diagnosed as long-haulers and those diagnosed as vaccine-injured.

Kory’s vaccine-injured patients tend to have more neurological symptoms, including neuropathies, seizures, tremors, and tinnitus, while Berkowitz said that he observes more cardiac problems among his vaccine-injured patients.

**Compared to long COVID, COVID-19 vaccine injuries receive significantly less media coverage and research.**

Board-certified internist Dr. Syed Haider, founder of MyGoToDoc.com, an on-line platform that connects over 50,000 long-COVID patients with health care professionals, said that with his patients, those who developed symptoms after the vaccine usually have one or two particularly prominent symptoms, while the long-COVID patients tend to have more of an even mix.

Hazan, on the other hand, notices subtle differences.

“The differences in the presentations are all in the history taking,” she said.

From early 2022 to now, Kory and Berkowitz have seen a shift in the patients presenting in their clinics. A year ago, the majority of patients they treated had long COVID; now, people who first developed



There is no approved diagnostic test for either long COVID or vaccine injury, leaving much for the doctor and patient to figure out.

symptoms after vaccines make up the majority.

For Haider, the majority of his patients are still long-haulers, while Hazan sees around a 50-50 split.

Recent studies have found that compared to those infected with earlier variants, people infected with Omicron seem to be at a lower risk for long COVID.

While Berkowitz and Kory have continued to see long-COVID symptoms in people infected with Omicron, both say that long COVID after Omicron tends to be less prevalent.

**The Majority Now: Vaccinated and Infected**

The unfortunate situation now is that most people have both been infected with COVID-19 and vaccinated, complicating diagnosis and treatment.

Regardless of doctors’ own diagnostic methods to determine whether symptoms are caused by infection or vaccination, the consensus among clinicians interviewed by The Epoch Times is that people who have been harmed by the spike protein, whether through long COVID or vaccinations, should avoid getting reinfected, infected for the first time, and getting a booster.

A 2022 survey conducted by React19 on 98 long-COVID or post-vaccine sufferers found that around one-third of the people reported worsening symptoms after a COVID-19 reinfection.

Subsequent vaccinations are also ill-advised. “I’ve had patients who took the first shot, really got kind of sick in the weeks afterwards, and actually got a second shot,” Kory said.

People who fell ill after the first shot are advised to speak to their physicians about potential health risks to decide whether they should continue vaccinating.

While there are long-COVID cases in which patients feel better after vaccination, these cases tend to be rare, with most patients experiencing symptom aggravations after a subsequent infection or vaccination.

An interesting thing Berkowitz noticed was that while infections with previous COVID-19 variants such as Alpha and Delta may worsen a post-vaccine patient’s symptoms, he sees less of this with post-vaccine patients infected with Omicron. This suggests that these patients’ immune

systems may be better able to control Omicron infections.

**Similar Treatment Protocols**

Treatment-wise, there is not a clear difference between treatment protocols for these two conditions.

“My approach to treating both syndromes is essentially the same,” said Haider, explaining that clinicians currently do not know how to remove the lipid nanoparticles, polyethylene glycol, intact mRNA, or fragmented mRNA from people who have been vaccinated with the mRNA shots, so there’s no specific way to address the differences.

A biodistribution study released upon a Freedom of Information Act request on mRNA vaccines found that when lipid nanoparticles were injected into mice, most of the particles would stay in the injection site while some would sequester in the liver, adrenal glands, spleen, and ovaries. Another study in rats found that those injected with vaccine lipid nanoparticles tended to have a lower immune response, though it’s unknown if this relationship is causal.

Since treatment protocols are similar for the two conditions, vaccine-injured patients may benefit from treatments available at long-COVID clinics, provided that they are receiving proper treatment.

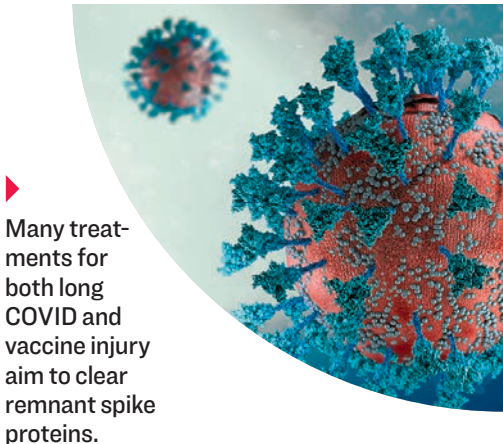
Kory said that a majority of his patients tried going to primary care doctors and long-haul clinics, received little treatment or help, then came to him in despair.

“The other plight of the long-hauler and the vaccine-injured is that the majority have normal tests,” said Kory. “You might find some abnormalities [but] there’s no smoking gun to point to what the problem is, in testing.”

Therefore, a large portion of long-COVID and vaccine-injury treatments aim to target the underlying mechanisms that may be causing the symptoms, hoping that the mechanism that is targeted is the right one.

Many of these treatments aim at clearing the remnant spike proteins and relieving the inflammation they cause, while also boosting overall health to help with self-recovery.

Sometimes these patients simply need time to recover. Kory observed that his



long-haul patients tend to see improvement in their symptoms over time, while he found that there seems to be less of a time benefit for people who have post-vaccine symptoms.

“We use this phrase: a tincture of time,” he said.

Long-COVID patients also tend to have more pulmonary problems from their prior infection; therefore, they may be prescribed steroids such as prednisone to control pneumonia.

Berkowitz, on the other hand, sees patients of various presentations and has to adjust his treatments to suit each patient. Vaccine-injured patients especially tend to have more symptoms, and this inevitably increases their recovery time.

Hazan treats patients by replenishing their lost gut microbiome. The type of bacteria lost tends to vary among patients, so everyone is treated differently.

**Research**

While research on spike protein injury has exclusively focused on long-COVID patients, Kory suspects that some of these cohort studies have also included people who were harmed by the vaccines rather than the disease.

“I don’t think [the studies are] purely about long-haul, unless it’s [published in] 2020 before the vaccines came out,” Kory said.

Therefore, data on long COVID may be confounded and impure.

Focused attention on long COVID while denying vaccine injury syndromes promotes a vaccination agenda, as people may be led to think the vaccines are safe and without harm.

“It will continue to propagate this non-recognition of the scope and scale of vaccine injuries,” Kory said. “If anything, it could make people want to get vaccinated because they don’t want to get long COVID.”

Hazan, who has clinical trial experience of more than 30 years, told The Epoch Times that there has been a lot of resistance against published research that went against the mainstream narrative on vaccine safety and early treatment.

Though she has yet to publish any studies on vaccine injury, her previous papers that speculate on the possible benefits of ivermectin have faced scrutiny, and there have been multiple external attempts to remove them.

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

# Causes of Renal Disease and Tips for Kidney Health

If you’re concerned about kidney function, knowing the causes of kidney failure and how to address it can help you take action

TENG CHENG LIANG

In the early stages of kidney disease, there are usually no obvious symptoms, and few patients suspect any issues. When kidney disease is finally diagnosed, considerable damage may have already been done. If it has gone too far, the patient may require kidney dialysis to stay alive.

As COVID-19 wreaks havoc around the world, the sequelae of the disease (secondary ailments that follow infection) shouldn’t be underestimated.

Research from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) shows that long COVID can cause damage to multiple organs, including the kidney. Renal function can be degraded by 3 to 4 percent within one year, according to one study published in JASN, the Journal of The American Society of Nephrology.

Fortunately, greater awareness of the symptoms of chronic kidney disease, early detection and treatment, and dietary management may preserve kidney function.

Chronic diseases that can induce kidney issues include systemic lupus erythematosus, diabetes, high blood pressure, and long COVID.

Other causes of kidney disease include the deposition of immunoglobulin A antibodies in the kidney’s glomeruli, overadministration of analgesics (pain killers), xanthine oxidase deficiency, toxicity acquired from chemotherapy drugs, and chronic exposure to lead.

**Causes of Kidney Disease**

**Painkillers**

Pain relievers that can cause kidney problems include aspirin, propranolol (a beta blocker), phenacetin (an analgesic and fever-reducing drug), and nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs. The use of pain relievers can cause nephropathy—a chronic inflammatory change characterized by loss and atrophy of renal tubules, interstitial fibrosis, and inflammation. Long-term use of phenacetin is associated with renal papillary necrosis.

**Diabetes**

Diabetic nephropathy is a progressive kidney disease caused by glomerular capillary vasculopathy. It’s characterized by nephrotic syndrome and diffuse glomerular scarring. It’s particularly associated with poorly managed diabetes and is the main reason for dialysis in many developed countries. It’s classified as a small-vessel complication of diabetes.

**Traditional Chinese medicines that protect the kidneys include goji berries and yam.**

**Long COVID**

According to the latest research report of the CDC, 1 in 5 infected adults will suffer from at least one complication as a result of long COVID, and 1 in 4 people over the age of 65 will suffer at least one symptom of long COVID, causing damage in particular to three main organs: the heart, lungs, and kidneys, wherein renal function can suffer accelerated deterioration of three to four years in just one year.

**Chromosomal Dominant Polycystic Kidney Disease**

Autosomal dominant polycystic kidney disease is the most common genetic kidney disorder, affecting half a million Americans.

**Diet**

A diet high in animal protein, animal fat, and cholesterol may increase the risk of microalbuminuria, a sign of declining kidney function. In general, a diet high in fruits, vegetables, and whole grains but low in meat and sweets may provide some protection against renal decline. Animal protein and fat, cholesterol, and sweets produce more acids, while fruits, vegetables, legumes, and whole grains produce more alkalis.

**Immunoglobulin A Nephropathy**

Also known as Berger’s disease, immunoglobulin A nephropathy is a kidney disease that occurs when the antibody immunoglobulin A builds up in the kidneys resulting in local inflammation that can reduce the kidneys’ ability to filter waste from the blood.

**Iodine**

The underlying mechanism of renal disease induced by iodine agents is still unclear. However, there is substantial evidence that several factors, including

apoptosis, appear to play a role.

**Lithium**

Lithium, a drug commonly used to treat bipolar disease, and psychiatric disorders, can cause nephrogenic diabetes insipidus, and persistent usage can lead to kidney disease.

**Lupus**

Lupus nephritis is a kidney complication that can occur in people with systemic lupus erythematosus—more commonly known as lupus.

**Polycystic Kidney Disease**

Other possible causes of kidney disease are due to the formation of cysts, or fluid-containing sacs, within the kidneys. When one grows older, these cysts can also grow larger, which can lead to eventual kidney failure. Polycystic kidney disease is an inherited disease caused by gene mutations.

**Toxicity of Chemotherapy Drugs**

Kidney disease may be related to some therapies used to treat cancer. The most common form of kidney disease in cancer patients is acute kidney injury, which is usually due to volume depletion from post-chemotherapy vomiting and diarrhea, or occasionally due to nephrotoxicity of chemotherapy drugs.

Kidney failure caused by the breakdown of cancer cells, usually after chemotherapy, is unique to oncological nephrology. Several chemotherapy drugs, such as cisplatin, are

associated with acute and chronic kidney injury. Newer drugs, such as anti-vascular endothelial growth factor, have also been associated with similar injuries as well as proteinuria, hypertension, and thrombotic microangiopathy.

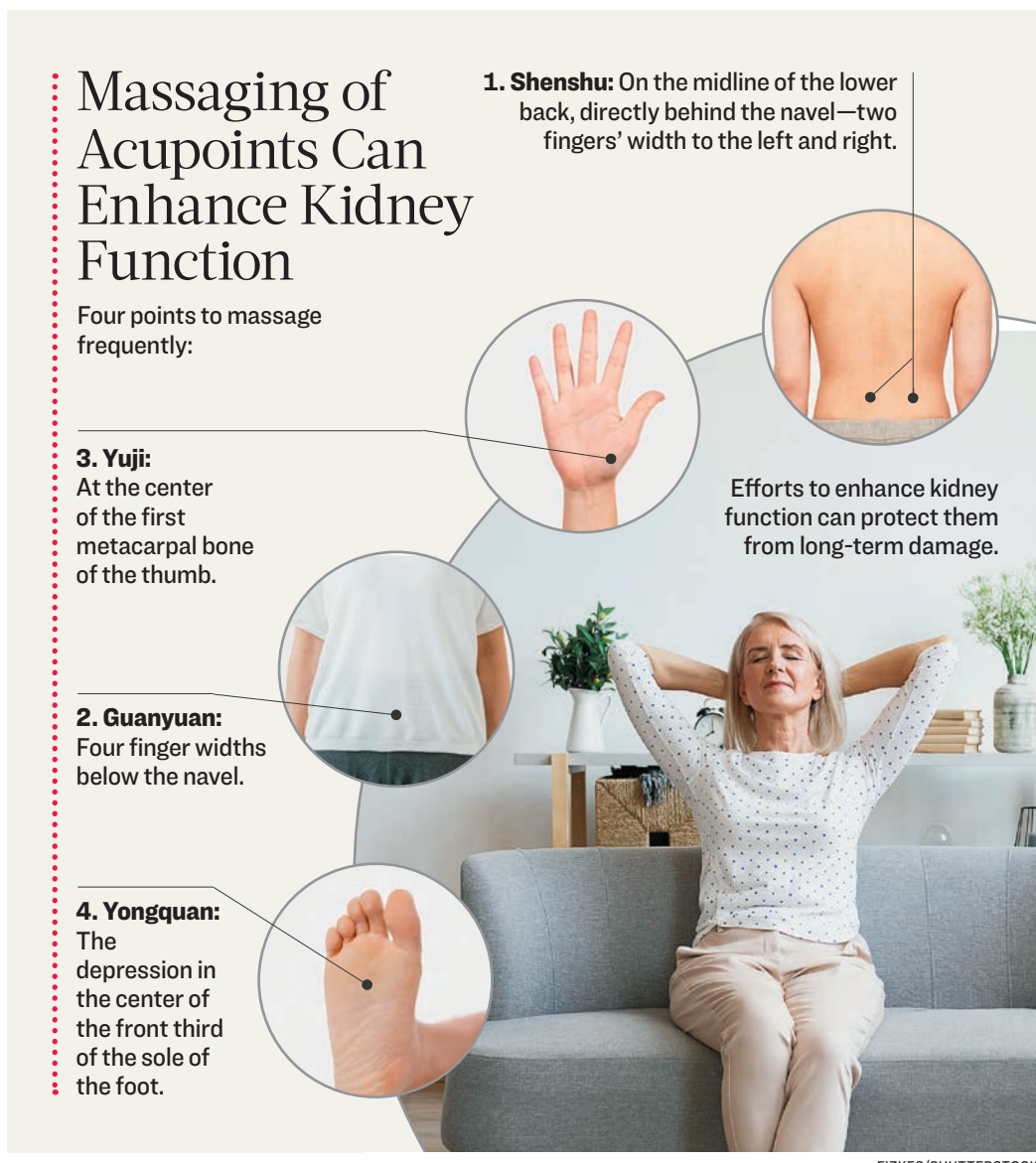
**How to Protect Your Kidneys**

From the perspective of traditional Chinese medicine (TCM), the intestines and stomach are closely related to the function of the kidneys. Taking good care of the intestines and stomach can make the kidneys healthier. Traditional Chinese medicines that protect the kidneys include goji berries and yam. People with poor kidney function can often take porridge, which is good for the stomach. You can also add goji berries and yam, which will nourish the kidneys.

**Other Foods that Nourish the Kidneys**

1. Chestnut: Nourishes the stomach and kidneys and strengthens the spleen and the tendons.
2. Black sesame: Nourishes and replenishes the organs, which can produce body fluid and reduce dryness.
3. Black beans: Nourishes blood and repairs deficiencies.
4. Walnut: Nourishes the kidneys via the kidney and lung meridians. Also strengthens essence, warms the lungs, and relieves asthma.

Some of the above ingredients may be found at local Asian food markets.



## Massaging of Acupoints Can Enhance Kidney Function

Four points to massage frequently:

1. **Shenshu:** On the midline of the lower back, directly behind the navel—two fingers’ width to the left and right.
2. **Guanyuan:** Four finger widths below the navel.
3. **Yujie:** At the center of the first metacarpal bone of the thumb.
4. **Yongquan:** The depression in the center of the front third of the sole of the foot.

FIZKE/SHUTTERSTOCK





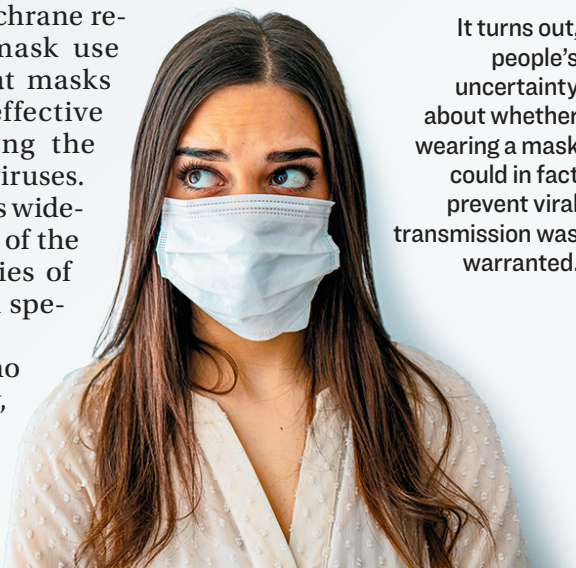
# Masks Not Effective in Reducing Spread of Respiratory Viruses: Study

A new research review confirms that mask mandates didn't have a scientific basis and are of little use

LIA ONELY

A recent Cochrane review of mask use found that masks are not effective in reducing the spread of respiratory viruses. A Cochrane review is widely held to be a review of the highest quality studies of medical literature on specific topics.

The researchers who conducted the review, which assessed the effectiveness of masks



It turns out, people's uncertainty about whether wearing a mask could in fact prevent viral transmission was warranted.

and hand hygiene, said masks probably make "little to no difference in how many people have confirmed flu." They also found that hand hygiene programs "may reduce the number of people who catch a respiratory or flu-like illness."

The researchers looked through large medical databases such as CENTRAL, PubMed, and Embase for well-controlled studies in which one intervention is compared to another, known as randomized controlled trials (RCTs) and cluster RCTs, in which groups or clusters of individuals are randomized rather than individuals themselves.

The study, published on Jan. 30, examined 78 RCTs and cluster RCTs published until October 2022. Six of the new studies were conducted during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Physical measures such as screening at entry ports, quarantine, physical distancing to stop or slow the infection of acute respiratory viruses (ARVs) such as those causing influenza, severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS), and COVID-19 were also included in the review, but the authors were unable to find any high-quality studies to assess these interventions.

The review is an update to a previous one published in November 2020.

## Medical or Surgical Masks

Ten of the studies the authors examined regarding masks took place in the community, and two studies were among health care workers.

"Compared with wearing no mask in the community studies only, wearing a mask may make little to no difference in how many people caught a flu-like illness/COVID-like illness," the authors concluded.

In addition, it "probably makes little or no difference in how many people have flu/COVID confirmed by a laboratory test."

Reports about unwanted effects were rare and were poorly reported.

Similar results were found in an RCT study from Guinea-Bissau published on Jan. 5 in *The Lancet*.

The study, not yet peer-reviewed, was conducted between July 20, 2020, and Jan. 22, 2021, and included over 39,000 participants.

"New Cochrane meta-analysis of RCTs shows masks don't work. New COVID mask RCT from Guinea Bissau shows masks don't work. Throw that onto the pile of old COVID/flu mask RCTs that show masks don't work. It's done. Move

on," said Margery Smelkinson, an infectious diseases scientist at the U.S. National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, on Twitter.

She said in a Jan. 14 video attached to the post, "why are we focusing on these lower quality observational studies when we have these better, randomized controlled trials?"

There have been many RCTs on flu in health care workers and they find that masks have no effect, she said. So three years into the COVID-19 pandemic, why do we continue to "promote masking?"

## N95 Respirators

When comparing N95 respirators to medical or surgical masks, the authors noted that they were "uncertain whether wearing masks or N95/P2 respirators helps to slow the spread of respiratory viruses," based on the studies they assessed.

N95 respirator masks refer to the U.S. testing requirements and the P2 classification represents the European testing requirements.

The researchers reviewed four studies that were conducted on health care workers and one small study in the community.

Wearing N95/P2 respirators probably made "little to no difference" in how many people were confirmed with flu, a flu-like illness, or a respiratory illness.

Harms from wearing the masks were not well-reported in this case as well.

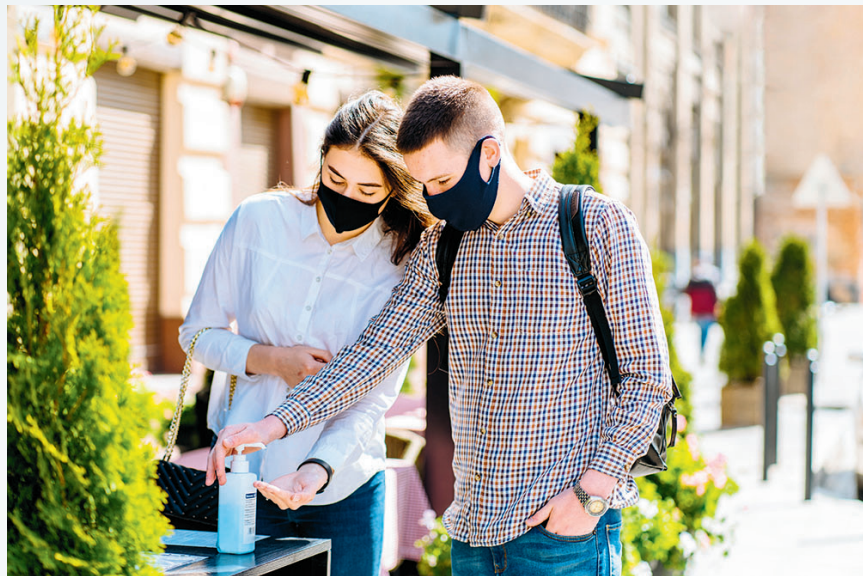
Evidence was limited by imprecision and heterogeneity for these subjective outcomes.

The authors noted medical or surgical masks "were non-inferior" to N95 respirators according to a recent study of 1,009 health care workers in four countries providing direct care to COVID-19 patients.

"There is no proof for the effectiveness of wearing masks to prevent infection with a respiratory virus in the community," Yoav Yehezkeli, a medical doctor and former lecturer at the Department of Emergency and Disaster Management at Tel Aviv University in Israel, told *The Epoch Times*.

The review strongly supports and confirms the conclusion that he and his colleagues have been saying since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, he said. Yehezkeli was one of the founders of the Epidemic Management Team and Evaluation Programs for Extreme Biological Incidents—a professional body that advises the director general of the Israel Ministry of Health (MOH).

In December, he co-authored a letter "Masks for Prevention of Respiratory



Hand washing was shown to have a meaningful impact in reducing viral transmission from one person to another.

**Hand-washing does reduce infection from respiratory diseases, to a moderate extent.**

**There is no proof for the effectiveness of wearing masks to prevent infection with a respiratory virus in the community.**

Dr. Yoav Yehezkeli, former lecturer, Tel Aviv University

Infections—Is It Evidence-Based Medicine?" sent to the Israel Medical Association Journal, which said that mask mandates—which still remain mandatory in medical facilities in Israel—are not evidence-based.

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention continues to recommend masks in communities where the prevalence of COVID-19 remains high.

According to Yehezkeli, there are studies that showed that masks had some effect, and some studies showed that there is no effect, but in general there is no proof that masks are effective.

The findings regarding N95 were a bit surprising Yehezkeli said, "since in terms of biological logic, the N95 mask is supposed to have a better protective effect."

Yehezkeli emphasized that in his professional opinion, during an encounter between a doctor and a patient who is suspected of having COVID-19 or has COVID-19 or another respiratory disease, "there is value in masks and even more so in the N95 mask, but the studies simply did not examine this specific situation."

## Hand Hygiene

Another interesting finding in the review worth noting, according to Yehezkeli, is that hand washing does reduce infection from respiratory diseases, to a moderate extent, "not dramatically, but it does have a protective effect."

The review found that hand washing interventions such as hand-washing and using hand sanitizer "may reduce the number of people who catch a respiratory or flu-like illness, or have confirmed flu," in 14 percent of people compared to those who did not

follow hand hygiene interventions.

This probable benefit would result in a reduction from 380 events per 1,000 people to 327 per 1,000 people in absolute terms, the authors said.

Yet this effect was not statistically significant with more strictly defined outcomes of influenza-like illness and laboratory-confirmed influenza, suggesting that the intervention "made little or no difference."

There were only a few studies that examined unwanted effects. They mentioned skin irritation in people using hand sanitizer.

## High Risk for Bias

The researchers note that it was hard to draw clear conclusions due to high risk for bias in the assessed studies, variation in measurements of the outcome, and low adherence with the interventions during the trials.

The studies were done in different countries worldwide, and in different settings during non-epidemic influenza periods, the global H1N1 influenza pandemic in 2009, epidemic influenza seasons up to 2016, and during the COVID-19 pandemic, while adherence with interventions was low in many of them.

In addition, there were few additional RCTs during the pandemic related to physical interventions but none of them dealt with the issue of mask quality and adherence to wearing masks properly, which are both important for evaluating effectiveness.

The authors noted that their confidence in the results were "low to moderate" regarding the subjective outcomes related to respiratory illness and moderate for the more accurately defined laboratory-confirmed respiratory virus infection, related to masks and N95/P2 respirators.

This highlights the fact that in public health policy, one cannot enforce on the population measures that are not scientifically proven, said Yehezkeli.

"It is actually very unfortunate that the public—not only in Israel but also in the world—was forced for a very long time to wear masks," he said.

Wearing masks—along with other measures that were enforced on the public for a long time—were "very draconian" measures that have not been proven to be effective.

"It is a bit sad, that especially professional bodies such as medical bodies supported such a policy ... even though it was clear from the beginning that it is not useful."

# 5 Surprisingly Simple Ways to Detoxify

Continued from Page 9

## 2. Break a Sweat

Sadly, sweating has become synonymous with something gross that should be blocked with antiperspirants—which, ironically, only further exacerbates the problem of body odor, as these keep one of your primary channels of detoxification from doing its job.

The reality is that we're meant to move our bodies, the result of which is the release of profoundly uplifting and regenerative hormonal and neurochemical secretions. And this is just the obvious "reward" we receive by pushing ourselves through the discomfort of sustained, intense bodily exertion to the point where we are profusely sweating.

Deeper benefits include the activation of the lymphatic system, which, while it's a part of the circulatory system, lacks a pump (like the heart) to push the lymphatic fluid through. This means that the lymphatic system requires the activation of the entire skeletal musculature via breathing, movement, and—most powerfully—exercise.

While one doesn't necessarily need to break a sweat to move the lymph (walking will suffice), you can "free two birds with one hand" by eliminating various heavy metals and chemicals via profuse sweating if you bring your physical activity toward that threshold, which, incidentally, overlaps with that sweet spot that activates feel-good hormone secretions.

## 3. Don't Break the Fast

In wealthier countries, where we

suffer from the Orwellian paradox of being incredibly overfed and simultaneously dying of nutritional deficiencies, one of the best ways to optimize your detoxification systems is to stop eating before sundown (which, I believe, is hard-wired into our bodily design) and skip your breakfast entirely. In other words, skip breakfast and continue through your day until you are truly hungry, and then eat something wholesome, organic, and preferably living to get you fill.

If you want to build a healthy brain and body, eliminate or minimize the consumption of nutritionally vapid foods such as over-processed convenience food made of grains, sugars, and oils. Instead, snack on a salad, an apple, or some organic nuts, etc., and focus on eating one really good meal later in the day. You will be surprised by how little hunger you experience. Much of that craving is a byproduct of chronically elevated insulin, which is largely caused by overeating processed, grain-based foods and simple carbohydrates way beyond what you need to replenish your glycogen stores.

This doesn't have to be painful. If you wake in the morning, have your cup of coffee or tea (if you imbibe), and feel that hunger and low energy are driving you toward French toast, or whatever you would normally eat, try taking a couple of tablespoons of coconut oil. This will provide you (and your grumpy morning brain) with a near-immediate source of fuel. Sixty-six percent of coconut oil is medium-chain triglycerides that your body can use for energy very quickly and that your liver breaks down into ketone bodies for your brain. Ketone bodies are the brain's only other source of energy beyond glucose.

Of course, this isn't going to work for everyone, but it certainly may fit better into a busy lifestyle than the "heroic fast" concept of just not eating anything at all—which has its place, especially for the very sick under professional guidance,

**The problem with municipal drinking water isn't just the fluoride residues, but the 600-plus disinfectant byproducts it carries.**



Probiotics like coconut yogurt can aid the body's detoxification pathways.



Sweating profusely helps detox various heavy metals and chemicals. Exercising will also activate the lymphatic system.



We should do our best to avoid foods that contain high amounts of pesticides and herbicides to limit our toxic exposures.

or those on a spiritual mission. Heroic fasting doesn't suit those with kids, several jobs, and who just want a way to jumpstart the internal house-cleaning, metabolism-boosting process.

## 4. Spice Up Your Life!

Basic culinary spices can work wonders to stimulate bodily detoxification. A recent study, which we highlighted in the article "Garlic Beats Drug in Safely Detoxifying Lead from the Body," illustrates how you can use your food as medicine. If you love garlic, you are already a step ahead of those who only tolerate it. If not, don't ignore its potential application in foods you are already enjoying. The point is that we have plenty of help all around us, in our kitchen cupboards, on our spice racks, etc. And do you know

ALL PHOTOS BY SHUTTERSTOCK

what's cool? There is a huge list of spices, foods, and nutrients—more than 75, last time we counted—that we have indexed on [GreenMedInfo.com](http://GreenMedInfo.com) that can stimulate detoxification pathways in the body.

## 5. An Apple a Day Isn't Going Away

One of the most amazing nutritional stories of our time is what happened to tens of thousands of "Chernobyl children" after the meltdown of that reactor. In our article "Why Apple Is One of the World's Most Healing Superfoods," we discuss the radioisotope-detoxifying properties of this incredible healing agent:

"Post-Chernobyl, for instance, apple pectin was used to reduce Cesium-137 levels in exposed children, in some cases by over 60 percent. From 1996 to 2007, a total of more than 160,000 "Chernobyl" children received pectin food additives. As a result, levels of Cs-137 in children's organs decreased after each course of pectin additives by an average of 30–40 percent. Significant reductions were noted in as short a time period as 16 days. Apple pectin has even been found to prevent the most deadly, and entirely manmade radioisotope, plutonium-239, from absorbing in the gastrointestinal tract of animals fed it."

The great thing about an apple, of course,

**Ketone bodies are the brain's only other source of energy beyond glucose.**



Kombucha, a fermented tea, is a lightly effervescent probiotic.



Garlic was shown to be a potent detoxifier of lead.



Eating a healthy, probiotic breakfast is good. Delaying that breakfast to extend your fast from the night before is typically even better.

is that it's a whole food. Rather than take mega-doses of apple pectin (assuming you don't live in Fukushima or were exposed to its fallout in some way; otherwise, please do), simply incorporating a good apple—that is to say, 100 percent organic, nonirradiated, non-GMO—into your daily diet should constitute a pleasurable experience. That's especially true if you incorporate this healthy snack as the "break" in your break-the-fast strategy. We can be nourished, pleased, and detoxified all in one act; and this is indeed the way nature designed things, in its inexhaustible wisdom.

Lastly, but perhaps most importantly, please avoid getting poisoned in the first place. Easier said than done, I understand. But here are some important things to remember to make sure you aren't unintentionally throwing yourself on a chemical grenade every day.

## Don't Take Receipts, If Possible

Next to canned food (with that darn alphabet soup of bisphenols (BPA, BPS, etc.) in its can liners, receipts are the primary route of exposure to this profoundly damaging class of gender-bending, heart-damaging, brain-damaging petrochemicals. Avoid touching thermal printer receipts—especially if you use lotion, which only accelerates the skin's absorbance of these chemicals.

## Stop Slathering On Petrochemicals

If you're putting it on your skin, it's likely worse than eating it. How's that? Unlike what you put into your mouth, where your liver determines whether it will be allowed into your bloodstream, your skin has no such guardian to keep poisons out. If something you are using as a body care product has an ingredient that requires a degree in chemistry to understand, ditch it or don't buy it. If you can't eat an ingredient, don't put it on your body. Even better, try using coconut oil or related food-cosmetic

medicines that have thousands of years of prior use backing up their effectiveness and safety.

## Don't Drink the Unpurified Water

If you get your water through a municipal system and it hasn't been effectively purified (ideally, distilled with minerals reintroduced), you shouldn't drink it. Also, keep in mind that you can get pristine water from Iceland or Fiji (or wherever marketers like to take our imagination), but if it's been sitting in plastic for a year, it's not as good as it would seem due to the widespread contamination of plastic bottles with microplastics.

The problem with municipal drinking water isn't just the fluoride residues, but the 600-plus disinfectant byproducts it carries, all of which are known to be toxic to the body, damage DNA, and probably contribute to cancer. It still boggles my imagination that anyone would willfully expose themselves to this, even in its secondary iteration as cooking water, i.e., using it to make pasta. Water composes the majority of our bodies. Learn to savor "biological water,"—that is, water that comes from pure food, for example, watermelon. This water is enriched by the universe itself, and is unparalleled in what it can do for your body.

So we've covered some problems and solutions; certainly, this is just the tip of the iceberg. Just take it all with a grain of sea salt, and take what works for you and leave the rest.

*Sayer Ji is the founder of GreenMedInfo.com, a reviewer at the International Journal of Human Nutrition and Functional Medicine, co-founder and CEO of Systome Biomed, and vice chairman of the board of the National Health Federation. This work is reproduced and distributed with the permission of GreenMed-Info LLC. Sign up for their newsletter at [GreenMedInfo.com/newsletter](http://GreenMedInfo.com/newsletter)*



MINDSET MATTERS

# What’s the Point of Health?

Health is far more than just a resolution of illness, it’s an important step on a journey toward our deeper reason for being

KELLY BROGAN

When the body comes into harmony, it’s more than just symptom relief, it’s an opportunity to come into yourself and ascend that ladder.

I used to be an atheist; in fact, I used to be a self-described “belligerent atheist.” I thought that religious dogma was the outgrowth of fear and unresolved parental issues. Certainly, much modern religion has lost touch with its more mystical roots, but there’s no question that what ails the average American, as Graham Hancock quotes, is a disconnection from Spirit.

### The Religion of Medicine

When we disconnect from a sense of inner guidance and intuition, we are forced to rely on external constructs, authority, and experts. My mentor, Dr. Nicholas Gonzalez, said:

“The last remaining religion is medicine. If you look at Sloan Kettering [Cancer Center], it’s actually like a temple, and the priests wear white coats and they speak their own language. Patients tend to bow down to that. Never underestimate the power of authority.”

What happens when religion masquerades as medicine and seeks to summarily eliminate all competing belief systems? What happens when we’re told that there’s one truth and that that truth is consensus-driven medicine? Perhaps the 110 bills introduced across this country to eliminate religious and personal belief exemptions to vaccination are a symptom of this insidious process.

Gonzalez also said: “Patients have to do the treatment they believe in. Fear is an infectious disease. You can catch fear but you can’t catch faith. That has to come from within.”

I have always practiced this ethos. I know that fear has a nocebic effect that can’t be undone. But where there’s faith in the body’s

ability to heal when properly supported, magical things can happen.

### Healing the Nervous System

Nick wrote me in an email before he died about the role of healing the autonomic nervous system (ANS) as a part of a patient’s life path:

“I was pleased, though not surprised, to learn yesterday that you have moved beyond atheism, the fanatical religion of our time.

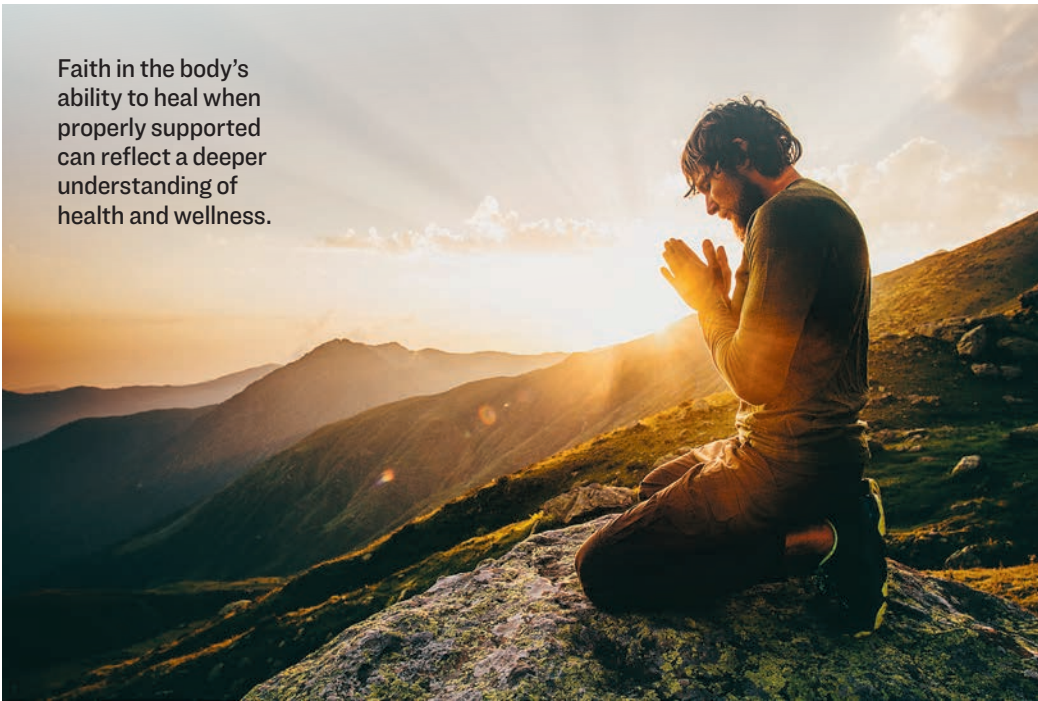
“I approach atheism the way I approach adolescent acne, as a phase many go through that is meant to be outgrown, discarded, and forgotten. Unfortunately, too many ‘smart’ people stay stuck in adolescent levels of spiritual understanding, which limits them in their personal lives and precludes, in our particular profession, physicians from becoming truly healing.

## We all want to know and connect to our purpose in this life.

“Interestingly enough, we find as the ANS branches become strong, healthy, and balanced, the brain hemispheres become stronger, healthier, and more balanced, and patients will start often looking into higher things spontaneously with no prompting. Sometimes it’s amazing to watch. It’s a question of the whole being far more powerful and insightful than the sum of its parts (ie, sympathetic nervous system and parasympathetic nervous system).”

Snarky comments about atheism aside, he touched on something that I’ve observed in my own life and in the lives of many of my patients who go on to become nutritionists, counselors, and artists after our work is largely completed.

It’s the concept of Abraham Maslow’s hier-



Faith in the body’s ability to heal when properly supported can reflect a deeper understanding of health and wellness.

archy of needs: the notion that needs must be met in a particular order and that the meeting of these needs frees one to examine higher-order intentions.

The typical hierarchy looks like this ...

Once we have fed ourselves and put a roof over our heads, then we concern ourselves with external dangers, then with relationships, then with self-love, then with spirituality and coming in touch with our own power.

Of course, in today’s health climate, many of us can get stuck pinballing between the lower three rungs on the ladder never quite making it to the higher agenda. I see this work, the work of teaching patients about lifestyle medicine, as having an unintended benefit of radically changing, evolving, and freeing one’s life path to expose the potential for purpose-driven behaviors.

We all want to know and connect to our purpose in this life. We want to know what we’re here for. How can we bother with that if we’re plagued by fears of degenerative conditions and chronic ill health and bogged down under labels and diagnoses?

### Freeing the Soul

When the body comes into harmony, it’s more than just symptom relief, it’s an opportunity to come into yourself and ascend that ladder.

Personally, I had to heal my body and

resolve my autoimmune condition before I could open myself up to my greater mission. I understand now that cultivating an inner compass is trusting in a guide inside and connecting, without fear, to a trust in the unfolding of the universe—an unfolding we’re here only to witness, not to manipulate. In this way, challenges and distress are an invitation to look at what might be misaligned or out of balance.

Own your body. Free your mind. It’s so much more than a “cure.”

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