

THE EPOCH TIMES

MIND & BODY

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HEALTH CARE



Bacterial infections from central line IVs and catheters can be fatal and are entirely avoidable.

Being a proactive patient can ensure you are better protected against medical errors.



Doctor Sounds **Alarm** on

HOSPITAL SAFETY

A quarter of a million Americans suffer preventable deaths due to medical error or common risks encountered during hospital stays

CHRISTY PRAIS

More than 250,000 people in the United States die every year from medical errors, making it the third leading cause of death after heart disease and cancer, according to a 2016 Johns Hopkins study.

Continued on **Page 4**



Medication errors harm around 1.5 million Americans every year.

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An autopsy in Germany documented how a man died from an mRNA vaccine having never been infected with COVID-19.

COVID-19

Study Proves Man's Death Linked to mRNA Vaccine

Case study details autopsy findings of heart and brain damage arising from vaccine, not natural infection

JENNIFER MARGULIS & JOE WANG

Scientists in Germany have found that mRNA vaccination, not COVID-19 infection itself, caused brain and heart damage in an older adult with underlying conditions.

The study, titled "A Case Report: Multifocal Necrotizing Encephalitis and Myocarditis after BNT162b2 mRNA Vaccination against COVID-19," was published in October 2022 in the journal *Vaccines*. It examined the situation of a 76-year-old German man with Parkinson's disease.

The patient died three weeks after receiving his third COVID-19 injection.

The first vaccine he received in May of 2021 was the Oxford/AstraZeneca vaccine. That was followed by two more injections in July and then December of the same year. His two subsequent vaccines were both made by Pfizer.

After the second vaccine, the patient's family noticed marked changes in his behavior. He started experiencing more anxiety, became more lethargic, and didn't want to be touched. He became withdrawn, even from close family members, and the symptoms of his preexisting Parkinson's disease worsened considerably.

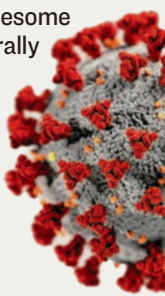
Given the ambiguous clinical symptoms prior to his death, his family requested an autopsy.

Continued on **Page 4**

SPIKE PROTEIN

COVID-19 vaccines trigger the body to produce the same spike (S) protein that has proven so troublesome among the naturally infected.

S-PROTEIN



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Natural Ways to Whiten Your Teeth at Home

Do-it-yourself whitening treatments are easy, safe, and cheap

ZRINKA PETERS

A bright smile may be the first thing you notice about a person, but a closer look could reveal that their teeth are less than bright. The majority of Americans desire whiter teeth, and millions are spent each year on over-the-counter and in-office treatments to achieve this goal. As a result, many have wondered if there are natural home treatments that are safe and effective to whiten teeth. The good news is that you probably have ingredients in your kitchen that can be used to help whiten your teeth and produce a more confident smile.

Baking Soda

Baking soda tops the list as the best-known natural ingredient for tooth whitening. You probably have a box in your kitchen pantry. It's inexpensive, safe for many purposes, and can be found anywhere. And it can play a starring role in your dental routine.

Baking soda is naturally a mild abrasive, making it perfectly suited for gently scrubbing away plaque from the surface of teeth. It's also an effective tool in the fight against surface tooth staining. A review of clinical studies examining the stain-removing effectiveness of baking soda published in the November 2017 edition of the Journal of the American Dental Association, consistently found that "baking soda-based dentifrices are effective and safe for tooth stain removal and consequently whitening"—and sometimes even more effective than their non-baking soda-containing counterparts.

Baking soda also has antibacterial and antimicrobial properties, which can help with the prevention of oral infections. At 10 cents per ounce or less, it's the most affordable option available for at-home whitening.

Hydrogen Peroxide

Hydrogen peroxide is a natural bleaching agent which, like baking soda, is inexpensive and readily available. Since studies so far have focused on manufactured teeth-whitening products that contain hydrogen peroxide, instead of hydrogen peroxide alone, the long-term effects on teeth of direct exposure to hydrogen peroxide are unknown.

However, based on the research that has been done, there are some good indications.

The hydrogen peroxide that's most commonly found in drugstores is diluted to a 3 percent solution. Commercial teeth-whitening products containing hydrogen peroxide often contain two or three times that concentration.

One randomized controlled trial comparing different concentrations of hydrogen peroxide in toothpaste, published in the December 2020 Journal of Dentistry, found that higher concentrations of hydrogen peroxide resulted in greater stain removal. But, some safety concerns exist.

Diluted solutions of 3 percent hydrogen peroxide or less are generally considered to be safe to use as whitening agents when used for short amounts of time. A 1.5 percent solution (made by mixing 3 percent hydrogen peroxide with water in equal parts) can be used as a mouth rinse.

Alternately, making toothpaste out of a small amount of baking soda mixed with enough hydrogen peroxide to make a paste, is also an easy tooth cleaning and whitening option.

Using higher concentrations of hydrogen peroxide, for longer amounts of time (more than one-minute swishing or two minutes brushing) or too frequently (more than once or twice daily), can actually damage teeth by eroding enamel, and lead to inflammation, cavities, and even an increased risk of oral cancer. Bottom line: In low concentrations, hydrogen peroxide can help whiten teeth—just be careful not to overdo it.

Oil Pulling

Oil pulling has its roots in traditional Indian, or Ayurvedic medicine, and involves swishing a small amount of oil around in the mouth and in between the teeth for up to 20 minutes to remove (or "pull") bacteria and improve dental health. It's also thought to help remove toxins from the body.

This practice may not be very familiar in Western circles, but some scientific data supports the use of oil pulling for oral and dental health, resulting in decreased plaque accumulation and incidence of gingivitis. Coconut oil is often used because of its pleasant taste and known health benefits.

While there's no solid evidence showing that oil pulling does work to whiten teeth, a quick online search will turn up plenty of testimonies from people who believe that it did help give them a brighter smile. The practice is very safe, if somewhat time-consuming, so it doesn't hurt to give it a try. Just don't spit the oil down the drain, since it could clog pipes.



Baking soda is a natural antimicrobial teeth whitener.

Fruit and Fruit Enzymes

Celebrity media often buzzes with excitement at the beauty secrets of famous beautiful women. Such was the case when actress Catherine Zeta-Jones revealed that she rubs strawberries on her teeth to clean and whiten them. As it turns out, strawberries (and other fruits) contain malic acid, which can actually whiten teeth. But beware, there's a major downside to this method—the berries also contain citric acid—and both acids will erode tooth enamel with prolonged exposure. If you try this method, keep it short.

Papain and bromelain, fruit enzymes that are found in papayas and pineapples, respectively, have been shown in clinical studies to work as effective stain removers when used as active ingredients in toothpaste. The same effects weren't found by simply eating the fruits though.

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Avoid repeated COVID-19 infections by supporting your body's ability to fight off viral invaders

AMBER YANG & JOJO NOVAES

With the continuous mutation of COVID-19 variants, protection generated by a previous bout may not be able to counter new virus strains. So, how can you avoid the risk of repeated infection?

In an interview with "Health 1+1," Dr. Dawei Guo, director of Fu Yuan Chinese Medicine Clinic in Taiwan, shared how to supplement daily nutrition to improve innate immunity.

Prevent Inflammation

Chronic inflammation contributes to many diseases and may cause them as well. Inflammation can make it difficult for the body to maintain sufficient resistance to infections, such as COVID-19. Guo pointed out that we should eat more foods having anti-inflammatory substances, including the following:

- fish rich in omega-3, such as salmon, herring, mackerel, and sardines
- blackberries
- pineapples
- strawberries
- raspberries
- walnuts
- sesame
- onions
- spinach
- garlic
- ginger
- tea rich in catechins

Points to Note When Traveling, Dining Out

Guo reminds everyone to bring some alcohol-based hand sanitizer when traveling or dining out. You can bring wet disinfectant tissues to wipe surfaces to utensils if you like. To reduce the risk of exposure to the virus for yourself and your family, be careful not to touch your eyes, nose, or mouth. Some herbs mentioned above may sound strange, but many are available in health food stores and Asian groceries.

The oligosaccharides in foods such as onions, burdock, and asparagus provide nutrients for the good bacteria in the gut.

1.

Enhance Gastrointestinal Health to Boost Immunity

The gut provides the bulk of immunity in the human body. About 70 percent of immune cells are produced in the intestines, so maintaining a healthy gut is essential for good health. Can taking probiotics help? Guo said that the intestinal tract must first be conditioned to a healthy state before the probiotics can be effective. He recommends the following four categories of foods that can improve your gut.

1. WHOLE GRAINS, ROOTS, AND TUBERS

Oatmeal, brown rice, pumpkin, potato, and sweet potato are all rich in dietary fiber, which promotes intestinal peristalsis, increases stool volume, and accelerates the body's digestion and absorption, thereby reducing the time that food accumulates in the intestinal tract.

2. BEANS

Beans contain water-soluble dietary fiber, which helps to provide sufficient nutrients for good bacteria. It's best to focus on whole beans for their full nutrient value.

3. CRUCIFEROUS VEGETABLES

The oligosaccharides in foods such as onions, burdock, and asparagus provide nutrients for the good bacteria in the gut.

4. FRUITS

Apples, kiwi fruit, and bananas contain water-soluble dietary fiber. If eaten with plain yogurt rich in probiotics, fruits will have increased benefits in maintaining the ecological health of the intestinal flora.

2.

Nutrients Capable of Boosting Immunity

Guo said that to fight the virus, the most important thing is to increase one's innate immunity. A healthy diet is the best way to enhance immunity. He recommends consuming food and supplements containing the following nutrients..

1. VITAMIN A

Since the virus is transmitted through droplets and aerosols, strengthening the defenses of the respiratory mucosa is essential. Vitamin A can enhance the self-repairing capability of the mucous membrane of the respiratory system and reduce the chance of pathogenic bacteria and viruses entering the body. Foods containing vitamin A include carrots, spinach, pumpkin, sweet potatoes, and dark green vegetables.

2. VITAMIN C

Vitamin C has a strong antioxidant capacity. It can remove free radicals from the human body and reduce the chance of disease. Foods that contain vitamin C include kiwi, guava, apples, bananas, citrus fruit, and fish.

3. VITAMIN D

Vitamin D regulates the immune cells. Research has confirmed that increasing the level of vitamin D in the body can reduce the chance of infection with COVID-19 and the rate of severe illness after infection. To get enough vitamin D, in addition to sunshine and diet, consider taking a high-quality supplement.

4. CRUCIFEROUS VEGETABLES

Cruciferous vegetables improve immunity. This group includes arugula, cabbage, Brussels sprouts, cauliflower, and broccoli. Researchers have found that broccoli can also prevent cancer and lower blood pressure.

5. LING ZHI

(Ganoderma lucidum, or Reishi)

Studies have confirmed that the triterpenoids and polysaccharides in Ganoderma lucidum—a type of mushroom—can enhance human immunity.

6. KOREAN GINSENG

Korean ginseng is known as the "King of Herbs." The ginsenosides and polysaccharides contained in it have the effect of improving human immunity.

3.

Chinese Herbal Tea for Daily Health Care

Suppose you are infected with COVID-19 and don't want to take Western medicine. In that case, Guo provides several traditional Chinese medicines and some health teas daily to prevent or reduce symptoms. You can try da qing long (major green dragon) decoction if you have cold symptoms, chills, or fever. If you have cold symptoms with no fever, try gui zhi (Cinnamomi ramulus) decoction. If symptoms include colds and sore throats, try yin qiao san (lonicera and forsythia powder) or sang ju yin (mulberry leaf and chrysanthemum beverage). In addition to treating cough and sore throat, if you also want to moisten the lungs and reduce phlegm, the following are all good choices: xiao qing long (minor green dragon) decoction, ling gan wei jiang xin xia ren (hoelen and schizandra) decoction, bai he gu jin (lily combination) decoction, and zhi ke (anti-cough) powder.

VITALITY TEA

You can also try making your own vitality tea to enhance physical strength and vitality. Ingredients: 3 qian (0.4 oz) of Astragalus, 5 qian (0.7 oz) of American ginseng, 5 qian (0.7 oz) of Acanthopanax, 5 qian (0.7 oz) of roasted licorice, 2 qian (0.3 oz) of dendrobium, 8 to 10 pieces of red dates, and 3 qian (0.4 oz) of wolfberry.

MOISTURIZING TEA

If you are concerned that an infection has moved into your lungs, you can try this tea to nourish the lungs, resolve phlegm, promote body fluids, and relieve cough. Ingredients: 3 qian (0.4 oz) of Ophiopogon japonicus, 3 qian (0.4 oz) of Hangzhou chrysanthemum, 3 qian (0.4 oz) of mulberry leaf, 2 to 3 pieces of Luo Han Guo (Siraitia grosvenorii), 5 qian (0.7 oz) of honeysuckle, 5 to 8 qian (0.7–1 oz) of red dates, 5 qian (0.7 oz) of licorice. Please note that everyone's constitution is different, so please consult a traditional Chinese medicine practitioner before taking the medicines listed here.

4.

Causes of Chronic Inflammation

In addition, Guo suggested that we can eliminate several chronic inflammation causes.

1. SALTY FOOD

Food that is too salty will deter the body's ability to excrete water, causing a sense of bloatedness or fatigue, resulting in a reluctance to move.

2. ADDED SUGARS

Eating sugar causes blood sugar to rise so that human cells are soaked in a high-sugar environment, producing advanced glycation end products (AGEs), the products of excess sugar and protein combined. Studies have found that AGEs can increase oxidative stress and inflammation, accelerate human body aging, and lead to many chronic degenerative diseases.

3. FRIED FOOD

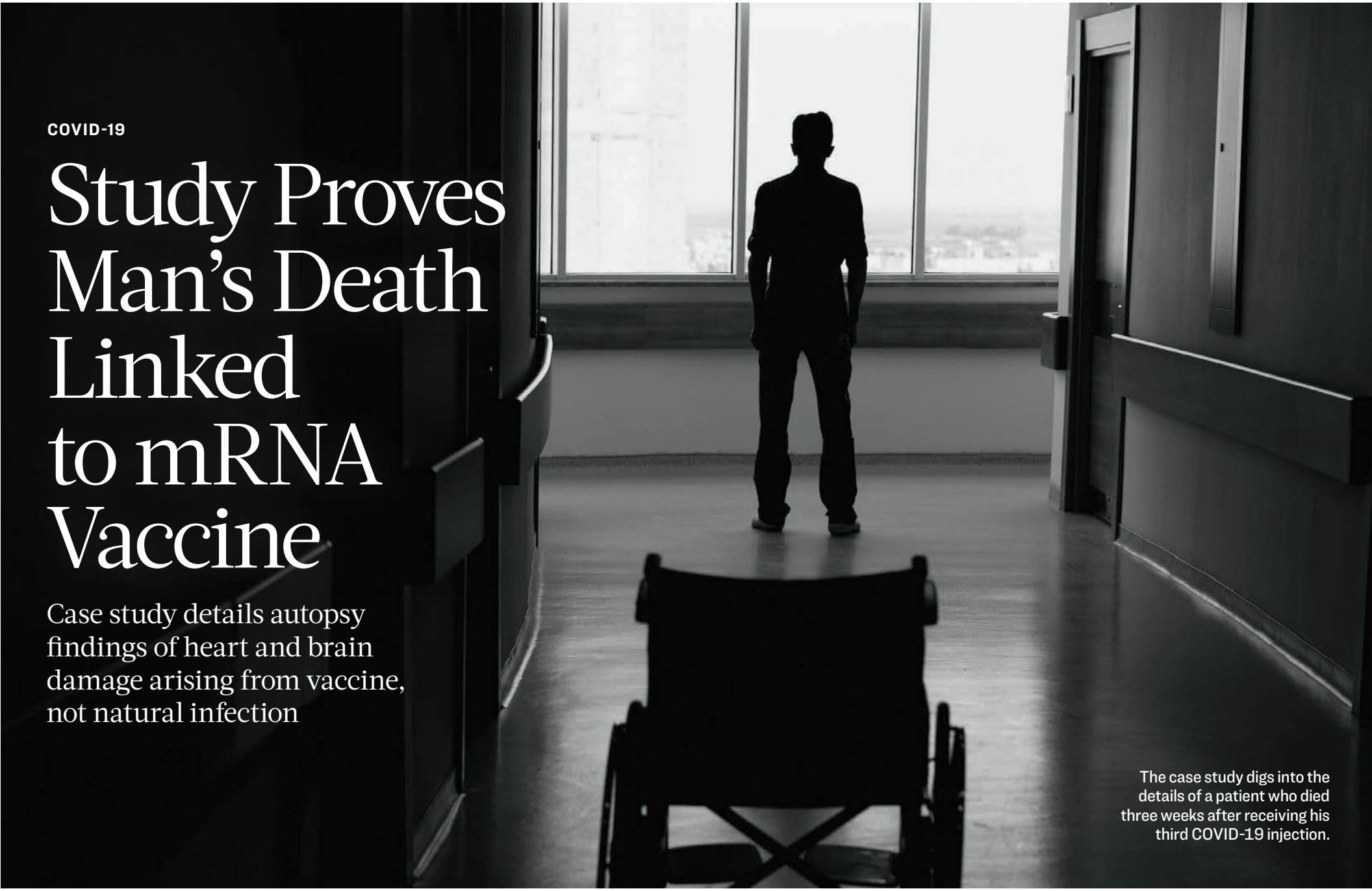
Fried food produces a lot of free radicals, and excess free radicals in some regions of the body can cause inflammation.

4. STAYING UP LATE

Staying up late will reduce the function of immune cells and thus degrade the body's immunity.

Replace salty chips with healthy snack foods like freshly popped and lightly salted popcorn.

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COVID-19

Study Proves Man’s Death Linked to mRNA Vaccine

Case study details autopsy findings of heart and brain damage arising from vaccine, not natural infection

The case study digs into the details of a patient who died three weeks after receiving his third COVID-19 injection.

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The unusual and fascinating results of the autopsy led to a published case report about what’s now being claimed as a vaccine-induced death.

This patient had no history of ever having a COVID-19 infection. This clinical history was confirmed via pathology.

“We can say definitively that this damage was caused by vaccine,” said John Campbell, a nurse educator, explaining the study in detail in a 14-minute YouTube video that he shared with his 2.68 million subscribers on Feb. 16.

Natural COVID-19 Infection

The COVID-19 pandemic was caused by a virus called SARS-CoV-2, which is short for Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus 2. It’s an RNA virus belonging to the family Coronaviridae. The name for this family of viruses is derived from the Latin word “corona,” meaning crown. This is because the virus under

electron microscopy appears crown-like due to small bulbar projections formed by viral spike proteins.

“When the spike protein is expressed in the brain and the heart, it causes an inflammatory response and leads to the death of different parts of the brain.

John Campbell, a nurse educator

Like many other respiratory viruses, coronaviruses spread quickly through droplets that one person projects out of the mouth or nose when breathing, coughing, sneezing, or speaking. The droplets can then be inhaled by another person.

Once inside the recipient’s respiratory system, the viral spike protein plays a key role in virus-host cell communication. A successful communication results in the virus being accepted by the recipient’s cell, completing the process of natural infection.

FDA Approved COVID-19 Vaccines

Apart from the spike protein, SARS-CoV-2 also has other essential structural proteins, such as an envelope, a membrane, and nucleocapsid proteins.

As the spike protein is the most abundant and most “exposed” viral protein, it was the obvious choice as a viral antigen for vaccine development.

In fact, without exception, all of the FDA-approved COVID-19 vaccines use the spike protein as a viral antigen. None of the authorized vaccines use any other SARS-CoV-2 proteins as viral antigens.

“So if you see spike protein on its own, that means it’s vaccine; if you see spike protein and nucleocapsid protein, that means it’s natural viral infection. That’s

the difference between the two,” Campbell explained.

As a former vaccine developer with a Ph.D. in molecular genetics, Joe Wang has questioned the design of these vaccines. At the same time, however, this vaccine design makes it easy to distinguish pathology caused by infection by the virus versus pathology caused by the vaccine.

In order to conduct an autopsy to determine the cause of death in the 76-year-old Parkinson’s disease patient, researchers processed tissues in his body with formalin, cut them into sections, and stained them with hematoxylin and eosin in order to examine them.

They compared their samples with controls, both of the cultured cells from SARS-CoV-2 positive COVID-19 patients (that contained both the spike protein and the nucleocapsid), and cultured cells that contained vaccine-induced spike protein expression but no nucleocapsid protein.

The autopsy uncovered inflammation

site. Even after washing your hands, they aren’t considered truly sterile.

Catheter-Associated Urinary Tract Infections

Among urinary tract infections acquired in the hospital, about 75 percent are associated with a urinary catheter.

Urinary tract infections also lead to bloodstream infections that can be potentially life-threatening. It is estimated that more than 13,000 deaths each year are associated with health care-associated urinary tract infections.

Hester explains that you don’t want to have a bladder catheter unless you “absolutely need it.” This is because the longer the catheter is in, the higher the potential is for an infection in the bladder.

“Get up and go to the bathroom if you are able. If you feel unsteady on your feet, ask for assistance. You can also request a bedside commode and assistance moving from the bed to the commode whenever needed,” she recommended.

Blood Clots

When you lie in a hospital bed for too long, there is an increased risk of developing blood clots. According to the CDC, pulmonary embolism is a leading preventable cause of hospital death. About half of all blood clots happen during or within three months of a hospital stay or surgery and don’t receive proper preventative measures.

If a blood clot occurs in the leg, some of the signs and symptoms can be swelling, pain, and redness. Typically, a blood clot in a leg (deep venous thrombosis) breaks off and travels through the bloodstream to an artery in a lung, which can be immediately fatal.

A blood clot in a lung (pulmonary embolism) typically causes shortness of breath or chest pain but can go unnoticed and the first outward sign can be a cardiac arrest.

This is why “when you go to a hospital you

HEALTH CARE

Doctor Sounds Alarm on Hospital Safety

Continued from Page 1

Another study reported higher figures and estimated numbers of premature deaths associated with preventable harm to patients at more than 400,000 per year.

The actual number could be larger still. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services reported in 2012 that 86 percent of all hospital bedside mistakes aren’t reported because they were events “that staff did not perceive as reportable (61 percent) or as events that staff commonly report but did not report in this case (25 percent).”

More recently, a report from the National Healthcare Safety Network that was published by Cambridge University Press in September 2021 found significant increases in the leading preventable causes of hospital death during the pandemic. For example, central line-associated bloodstream infections increased 97 to 148 percent in reported hospitals in several states in the third quarter of 2020, compared to the year-earlier period.

In 2016, authors of the Johns Hopkins study appealed to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to change how it collects data from death certificates to capture medical errors. As of 2022, the CDC still doesn’t include medical errors as a cause of death in the national health statistics report.

Because medical errors aren’t “counted” as a leading cause of death, they aren’t getting the public health investment or attention they merit, experts say. Just like we invest billions of dollars of funding in preventive care for heart disease, these health advocates say we

need to invest in the systems and training needed to prevent medical errors.

Knowing how we can advocate for our health—and work with health care professionals while in the hospital to avoid the leading preventable causes of hospital death—can be the difference between living and dying.

As of 2022, the CDC still doesn’t include medical errors as a cause of death in the national health statistics report.

Dr. Ann Hester is the author of “Patient Empowerment 101.” Her book outlines the most common causes of preventable hospital death and what we can do to stay safe in the hospital. Hester is a board-certified internal medicine doctor with more than 25 years of clinical experience, spending most of her career as a physician assistant providing direct in-hospital patient care.

“While you’re in hospital, you need to make wise decisions and you need to be a partner in your care,” Hester said in my recent interview with her on “Discovering True Health.”

Common Treatments With Known Risks

Each year, thousands of Americans die from preventable hospital-associated infections, and those numbers skyrocket

eted during the pandemic.

“If you get an infection while in hospital, they’ll put you on antibiotics,” Hester said. Taking antibiotics can increase your risk of C. diff by seven to 10 times. C. diff is a germ (bacterium) that causes diarrhea and colitis (an inflammation of the colon) and can be life-threatening.

Also, drug-induced acute kidney injury (AKI) has been implicated in 8 percent to 60 percent of all cases of in-hospital AKI and is a recognized source of significant morbidity and mortality.

Because of this, Hester said, “You want to be exposed to the fewest number of chemicals as possible.”

Bacterial infections from central line IVs and catheters are two avoidable significant health care-associated infections that can be fatal.

Central Line-Associated Bloodstream Infections

Intravenous lines (IV) placed in a large vein in the neck, chest, or groin area are called central lines.

A central line-associated bloodstream infection (CLABSI) is a serious infection that occurs when germs (usually bacteria or viruses) enter the bloodstream through the central line.

Hester outlines several ways we can help prevent CLABSI:

- Make sure the bandage covering any IV stays clean and dry, the dressing is a barrier to bacteria.
- If you notice the skin near where the IV enters your body is tender, red, or has unusual drainage, notify the nurse or doctor immediately.
- If you develop fevers or chills while you have a central line, you may need blood cultures to look for possible bloodstream infection, particularly if there is no other obvious source of infection.
- Avoid touching the IV tubing; that can transfer any harmful bacteria to your IV

‘The Vaccines Caused the Brain Damage’

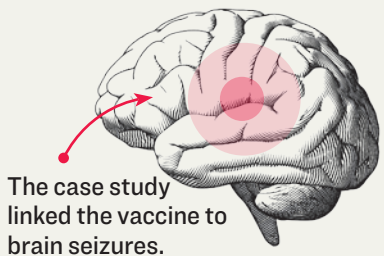
Pathologists found that the patient had several places in his brain where there was damage, as well as generalized swelling in his heart. They also confirmed that he was suffering from Parkinson’s disease and that he had some long-standing hardening in his arteries. Finally, they found evidence of pneumonia, which may have been caused by him aspirating his own saliva or other body fluids.

“It looks like what happened here is that the vaccines caused the brain damage,” Campbell says. It appears that the vaccine-induced brain damage caused the patient to have seizures.

Then, the seizures (what Campbell called “fitting”) caused him to go unconscious, and while unconscious, he breathed in some of his own vomit or saliva, which contributed to his cause of death.

“The vaccine circulating around the body will come into contact with the blood vessels. So the liponanoparticles containing the mRNA will go into the blood vessels. And it’s

the blood vessels’ cells themselves that will express the spike protein,” Campbell explained. When the spike protein is expressed in the brain and the heart, it causes an inflammatory response and leads to the death of different parts of the brain.



Why Aren’t More Autopsies Being Conducted?

This is a question nurse educator John Campbell asked in his video—one for which he had no answer. Why are German pathologists conducting autopsies but American and British medical scientists aren’t?

Dr. Robert Lowry, a Texas-based neurologist who specializes in sports medicine, thinks not conducting autopsies is a grievous mistake.

Lowry, who has been practicing medicine for more than 30 years, insisted back in July of 2022 that autopsies should be conducted on every young person who dies suddenly and unexpectedly.

In addition, based on his research and what he has seen in his clinical practice, Lowry doesn’t hesitate to say that we shouldn’t be giving any more mRNA injections.

“We need to stop these vaccines because they don’t work,” Lowry told The Epoch Times.

“They don’t prevent disease, and

the immediate and long-term risk of serious injury from them is greater than that of having the actual disease,” he said. “Natural immunity to coronaviruses is far better and longer lasting than anything these vaccines provide.”



in both the brain and the heart.

The patient experienced acute brain damage that was unrelated to his Parkinson’s disease diagnosis. There were patches of degeneration and inflammation in the front of his brain and his brain further contained three kinds of pathological findings: neuronal death (dead nerve cells), microglial infiltration (defense cells in the brain), and lymphocytes, which are associated with viral infection. They found spike protein in the frontal lobe of the brain, as well as in other sections of the brain. But there was no nucleocapsid protein present.

They found myocarditis—that is, swelling in the heart. It was clear from the autopsy that the myocarditis wasn’t caused by natural infection but, instead, by vaccine-induced spike proteins.

This research showed very clearly that the patient’s pathology was caused by the vaccines and not by natural infection.

The case report included detailed photographs of the patient’s affected tissue. The



COVID-19 vaccines can result in the spike protein being expressed in blood vessels’ cells, the brain, and heart, leading to a dangerous inflammatory response.

images speak for themselves: Scientists or doctors who deny the connection between vaccines and abnormal tissue findings need only review the images for themselves.

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

Joe Wang, Ph.D., was a molecular biologist with more than 10 years of experience in the vaccine industry. He is now the president of NTD Television Network (Canada), and a columnist for The Epoch Times.

need to ask what the plan is to decrease your risk of blood clots,” Hester said.

Many of these blood clots can be safely prevented, and Hester gave the following guidance on the different preventative options:

- Don’t spend all day in bed. If your doctor hasn’t restricted your activity, get up and move around the room regularly (make sure you wear no-skid socks).
- If a doctor considers you to be at moderate or high risk for blood clots, they may prescribe injections of a medication to help prevent clotting.
- Intermittent pneumatic compression devices are air-filled sleeves worn on the lower legs that can be used in hospitals to prevent blood clots and deep vein thrombosis.
- Human errors occur—don’t leave anything to chance. If your doctor or nurse doesn’t clearly state the plan to minimize your risk of blood clots, ask what needs to be done.

Medication

Medication errors harm an estimated 1.5 million people every year. Hester shared some basic guidelines around medication prescribed in the hospital:

- When you get a new medication, ask the name of the drug, why it was prescribed, and take notes.
- Listen to your body. If you have even a minor reaction to a medication, let the nurse know and discuss it with your doctor. If you don’t let your feelings be known, the doctor will miss out on the opportunity to keep you as safe as possible, and you could miss out on the opportunity to be taken care of appropriately.

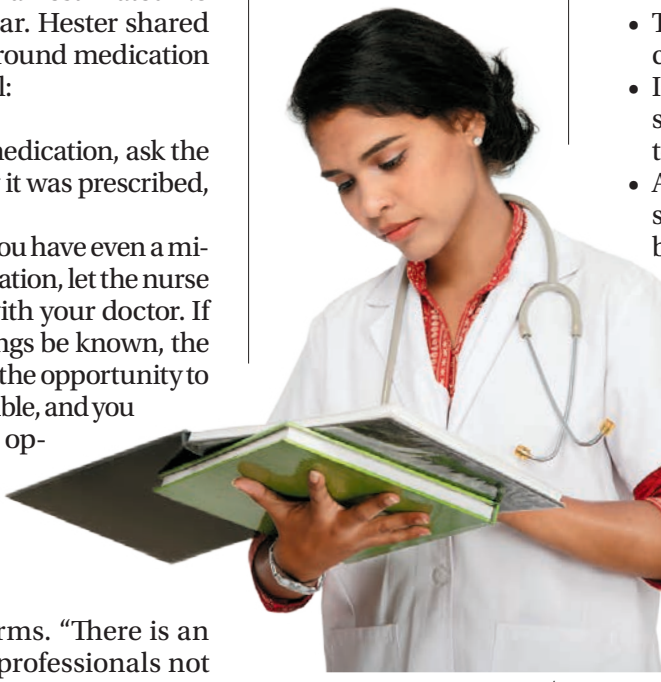
Hand Hygiene, Bed Sores, and Rest

Hospitals are full of germs. “There is an issue with health care professionals not

A study estimated numbers of premature deaths associated with preventable harm to patients at more than

400,000 PER YEAR

Knowing how to advocate for yourself in a health care setting can be life saving.



DIPAK SHELARE/SHUTTERSTOCK

really washing their hands in hospitals,” Hester said. “If a doctor or nurse walks into your room and you did not see them wash their hands, you need to ask them if they did.”

It’s also important for loved ones visiting you to wash their hands upon entering your room and upon leaving the hospital as well.

Bedsore or pressure ulcers are another consequence of not moving enough. More than 2.5 million people in the United States each year develop pressure ulcers. These skin lesions are associated with a risk of serious infection and increased health care utilization.

If you (or a loved one) are too sick to move around in the hospital bed, make sure to get turned regularly by your nurse or nursing assistant. Also ensure that you are getting proper nutrition.

Rest is an important part of recovery. Hester’s tips to ensure that we are helping our bodies get adequate sleep while in the hospital are as follows:

- Try to maintain your normal sleep-wake cycle.
- If you are frequently awakened for vital sign checks, your doctor may be willing to decrease their frequency. Ask and see.
- Avoid napping during the day. Open the shades and let the sunlight in. Read a book or do something else that interests you.

Christy A. Prais received her business degree from Florida International University. She is founder and host of Discovering True Health, a YouTube Channel and podcast dedicated to health and wellness, and contributing journalist for The Epoch Times. Christy also serves on the advisory board at The Fostering Care Healing School.

NAHIANA/SHUTTERSTOCK



Einkorn has more protein and antioxidants than other wheat varieties.

Einkorn: The Forgotten First Wheat

This ancient grain has unique nutritional properties that make it worth remembering

SUSAN C. OLMSTEAD

The ancient grain einkorn, unlike modern wheat, has never been hybridized, making it easily digestible, extra nutritious, and suitable for people with gluten sensitivity.

The ancient grain einkorn, likely a dietary staple of our ancient ancestors, is making a comeback as many people seek to return to a diet that includes more nutrient-dense heritage foods.

A Relic of History

Einkorn was the first wheat on the planet, according to Werner Forster, the founder of Revival Einkorn. He told The Epoch Times that it’s also the only wheat never to have been hybridized.

This means that einkorn is easier to digest than modern wheat. Einkorn was first cultivated more than 14,000 years ago, with archaeological evidence suggesting it was consumed long before that, according to the Revival Einkorn website.

Forster told The Epoch Times that he and his wife, Maria, first discovered einkorn during a trip to Bulgaria.

“We wandered into an organic cafe in the center of the capital, Sofia. The owner decided some time back to only use einkorn for all his flour needs. Aside from the restaurant menu, he also offered an assortment of breads and snacks, 100 percent produced from einkorn,” he said.

After testing nearly 23 genetically pure varieties, Forster’s company produces a European heritage variety of einkorn.

“We do believe [einkorn’s] reintroduction could be one of the more important transformative developments toward good health across all societies, in particular, the Western world,” Forster said.

Nutrition

Thanks to his years of experience in organic farming, Forster immediately recognized the potential of this forgotten grain, he said.

“Its nutrient density surpasses all other wheats and most grains, it presents no gluten health issues to people with nonceliac gluten intolerance, is very resource-efficient when comes to farming, and tastes very good,” he said.

As a crop, einkorn is resistant to disease and parasites and can survive harsh growing conditions, making it suited to organic farming practices.

Einkorn has a complete nutritional profile, is a good source of fiber, and is richer in minerals, vitamins, antioxidants, and protein than any modern wheat, the company claims.

Einkorn has 30 percent to 40 percent more protein than other wheat varieties and up to 300 percent more antioxidants. Its starch structure results in slower glucose conversion in the body, and its diverse fibers support digestive health.

Baking With Einkorn

In “Einkorn: Recipes for Nature’s Original Wheat: A Cookbook,” author Carla Bartolucci describes how she and her husband replaced conventional wheat flour with einkorn flour to dramatically improve the health of their daughter Guilia, who is gluten-sensitive.

Although einkorn is challenging to mill, Bartolucci writes (its husk must be removed before milling, reducing the harvest by 40 percent), “the way einkorn grows is the way wheat is supposed to grow, and as parents, we felt strongly that this was the type of wheat our daughter was supposed to eat.”

Her family began growing einkorn on their farm in northern Italy in 2009. Her cookbook includes 100 recipes incorporating einkorn in bread, pasta, entrees, and desserts.

If you’d like to try baking with einkorn, you might want to start with recipes on The Epoch Times website, including No-Knead Sourdough Bread, Einkorn Blueberry Muffins, or Einkorn Soft Pretzels.

Susan C. Olmstead writes about health and medicine, food, social issues, and culture. Her work has appeared in The Epoch Times, Children’s Health Defense, Salvo Magazine, and many other publications.

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MADE TO MOVE

Ping-Pong for Parkinson's

Japanese study suggests this fun and relatively inexpensive sport may be an effective therapy for those facing Parkinson's disease

JENNIFER MARGULIS & JOE WANG

Parkinson's disease is the second most common neurodegenerative disorder, after Alzheimer's. This brain disorder usually comes on slowly. Those afflicted may notice a tremor in the hand, for example, or find they're slurring their speech or feeling a little bit slower than usual. It's a progressive disease, which means that as time goes on, symptoms will worsen.

An estimated 500,000 people in the United States suffer from Parkinson's, according to the National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke. However, many experts believe that number is much higher, as people who have it can go undiagnosed for years. Worldwide, Parkinson's is

Playing ping-pong requires movement, responding to the ball as well as to the opponent, and coordination.

Ping-pong is engaging without being too physically demanding, a great combination for older people.



thought to affect 10 million people.

While most people think of Parkinson's as a brain disorder that affects older adults—and it's known that incidences of Parkinson's disease do increase with age—some 4 percent of people with the disease are diagnosed before they turn 50 years old.

Like certain other brain disorders, men are much more likely to suffer from Parkinson's than women.

This is a costly disease. According to the Parkinson's Foundation, the combined costs of the disease—including treatment, lost income, and social security payments—are about \$52 billion per year, just in the United States.

The disease is considered incurable, and medicine to treat the symptoms costs a patient an average of \$2,500 a year. Surgery can run \$100,000 per person, also according to the Parkinson's Foundation.

A Way Forward Without Medicine or Surgery?

Given how costly—and potentially devastating—the symptoms of Parkinson's can be, finding affordable and effective treatment options, as well as nonpharmaceutical ways to manage the disease, should be a priority.

Two years ago, researchers from Japan published a fascinating study, "Table tennis for patients with Parkinson's disease: A single-center, prospective pilot study." These researchers began by asking an unusual question: Could ping-pong, also known as table tennis, be of benefit to people with Parkinson's?

While anyone who has never played a racket sport may find the question a bit absurd, we all know that staying active and fit later in life helps improve cognition, vibrancy, mood, and even lifespan. Research has continually affirmed that exercise is an important measure—possibly the most important measure—people can take to reduce their risk of Alzheimer's disease.

And anyone who has played a racket sport (badminton, pickleball, ping-pong, racquetball, squash, and tennis, among others) knows already how much these games can help improve hand-eye coordination, balance, muscle tone, and general mobility.

The first of its kind, this Japanese pilot study of ping-pong for Parkinson's was conducted over a period of six months. The researchers designed it to examine whether a ping-pong exercise program, tailored for older adults suffering from parkinsonian motor symptoms, might improve the motor symptoms, brain issues, and psychiatric symptoms.

Twelve adults with Parkinson's disease were recruited for the study. They participated in a six-hour exercise session once a week. They were evaluated at the beginning of the study, then again at three months, and once more at six months.

Why Ping-Pong?
Ping-pong is a popular sport in Asia. It originated in Victorian England, where it was played among the upper class as an after-

dinner parlor game. It was introduced as an Olympic sport in 1988.

Playing ping-pong requires movement, responding to the ball as well as to the opponent, and coordination. It's also a particularly convenient sport to play indoors with limited space.

In addition, according to the researchers, it's an enjoyable activity because it has a competitive component, "an activity that patients can enjoy as a game by competing for points."

Move Big Ball (the Earth) With Small Ball (Ping-Pong)
When Joe grew up in China, poor children couldn't afford expensive sports equipment. Instead, everybody played ping-pong on concrete tables using wooden rackets. Ping-pong was so popular in the '70s and '80s, it was deemed China's de facto national sport.

In 1994, the blockbuster movie "Forest Gump" featured the eponymous character playing high-level ping-pong. His skills captivated audiences around the world. Many didn't realize, however, that the movie (which grossed over \$679 million worldwide) actually portrayed true historical events: Ping-pong diplomacy between the United States and the People's Republic of China.

It all started in 1971, during the 31st World Table Tennis Championship in Nagoya, Japan, when an American ping-pong player named Glenn Cowan missed his team bus and had to take a ride with the team from

\$2,500
A YEAR
is the average medical cost to treat symptoms of Parkinson's disease.



communist China. Athletes from the two hostile countries didn't kill each other. Instead, they talked and laughed and shook hands.

The Japanese Ping-Pong Study
The ping-pong exercise program ran from November 2018 to May 2019. The participants, all right-handed, did the exercise session for six hours once a week for six months. They weren't prohibited from being physically active in other ways if they chose to be.

Students from the Department of Sports and Health Science at Japan's Fukuoka University instructed the participants. They led them in 30 minutes of stretching and then had them do rally-style and game-style play. Included in the warm-up exercises were breath work, neck stretches, knee bends, ankle flexions, and other exercises.

After a period of morning play, the study participants enjoyed a break for lunch. After lunch, they played ping-pong again, and at the end of the session, they spent 10 more minutes stretching and self-assessing how fatigued they felt and how much fun they had had.

Medical staff on hand monitored the participants closely so they could help the participants if they lost their balance during play.

How Did It Help?
The researchers were only able to collect data

on nine of the 12 original participants: two men and seven women whose average age was 72 years old and who had suffered from Parkinson's for about seven and a half years. All were able to walk without the help of a cane or other device, even though some of the patients had previously experienced falls.

During the six months that the study lasted, one participant reported a backache, and one had a fall. But neither suffered any lasting effects from these and none of the participants needed any additional medication.

At the same time, playing ping-pong "significantly improved" certain aspects of Parkinson's patients' mobility.

"Because swinging paddles repeatedly around the body requires manipulation of axial muscles," the researchers concluded, "it is possible that this exercise program may help ameliorate axial symptoms. Furthermore, the rhythmic sounds of the ball hitting the table may provide an auditory cue for participants to move. In addition, the visual image of an orange or white ping-pong ball coming over a green table may provide an exciting visual cue for participants to move."

The study also found that playing ping-pong improved motor experiences of daily living for the participants, at three months and six months.

The scientists enthusiastically noted that rehabilitation using ping-pong has the possi-



Research suggests activities like ping-pong can improve the motor function of people facing Parkinson's disease.

HALK-44/SHUTTERSTOCK

The social engagement and fun that come with ping-pong are naturally therapeutic—and it's relatively easy to learn.

bility of having relatively immediate positive effects for people suffering from Parkinson's.

Several aspects of the game, including its competitive nature, the ease at which it can be learned, the socialization that comes from being active in a sport with other people, and the fun involved in playing ping-pong, were also noted.

We know from other research that exercise helps people of all ages and abilities feel more positive and vibrant, as does engaging in new activities. In addition, research has long associated movement with longevity. So it makes sense that ping-pong could help people suffering from a degenerative brain disorder.

Now bring out the paddles. It's time to play ping-pong.

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

Joe Wang, Ph.D., was a molecular biologist with more than 10 years of experience in the vaccine industry. He is now the president of NTD Television Network (Canada), and a columnist for The Epoch Times.

Research has continually affirmed that exercise is an important measure—possibly the most important measure—people can take to reduce their risk of Alzheimer's disease.

DYING WELL

The Various Costs of Dying

A new report breaks down what it costs to die, giving further reason to make clear final arrangements

EMMA SUTTIE

As a culture, we don't like to talk about death. Even though it's the destination we all share, regardless of our beliefs, most of us prefer not to think about it. Unfortunately, this aversion leaves most of us unprepared for death when it arrives, making things harder for the loved ones left to manage our affairs.

A new report looks at the cost of dying in the United States, from the material costs to the emotional and physical toll it takes on those left behind.

The report was created by Empathy—a company that helps people manage the logistics and emotional hardships associated with death. The company surveyed almost 1,500 people who had experienced the loss of a close family member in the past five years. Their goal was to try to quantify and better understand what they went through.

Here are some interesting findings from the report:

- 3 million people die in the United States every year
- 68 percent of Americans who are griev-

ing suffer physical symptoms

- An average of 540 hours of work are spent settling a loved one's affairs
- It takes families an average of 12.5 months to resolve all financial matters after the death of a loved one
- 20 percent of the workforce is grieving a recent loss at any given moment

The Financial Cost
Perhaps the most astonishing figure from the report was that the average direct financial costs related to the death of a loved one can reach \$20,000. This includes things like the cost of the funeral and financial and legal matters that must be dealt with when a person dies.

The report found that the average cost of a funeral is \$7,848, the cost of financial matters averages \$4,384, and legal matters cost an average of \$4,967. Using these numbers, it's easy to see how the cost can easily climb to \$20,000 and beyond. And these are only part of the financial costs associated with dying.

Other financial costs the report included in their analysis are those associated with the total funeral costs, such as payments to the funeral home (\$3,584), the burial plot

(\$1,841), catering and refreshments (\$602), hiring officiants, priests, or other clergy (\$472), music (\$136), and invitations (\$111).

How Loss Affects the Mind and Body
There are other, less tangible consequences as well—like grief—which is a highly personal experience that people grapple with while having to contend with all the tasks associated with the death of someone they love, which only complicates the process further.

The stress and emotional strain associated with a loved one's death often lead to physical symptoms. The report found that 93 percent of those surveyed suffered from at least one physical or mental symptom after their loss, 83 percent suffered anxiety, with 46 percent suffering for a few months or more. None of this seems surprising, considering that grief can be an overpowering emotion, and after the loss of someone close to us, we have an immediate increase in tasks and responsibilities to manage the affairs of the one we've lost.

Other physical and mental symptoms that lasted more than a few months reported in the study were:

- Memory problems (30 percent)
- Unusual anger or irritability (30 percent)
- Weight loss or gain (33 percent)
- Irregular sleep patterns (38 percent)

And the above numbers increased significantly if the person happened to be the executor of the deceased person's estate—a job that comes with considerable responsibility and its own unique stresses.

How to Prepare—for Peace of Mind
Although our views about death are highly individual, there are things that we can all do to help prepare for it when the time comes. Preparation can help us relieve some anxiety, think about what we want, as well as think through some of the logistics, which will help others have a clear roadmap of what we desire and how to make it happen.

There are a lot of things to consider when we begin thinking about our own death. And although this can initially seem an anxiety-producing activity, it can actually be very grounding and help give one a sense of peace.

Here are some things to think about, broken into different categories:

If you're diagnosed with an illness and need healthcare, here are some considerations:

- Do my loved ones fully understand my condition and what to expect?
- Have I expressed exactly what medical interventions I want and ones I don't?
- At what stage do I want to waive further medical interventions or procedures?
- Do I have a do not resuscitate (DNR) order that would be enacted after certain procedures or surgeries?
- Have you chosen someone who can make your healthcare decisions when you can no longer make them yourself? Do they know your wishes?
- If the healthcare system can no longer help with your condition, what would you like to happen? For example, would you like to be at home?



WESTEN061/GETTY IMAGES

Knowing that your passing will not leave unexpected financial burdens on loved ones can provide peace of mind.

Personal Considerations

- What are my beliefs about death? Do I need to make peace with any aspect of this process?
- Are there any family or friends I want to talk to and share love and gratitude with so they know how I feel about them?
- Is there anyone I may have had difficulties with and want to make peace with before I die? Perhaps there's someone who may need my forgiveness or a broken relationship I want to repair.
- Who would you like to leave your personal belongings to? Make notes as to who should have what so you can make sure people get what you want them to have.
- If you're a single parent with young chil-

12.5
MONTHS
is the average time it takes a family to resolve all financial matters after the death of a loved one.

dren, who will care for them after you are gone?

- If you have pets, who will look after them?
- Where are all your personal photos/videos? Are they on a computer? If so, does someone else know how to access them?
- Have you labeled people in your photos? And where do these personal treasures go when you die? Will they go to children or other family members? Having photos well-labeled is important so your family can identify others later on.

Funeral/Memorial/Celebration of Life Planning

- What would you like to happen to your body after you die? Do you want to be embalmed? Buried? Cremated? Or do you want a green or natural burial?
- Do you have a preference for what casket you would like or how you would like to be buried? If you would like to be buried, where will it be?
- Would you like a burial plot, headstone, or grave marker? If cremated, where would you like your ashes scattered, or who would you like to keep them?
- Do you want a ceremony of some kind? If so, what kind of ceremony would you like, and how would you like people to celebrate you?
- Would you like flowers, and if so, what type? Or would you like people to donate to a charity you believe in instead?
- Would you like someone to deliver a eulogy or have several people speak about your life? If so, speak to them ahead of time.

- Should you pre-pay for funeral/burial/cremation services ahead of time? It can often be less expensive when done in advance.

Legal Considerations

- Consider writing a will to make your wishes known and have them carried out legally.
- Do you want someone to be your power of attorney?
- Make a list of your assets so you can decide who you would like to have them.
- Organize and store important documents and passwords so they can be easily found and accessed.
- Talk to your loved ones about your wishes.

If you need a little inspiration, BJ Miller, a practicing hospice and palliative care physician, gives a moving TED talk about what really matters at the end of life.

Final Thoughts
Although this all might seem a bit daunting initially, you can do what's comfortable and take your time. Choose which tasks are important to you, and work your way through them at your own pace.

Although some people know that they're coming to the end of their lives and can prepare, many of us won't know in advance.

Thankfully, we can choose to do any of the things above at any time. Perhaps more important than anything is the way contemplating death can remind us of how precious life is and how important it is to cherish every moment and let the people in our lives know what they really mean to us.

INTENTIONAL LIVING

Why Success Fell Out of Fashion and Why It Matters

Wealth and power are relatively shallow pursuits, but distraction and comfort are even less meaningful

MIKE DONGHIA

Google has an amazing tool that lets you see the frequency of a word's usage over the years across a sample of 8 million books. From the year 1800 until about 1985, the word "success" was surprisingly steady in its usage across each decade. But then, starting in the mid-'80s and continuing until today, the word began to fall more out of favor each year. By 2020, the word "success" was used 85 percent less frequently than it was in 1985—a significant change in just 35 years, representing a fascinating shift in cultural values.

Possible Reasons for Disinterest in 'Success'
I'll speculate on a few reasons why success may have fallen out of favor over the past generation or two.

Changing Attitudes Toward Traditional Markers of Success
In recent years, the traditional markers of success—wealth, power, and status—have fallen slightly out of favor and internal and inward-looking markers have taken their place. We now see fulfillment, happiness, and personal growth as important aspects of a successful life, and we judge across this broader definition of success—which we no longer simply call "success."

Greater Awareness of Work-Life Balance
The book "The 4-Hour Workweek" was published in 2007 but epitomized a trend that was already picking up steam. The book advocates for "working less and living more" by trading in the old concept of retiring in your later years, to one of achieving maximum freedom and flexibility throughout your entire lifetime. This belief has become embedded in our cultural attitude toward work, and its influence was especially felt in what's now being called the Great Resignation—a mass voluntary exit from the workplace in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Greater Emphasis on Self-Care and Mental Health
Another product of our relative prosperity as a society is the opportunity to invest more in taking care of ourselves. While not true across the entire population, a significant number of people are more invested in physical and mental health than ever before. It's no longer considered impressive to achieve great wealth and "success" in the traditional definition of the word while having your health and relationships lie in ruins.



Retiring with a bit of money is nice, but the real success is living a meaningful life and having a contented heart.

Instead of freeing us toward higher-value pursuits, our wealth has only led to us pacifying ourselves with constant entertainment and ever-increasing convenience.

From the year
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If our definition of success shifts away from money and power but doesn't grow to include more intrinsically important values, then real success is only slipping further away.

A Societal Malaise and Pessimism
What's been gained and lost in this cultural transition?

Overall, I think most of us can agree that the traditional markers of a good life were found wanting, to say the least. Money and power are nothing compared to close friends, rich experiences, and a sense of meaning in your life. At some margin, it makes complete sense to begin trading away money for more time to pursue what's important to you. While I'm not convinced our culture is quite on track with its definition of happiness, I welcome fulfillment and personal growth as new aspirational goals to pursue. I think they have the potential to open our eyes to a better way of living. But, you can probably sense my hesitancy and unwillingness to embrace these changes as a complete success. It doesn't take much looking around to see that, at least in the United States, our society is ailing from something. There's a general malaise in the air, and a pessimism in our outlook that is uniquely un-American. If we've unchained ourselves from traditional markers of success, why aren't we thriving? What's going on here?

The Dark Side of Convenience, Constant Entertainment
The underlying driver behind this shift away from the word "success" has been an increasingly prosperous society, at least for a large segment of the population. With their basic needs met, and many wants as well,

people feel empowered to pursue more freedom instead of more money and power. Instead of working long hours, and climbing the corporate ladder, they're taking the opportunity to live life on their own terms. That's the positive news. The challenge is the sobering reality behind where their free time ends up going. Instead of investing more in relationships, nonprofit work, faith-related pursuits, or even adventure, the vast majority of freed-up time is being eaten up by screens. Instead of freeing us towards higher-value pursuits, our wealth has only led to us pacifying ourselves with constant entertainment and ever-increasing convenience. This might be fun for a weekend but the long-term impact is an increase in boredom, anxiety, and restlessness—all things which seem to be increasing around us.

Avoiding the Pitfalls of Selfishness, Complacency
While the old model of "success" had deep flaws, it at least gave us something outside ourselves to aim for. Our turn inward has had the ironic effect of cutting off our ambition while delivering no sustainable increase in the satisfaction we have with our lives. Instead of trying to better ourselves, and serve those around us, it seems we're now content to merely do no harm and to maximize our own pleasure. It has been the journey of my own life (and writing) to find a middle way between these two temptations—the selfish pursuit of status and a life of complacency. There's an inherent value in doing difficult things and a deep reward in pursuing a meaningful life built around doing what matters—with people that matter to us. If our definition of success shifts away from money and power but doesn't grow to include more intrinsically important values, then real success is only slipping further away.

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

HEALTH CARE

Doctor Exodus

Signals a System in Distress

Unprecedented shortages, burnout, and a desire to practice medicine independently are driving resignations

AMY DENNEY

A crescendo of circumstances burdening physicians to the point of burnout is reshaping the already fragile health care system in the United States. The mass exodus of doctors from some practices, reduced hours among others, high suicide rates, and an increase in cash-based practices are straining an already stressed system. While some doctors are courageous enough to speak up—often after leaving corporate health care positions because of lack of respect and workplace autonomy—others silently suffer under pressure. At the heart of it seems to be an inability to offer the kind of care that steered them into their chosen profession—but their departure under duress may ultimately leave their patients even more underserved. It's a simple supply-and-demand catastrophe that affects anyone who relies on the medical system. "We've seen the terrible direction medicine has moved into since physician independence has gone away," Dr. Suneel Dhand, who specializes in internal and lifestyle medicine, said. "We've gotten ourselves into this position because the old way of practicing is gone." Today's doctors are most often found working within a corporate model. Nearly 74 percent of U.S. physicians are employed by hospitals, health systems, or other corporate entities—up from 62.2 percent in 2019, according to a study sponsored by the Physicians Advocacy Institute. One problem with corporate practices is a higher likelihood of undue influence on patient-care decisions, Dr. Craig Backs explained to The Epoch Times. Backs, who has worked at a private clinic and for a hospital, now owns an independent practice, The Cure Center. "The reality is, it used to be that the patient-physician relationship was an important one not to be interfered with, having elements of privacy, and the interests of the patients over the interests of the physician. I think that's really changed," he said.

Continued on Page 10



A broken health care system is leaving doctors facing elevated rates of depression, addiction, and suicide

ALEKSANDRA GIGOWSKA/SHUTTERSTOCK

Are the Risks of Vitamin D Toxicity Overstated?

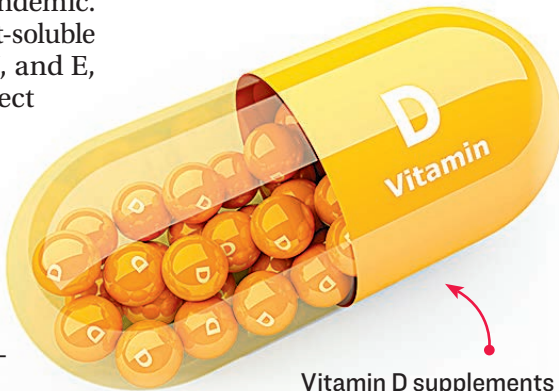
An epidemic of vitamin D deficiency is being met with supplements that may present risks

MARINA ZHANG

Vitamin D is a popular yet controversial supplement. One reason for the controversy is that people are concerned about suffering toxicities if they take too much. Some of this concern is merited: Vitamin D is fat-soluble, meaning that compared with water-soluble vitamins, such as B-group vitamins and vitamin C, it's stored in the body for a much longer time, which carries a higher risk of toxicity. On the other hand, researchers are describing vitamin D deficiency as an epidemic, and public awareness is growing, with more people taking supplements. It

has also become a particularly high-profile vitamin during the COVID-19 pandemic. As a result, compared with other fat-soluble vitamins, such as vitamins A, K, and E, vitamin D will naturally be subject to a higher level of scrutiny. But fears of overdosing on vitamin D are largely unjustified, some say. Experts argue that the toxicities of vitamin D have been overstated, with much of the current fear stemming from historical reports and outdated information.

Continued on Page 12



Vitamin D supplements may help make up for a lack of sunshine.

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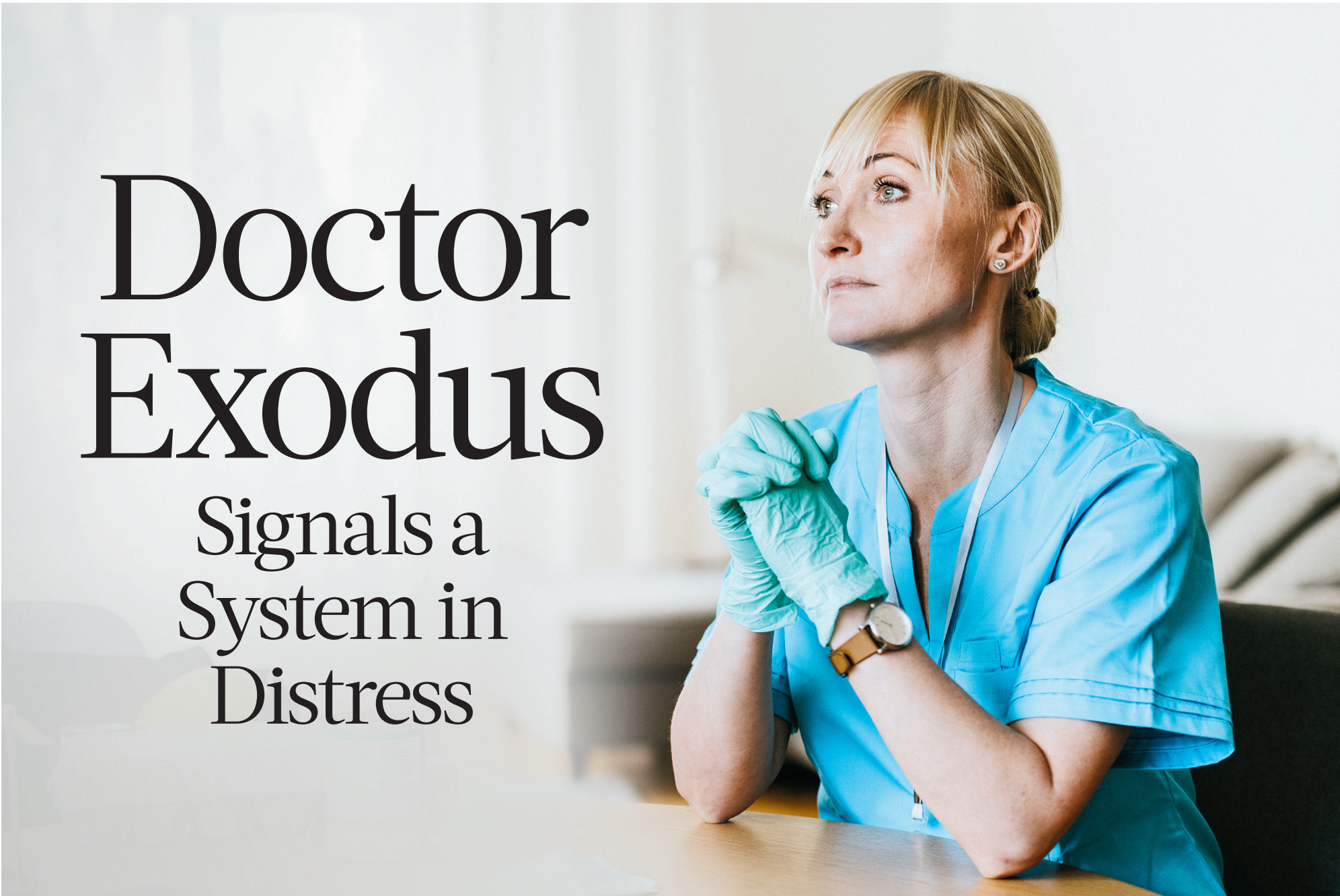
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Doctor Exodus

Signals a System in Distress

Continued from Page 9

“There’s also been massive growth in the number of administrators who have never uttered the Hippocratic oath.”

Physician preference for the stability and predictable income that comes with a corporate job has upended traditional health care, with the current model handing over more and more power to insurance companies. These realities are forcing many doctors to take a discerning look at their careers and, ultimately, to find a way out. Their departures—and their dissatisfaction when they stay—are creating reverberations in the entire health care system that echo most loudly on patient care.

The Price Patients Pay

The effects burnout—mental exhaustion, depersonalization, and a decreased sense of personal accomplishment—increase the risk to patient safety, decrease quality of care because of reduced professionalism, and lower patient satisfaction, according to a 2018 meta-analysis in JAMA. Physician departures from the system also put more pressure on those left behind to juggle increasing demands.

“We are seeing a lot of patient errors that are happening currently,” Dr. Nadia Ali told The Epoch Times. Ali, an independent functional family practitioner, resigned a corporate job after microaggressions resulting from her desire to spend time with her patients led to moral injury. “What we know now is physician burnout doubles the risk of adverse outcomes in patients.”

Burnout, workload, and COVID-19-associated stresses are motivating health care practitioners to leave, according to a study in Mayo Clinic Proceedings in December 2021. The study found that 20 percent of physicians and 40 percent of nurses among more than 20,000 polled said they planned to leave their practice within two years. An additional one-third of physicians and nurses said they plan to reduce work hours in the next year.

“Our study demonstrates that the U.S. health care workforce is in peril. If even one-third to one-half of nurses and physicians carry out their expressed intentions to cut back or leave, we won’t have enough staff to meet the needs of patients,” the study’s lead author Dr. Christine A. Sinsky wrote in an American Medical Association article. Sinsky is also the American Medical Association’s (AMA’s) vice president of professional satisfaction.

Demands of Insurance

The AMA has launched STEPS Forward, a resource that offers strategies for reducing workload, streamlining administration, and managing inboxes. But there’s an element of health care outside the purview of physician organizations that’s increasingly stifling doctors’ practices: insurance rules and reimbursements.

Dr. Armen Nikogosian was operating an independent practice that he opened in 2003 with a handful of doctors when Blue Cross Blue Shield dropped reimbursement rates with a month’s notice about 13 years ago; he had to make the

difficult decision to drop 40 percent of the clinic’s patients when reimbursement rates shifted from \$80 for a follow-up visit to \$35, which wasn’t enough to keep his clinic afloat.

“Maybe you could make it work if you had free rent and everyone volunteered to work for you,” Nikogosian remarked. “That was a lesson that insurance companies are very unpredictable. They didn’t care whether they paid me enough so that I could make my practice sustainable or not.”

He said that unfortunately, most practices “take what they give you even though it’s not the way you want to run your business.” Smaller clinics have little bargaining power, so they simply adjust the time they spend with patients, cramming up to 10 visits into an hour.

Nikogosian knew a cash practice was the way out, but with his wife expecting their fourth child, the time wasn’t right for such a risk. He closed his clinic and took a position with a U.S. Veterans Affairs clinic while he slowly went to work

“I wanted to be a healer. I didn’t want to be the person who writes a prescription all the time. I wanted to sit with patients and hear their stories.”

Dr. Nadia Ali, independent functional family practitioner, author



Doctors are forced to see more patients, in less time, and deliver poorer care.

on setting up a practice. His second son’s autism diagnosis influenced his decision to open a practice geared toward autistic children and adults in 2016 after he saw firsthand that conventional medicine was almost useless for their needs.

He makes less money, and it took time to become sustainable, but the pay-for-service model makes sense to Nikogosian. When patients are happy with what he’s doing, they pay their fees, and there’s no third party influencing care.

Direct primary care clinics are also on the rise, with nearly 2,000 now operating in the United States. A 2022 report on direct primary care (DPC) trends in the United States found that DPC membership grew 241 percent from 2017 to 2021. While there was a six percent increase in the number of active primary care providers per 100,000 people in that timeframe, the number of active DPC clinicians per 100,000 people increased by 159 percent.

“Health insurance completely dominates the doctor’s life and increasingly, the patient’s life,” he said. “It was clear they were trying to affect the way the doctor was trying to practice. To me, that’s a risky proposition. It made me unhappy. It makes plenty of doctors unhappy.”

COVID-19 Doctor Doubletake

Pressures of the fiduciary obligation to hospital boards and government mandates have put doctor decisions under a microscope for decades. The pandemic revealed the systemic corruption to a watchful public. Hospitals received government kickbacks for COVID-19 cases, including extra funds for the number of patients put on ventilators. Doctors in favor of other medical treatments sometimes lost their positions or licenses for prescribing ivermectin off-label.

“When you are working in an environment where you’re strongly encouraged or forced to do things you don’t want, it takes a tremendous toll on one’s physical and mental health and soul,” Backs said, adding that constant demands from many parties are dizzying. “What happens is your moral compass will eventually go on the fritz.”

After years of practicing within the system, Backs is now able to holistically treat his patients—whether for COVID-19 or anything else—without regard for how higher-ups or other doctors might react. In corporate care, he said there’s tremendous peer pressure to stay away from diseases outside one’s specialty.

Because Backs focuses on arterial disease, his practice looks at myriad symptoms that would cross a handful of disciplines in a larger clinic. In those settings, there’s an unspoken agreement that doctors won’t try to eliminate diseases that a colleague’s livelihood depends on.

Weight of Burnout

Burnout is under-recognized and under-reported among doctors, according to a 2017 article in Clinical Gastroenterology and Hepatology. It may affect more than 60 percent of family practice providers.

The costs are tremendous to not only doctors but also the health care system. Doctors facing burnout experience increased rates of depression, addiction, and suicide. It also affects their relationships at home, with higher rates of

divorce—and at work, where patient dissatisfaction and friction among co-workers increase.

Female doctors, who statistically have better patient outcomes, are at higher risk for burnout, according to a 2022 *Frontiers in Public Health* article. A 2020 *New England Journal of Medicine* article reported that female physicians are paid less and spend more time with patients and documenting health records.

Of these issues and more, Ali said there’s “no awareness, no consequences, and no accountability.”

She shared her story in the book “Thriving After Burnout,” a compilation of female physician stories of triumph after struggles with abuse, aggression, and discrimination in the health care system.

Ali, who grew up in Pakistan, overcame extraordinary hurdles to become a doctor in the United States. But she was blatantly belittled and consistently disregarded by leadership in the hospital where she worked. She was losing sleep, unable to take care of her health, and constantly striving to prove herself. Finally, her husband wrote a resignation letter for her, and she turned it in.

“I wanted to be a healer. I didn’t want to be the person who writes a prescription all the time,” she said. “I wanted to sit with patients and hear their stories. My husband said, ‘Do what you love. Do it with all your heart.’ So that’s what I did.”

Now, as a functional integrative physician working for herself, she can not only serve her patients the way she wants, but she can also practice what she preaches. Ali said she’s grateful for the people who mistreated her—herself included—as it was instrumental in her journey to discovering self-worth.

Looking Forward to a Better Future

Administrators who acknowledge and appreciate doctors and give them more autonomy in the workplace could reverse some departures. AMA data from physicians showed that feeling valued was strongly associated with lower odds of reducing hours or leaving.

Those in the AMA survey with more control over their work environment had lower rates of burnout (39 percent) than those who reported a low amount of control (75 percent).

The problem is that corporate entities and doctors aren’t aligned in their goals, Dhand said. He and a couple of other physicians launched Docdox six years ago, which is like a “dating service” for health care institutions that need doctors. The doctors negotiate their own contracts and either moonlight or work on a regular basis.

It solves the problem many clinics have of a high turnover of primary care physicians, allowing patients to have more continuity of care with doctors who feel appreciated because they have autonomy and forge better patient relationships.

“A lot of doctors realize there’s a supply and demand mismatch. And there are opportunities to take matters into their own hands,” he said. “We have to make it easier for physicians to practice independently again. The health care system, under the influence of corporate interests, is failing both patients and physicians, and the current model is unsustainable.”



Insurance companies often control physician decisions.

INTROWIZ/SHUTTERSTOCK



Physician burnout puts patients at increased risk.

LIDIA KOVAL/SHUTTERSTOCK

FAT LOSS

Want to Burn Belly Fat? Eat More Fiber

Soluble fiber has essential roles in the body that can help you lose the most stubborn fat

JINGDUAN YANG

Losing weight isn’t easy, and losing belly fat is even harder. Is there a simple and effective way to lose that stubborn fat? The answer is yes. Just adding a certain amount of soluble fiber to your food can help melt belly fat away.

There are two types of plant fiber: Soluble and insoluble. Insoluble means it isn’t able to be broken down by the water and is excreted

directly by the body. Eating an excess of insoluble cellulose can cause diarrhea, although it also has helpful roles in the body.

Water-soluble fiber plays an important role in our digestive tract and has a lot to do with our health and weight.



The Role of Soluble Plant Fiber
Soluble plant fiber helps the body lose excess weight by absorbing water in our digestive tract

Soluble plant fiber helps us lose excess weight by making us feel full from fewer calories.

and then expanding it. As a result, we experience a feeling of satiety and this reduces the tendency to overeat. If you do happen to eat too much soluble plant fiber, you may become constipated due to the absorptive factor in the intestines.

Soluble plant fiber also nourishes the microbiota of the gastrointestinal tract.

Our body’s microbiome resides in our nasal, oral, respiratory, reproductive, and digestive tracts and is most abundant in the digestive tract. These microorganisms include protozoa, fungi, viruses, and bacteria. Among them, bacteria account for the majority. There are at least 100 trillion bacteria within the human body.

Soluble plant fiber can feed the microbiome in our body. The health of the microbiome is essential to us. They protect the integrity of the lining of our gastrointestinal tract and help the lining of the gastrointestinal tract to perform its functions. The microbiome can also help us metabolize food so that the nutrients in food can be fully absorbed and utilized. On top of that, this microbiota also reduces inflammation in our

gastrointestinal tract.

Studies have found that the level of gastrointestinal microbiota is inseparable from our digestive, immune, and nervous system functions. Many autoimmune and neuropsychiatric diseases are related to an imbalance of the intestinal flora.

Another benefit of soluble fiber is to enhance blood sugar balance. Although it’s a carbohydrate, soluble fiber doesn’t generate calories and can adjust the body’s sensitivity to insulin and its blood sugar balance.

Foods Containing Soluble Fiber

Not all soluble fiber has this effect—only thick and sticky fiber exhibits this function. Because this kind of fiber can stay in the gastrointestinal tract for a long time and makes us feel full, it brings about various biochemical effects.

Which foods contain this viscous soluble fiber? All kinds of beans, flaxseed, asparagus, Brussels sprouts, and oats.

Worth noting is that the effects of fiber supplements aren’t as good as fiber derived from whole foods. Eating food

containing 30 grams (1 ounce) of fiber per day is enough to produce an effect.

To summarize, in conjunction with a healthy lifestyle, a daily intake of at least 30 grams (1 ounce) of soluble viscous fiber aids in weight loss. Soluble fiber comes mainly from beans, green vegetables, and oats. Remember—don’t eat too much soluble fiber at once as it can cause constipation.

Dr. Jingduan Yang is a faculty member at the University of Arizona’s Center for Integrative Medicine, former assistant

professor of psychiatry, and director of the Oriental Medicine and Acupuncture Program at the Jefferson-Myrna Brind Center for Integrative Medicine at Thomas Jefferson University. He completed a research fellowship in clinical psychopharmacology at Oxford University, residency training in psychiatry at Thomas Jefferson University in Philadelphia, and a Bravewell Fellowship in integrative medicine at the University of Arizona. You can find out more about Dr. Yang at his website www.YangInstitute.com

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Eating high-fiber foods is one of the best ways to nurture a healthy microbiome.

Are the Risks of Vitamin D Toxicity Overstated?

Continued from Page 9

Historical Cases Fuel Current Fears
Much of today's fear of toxicities comes from decades-old clinical research, endocrinologist Dr. Michael Holick reasoned in his Mayo Clinic Proceedings commentary titled "Vitamin D Is Not as Toxic as Was Once Thought: A Historical and an Up-to-Date Perspective."

Before the discovery of vitamin D in the late 1920s, rickets, a disease from which children developed bowed legs, was a common problem in Europe and the East Coast of the United States.

Vitamin D fortification started once people realized that vitamin D could prevent rickets in the 1930s. This was met with great success; children who

41% OF PEOPLE ARE VITAMIN D DEFICIENT
Growing awareness of vitamin D deficiency has fuelled a rise in supplement use and increased reports of toxicity.

drank fortified milk no longer developed rickets, which led to vitamin D fortification becoming widespread in Western countries.

The first reports of vitamin D toxicities came in the 1940s. Since vitamin D also regulates the immune system and reduces inflammation, it was used to treat rheumatoid arthritis and tuberculosis, often at massive doses of 100,000 to 600,000 international units (IU) per day.

It's unknown how these doses were decided. But while some people reported miraculous effects of improvement, there were also fearful reports of elevated levels of calcium from vitamin D toxicity. Some developed kidney stones or even died from complications of toxicities.

Physicians were alerted to the toxicities of vitamin D, and the treatment was stopped. It took up to several years for manifestations of toxicity to resolve.

Then, in the early 1950s, several infants were born with facial abnormalities, heart defects, mental retardation, and hypercalcemia. Two investigations concluded that it was likely caused by excessive intakes of vitamin D through fortified foods, including milk.

This conclusion was based on literature that reported that pregnant rodents that received intoxicating doses of vitamin D delivered pups with the same abnormalities.

As a result of this, the fortification of any food or produce with vitamin D was forbidden in Great Britain. The concern of toxicity in children led most of the world—except the United States, Canada, Australia, and a few European countries—to also ban vitamin D fortification.

In retrospect, however, Holick speculated that it's likely that these infants suffered from genetic problems that made them averse to vitamin D, including Williams syndrome and other conditions that impair the breakdown of vitamin D.

Nonetheless, the concept that vitamin D is one of the most toxic fat-soluble vitamins "has been instilled in the psyche of health regulators and the medical community," Holick wrote.

Vitamin D Toxicity and Tolerance Levels May Be Higher
Surgeon and physician Dr. Joseph Bosiljevac has been practicing for more than 20 years. He observed that most of the guidelines on vitamin D recommendations haven't changed over the decades.

This may also be a sign of unchanged notions about the vitamin's toxicity.

From the 1980s to 2011, the general recommendation for daily vitamin D intake was 400 IU.

Vitamin D toxicities are usually due to prescription errors, accidental ingestion of toxic levels of vitamin D due to product mislabeling, and increasing use of high-dose supplemental products.

In 2011, the Institute of Medicine (IOM) increased the recommendation to 600 IUs for anyone between the ages of 1 and 70. The recommendation is still in effect today and was made under the assumption that people would fulfill most of their vitamin D needs through sun exposure.

Many medical providers and academics alike have criticized the IOM's daily recommendations for being far too low.

According to the IOM, a person would be considered to meet vitamin D adequacy once their vitamin D serum levels reach 20 ng/ml. About 100 IUs of vitamin D would increase serum levels by one ng/ml. A dose of 600 IUs of dietary vitamin D would translate to six ng/ml.

Yet times have vastly changed, according to William Grant, who has a doctorate in physics and has published more than 200 papers on vitamin D. Grant is

also the director of the Sunlight, Nutrition, and Health Research Center. He argues that most people don't spend enough time in the sun to produce adequate vitamin D.

The skin produces about 1,000 IUs of vitamin D after 10 to 15 minutes of sun exposure in a light-skinned person. This only happens under broad sunlight; otherwise, it takes even longer, as it does in people with darker skin tones.

People also often wear sunscreen and spend more time indoors—especially since the start of the pandemic in 2020. These factors drastically reduce a person's skin-based vitamin D production. Reaching adequate levels through diet alone is quite difficult.

Grant also argued that most people may be able to tolerate significantly higher levels of vitamin D than the guidelines suggest.

The guideline shows that 50 ng/ml is the upper limit of serum level. However, according to a 2018 review in Frontiers in Endocrinology, symptoms of intoxication start to appear once serum levels for vitamin D reach 150 ng/ml or more, translating to 15,000 IUs of vitamin D daily.

This is more than seven times the official recommendation for serum vitamin D levels.

Grant also pointed to a 2011 report that followed two patients who developed hypercalcemia after ingesting more than 900,000 IUs of vitamin D3 every day.

The first patient was the most extreme case. Because of errors in manufacturing and labeling, he ingested more than 1.8 million IUs of vitamin D3 daily for two months and developed hypercalcemia, presenting with a vitamin D serum level of 1,220 ng/ml.

Unexpectedly, the two patients were asymptomatic and no longer hypercalcemic once their vitamin D serum levels fell to below 400 ng/ml, which is 20 times the National Institutes of Health's recommended cut-off.

Both patients recovered without any complications.

Increased Reports of Vitamin D Toxicity

Toxicity does pose a problem that can't be overlooked.

With more than 41 percent of the U.S.

population being vitamin D deficient, vitamin D treatment has seen increased use over the years, and reports of toxicity have also increased.

A study that followed vitamin D exposures reported to the U.S. poison centers from 2000 to 2014 observed a 1,600 percent increase in reports from 2005 to 2011.

The report also found that despite increased reports over the years, the increase in severe outcomes hasn't been statistically significant.

Literature reports of vitamin D toxicities have also increased since 2010.

A 2018 review article stated that vitamin D toxicities are usually due to prescription errors, accidental ingestion of toxic levels of vitamin D due to product mislabeling, and increasing use of high-dose supplemental products.

Hypercalcemia: The Main Concern of Vitamin D Toxicity

Vitamin D increases the gut's ability to absorb calcium through the diet; a major consequence of vitamin D toxicity is abnormally high levels of calcium in the blood, also known as hypercalcemia.

According to the Frontiers in Endocrinology review, common symptoms of hypercalcemia are confusion, apathy, recurrent vomiting, abdominal pain, excessive urination, and thirst, as well as muscle and bone pain.

In severe cases, it can cause kidney stones and calcification of soft tissue, and deaths have been reported in very extreme cases.

However, hypercalcemia is rare, and clinical complications of hypercalcemia are even rarer.

Board-certified internist Dr. Ana Mihalcea, who provides vitamin D injections as part of her clinic's treatment, said she has yet to see any of her patients develop toxicities from vitamin D injections.

Dr. Patrick McCullough, a board-certified internist who has published several papers on the use of vitamin D in treatment—especially high-dose vitamin D—told The Epoch Times that most of the hypercalcemia he has observed is easily reversible.

Given the large tolerance margin for vitamin D doses, McCullough argued that vitamin D deficiency poses a higher risk than toxicity.



Taking vitamin D with vitamin K2 and magnesium lowers the risk of hypercalcemia.

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Sleep Apnea Causes Gut Microbiome Imbalance, Study Says

Human study suggests hypoxia may be driving bacterial changes that lead to related disease

AMY DENNEY

A new study examining the link between obstructive sleep apnea (OSA) and the gut microbiome links an imbalance in microbiota, known as dysbiosis, with mild, moderate, or severe apnea.

Our body depends on its microbiota—the bacteria, fungi, and viruses that live symbiotically in and on the body—for several functions, including an effective immune response.

Earlier research shows shifting bacteria levels can ease or exacerbate systemic inflammation and create symptoms that go hand-in-hand with sleep apnea.

Similar shifts in bacteria levels can also lead to inflammation. Research from 2018 found that this happens when an overgrowth of some gut bacteria begins to damage the intestinal mucosal barrier, allowing the translocation of microbiota in the body. This inflammatory response can drive symptoms such as high insulin, hypertension, fatigue, and inattention.

The new study, published in Scientific Reports in January, was conducted with 48 Chinese subjects at a sleep lab using blood and

stool tests. It validates earlier animal studies and strengthens the pathology hypotheses that linked OSA to intestinal dysbiosis. In doing so, it shows that while the bacterial imbalance may be slightly different based on where you live, disease progression and dysbiosis are predictable.

"It's not surprising. The concepts have been around for a long time. It confirms other studies that have hinted at it," Dr. Steven Park told The Epoch Times.

Author of the Amazon bestseller "Sleep, Interrupted," he said this study offers a plausible explanation for the vicious cycle between sleep apnea and disease.

The Danger of Sleep Apnea

Nearly 1 billion people worldwide are estimated to have sleep apnea—China, the United States, and Brazil are the top three affected countries—with many being undiagnosed.

The word "apnea" means to stop breathing, usually the result of the upper airway collapsing, interfering with the sleep cycle and forcing mouth breathing. This dysfunctional process leads to intermittent hypoxia, which is when too little oxygen is being delivered to tissues, thereby affecting circulation, cognition, and organ function.

Sleep apnea has long been associated with cardiovascular and respiratory diseases such as heart disease and asthma, obesity, Type 2 diabetes, and cancer. These illnesses also are linked to intestinal dysbiosis, which occurs when problematic microbes proliferate.

The relationship between sleep apnea, damage to the intestinal barrier, and an imbalance of microbiota was shown in this and other studies. But it's repeated hypoxia that has a direct effect on dysbiosis, according to the new study.

"Increased tissue oxygenation can direct-

ly affect microorganisms, such as reducing anaerobes. Therefore, the gut may provide a unique environment conducive to living aerobic and facultative anaerobic organisms," the authors wrote.

Oxygen concentrations in the intestine have been shown to affect the distribution and metabolism of microbes, as most intestinal bacteria are obligate anaerobes and fail to grow at oxygen concentrations greater than minus 0.5 percent. Shifts in the balance can impact the integrity of the intestinal mucosal barrier.

Previous research has found that repeated hypoxia can manifest in all blood-perfused organs. The new study hypothesizes that multi-organ damage could result from suspected microbiome changes in different mucous membranes associated with sleep apnea, such as the nasal, oral, and lung microbiomes.

Observations from the study include:

- Hypoxia induces systemic inflammation, and inflamed tissues worsen hypoxia in a frustrating feedback loop. Protein markers in the blood associated with early arterial disease rapidly rise after episodes of hypoxia.
- The microbiome in those with severe sleep apnea correlated with blood glucose and body mass index (BMI). "Therefore, alterations of these microbiota could cause low-grade chronic inflammation, immune and metabolic abnormalities," the study reads.
- Specific imbalances discovered are also already linked to cardiovascular disease, colorectal cancer, oral and lung infections, chronic kidney disease, infections, and diabetes.
- Those with severe sleep apnea also had intestinal barrier dysfunction biomarkers.

It's repeated hypoxia that has a direct effect on dysbiosis.



Bacteria associated with sleep apnea could reveal gut microbiome disorders.

A Vicious Cycle

Park said that while he agrees with the study's assumption that sleep apnea is what's causing dysbiosis, it's possible that in some cases it could be the other way around, too.

"It's nice to have some explanation or answers as to why these things happen," he said. "The problem is the gut microbiome is so sensitive to things in our environment, our stress levels, our diet, environmental toxins, sleep deprivation. It's a vicious cycle. It's hard to prove what causes what."

A mice study published in Experimental Neurology in 2020 shows that when healthy mice received a fecal transplant from mice with sleep apnea, they began to have sleep disturbances. This raises the possibility of fecal transplants—transfer of stool usually by way of colonoscopy into the large intestine—working as a treatment for sleep apnea. Currently, the Food and Drug Administration has only approved fecal transplants for Clostridium difficile (C. diff) overgrowth, which is associated with life-threatening diarrhea.

If such a "quick fix" was readily available for sleep apnea, Park warned that there's no guarantee it would be long-lasting without addressing root causes. More research is needed on long-term microbiome health after fecal transplants, he said.

Previously considered the standard of care for sleep apnea, continuous positive airway pressure (CPAP) machines are scrutinized in a 2016 article in the Journal of Otolaryngology-Head & Neck Surgery. Twenty years of data suggest that only 34 percent of patients are adhering to the proper use of the device. This review of studies on CPAP concluded that the many techniques for improving compliance have had no effect.

Unless they have a severe gut issue, most people aren't even aware that they have

dysbiosis, nor understand what it means or what causes it. Sleep apnea can also be a quiet agitator. Snoring is a telltale sign, but you can have the disorder without being a snorer. And while it often coincides with obesity, thin people and even children can suffer from sleep apnea.

Because specific bacteria—Fusobacterium, Megamonas, and Lachnospiraceae—are associated with sleep apnea, the authors of this latest study suggest tests could be used as a tool to identify those at risk of related gut microbiome disorders.

Protecting the Microbiome

In the meantime, evidence isn't necessary for those who know or suspect they're at risk and want to end the cycle, Park said. There's enough evidence that we're losing important gut bacteria that taking basic steps for better health is essential to human health. Root causes for dysbiosis include taking antibiotics, poor diet, and toxins. Chronic sleep deprivation, whether associated with sleep apnea or not, also taxes the body.

Often we prioritize family and work over essential hours of sleep, Park said. Because it has broad implications for overall health and affects those relationships, good sleep habits are vital for everyone.

He offered these simple suggestions:

1. **Don't use screens within two to three hours before bedtime.** Blue light lowers melatonin, the sleep hormone that regulates circadian rhythm, and consuming content that's disturbing or overstimulating can also affect sleep.
2. **Go to bed and wake up at the same time every day—even on weekends.**
3. **Get as much early morning light as possible.** "That's why people who walk dogs

Ways to Reduce Vitamin D Toxicity

Some of the easiest ways to reduce the risk of developing hypercalcemia are by drinking water and taking supplements such as vitamin K2 and magnesium.

Drinking six to eight glasses of water per day dilutes the calcium concentration in the blood and can reduce the risk of hypercalcemia.

Taking both vitamin K2 and magnesium with vitamin D can reduce calcium levels in the blood by directing it into the bone.

It's also very important for individuals to take vitamins at the dosage most suitable for them.

Some of Mihalcea's patients would present with a baseline vitamin D level of 30 ng/ml yet display signs of deficiency, including fatigue and problems with sleeping and concentration.

Some of these patients' symptoms alleviate once their

vitamin D serum levels are increased to 70 ng/ml or higher using supplementation, indicating that their prior vitamin D levels may not have been optimal.

It's also very important to investigate "the different absorption rates in different people," she noted.

While some people experience a dramatic increase in vitamin D levels after supplementation, in others, the increase is subtle.

Mihalcea said patients who are obese and those with gut problems tend to have a poorer absorption of vitamin D, and for these people, she may need to give them 25,000 IUs a day just so they hit 50 ng/ml.

"There's a huge variation and I'm always concerned when people just put out this idea that everybody can take the same amount—no, [they can't]," she said.

3 Factors That Increase Risk of Toxicity

1. MISLABELING AND PRESCRIPTION ERRORS

Mislabeling by manufacturers and prescription errors are the driving forces behind today's vitamin D toxicity incidents.

Supplements aren't subject to regulation by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration for their safety, effectiveness, or labeling. Some have dosages that don't match the labeled dosage, often with instructions on dietary intake that are either insufficient or potentially toxic.

In the case report by Holick, the patient consumed vitamin D3 "more than 1,000 times what the manufacturer had led the patient to believe he was ingesting," the author wrote.

Mistakes in prescription regarding the time between each intake, as well as dosage per intake, have also resulted in vitamin toxicities; therefore, it's always important to verify doses with pharmacists or health care professionals before taking a supplement.

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

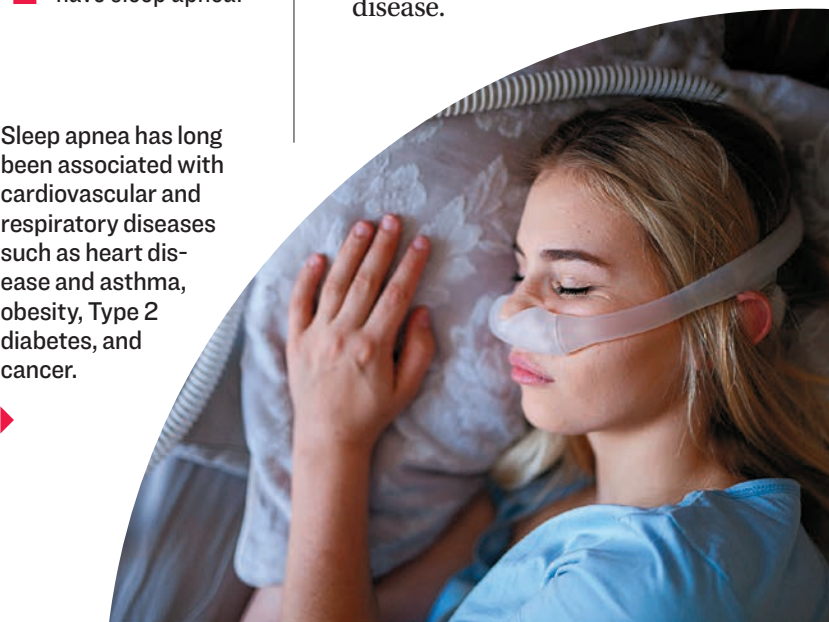
This study offers a plausible explanation for the vicious cycle between sleep apnea and disease.

1 BILLION people worldwide are estimated to have sleep apnea.

early in the morning are healthier and happier," he said. "You need to reset your circadian clock."

4. **Maximize light during the day and minimize light at night.**
5. **Don't eat within three to four hours before going to sleep.** This causes the body to prioritize digesting over important detoxification tasks that happen during sleep. "If you're already eating late at night and stop eating, your sleep quality will improve and you'll lose weight, too," Park said.

The new research may open up new treatments for sleep apnea. Using gut microbial composition could conceivably be part of an individualized treatment protocol for sleep apnea, according to the study. Precision medicine will drive more individualized treatment plans, and such components will undoubtedly become an important part of future efforts to reduce disease.



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Some believe pharmaceutical research cannot resolve the complex problems that afflict modern people.

HEART TO HELP

Pharma Exec Spurred to Change Because of COVID-19

Dr. Yuhong Dong believes the COVID crisis is a golden opportunity to find our innate goodness

DOROTHY LI

Amid the chaos of the pandemic, when many people were worried and unsure about what to do, Dr. Yuhong Dong was one of the medical professionals advising calm. “Don’t panic. There are ways out.” Dong is an infectious diseases expert with decades of research and physician experience in virological diseases, including working as a senior medical scientific expert in a large pharmaceutical firm. “If my speech and papers could help people calm down and find a better way to protect themselves during the pandemic, that is the biggest reward,” Dong said. She is also a columnist for The Epoch Times.

Inspiration

The pandemic panic started in China. Then, it spread across the world. On Jan. 24, 2020, the Chinese regime imposed a lockdown in Wuhan, where the first COVID-19 cases emerged, along with several cities in central China’s Hubei Province, including Huanggang, where Dong’s parents reside. From thousands of miles away in Switzerland, Dong could only watch helplessly as her parents were sealed in their apartment for weeks, trapped and fearful of catching the virus.

Then, as the pandemic worsened, governments in other countries enacted similar stringent curbs on movement, fueling fears of an invisible and deadly viral enemy. But the increased feelings of uncertainty, isolation, and fear were a health hazard in and of themselves, Dong worried.

“People think that our thoughts are intangible, but they do, in fact, have material effects,” she said.

“Depression, anxiety, stress, anger, and fear all have widespread and well-documented physiological effects. They can affect essential aspects of our biochemistry, from hormone production to our perception of pain. Positive emotions also have an effect, though they can be mixed,” she added.

Dong, who was a chief scientific officer at a Swiss biotech company at the time, was thinking about what she could do to help. In 2021, Dong decided to contribute her knowledge to “Health 1+1,” a weekly medical program on Chinese-language NTD, the sister media outlet of The Epoch Times, something she felt was her calling.

“I purely and sincerely want to help people calm down, understand the virus, understand the basic knowledge of human immunity, and give them practical methods to protect themselves,” Dong said. It was a big switch from doing research in

laboratories to speaking in front of a camera, she said. While it was difficult at the beginning, the thank-you messages from viewers motivated her to continue.

In 2022, Dong relocated to New York and started to contribute to the publication. To date, she has published more than 100 articles on a wide range of health topics, including viruses, mutations, drugs, immunity, natural therapies, and dietary supplements. These analyses have been viewed 5.6 million times.

‘Divine-Given’ Immunity

When Dong spoke of the human immune system, the infectious disease expert was full of gratitude. She called it a “divinely given gift,” especially during the pandemic. “A virus is like a seed. It can only grow and thrive when there is suitable soil,” she said. “Our human immunity is a fundamental internal factor that can decide the outcome of a viral attack,” she said. In other words, one’s internal condition can determine whether he or she gets infected.

During the pandemic, governments around the world have focused on developing and distributing vaccines at an unprecedented speed to keep COVID-19 at bay.

But a well-functioning innate immune system is likely to offer more dynamic and holistic protection than these innovative medicines, Dong said.

The expert referred to a “human challenge trial” for COVID-19 that kicked off in the UK in 2021. By administering the virus to 36 healthy adults aged 18–30 who hadn’t been vaccinated, scientists hoped to gain a greater understanding of how the infections developed and thereby accelerate the discovery of treatments.

Among the 36 participants who had the virus dripped into their noses, only half of the group developed an infection.

“This is an excellent experiment for people to start to recognize the existence and fundamental role of human immunity,” said Dong. “When different people are exposed to the same amount of virus in their noses, not everyone is infected.”

“Why? Because different people have different immunity,” she said. “Some people’s immunity is stronger, so they won’t get infected. Others’ immunity is weaker, so they are more susceptible to the virus.”

Dong forged her career in infectious diseases. She has accumulated nearly 20 years of clinical and research experience in understanding the battle between immunity and viruses.

After she received her doctorate from China’s elite Peking University in infectious diseases in 2002, she worked as a senior medical expert at drugmaker Novartis. While she was dedicated to finding in-



“A virus is like a seed. It can only grow and thrive when there is suitable soil.”

Dr. Yuhong Dong, M.D., infectious diseases expert



COVID-19 vaccines offer some protection for COVID-19 but a well-functioning innate immune system is more dynamic.



Nutrition, exercise, and sleep are essential to health, along with positive thoughts and moral values, advises Dr. Yuhong Dong.

novative antiviral treatments, Dong cautioned that current modern scientific technological innovation wasn’t always a universal good.

“People are inclined to pursue innovative technology,” she said. “It seems to have become a widely accepted idea that the more advanced the technology is, the greater benefit it may have.”

“However, there are shortcomings and hidden drawbacks behind these high technologies. Superbugs are generated. Antiviral resistance is an inevitable issue sooner or later. MRNA vaccines seem to produce more problems than benefits.”

Moral Values and Health

Keeping people’s immune systems healthy has taken on new importance since the pandemic, and Dong shared her insights on the topic.

Good nutrition, regular exercise, and quality sleep are simple and easy ways to stay healthy, Dong said. But she noted that positive thoughts and moral values also contributed to well-being.

“Scientific research has demonstrated that people with traditional values or who follow moral values will have a more powerful antiviral immune system, helping them defend against viruses,” the immunology expert said.

Dong said honesty was an example. “Researchers have found that cortisol responsiveness of liars is significantly higher than that of truth-tellers, leading to a decline in antiviral ability,” she said. Cortisol is a hormone released from the adrenal glands that affects the immune system.

Citing findings of a 2013 paper published in the top-ranked medical journal PNAS, she said: “People who were inclined to pursue justice and noble goals (more altruistic) had higher gene expression of antivirals, a higher ability to produce antibodies, and significantly lower expression of chronic inflammatory genes.

“I often cited this study to promote goodness and thinking of others, as such mindsets can indeed protect oneself better against the virus from a microscopic genetic level, which has more fundamental and profound effects.

“Human health is a holistic concept including physical, mental, and spiritual health. Modern science is very advanced at the physical level but still a bit naive at the mind and spiritual levels.

“We still have a long way to go.”

BRAIN HEALTH

10 Herbs and Supplements That Help Boost Memory

Maintain better cognitive function with these herbs, supplements, and lifestyle habits

GEORGE CITRONER

Storing, retaining, and retrieving information are essential cognitive functions. However, as one ages or faces various cognitive challenges, memory may start to decline. Fortunately, there are many cognition enhancers, vitamins, and other supplements that can boost memory and other cognitive functions.



1. Omega-3 Fatty Acids

Omega-3 fatty acids are essential fats that play a vital role in brain health and cognitive function. They’re found in fatty fish, such as salmon and mackerel and in nuts and seeds.

A systematic review of 14 studies concluded that omega-3s could be used as a preventive or therapeutic tool for cognitive decline in older adults.

A 2016 double-blind, placebo-controlled proof-of-concept study published in the Journal of Alzheimer’s Disease found that omega-3s exert “positive effects on memory functions in healthy older adults.”



2. Bacopa Monnieri

Bacopa monnieri is an herb that has been used in ayurvedic medicine for centuries. Studies have shown that bacopa monnieri can improve memory and learning abilities, particularly in older adults.

In one study, bacopa monnieri showed modest improvements in study participants with memory loss, while another found that using an extract of the herb improved spatial working memory and encouraged the growth of new neurons in an animal model.



3. Caffeine

Caffeine is a stimulant commonly found in coffee, tea, and energy drinks. It can improve alertness and concentration, and research suggests that it can also enhance memory.

The findings of one study suggest that caffeine has a specific benefit for memory during students’ “non-optimal time of day”—early morning. These findings have real-world implications for students taking morning exams.

A review of studies finds that chronic treatment with caffeine was shown to be effective in preventing beta-amyloid production and memory deficits in experimental models of Alzheimer’s disease.

However, it’s essential to keep in mind that too much caffeine can lead to negative side effects, such as anxiety and insomnia.



4. Ginkgo Biloba

Ginkgo biloba is an herb that has been used in traditional Chinese medicine for centu-

ries. It’s believed to improve blood flow to the brain, which could enhance memory and cognitive function.

A randomized, double-blind crossover study found that two tablets of ginkgo biloba extract taken daily over 14 days improved cognitive processing during working memory tasks. Each tablet contained the equivalent of two grams of dry leaf and was standardized to provide 10.7 milligrams of ginkgo flavonol glycosides and 2.7 milligrams of ginkgolides and bilobalide.

A review of studies that investigated ginkgo biloba extract EGb 761, a standardized form of the plant extract, found that EGb 761 at 240 milligrams per day can stabilize or slow decline in cognition in participants with cognitive impairment and dementia.

Ginkgo biloba is considered safe and well-tolerated. The maximum recommended dose for the extract is 240 milligrams per day. It can have mild adverse effects such as headaches, heart palpitations, gastrointestinal upset, constipation, and allergic skin reactions.



5. L-Theanine

L-theanine is an amino acid commonly found in green tea and mushrooms. It can enhance relaxation and reduce stress, which may improve cognitive function, including memory.

Researchers found that middle-aged participants who took a single dose of L-theanine (100.6 mg) experienced improved reaction time in attention tasks and provided more correct answers and made fewer omission errors in working memory tasks.

In one study, elderly people with normal or slight cognitive dysfunction who were given powdered green tea containing a high theanine concentration (about 47.5 mg) experienced a significantly lower decline in cognitive function compared with a placebo group.



6. Vitamin B12

Vitamin B12 plays a crucial role in brain health and cognitive function. It’s found in animal products, such as meat, fish, and dairy.

A cross-sectional, multicenter study of patients with minimal cognitive impairment identified patients deficient in the vitamin. Those patients were then given B12 replacement therapy, and of 202 patients included in the study, 84 percent reported marked symptomatic improvement.

Another study found that vitamin B12 combined with vitamin B9 (folate) can prevent hyperhomocysteinemia, which is associated with increased Alzheimer’s disease risk.



7. Rhodiola Rosea

Rhodiola rosea is an herb that has been used in traditional medicine for centuries. It’s believed to enhance cognitive function, including memory.

A systematic review and meta-analysis of studies concluded that Rhodiola rosea can improve learning and memory function, in part because of its antioxidant and anti-inflammatory effects, which improve coronary blood flow and cerebral metabolism. Other research finds that the plant calms



Taking the right herbs can be a delicious way to protect your brain, whether you’re young or old.

emotions and stimulates the brain, which improve cognitive and memory performance and long-term preservation of brain functions.

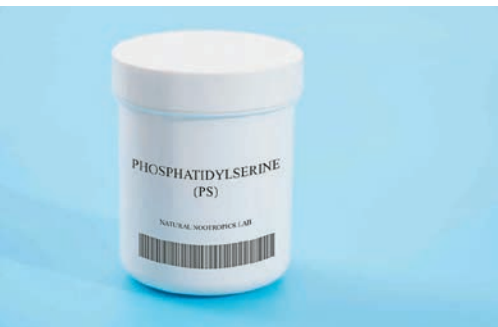


8. Creatine

Creatine is a compound commonly used by athletes to improve performance. Research suggests that it can also enhance cognitive functions, including memory.

A systematic review of randomized controlled studies finds evidence that short-term memory and intelligence and reasoning are improved in people who take creatine.

Other researchers concluded that creatine supplementation has the potential to improve cognitive processing, especially in conditions such as aging and Alzheimer’s disease. But they emphasized that “the optimal creatine protocol able to increase brain creatine levels is still to be determined.”



9. Phosphatidylserine

Phosphatidylserine is a phospholipid that’s found in high concentrations in the brain. It’s believed to enhance cognitive function, including memory.

A review of 127 studies concluded that phosphatidylserine is absorbed efficiently in humans, crosses the blood-brain barrier, and supports cognitive functions that include:

- Formation of short-term memory
- Consolidation of long-term memory
- Creation of new memories
- Retrieval of memories

In research involving 51 patients meeting clinical criteria for probable Alzheimer’s disease, patients were treated for 12 weeks with 100 milligrams of animal-derived phosphatidylserine or a placebo. Those receiving phosphatidylserine showed improved cognition compared with the placebo group. The difference was most apparent in patients with less severe cognitive impairment.



10. Ginseng

Ginseng is one of the best-known plants used in ancient Chinese medicine and comes in many varieties. American and Korean gin-

sen have both shown beneficial effects on brain function.

A double-blind, placebo-controlled, crossover-design study of 52 healthy, middle-aged volunteers given either 200 milligrams of American ginseng or a placebo found that American ginseng can “acutely benefit” working memory.

Another study looked at whether Korean red ginseng (KRG) could increase the amount of gray matter in the brain to improve mental abilities. After eight weeks of KRG supplementation, participants showed a significant increase in gray matter volume compared with the placebo group. The KRG group also showed greater enhancement in cognitive scores.

Keep in mind that you should check with your doctor before using herbs or supplements to make sure that you’re using the right dose and that it won’t cause problems with any medications you’re currently using.

Dong could only watch helplessly as her parents were sealed in their apartment for weeks, trapped, and fearful of catching the virus.

Lifestyle Factors That Affect Memory

“Research indicates that the most powerful strategies for better overall brain health, as well as cognition, are prioritizing adequate sleep, getting regular exercise, eating a diet rich in diverse whole foods, and engaging in stress-mitigating exercises,” Dr. Austin Perlmutter, a board-certified internal medicine physician, senior director of clinical and scientific innovation at Big Bold Health, and New York Times bestselling author, told The Epoch Times.

“Of these interventions, taking steps to improve your sleep quality may be most likely to have an immediate benefit to your memory.”

Dr. Theodore Strange, chair of medicine at Staten Island University Hospital, part of Northwell Health in New York, said ways to improve recall ability and important information include:

- Writing information down
- Repeating important information to oneself
- Attaching meaning to what one needs to remember

He noted that we should also avoid distractions such as noise and poor lighting when trying to memorize things and that attaching information to a song or other mnemonic will improve recall.

Diet can also play a big role in how well we can recall information.

“Research tells us that a diet rich in highly processed foods and added sugar may translate into an increased risk for memory impairment in the context of cognitive impairment and dementia,” Perlmutter said.

On the other hand, the Mediterranean diet and the MIND diet have been linked to lower risk of developing memory impairment regarding the prevention of Alzheimer’s disease, he noted.

“Both the Mediterranean diet and MIND diets emphasize eating more minimally processed foods, including fruits, vegetables, fish, nuts, olive oil, whole grains, and the minimization of added sugar,” Perlmutter said.

WISE HABITS

The Practice of Letting Go of Mental Constructs

Our ideas about ourselves, other people, or situations can often block us from enjoying life’s inevitable challenges and dealing with them wisely

LEO BABAUTA

Everything we believe about ourselves and others is an idea, an image constructed in our heads. And these mental constructs can be some of our biggest obstacles and struggles. Letting go of our mental constructs—our ideas about ourselves and others—can be most liberating. I’m not saying it’s wrong to have mental constructs. We can’t help it—it’s human and often necessary for whatever we’re doing. But they can also be obstacles that cause pain. So, let’s look at what it would be like to let go of these mental constructs, and then how to practice.

Some Concrete Examples

We need concepts and mental constructs to relate to the world, but they can also be highly problematic. Let’s look at what happens if we can let go of them.

- You’re stressed about an upcoming meeting or social event. You have all kinds of worries, such as, “What if I look stupid and people judge me?” These seemingly reasonable worries can cause a lot of anguish. If you realize that the idea of looking stupid and being judged is just in your head, you can let it go. You can return to the present moment and relax. Or you can choose to be with the sensation of fear in your body and let it be there—without steering you toward specific actions or thoughts.
- You’re frustrated because someone has complained about you. You get caught up in thoughts about why they’re wrong, or how they’re always complaining, or maybe how you can never do anything right. Maybe you start thinking about how you should just leave this job and be done with all of hassle. But if you take a deeper look, maybe you can see that these thoughts are made up in your mind—they’re not objective reality. In reality, you’re just feeling an emotion, a set of sensations in the body. The work

is to become present and aware of your emotions and the resulting sensations in your body—and thus be freed of all of the extra narratives feeding resentment.

- You feel resistance to a task and want to procrastinate. There’s an idea in your mind about how hard this task will be, how overwhelming it feels, or how it’s too much right now. From these feelings and thoughts, you decide to do it later. But the feelings of difficulty and being overwhelmed just get delayed. They don’t go away, and in fact things might only become worse when the deadline for the task looms closer or the consequences of inaction grow steeper. So what if you let go of the ideas about how it’s “too hard” and simply become present to the sensations of resistance and fear that are occurring in the moment? When you get present to these sensations, you develop the capacity to be with your experience and learn that it’s not so difficult—that it’s just an idea, after all. And then you can turn toward the task and take a small action.

We can access an open, fresh perspective in the midst of any struggle.

These are a few examples, but you can see that letting go of “ideas” can be freeing. We start to realize that we can access a wider view of each moment by letting go. Our vision becomes broad instead of narrow and tight. We can access an open, fresh perspective in the midst of any struggle. We start to have a more relaxed way of being with life and can access freedom, peace, and presence in any moment.

How to Practice

So how do we practice letting go of our mental constructs? First, start by noticing what ideas you have about the world, yourself, and other



When we let go of the ideas about ourselves and others, we are free to be in the moment.

people in various moments. What are your ideas about the situation that is annoying you? What ideas do you have about yourself in that situation? How is everything you believe about someone or some situation just a set of ideas or mental constructs? That doesn’t mean it’s bad to have ideas, but recognizing that they’re ideas we’ve created is a powerful step in moving beyond the hold they can have on us. Second, contemplate what this moment would be if you were free of these notions. Imagine that the blackboard of your mind were wiped clean of the narrative and ideas about the thing you’re thinking about. Imagine a moment that’s free of these ideas. Feel the wider perspective of the moment that becomes accessible when you let go of the ideas. Feel how open, free, and light you become. Third, once you’ve accessed this, you might let yourself become present to the sensations in your body. Catalog any feelings—such as tightness, heaviness, ten-

sion, fear, and anxiety—that are residing in your stomach, shoulders, heart, head, or elsewhere. Ignore any ideas about these sensations—just note the experience of the sensations. What does it feel like? Could you relax with the sensations in the present moment, or even feel the freedom of being in the midst of the experience? Finally, ask yourself if you can take a small action. Wash a dish. Write a sentence in that email you’ve been avoiding. Speak to the person in front of you with an open heart. You don’t need to do anything—experiencing the freedom of the present moment is enough. But freed of your ideas, there might be something you feel called to do—a single, helpful step you can take. Are you up for practicing letting go of ideas and experiencing the freedom available in each moment?

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



THINK TWICE

Don’t let these mistaken beliefs hold you back

MYTH	REALITY
I won’t have time to keep up with The Epoch Times.	We make it easy to build and maintain the habit of staying informed through our mobile app, our email newsletters, and our audio articles. You won’t even notice that The Epoch Times has become a part of your day until, well, it has. We are in a worldwide war of ideas and worldviews. Only truth will save the nation, and each of us is responsible for keeping the truth alive.
I can find similar content somewhere else for free.	The Epoch Times is the number one independent media in America. Not only do we report stories the legacy media won’t touch, we regularly break stories before even conservative sources can. Our worldwide team of carefully vetted investigative journalists is second to none, and that means you get news you won’t find anywhere else. Plus, we have exclusive EpochTV shows, Epoch Health, special reports, premium magazines and so much more.

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