

# MIND & BODY

**TOXINS** AMERICA THE FLUORIDATED Part V



**In this series, we explore the contentious findings surrounding fluoridation of the U.S. public water supply and answer the question of whether water fluoridation poses a risk and what we should do about it.**

**“Our research on pregnant women suggests that fluoride, even at low levels of ingestion, may have a deleterious effect on fetal development.”**

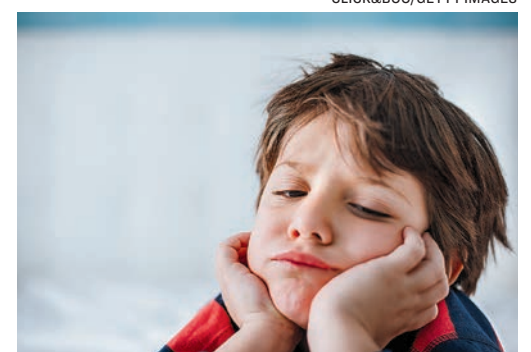
*Meaghan Hall, doctoral student, York University*

## New Studies Link

# Fluoride to Reduced IQ and ADHD in Children

CHRISTY PRAIS

*Previously: Decades of research have raised concerns about the safety of water fluoridation. In 2006, the National Research Council urged further investigation into fluoride exposure’s impact on endocrine function and brain health, resulting in recent NIH-funded studies addressing these issues.*



Young children have three to four times greater exposure to fluoride than adults.

In 2006, concerns about fluoride exposure in sensitive subpopulations arose when the National Research Council’s (NRC) Committee on Fluoride in Drinking Water conducted a scientific review of the Environmental Protection Agency’s (EPA) fluoridation standards.

The review mentioned particular concerns regarding infants and young children after it looked at the estimated aggregated total fluoride exposures from pesticides, background food, air, toothpaste, and drinking water.

The NRC committee warned that “on a per-body-weight basis, infants and young children have approximately three to four times greater exposure than do adults.”

Due to the NRC’s subsequent concerns, several peer-reviewed studies funded by the U.S. National Institutes of Health (NIH) followed, investigating the effects of pre- and postnatal fluoride exposure on neurodevelopment.

An ongoing federal lawsuit that began in 2017, brought against the EPA by the Fluoride Action Network (FAN) to remove fluoride from public drinking water, has also brought attention to significant research on health issues associated with drinking fluoride.

Two principal scientists leading NIH-funded studies, Dr. Howard Hu and Dr. Bruce Lanphear, have testified as expert witnesses for FAN.

### New Studies on Prenatal, Postnatal Risks of Fluoride Exposure

Hu and Lanphear are known for their seminal research on the impact and neurotoxicity of lead exposure, and both have worked with the EPA in expert advisory roles.

Their NIH-funded multi-year studies from Mexico and Canada have shown that early-life fluoride exposures were negatively associated with children’s performance on cognitive tests.

### MIREC Study

The Maternal-Infant Research on Environmental Chemicals (MIREC) Study is a multi-year research study led by Health Canada. “The study was designed to produce new knowledge on Canadians’ exposure to environmental chemicals and address data gaps on vulnerable populations in Canada, including infants, children, and pregnant women,” Health Canada’s website states.

The original study was the basis for a platform for various follow-up studies that looked at multiple chemical exposures. Multiple MIREC-based studies have looked at fluoride exposures.

MIREC’s cohort study of fluoride and IQ was funded by a grant from the NIH.

*Continued on Page 5*

*IQ dropped by*

**4.49**

**POINTS**

in boys for every 1 milligram per liter (mg/L) increase in fluoride levels found in maternal urine.

*IQ dropped by*

**3.66**

**POINTS**

in girls and boys for every 1 mg higher daily intake of fluoride from beverages.

*IQ dropped by*

**5.29**

**POINTS**

in girls and boys for every 1 mg/L higher concentration of fluoride in water.

(SOURCE: ASSOCIATION BETWEEN MATERNAL FLUORIDE EXPOSURE DURING PREGNANCY AND IQ SCORES IN OFFSPRING IN CANADA, JAMA PEDIATRICS, 2019)

**COVID-19 VACCINE**

# The Trojan Horse in mRNA-Based Vaccines

**Modified mRNA has concerning qualities** that include genetically manipulating healthy cells

KLAUS STEGER

A few years ago, the term “mRNA” was primarily confined to scientific circles and research papers. Back then, the use of messenger RNA (mRNA) seemed promising: It would teach cells to create a protein that would initiate an immune response against a specific pathogen.

Today, many more of us have heard of mRNA, as both the Pfizer-BioNTech

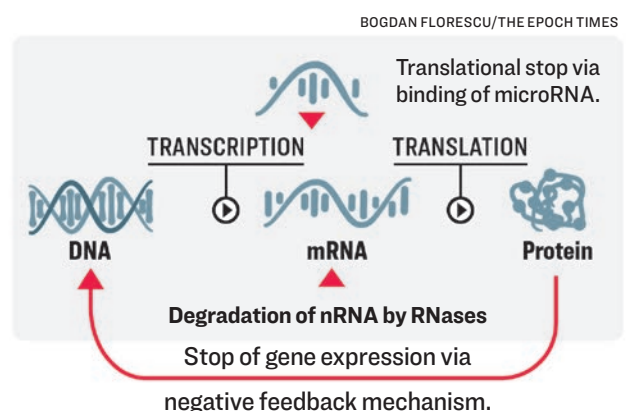
and Moderna COVID-19 vaccines use messenger ribonucleic acid, or mRNA, as the active ingredient. At least, that’s what we’ve been told.

In fact, RNA-based vaccine technology utilizes modified RNA (modRNA), not mRNA. This applies to the COVID-19 vaccines and all vaccines currently in the research and development stages. Because mRNA is so fragile that the human immune system will destroy it within a few minutes,

mRNA can’t be effective on its own. Therefore, the current technology was made possible only after stabilizing mRNA; the result is modified RNA.

Furthermore, modified RNA-based “vaccines” aren’t vaccines but gene-based injections that force healthy cells to produce a viral protein. In this article, we will look at the uses and dangers of modRNA.

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The body takes steps to degrade mRNA so it stops prompting the creation of proteins.

MICROBIOME CULTIVATING OUR GUT MICROBIOME TO STIFLE DISEASE Part V

# Our Gut Bugs Make Tiny Metabolites That Have Gigantic Jobs

In this series, we'll share how the latest developments on this medical frontier are transforming our approaches to illness and offering new strategies to heal and prevent disease.

Previously: Dysbiosis, an imbalance of microbes living inside us, is linked to several diseases but scientists still struggle to define, diagnose, and treat it.

AMY DENNEY

In this series, we'll share how the latest developments on this medical frontier are transforming our approaches to illness and offering new strategies to heal and prevent disease.

Previously: Dysbiosis, an imbalance of microbes living inside us, is linked to several diseases but scientists still struggle to define, diagnose, and treat it.

Based on current science, one of the most important roles of the gut microbiome—the community of bacteria, viruses, and fungi in our gut—is conducting an essential bit of biochemistry that provides us with short-chain fatty acids. These molecules are essential to our health and play several critical roles in the body.

Short-chain fatty acids (SCFA) are anti-inflammatory. That means they cool the fire of inflammation that our body uses to burn off pathogenic invaders. Unfortunately, this inflammation function is widely dysfunctional in modern people, because of constant triggering by stress, environmental toxins, and processed foods. The result is that instead of burning off infections, inflammation burns the mind and body instead. The resulting damage is linked to nearly every modern disease—mental and physical.

Regulating this immune response is just one of the jobs that SCFAs do for us. They also work to prevent and regulate several diseases, including Type 2 diabetes, heart and liver disease, obesity, cancers, psychiatric disorders, arthritis, neurodegenerative diseases, gut disorders, periodontal disease, and more. To do their jobs effectively, we need to feed them well.

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Probiotic supplements must get through the high-acid environment of the stomach to reach their final destination.

## A CLOSER LOOK



Research suggests that there may be a link between short-chain fatty acid deficiency and neurological conditions, including depression, anxiety, autism, and Alzheimer's disease.



CAVANIMAGES/GETTYIMAGES

## FIBER FUELED

Eating more fiber will ensure that the gut is making adequate amounts of short-chain fatty acids, which play several critical roles in the body

### Eating for Trillions—Prebiotics and Probiotics

Our microbes want prebiotics—plant-based fiber. It keeps them healthy and nurtures the kind of community that can produce plenty of SCFAs and ward off invasions of pathogenic microbes. If that community is damaged, for example, from a round of antibiotics, we can also add new microbiota to our gut by eating prebiotics. These are foods that contain live beneficial bacteria—fermented foods.

Nurturing these microbes can be the difference between health and disease.

"They are guardians of our health, and we need to be protective of them. Their ecosystem is so sensitive," Dr. William Li, renowned physician, scientist, and author of "Eat to Beat Your Diet" told The Epoch Times.

"If we feed our gut bacteria damaging substances like excess sugar or salt, ultra-processed food, chemical synthetic preservatives, artificial colors and flavors, they can be effectively poisoned. Then, the bacteria don't cooperate and behave as they should, harmful bacteria can grow, and the entire ecosystem is disrupted. Inflammation will rise."

While eating fermented foods regularly can support the microbiome, it's likely even more important to sustain the population of microbes already inside you. That's because before microbes can get to their primary destination, the cecum, they need to pass through the stomach. Our stomach uses enzymes and hydrochloric acid to break down food. Few bacteria can survive here, which can limit the effect of ingesting prebiotics.

When food leaves the stomach, it arrives at the main place it gets used—the small intestine. This is where the small intestine, pancreas, and gallbladder help 90 percent of food cross into the bloodstream, giving us the nutrients that fuel us.

Some bacteria live in the small intestine, but the vast majority of our gut microbes (fungi and bacteria) live in our cecum—the first part of our large intestine. Here, microbes feed on the small intestine's leftovers and carry out their essential work.

"When we feed them, they pay us back by giving us these anti-inflammatory substances," Li said. "[The microbiome] relies on dietary fiber. It digests

that and produces metabolites. These metabolites have remarkable health benefits."

### Short-Chain Fatty Acids

Bacteria metabolize plant fiber through fermentation and create metabolites. Metabolites are typically small molecules and exist in tremendous variety. They get their name from the fact that they result from metabolism and contribute to metabolism. Metabolism is the biochemical process of turning the food we eat and the air we breathe into our molecular body and all its various activities.

Our gut microbes create three main metabolites (that we know of), the short-chain fatty acids known as acetate, butyrate, and propionate.

This trio indirectly reduces appetite, limits food intake, and regulates blood glucose. Acetate, the most abundant short-chain fatty acid, nurtures the growth of other beneficial bacteria and plays vital roles in cellular metabolism, including supporting insulin sensitivity and body weight control.

Type 2 diabetes is associated with insulin resistance or sensitivity, a process of insulin being unable to clear glucose from the blood, which can lead to a dangerous buildup.

"Good bacteria lowers our sensitivity to insulin," Li said. "When insulin goes up, it's useful for energy, but if it continues to because your body is sensitive and not absorbing it, it is a road to diabetes."

Our hunger and digestion go awry when we don't have the microbes we need to produce sufficient SCFAs.

Not surprisingly, obesity is associated with a low level of short-chain fatty acids, which are considered a biomarker of a healthy microbiome, according to Leigh A. Frame, associate director of the George Washington University Resiliency & Well-Being Center and a nutrition and microbiome expert.

Other issues we might not connect to diet and digestion are also linked to short-chain fatty acids. These metabolites have been found to regulate immunity, as well as being protective against diabetes, cancer, cardiovascular disease, kidney disorders, and neurodegenerative conditions.

They may even play a role in the development of an infant's immune system. In a study published in Nature Communications in 2015, short-chain fatty acids were measured in pregnant women and then compared to the number of infant doctor visits for coughing and wheezing in the first year of life.

"Strikingly higher levels of serum acetate, but not propionate or butyrate, were significantly associated with fewer respiratory problems in the infants," according to the study.

Generally, where short-chain fatty acid production is low, diseases flourish. A 2021 article in Trends in Microbiology explains that short-chain fatty acids influence health in three ways:

1. They alter levels of histone acetyltransferase and histone deacetylases, which work to protect our DNA by activating gene expression, DNA replication, and DNA repair.
2. They signal specific fatty acid-sensing G-protein-coupled receptors, which are expressed on immune cells and on epithelium and endocrine cells. They are central to metabolism and also help regulate an incredible range of bodily functions, including sensation, growth, and hormone responses.
3. They give the body anti-inflammatory mechanisms in the periphery and tissues due to the first two mechanisms.

### Eat More Fiber

The single most important way to ensure your gut is making adequate short-chain fatty acids is to eat sufficient fiber.

The Western diet is problematic because it's high in saturated fat and sugar and low in fiber. Most people worldwide consume less than 20 grams of dietary fiber per day, according to a 2019 review in The Lancet. The article said 25 to 29 grams of fiber daily is adequate, while more than 30 grams per day confer additional benefits.

## Bacteria metabolize plant fiber through fermentation and create metabolites.

# 5-15%

of most people's microbiome is made up of the bacteria *Faecalibacterium prausnitzii*. This bacteria produces butyrate which helps regulate the immune system.

Fermented foods are a great way to get probiotics (beneficial bacteria) but it's critical to eat prebiotics (fiber) to feed the microbes already inside you.



## Profile of a Top Bug

*Faecalibacterium prausnitzii* bacteria make up 5 to 15 percent of most people's total microbiome. It's the main producer of butyrate, a critically important short-chain fatty acid that helps regulate the immune system with strong anti-inflammatory compounds.

Butyrate fuels intestinal cells. It reduces gastrointestinal inflammation, stabilizes intestinal permeability, supports healthy mucus production for the gut lining, and improves colon motility. Additionally, it plays a role in mood regulation and insulin sensitivity, as well as having anti-cancer effects.

Declines in *F. prausnitzii* numbers have been associated with autoimmune diseases such as celiac disease, Crohn's disease, ulcerative colitis, and psoriasis, as well as in chronic illnesses like Type 2 diabetes, colon cancer, and irritable bowel syndrome.

Dr. Akil Palanisamy describes this keystone bacteria in his book "The T.I.G.E.R. Protocol: An Integrative 5-Step Program to Treat and Heal Your Autoimmunity."

Palanisamy notes that, unfortunately, there are currently no probiotics that contain *F. prausnitzii*, although levels can be raised by eating a diet of diverse prebiotic foods such as leafy green vegetables, mushrooms, apples, and those that include polyphenols, inulin, resistant starches, and arabinogalactan (found in carrots, radishes, pears, tomatoes, and coconuts).

Information adapted from "The T.I.G.E.R. Protocol" by Akil Palanisamy, M.D. Copyright 2023 by Akil Palanisamy, M.D. With permission from Balance, an imprint of Grand Central Publishing. All rights reserved.



Ultra-processed foods like fast foods and other junk foods that contain excess sugar, synthetic preservatives, artificial colors and flavors can damage our gut bacteria.

## Short-Chain Fatty Acids and the Brain

The clear link between microbiota deficits and neurological conditions reveals the interdependence of the gut and brain. Short-chain fatty acids could play a key part in gut-brain signaling related to neurodevelopmental disorders as well as neurodegenerative diseases, according to a 2020 article in Frontiers in Endocrinology.

Among the evidence pointed out in the study:

- Fecal short-chain fatty acid concentrations are lower in patients with depression. Butyrate in particular is noted for its antidepressant-like effect.
- Children with autism spectrum disorders have had both lower and higher levels of certain short-chain fatty acids than control groups.
- Recent studies have also suggested that an intestinal bacteria imbalance plays a role in the development of anxiety, bipolar disorder, psychosis, Alzheimer's disease, Parkinson's disease, and multiple sclerosis.



Many chronic disease, including Type 2 diabetes, obesity, and cardiovascular disease occur when there is a reduction in short-chain fatty acids.

Fiber also speeds up food transit time in the colon, and decreases pH, a measurement of acidity versus alkalinity. A lower pH is ideal in the gut, because it's associated with inhibiting pathogen growth and increasing short-chain fatty acid production.

"When we add fiber to the diet, it's a positive feedback loop," Frame told attendees at the recent Malibu Microbiome Meeting. "But we should be quite cautious. You should have a slow, gradual transition to a high-fiber diet."

While health findings associated with microbiota and metabolites have been tremendous in the last two decades, Li said it's humbling to consider how much is still undiscovered.

"In truth, we don't know that much," he said. "There are certainly many mechanisms, many pathways we have yet to discover in research."

**Next:** New studies are illustrating just how powerful the gut microbiome can be in helping our bodies heal from cancer, heart disease, and more.



ALL PHOTOS BY SHUTTERSTOCK

Any new habit, especially a spiritual one, will likely bring about significant internal resistance.

WISE HABITS

## Simplify Habits: Get to the True Heart of Change

Dealing with resistance is about recognizing it is inevitable and failure is simply a step along the way

LEO BABAUTA

Creating a new habit, such as meditating, journaling, or exercising, isn't incredibly complicated. At the most basic level, you tie the habit to a trigger that's already in your life, start small, and find ways to encourage yourself to remember it and actually do it.

But it becomes a much messier and more complicated ordeal because we experience resistance, we give in to the resistance, we feel bad about ourselves for that, and we give weight to that feeling, get discouraged, and fall out of the habit.

This is an almost universal pattern, in my experience. No one escapes this trap.

So how do we work with it? We can make things really simple (that's not to say easy) by getting to the heart of this: the resistance.

It also helps to have a way to deal with feeling bad about ourselves when we give in to the resistance.

### The Heart of Habit Change: Resistance

Let's say you decide to do a morning habit, such as writing, meditation, or exercise.

You commit yourself to doing it every day after your morning coffee. You set a reminder. You wake up. You have your coffee. And then, suddenly, you really need to check your email and messages.

That leads to a bunch of other things that need to be done. Then you decide it's time to check the news or social media. Now you have to get ready for work. You tell yourself that you'll do it later.

What I didn't describe above—and what most people don't even acknowledge or notice—is the most important part—the resistance.

If you can deal with the resistance, you can form a new habit.

If you aren't even aware of it, you'll keep looking for better answers to fix this problem without ever really dealing with it.

No app, life hack, book, or system will fix the problem of resistance. It doesn't go away even when you find the right answer.

Resistance may look like laziness or discomfort, but most often it's simply fear and uncertainty.

If we can learn to work with that resistance, new habits will form.

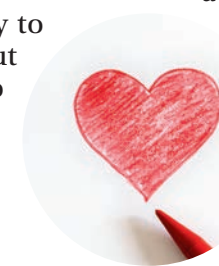
Incidentally, it's the same thing when you want to change an old "bad" habit—such as smoking, chewing your nails, or eating too many chips. We have the urge to do the old habit, and we have resistance to just letting the urge arise and fall. Of course, with smoking, there can also be physical symptoms linked to addiction, but even these are bearable if we aren't afraid of the discomfort.

It's like checking the email instead of meditating. We may think we have no choice but to give in to the resistance, but often we don't even pause long enough to realize that we made a choice to give in to it.

### Working With Resistance

So what if we didn't need to give in to the resistance? Here's how you might work with the resistance:

1. Make a commitment to do a new habit (or stop an old one). Make the commitment small so your resistance isn't high—meditate for five minutes, not an hour. Delay your first cigarette of the day by an extra hour. Set a reminder if it's a new habit.
2. When the time comes, and you resist doing the habit—pause. Don't go to your emails or give in to the urge to smoke a cigarette. Just pause.
3. Breathe. Feel the resistance. Focus on the urge, and stay with it.
4. Keep doing that. Give yourself love and compassion. Stay with the resistance or urge.
5. See if you can create some new way of working with the resistance or urge. Can you find someone to join you in your new habit? Can you create some accountability or consequences to help strengthen your resolve? Find a way to bring play, joy, and creativity to the activity. See the moment of resistance as sacred and full of wonder. Get creative.



Failure is inevitable. Take it likely and give yourself some compassion. Then keep going.

There isn't a right answer here. Play with it. Keep working with it. For instance, maybe every time you reduce your daily cigarette count by one, you calculate how much money that will save you over 10 years.

Our desire to not have resistance is our greatest stumbling block. Resistance is inevitable. Keep creating something new each time the resistance or urge happens. Eventually, you'll discover something that works. And along the way, you'll discover something new about yourself.

### Dealing With Failure

You hope you'll work with the resistance and crush this new habit. And that's exactly how it will go. As long as you understand that crushing it still includes failure along the way. That's just a part of the growth process. You fail, you struggle, and you find something new in that.

The difficulty is that people take the failure to mean something meaningful about themselves. It becomes such a big deal. "I failed! I must suck." "I can't do this." "What is wrong with me?"

Isn't it interesting that such a simple thing as failure carries such emotional significance? We feel bad about ourselves, we get discouraged, and we quit.

What if failure and feeling bad about ourselves were simply a part of the growth process? What if it's not a big deal, just something to learn from? How would you approach it then?

I won't give you the "answer" (because there isn't just one), but I invite you to get creative. What can you try that will help with this part of the growth process? How can failure be embraced and loved and be a place for curiosity and discovery?

If you can work with this, you'll be liberated.

Leo Babauta is the author of six books; the writer of Zen Habits, a blog with more than 2 million subscribers; and the creator of several online programs to help you master your habits. Visit ZenHabits.net

## HERBAL MEDICINE

# Dandelion: Medicine *and* Food

This common plant is often overlooked in Western culture but has long been valued in Chinese medicine for diuretic and anti-inflammatory effects

KANE ZHANG

Of the many flowers reborn in spring, dandelions—with their shining telltale yellow blossoms—may be the most underappreciated as they pop up in hillsides and yards. Apart from being a pretty sight, dandelions have been used for centuries as a medicinal herb.

This common plant has an uncommon variety of therapeutic effects, such as being diuretic and anti-inflammatory. In traditional medicine, it was used for clearing the liver and eyes, and it can also be enjoyed as a food, prepared in a variety of ways, with every part of the plant being edible.

Liu Chun, a doctor of medicine at the University of Tokyo, said that in spring, we should pay attention to nourishing and protecting the liver, and dandelion is one of the best ingredients to use.

Dandelion's medicinal attributes come from its roots, leaves, and flowers. It contains a variety of nutrients, including vitamins A, C, and K, and minerals such as calcium, magnesium, phosphorus, and potassium.

Traditional Chinese medicine (TCM) uses dandelion to nourish the liver (promoting bile secretion), thereby making use of its diuretic and anti-inflammatory characteristics. Dandelion was also used for its anti-rheumatic effects, a finding supported by research into its kynurenic acid content. This metabolite of kynurenine possesses anti-oxidative, anti-inflammatory, and pain-relieving properties, according to a 2013 study.

In 2010, a study published in the *International Journal of Molecular Sciences* mentioned that in folk medicine, dandelion was used to treat liver disease, inflammation, and various women's diseases such as breast and uterine cancers.

The study found that rabbits fed a high-cholesterol diet along with the roots and leaves of dandelion were less affected by the unhealthy food than rabbits that weren't treated with dandelion.

"Our results show that treatment with dandelion root and leaf positively changed plasma antioxidant enzyme activities and lipid profiles in cholesterol-fed rabbits," the authors wrote. This change can help reduce the risk of high cholesterol atherosclerosis and coronary arterial diseases.

## Dandelion Helps Nourish the Liver in Spring

TCM follows the theory of the five elements of "wood, fire, earth, metal, and water."

The five elements can also be described as five phases. They describe different characteristics and properties of the material world. For example, wood, with its cumulative and expansive pattern of absorbing nutrients and sunshine and growing roots and branches, describes a particular biochemical process and properties. Fire, with its heat and transformative consumptive qualities, also describes a particular biochemical process.

In Chinese medicine, the five elements theory is used to describe the growth and

activity of the body and processes such as digestion. Digestion is a fire-based process, an idea that sounds foreign and mystical but has been validated by modern science for more than a century. Food's caloric content was originally calculated by dehydrating food and then burning it to measure the heat produced. In other words, actually burning food is an accurate way to measure the energy the body would obtain from it through digestion.

These five elements or five phases have numerous interactions. For example, if we drink too much water with our meal, we will dilute our digestive juices and inhibit the fire of digestion. Some elements support each other, and others inhibit each other.

In Chinese medicine, the five elements are also related to five key internal organs—liver, heart, spleen, lungs, and kidneys—which are in turn described in terms of their yin and yang characteristics.

Yin and yang is a core concept in traditional Chinese culture that refers to the interdependent duality inherent in all creation, from male and female to hot and cold. The concept of yin and yang describes the essential interplay of positive and negative charges in an atom or the pairing of releasing and inhibiting hormones that stimulate or suppress certain activities in the body. The material world and physical body are created through a constant interaction of these opposite but complementary natures.

And because the human body doesn't exist in isolation from the physical world, Chinese medicine also factors in how different seasons affect the human body. In Western science, we know that heat and cold lead the body to produce different proteins to adjust. Chinese medicine accounts for such phenomena in its broader understanding of how the seasons affect our organs.

During the expansive energy of spring, "wood" is the dominant element of the five. The liver is characterized as a primarily wood-quality organ. This means spring has an important synergy with the liver.

## Dandelion is linked to the liver and stomach meridian and is highly regarded for nourishing the liver.

Liu said spring is full of life and vitality, and the blood within the whole body relies on the liver's detoxification and protein synthesis function to maintain vitality. The synergy between spring and the liver can increase the activity of the liver. When the vital energy (qi) of the liver is too strong, the liver tends to become hyperactive, and symptoms such as dizziness, light-headedness, and tinnitus can occur. Qi is the energy the body obtains through breathing

and eating. It's also linked to the metabolic activities or functions of specific organs.

People suffering from chronic liver disease might see the severity increase in spring, as the liver becomes more active. It's worth paying extra attention to the nourishment of the liver at this time.

Spring is the best season to nourish the liver. When the liver is clean, the intestines are relaxed, and you can better ensure your health in the year ahead.

The middle-aged and elderly are particularly prone in spring to irritability and symptoms such as vivid dreaming or insomnia, dry mouth, and tongue discomfort. These are all manifestations of liver hyperactivity (excessive liver qi). When excessive liver qi isn't cleared, it will also affect the health of the cardiovascular and cerebrovascular systems.

TCM refers to meridians, channels of human energy responsible for transporting qi and blood around the whole body to maintain all physiological activities.

There are 12 main meridians in the human body corresponding to the 12 internal organs. Meridians connect all the organs, limbs, five sense organs, and more.

Liu said that in TCM theory, dandelion is linked to the liver and stomach meridian and is highly regarded for nourishing the liver.

## Dandelion's Medicinal Efficacy

Japanese pharmacist and TCM practitioner Akiko Nakagaki wrote that dandelion has the following benefits.

**Clears the liver and eyes:** Dandelion is beneficial in detoxifying the liver and can be used to treat pain caused by the eyes' blood congestion, swelling, and acute conjunctivitis caused by liver problems.

**Clears heat and detoxification:** Using dandelion alone or combined with other medicinal herbs with detoxifying effects can treat symptoms such as lumps, fever, and swelling in the early stages of mastitis.

**Treatment of skin purulence:** Dandelion has antibacterial effects and can be used to treat skin diseases such as acne and atopic dermatitis.

**Diuretic:** Dandelion has a diuretic effect and can be combined with other Chinese medicinal herbs to treat urination difficulty and pain from urinary tract infections.

**Cautions**  
Nakagaki said that dandelion belongs to the heat-clearing and detoxifying classification of drugs and will cool down the body. Therefore, people who suffer from chills shouldn't use dandelion alone. Because different people have different physiques, it's recommended to consult your doctor or TCM experts before using dandelion.

## DANDELION DIETARY USE

Every part of the dandelion is edible. Its leaves are bitter but can be steamed, and its flowers make a bright addition to a salad.

Roasted dandelion roots taste like coffee and can be used as a coffee substitute. Because dandelion leaves are quite bitter, it's good to combine them with other vegetables in salads. Dandelion flowers can also be added to tea.

Dandelions have deep tap roots and absorb plenty of nutrients, but be careful not to harvest dandelions from places sprayed with chemical herbicides, pesticides, or fertilizers.



The medicinal properties of dandelion comes from its roots, leaves, and flowers, which contain a variety of nutrients.

An often under-appreciated 'weed,' dandelion has a variety of health benefits.



WINGMAR/GETTY IMAGES

## TOXINS AMERICA THE FLUORIDATED Part V



Early-life fluoride exposures were linked with a drop in children's performance on cognitive tests.

LUMINOLA/GETTY IMAGES

## New Studies Link

# Fluoride to Reduced IQ and ADHD in Children

Continued from Page 1

Lanphear has been involved with the study for more than 10 years and is one of the principal investigators for the study's neurobehavioral assessments. He oversaw the neurodevelopmental assessments.

The study, "Association Between Maternal Fluoride Exposure During Pregnancy and IQ Scores in Offspring in Canada," was published in *JAMA Pediatrics* in 2019. It examined mother-child pairs from six major cities comparing fluoridated and non-fluoridated areas in Canada.

Data was collected over a five-year period and children's IQs were assessed at ages 3 to 4 years using the Wechsler Primary and Preschool Scale of Intelligence-III.

The analysis showed several outcomes:

- Every 1 milligram per liter (mg/L) increase in fluoride levels in maternal urine was associated with a statistically significant loss of 4.49 IQ points in boys, but not in girls.

Every 1 mg higher daily intake of fluoride from beverages was associated with a loss of 3.66 IQ points in girls and boys.

Every 1 mg/L higher concentration of fluoride in water was associated with a loss of 5.29 IQ points in girls and boys.

The research team concluded that findings indicated "the possible need to reduce fluoride intake during pregnancy."

The study triggered a backlash, with an international cohort of scientists calling for a probe of the study. York University and *JAMA Pediatrics* have stood behind the work.

Because of concerns that infant consumption of formula reconstituted with fluoridated water may lead to excessive fluoride intake, a second MIRECS-based study was published in January 2020 in the *Journal of Environmental International*. That study, "Fluoride Exposure from Infant Formula and Child IQ in a Canadian Birth Cohort" looked into the formula-fluoride issue.

The study examined two criteria. First, it investigated the association between water fluoride concentration and the intellectual abilities of Canadian children who were formula-fed versus breastfed.

Second, it tested the postnatal effects of fluoride exposure on child IQ after controlling for fetal exposure.

The study found a decrease of 4.4 full-scale intelligence quotient (FSIQ) points among preschool children who were formula-fed in the first six months of life for each 0.5 mg/L increase in water fluoride concentration.

The authors noted that 0.5 mg/L is roughly the difference between a fluoridated (0.59 mg/L) and non-fluoridated (0.13 mg/L) community.

The authors also state that they "did not find a significant association between water fluoride concentration and FSIQ among exclusively breastfed children."

The findings also suggest that both prenatal and early childhood fluoride exposure affect the development of nonverbal intelligence to a greater extent than verbal intelligence.

A 0.5 mg/L increase in water fluoride level predicted a decrease in performance intelligence quotient (PIQ) in both the formula-fed (-9.3 points) and the breastfed groups (-6.2 points).

The research team concluded that fluoride intake among infants younger than 6 months may exceed the tolerable upper limits if they are fed exclusively with formula reconstituted with fluoridated tap water.

"It is prudent to limit fluoride exposure by using non-fluoridated water or water with lower fluoride content as a formula diluent," the researchers noted.

One of the most recent MIREC studies, "Fluoride Exposure and Hypothyroidism in a Canadian Pregnancy Cohort" published in *Science of the Total Environment* in April, was led by York University researchers.

It found that fluoride affects thyroid function and increases the risk of hypothyroidism in pregnant women, which is a known cause of brain-based disorders in children that may affect their learning ability.

"The safety of fluoride intake in pregnancy has not been well studied. We conducted our study to address the gaps in our knowledge about the potential health effects of fluoride in pregnant women living in cities with optimally fluoridated water," lead author, Meaghan Hall, a doctoral student at York University in Toronto, wrote in an email to *The Epoch Times*.

She added that because we are exposed to fluoride from a variety of sources, with the largest source being fluoridated tap water, the public should be aware of both the benefits and health risks of fluoride.

A February York University press release reported that a 0.5 mg/L increase in drinking water fluoride level—roughly the difference between a fluoridated and non-fluoridated community—was associated with a 65 percent increase in clinical hypothyroidism among pregnant women.

"Our research on pregnant women suggests that fluoride, even at low levels of ingestion, may have a deleterious effect on fetal development," Hall said.

Their press release noted that studies have revealed, children born to mothers with hypothyroidism tend to have lower IQ scores, particularly among boys, compared to children born to mothers with normal thyroid levels.

"We found that higher concentrations of fluoride in drinking water during pregnancy was strongly associated with increased odds of hypothyroidism. This is important because insufficient thyroid hormone in pregnancy may adversely impact fetal development and future learning ability of the child," Hall said.

**ELEMENT Study**  
In 1993, Howard Hu, the scientist men-

tioned above, co-founded the Early Life Exposures in Mexico to Environmental Toxicants (ELEMENT) project, a pregnancy and birth cohort study funded by EPA and NIH, studying how environmental toxicants impact children's health. His award-winning project has involved collaborators at top institutions, generating 80-plus publications influencing global environmental health policies.

In 2012, Hu's team successfully competed for a peer-reviewed NIH R01 grant to study fluoride's neurodevelopmental effects of pre- and postnatal fluoride exposures, which included looking at a possible link between fluoride exposure and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD).

"This research was funded with an understanding that it would provide a major contribution to fluoride risk assessment and policy decision-making on the neurotoxicity concerns identified by the NRC," Hu said in his May 2020 expert witness declaration in the fluoride lawsuit against the EPA.

Their September 2017 study, "Prenatal Fluoride Exposure and Cognitive Outcomes in Children at 4 and 6-12 Years of Age in Mexico," published in *Environmental Health Perspectives*, resulted in similar outcomes as Lanphear's cohort studies.

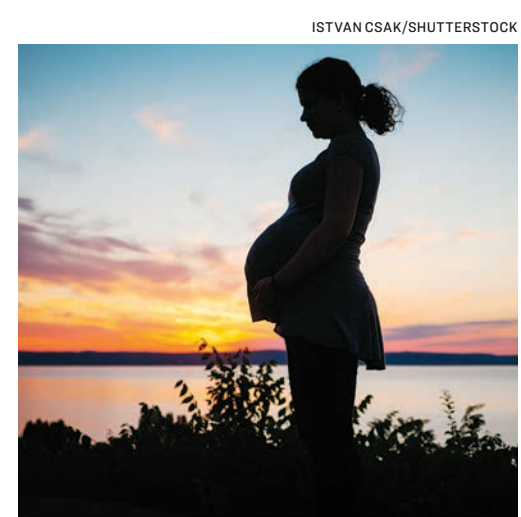
The research team found that each 0.5 mg/L increase in prenatal fluoride exposure was significantly associated with a loss of 3.15 General Cognitive Index (GCI) points among the 4-year-olds, and a loss of 2.5 IQ points among the 6- to 12-year-olds.

"These are substantial reductions in intelligence that rival the effect sizes associated with lead exposure," Hu said in his witness declaration.

Hu notes that in contrast with prenatal exposures, they didn't find statistically significant associations between IQ and childhood urinary fluoride levels at ages 6 to 12, although there was some suggestion of an adverse effect.

"This suggests that the timing of fluoride exposure is an important determinant of fluoride's neurodevelopmental effects, and is consistent with exposures occurring prenatally being more detrimental than those occurring during school-aged years," he said.

In their December 2018 study, "Prenatal



ISTVAN CSAK/SHUTTERSTOCK

Fluoride, even at small concentrations, may have a negative impact on pregnant women.

Fluoride Exposure and Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) Symptoms in Children at 6-12 Years of Age in Mexico City," published in *Environment International*, the team investigated 213 mother-offspring pairs, with the ADHD assessment conducted between ages 6 and 12.

"The effect sizes between prenatal fluoride and ADHD behaviors in our cohort were substantial," Hu said in his 2020 declaration.

The study found that increases of 0.5 mg/L in maternal urinary fluoride were associated with 2.4- to 2.8-point higher scores (higher scores reflect indicate poorer performance on the ADHD behavior scale).

"It is my opinion, to a reasonable degree of scientific certainty, that the results of the ELEMENT studies support the conclusion that fluoride is a developmental neurotoxicant at levels of internalized exposure seen in water fluoridated communities," Hu said.

## The Debate Continues

Despite Hu and Lanphear's studies, there is still significant debate around the prenatal and postnatal toxicity of fluoride in the scientific community.

The Infancia y Medio Ambiente (INMA) Project, a network of birth cohorts in Spain that aim to study the role of environmental pollutants in air, water, and diet during pregnancy, recently studied fluoride effects on prenatal exposure.

The study, "Prenatal Exposure to Fluoride and Neuropsychological Development in Early Childhood: 1-to 4 Years Old Children" published in May 2022 in *Environmental Research*, examined 248 mother-child pairs in both fluoridated and non-fluoridated areas.

The highest levels of fluoride in community drinking water that pregnant mothers were exposed to in the study were slightly above 0.8 mg/L and the lowest levels were below 0.10 mg/L.

Researchers said that the results of their study could support the view that fluoride has a detrimental effect with exposure through community drinking water at levels above 0.8 mg/l as previously suggested in the ELEMENTAL studies but they say that fluoride may have a positive effect at lower levels although they don't specify what those levels may be.

"The positive associations between the maternal urinary fluoride level adjusted for creatinine (MUFcr) and cognitive functions seemed to be more evident in children of mothers who lived their pregnancy in the non-fluoridated zones," the research team noted.

They suggest that fluoride could have a dose-response effect like those of other chemical elements essential for life, showing a different behavior at levels in the range of or lower than those recommended by agencies such as the World Health Organization.

The researchers concluded that "further studies should be carried out before ruling out a potential beneficial effect of F [fluoride] at low levels in natural or FCDW [fluoridated community drinking water]." Currently, the CDC says it's safe to use fluoridated water for preparing infant formula but warns that if a child is only consuming infant formula mixed with fluoridated water, there may be an increased chance for mild dental fluorosis.

They recommend alternating with bottled water without any fluoride, which is labeled as de-ionized, purified, demineralized, or distilled.

There is still limited knowledge on the toxicity of fluoride for sensitive subpopulations.

In a 2020 deposition clip provided to *The Epoch Times* by the Fluoride Action Network, when asked by plaintiff attorney Michael Connett whether the CDC has any data from the published literature that would define the tolerable upper fluoride intake for neurotoxic effects on children, Casey Hannan, CDC oral health director responded, "As a rep of CDC, to my knowledge, we don't have any knowledge about that."

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

**Next:**  
Your lifetime dose of fluoride depends on how much fluoridated water you drink and how much fluoride you get from other sources like tea, food, dental products, air, and pesticide residue. Dose can define the harm, and different bodies respond to different amounts.



Exercise and certain plants can help your lymphatic system ward off pathogens and eliminate toxins.

## Building a Strong Defense: Boost the Lymphatic System and Detoxify After COVID-19 Vaccines

*Previously: The lymphatic system is our "immune network manager," designed to keep internal and external toxins away from our body. However, its true healing power extends beyond that.*

YUHONG DONG & MAKAI ALLBERT

Severe life-threatening events in the brain and heart have been linked with the COVID-19 vaccine, but how can the vaccines disperse from the injection site to other organs?

The lymphatic system isn't only an indispensable protector to ward off pathogens, but it also eliminates toxins from our bodies.

During the COVID-19 virus and vaccine era, maintaining a robust lymphatic system has become more important than ever.

### How mRNA Vaccines Bypass 1st Line of Defense

The heart of the matter lies in the mRNA vaccine's ability to bypass the first line of defense, the mucous cells and tonsils that are typically triggered during a natural infection. This ultimately disrupts our innate immunity.

After being administered at the injection site, the vaccine spreads preferentially via the lymphatic system, then on to wherever our lymphatic immune cells fail to clear it out. Rarely, the vaccine might unintentionally be injected into the blood.

The COVID-19 mRNA vaccines, surrounded by a lipid shell, are specially designed to be absorbed by our lymphatic vessels.

First, these vaccine molecules are approximately 60 to 100 nanometers in diameter, which is the perfect size to enter the pores of lymphatic vessels.

Second, their lipid shell is likely transported via the lymphatic vessels.

When the mRNA is administered into muscle tissue, which is rich in blood vessels and lymphatic vessels, it allows the vaccine lipid particles to be absorbed swiftly into the lymphatic system and initiate subsequent outcomes.

Recently, the Australian Health Au-

thority released a report showing that the vaccine's lipid nanoparticles are distributed throughout the body, including the spleen, bone marrow, and lymph nodes.

### Frontline Battlefield With the Vaccine

In clinical trials of the mRNA vaccine, the enlargement of lymph nodes is reported in 0.4 percent of participants after the first two doses and 2.8 percent following an additional booster dose of the Pfizer mRNA vaccine.

Many people may see this as a natural and benign reaction to the vaccine. However, in the case of mRNA vaccines, particularly the COVID-19 mRNA vaccines, things are not that simple.

A Korean study was conducted on 88 healthy women with swollen lymph nodes after receiving the COVID-19 vaccines, including mRNA or viral vectors. About a quarter (23) of the women no longer had swelling after six weeks, but more than half (49) of those remaining still had swelling after 12 weeks.

### Exposure to cold and hot temperatures causes lymphatic vessels to contract and relax, increasing lymph flow throughout the body by as much as 117 percent.

The women who were administered mRNA vaccines exhibited increased and prolonged swelling compared with those who received a viral vector vaccine. Although the viral vector vaccine recipients were part of the control group, the same concern remains with them.

Additionally, women who received mRNA vaccines showed greater differences in their lymph nodes, which can be indicative of cancerous growth, warranting long-term follow-up.

### Build a Solid Fortress: 7 Ways to Detox and Heal

In the COVID-19 vaccine era, bolstering the lymphatic system and enhancing its ability to effectively eliminate these stealthy invaders is particularly important.

Strengthening the lymphatic system will enhance other detoxification and healing protocols, such as those provided by the Front Line COVID-19 Critical Care Alliance.

Some people haven't experienced more than mild side effects, regardless of the vaccines taken. This may be attributed to their body's robust self-healing and detoxifying lymphatic system.

In addition to sleep, exercise, deep breathing, a healthy diet, and hydration, additional practices can be taken to reinforce lymphatic function and alleviate vaccine-related injuries.

### Lymphatic Massage Techniques

Massage can promote lymphatic drainage, improve immune function, and cleanse waste products.

Manual lymphatic maneuvers are beneficial for the nervous, cardiovascular, respiratory, and musculoskeletal systems.

Lymphatic flow can be promoted by the Godoy method, used by Brazilian physicians to treat lymphedema; dry brushing, which can be done at home; and Japanese Kanpumasatsu.

### Acupuncture

A randomized, blind, controlled trial with 147 participants showed a significant reduction in adverse events and local pain in those who received auricular acupressure compared with the control group.

Based on available research, the reduction of adverse effects of vaccines after acupuncture is likely related to the boosted function of the lymphatic system.

Some acupuncture points may specifically improve lymphatic drainage and reduce inflammation and swelling.

CT scans have shown that acupuncture points contain more tiny blood vessels than other areas of the body, probably also with a high concentration of small lymphatic vessels.

Early and recent clinical trials have shown that acupuncture can decrease breast cancer-related limb swelling, improve the symptoms of lymphedema in the lower extremities, and relieve chronic pain, neuropathy, and anxiety.

### Herbs

Herbs such as calendula, echinacea, and dandelion can also help naturally purify the lymphatic system, reduce swelling and pain, and boost the immune system.

### Photobiomodulation

Studies have shown that photobiomodulation therapy can have the beneficial effect of clearing the brain's toxic proteins via the brain lymphatic system and thus is regarded as a noninvasive neuroprotective strategy for improving neurological symptoms such as brain fog or cognitive decline. This form of therapy applies light from low-level lasers or light-emitting diodes to the surface of the

## Immune Boosters



Echinacea is a herbaceous plant in the daisy family with a long use in traditional medicine.



Dandelion is medicinal, edible from flower to root, and the key spring food for many bees.



Calendula is a daisy relative with important medicinal qualities and edible petals.



### Next:

As one of the most misunderstood organs in our body, the spleen plays a critical role in our immune defense while filtering our blood to remove pathogens. Unexpected findings of multiple studies showed that COVID-19 can decimate the spleen, causing severe damage and the potential for a life-threatening outcome.

body. Near-infrared light is often used.

### Temperature Fluctuation

A spring or spa experience that naturally exposes the body to both heat and cold can improve the function of the lymphatic system by increasing lymph flow.

Exposure to cold and hot temperatures causes lymphatic vessels to contract and relax, increasing lymph flow throughout the body by as much as 117 percent. This surge stimulates the immune system, enhancing its function.

However, extremes such as winter swimming are not recommended, as these activities are generally not healthy. Sudden coldness may cause blood vessel contraction, which people with certain risk factors should avoid.

### Vitamin C

Vitamin C is a vital nutrient for the lymphatic system, providing support in multiple ways.

First, it boosts collagen production, enhancing the lymphatic system's structural integrity. Lymph nodes are surrounded by collagen-rich capsules and trabeculae, tiny fibers that support the structure of the lymph nodes that need sufficient vitamin C to remain strong.

Secondly, vitamin C aids lymphocyte function, which produces antibodies that identify and eliminate foreign particles in the body.

Lastly, vitamin C protects lymphocytes from oxidative damage.

### Vitamin D

A study has found that vitamin D can adjust the number and function of T lymphocytes in the skin lymph nodes, reducing dermal inflammation.

### Anti-Inflammatory Supplements

Anti-inflammatory dietary supplements may help reduce the number of extra immune cells or inflammatory cytokines in the body, reducing the burden on the lymphatic system.

The less cargo they carry, the more likely they will function properly. So taking them can make our lymphatic flow smoother with a lower risk of being clogged.

Some of the best supplements for lymphedema are vitamin A, spermidine, and hesperidin.

Some supplements with general anti-inflammatory benefits are:

- Curcumin/turmeric
- Omega-3 fish oil
- Ginger
- Resveratrol
- Spirulina
- Vitamin D
- Bromelain
- Green tea extract

Our lymphatic system is truly miraculous in the many complex ways it functions to protect our health. Doing our part to keep it strong by avoiding toxic exposures and otherwise caring for our body will keep it functioning well throughout our lifetime.

ALL IMAGES BY SHUTTERSTOCK



## A Deeper Look at Adverse Reactions to COVID-19 Vaccines

A large body of evidence has proven that the spike protein can induce subsequent downstream cascades that damage our body from several pathways in many organs. It can:

**Disable protective interferons:** Interferons recruit immune cells to fight infection, so disabling them means you're more vulnerable.

**Damage the mitochondrial function:** Mitochondria generate the energy currency of the cell, signal between cells, and regulate cell death.

**Trigger inflammation:** This includes cytokine storms, an overreaction of the immune system that can cause chronic inflammation.

**Damage of hematopoietic stem/progenitor cells:** These cells produce blood cells; damage can result in anemia, lymphopenia, and thrombocytopenia.

**Induce autoimmune conditions:** Vaccine-induced autoimmunity is associated with Guillain-Barré syndrome, postural orthostatic tachycardia syndrome, and other conditions.

Lipid nanoparticles in mRNA vaccines are also a big problem, as studies have shown they can disassemble, cluster, and trigger an embolism, the blockage of a blood vessel.

Accordingly, wherever the local lymphatic system is clogged or not functioning well enough to cleanse away the vaccine components, we may experience symptoms in corresponding parts of our body.

As of March 31, the Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting System (VAERS) recorded a staggering 1,541,247 global reports of COVID-19 vaccine-related adverse events. These incidents encompass a range of concerning outcomes, such as 35,948 fatalities, 196,067 hospitalizations, and 37,174 life-threatening cases.

To find the studies mentioned in this article, please see the article online at [TheEpochTimes.com](https://www.theepochtimes.com)

## COVID-19 VACCINE

# The Trojan Horse in mRNA-Based Vaccines

Continued from Page 1

### Natural Infection and Conventional Vaccination

When you are infected naturally by a virus or have received a conventional vaccine, your immune system identifies virus-specific antigens from active or inactivated virus particles, respectively.

The two main types of immune cells, T and B cells, behave differently. T cells identify infected cells and initiate apoptosis (the cell-killing process), while B cells produce antibodies that bind to the virus and thus prevent infection of other cells.

There are various "proteins"—called antigens—on the surface of each virus. Your immune system can memorize more than one of them. When the virus mutates and some proteins change, your immune system can still recognize and kill them. This is referred to as cross-immunity.

Particularly in the case of respiratory disease, most pathogens are already prevented by the first natural barrier, the mucous membrane. This barrier, however, is bypassed when an intramuscular injection (such as the COVID-19 shot) is administered.

### Results of Injections of modRNA

To protect against destruction by the immune system, modRNA is packaged in lipid nanoparticles (LNPs) that, due to their small size and synthetic optimization, can easily overcome biological barriers and even reach

the nucleocapsid protein.

Given the virus variants—Alpha, Beta, Gamma, Delta, and so on—the original Wuhan sequence no longer exists. That means that antibodies produced by our immune system (based on an "old" virus sequence) are ineffective against the sequences of the new variants.

### The modRNA forces perfectly healthy cells to produce a viral protein, transforming these cells from friend to foe.

This is yet another reason that RNA-based vaccine technology is and will always be inferior to natural infection and conventional vaccines, as viruses mutate far more rapidly

than the pharmaceutical industry can produce new, adapted vaccines.

### The Dangers of Redundant Proteins

Proteins represent our body's building material and our metabolism's central molecules.

For a functional metabolism, only essential proteins must be present in a distinct cell at a specific time. Proteins that are not required must be absent, as they will disrupt or even block the smooth running of the cell metabolism.

Proteins, or mRNAs in healthy cells, can be compared to orchestra musicians: Harmony depends on various players pausing, not on every musician playing without stopping. Likewise, the absence of a specific protein/mRNA plays an essential role in metabolism.

As modRNAs are developed for longevity and maximal efficiency and (via lipid nanoparticles acting as natural exosomes) have access to all cells, they contradict the nature of mRNAs, which are cell-specific and short-lived. In our orchestra analogy, it would be like giving one



RNA-based vaccines may be ineffective against the sequences of new variants due to the absence of cross-immunity, which happens during natural infection.

musician a bass drum and instructing him to bang it from start to end, completely ignoring the piece of music being played.

### The COVID-19 mRNA Vaccine Is Made With modRNA

Messenger RNA carries the genetic information for the blueprint of one specific protein. The human body has different mechanisms to prevent mRNA from being translated and to support the degradation of mRNA that is no longer needed.

A study published in Science Advances in 2017 reported that the expected lifetime of mRNA isn't hours to days, as previously assumed, but only minutes. However, the lifespan of modRNA is long.

Therefore, the basic idea of RNA-based injections contradicts the nature of mRNA in all aspects, as modRNA has been optimized for maximum translation efficiency and maximum lifespan. There is no reason that any cell in our body, including vital cells in the heart and brain, should produce as many molecules of a foreign viral protein as possible for as long as possible—which, in addition, transforms this cell into a target to be attacked and destroyed by our immune system.

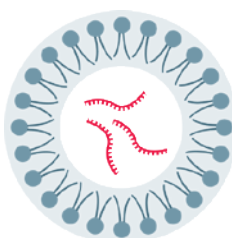
To ensure mRNA can stay in the recipient's body longer, the COVID-19 vaccine makers modified the mRNA to use modRNA.

### The modRNA: A Trojan Horse That May Be Worse Than the Disease

Even though modRNA encodes for the spike protein of SARS-CoV-2, the aim was never to mimic viral RNA, which our immune system would immediately destroy, but to adapt it to the structure of human mRNA.

The "fake" mRNA—modRNA—can have three problems:

## How B and T Cells Respond to mRNA Vaccine



### RNA Injection

Injected modRNA force cells to produce an exogenous "foreign" viral protein. Immune system identifies antigen presented by producing cells.

### T Cells

Identify originally healthy body cells as "foreign" and initiate apoptosis of these cells.

### B Cells

Produce neutralizing (virus-binding) antibodies. Virus particles can no longer bind to and infect cells.

### 1. It Can Increase Errors While Making Spike Proteins

Of note, the synthetic methyl-pseudouridine, which replaces the natural uridine, has been reported to increase the transcriptional error rate, namely one error every 4,000 nucleotides—one error per every synthesized "vaccine" molecule.

### 2. Active Ingredients Vary Greatly by Different Batches

Another factor of concern is the unusually broad "tolerance level" of the active ingredient. The modRNA concentration ranges from 0.37 milligrams/milliliter (mg/ml) to a maximum of 0.63 mg/ml, as shown in the European Medicines Agency (EMA) Assessment Report. Such a variation is highly unusual for a drug.

Furthermore, the vaccine requires only a minimum of 50 percent of modRNA to be present as intact molecules with a complete sequence, which means there can be up to a 3.4-fold variation of the active substance present in different batches.

Since one dose of Comirnaty (Pfizer-BioNTech) represents 0.3 ml containing 30 micrograms of active substance, approximately 13 trillion modRNA molecules will be transferred into the body per injection.

And the third problem is an even more significant concern.

### 3. This modRNA May Be Incorporated Into the Human Genome

According to the political narrative, mRNA from COVID-19 vaccines doesn't enter the cell nucleus, where human DNA is located. The narrative also insists that COVID-19 vaccines don't contain reverse transcriptase, thereby entirely precluding reverse transcription of mRNA into DNA with subsequent transport into the nucleus and incorporation into the host

genome. Two publications have refuted this.

Liguo Zhang and colleagues added the RNA genome of SARS-CoV-2 in the absence of reverse transcriptase to human embryonic kidney (HEK293T) cells. They observed that the cultured cells reverse-transcribed the viral RNA into DNA and integrated this DNA into the cell's genome.

In their PNAS-published study, the authors suggested a mechanism mediated by LINE1 (Long Interspersed Nuclear Element-1), which can act as an endogenous reverse transcriptase. As LINE1 accounts for approximately 17 percent of the human genome, it's highly likely that reverse transcription of the administered modRNA is possible.

In their study published in Current Issues in Molecular Biology, Markus Aldén and colleagues added the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 RNA vaccine (BNT162b2) to human liver (Huh7) cells and observed reverse transcription into DNA in as short a period as six hours.

The DNA sequence unique to BNT162b2 was demonstrated within the cultured cells' genome, confirming the integration of reverse-transcribed modRNA into DNA. In addition, an increased nucleus distribution of LINE1 has been observed, corroborating a LINE1-mediated integration mechanism.

Critically, sperm is known to contain high levels of LINE1.

Although earlier findings are based on studies in cell cultures, insertion into the human genome is possible, a fact that has already been impressively proven by evolution, as it's known that up to 8 percent of the human genome doesn't originate from our ancestors but from retroviruses. As previously shown, reverse transcription with subsequent genome integration is also possible for SARS-CoV-2 as a single-stranded RNA virus using LINE1.

Continued from Page 8

COVID-19 VACCINES UNEXPLORED ADVERSE EVENTS OF COVID-19 VACCINES Part V

# Novel Movement Disorders After COVID Vaccination: Patients Misdiagnosed, Treatment Delayed

Previously: Three days postvaccine, former *Pussycat Dolls* member Jessica Sutta woke up to “the most excruciating muscle spasms” that were unlike anything she had ever experienced, she said.

MARINA ZHANG

Before 2021, Ruth Davy ran more than three miles daily and could cycle up to 46 miles on her bike despite being in her 60s.

But her life changed 15 minutes after she got her first of two COVID-19 vaccine doses.

“I felt like I was sedated,” Davy told *The Epoch Times* about her experience after the first dose. “My whole body was shutting down.”

Davy is no stranger to neurological vaccine side effects. In 2008, she developed Guillain-Barré syndrome due to taking Vivaxim and Dukoral for travel. Her legs gave out, and she was bedridden, although her symptoms disappeared after she went on supplement protocols.

In 2021, COVID-19 vaccinations were mandated in her workplace, so she got the COVID-19 vaccine to keep her job.

After each dose, new neurological symptoms manifested.

Following Davy’s second dose, she lost con-

**Many patients have reported movement disorders from paralysis and tics, to difficulty swallowing after receiving COVID-19 vaccinations.**

trol of the muscles in her right calf, which stayed contracted.

“I was paralyzed for a week,” she said. “[The muscles in] my right calf solidified to the point that I couldn’t stretch my legs.”

After more than a week of going on various health protocols, Davy’s muscle contractions were alleviated.

Her rheumatologist told her that she had developed a new autoimmune condition following vaccination, although a definite diagnosis hasn’t yet been given.

**Movement Disorders With Completely Novel Symptoms**

While health authorities assert that post-vaccine adverse events are rare, Davy said her local medical specialists told her that they have “hundreds of patients” with similar post-vaccine symptoms like hers, relating to movement disorders.

“I am not rare; I am quite common,” she said.

Movement disorders manifest because of brain and neural abnormalities caused by infection, inflammation, neurodegeneration, adverse drug effects, and chronic disease.

Patients may develop a slowing of motion, such as Parkinson’s disease and paralysis, or an increase in motion, such as involuntary jerks and tics. Other symptoms include dancing movements (chorea), gait disturbances, stiffness in limbs and trunk, garbled speech, difficulty swallowing, and many more.

Neurologist Dr. Suzanne Gazda, who has treated several hundred post-vaccine patients, told *The Epoch Times* that most post-vaccine movement disorders have been entirely novel presentations, meaning that they “don’t fall into a conventional diagnosis.”

Therefore, it has been a great challenge for doctors to diagnose and treat patients.

Gazda said patients might present with symptoms that are multiple sclerosis-like, stroke-like, and Alzheimer’s disease-like but



*In this series, we evaluate some of the lesser-known yet common COVID-19 vaccine adverse events that are appearing in the research literature as well as in doctors’ clinics and, more importantly, how to deal with them and reduce the risks.*

aren’t entirely consistent. Laboratory tests and scans also often return with normal findings, which may make a less-informed doctor conclude that the patient is perfectly healthy despite their debilitating symptoms.

**Unusual Cases**

Gazda gave an example of patients who develop seizure-like convulsions that last for hours, even though seizures typically last from seconds to minutes.

Dr. Robert Lowry, a board-certified surgeon specializing in brain injury, said several patients developed unusual transverse myelitis following COVID-19 vaccination.

Transverse myelitis occurs when a spinal cord section becomes inflamed, causing muscles and organs to become weak and dysfunctional. Typically, one or two consecutive vertebral segments are affected, but Lowry’s patients often have three or more vertebral segments involved in succession.

Critical care specialist Dr. Pierre Kory, who now operates a long-COVID and vaccine-injury private clinic with nurse practitioner Scott Marsland, told *The Epoch Times* that he has seen patients whose muscle weakness was on track to be diagnosed as multiple sclerosis. Their scans also showed lesions and damage in the nerves, but the unusual thing is that the lesions didn’t always match with symptom location. Patients’ muscle weakness can also be episodic, with the affected areas changing from day to day.

**Many Cases Are Diagnosed as Psychosomatic, Posing a Risk**

These new and complex movement disorders in vaccinated individuals can be very confusing for doctors. Many of these patients have been misdiagnosed as having functional disorders.

“Functional neurologic disorder (FND), also known as conversion disorder and functional neurologic symptom disorder, refers to

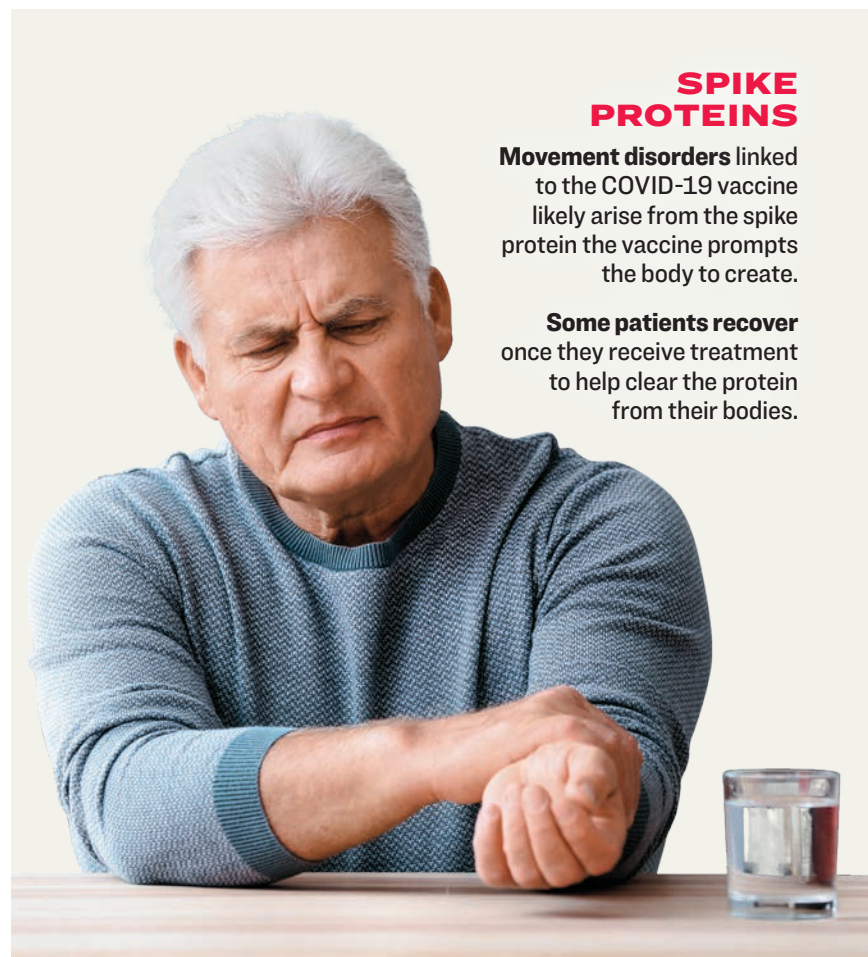
Research has revealed the spike protein may be toxic and inflammatory, making it a poor basis for a vaccine.



## PARALYSIS

Vaccine-linked movement disorders may manifest as paralysis or stiffness in the limbs and trunk.

Other symptoms can include a slowing of motion and garbled speech.



## SPIKE PROTEINS

Movement disorders linked to the COVID-19 vaccine likely arise from the spike protein the vaccine prompts the body to create.

Some patients recover once they receive treatment to help clear the protein from their bodies.

COVID-19 VACCINE

## The Trojan Horse in mRNA-Based Vaccines

Continued from Page 7

**The modRNA and Its Secret Byproducts**

The so-called RNA-based vaccines from Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna contain DNA impurities in addition to the active substance modRNA.

As stated in the EMA Assessment Report, “the BNT162b2 [Pfizer vaccine] active substance is manufactured by in vitro

transcription using a linear DNA template, produced via plasmid DNA from transformed *Escherichia coli* cells.”

In a very recent study, researchers demonstrated that the DNA contamination in both the Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna injections averages 9.1 nanograms/micro-liter (ng/μl) mean DNA concentration versus 33.4 ng/μl mean RNA concentration.

This means that approximately one-quarter (9.1 / 33.4 x 100 = 27.3 percent) of the nucleic acids in the analyzed vials can be attributed to DNA impurities. At the same time, the active substance modRNA represents the remaining three-quarters.

Plasmids are circular DNA molecules that can replicate by themselves. It’s assumed that this isn’t the case with lin-

**To ensure mRNA can stay in the recipient’s body longer, the COVID-19 vaccine makers modified the mRNA to use modRNA.**

earized DNA. Although the proportion of circular, replication-competent DNA plasmids versus linear DNA templates for the in vitro transcription of modRNA is still unknown, the DNA concentration isn’t only several orders of magnitude over the limit of 330 nanograms/milligram (ng/mg), as specified by the EMA, but also implies that billions of DNA molecules are transferred per shot of the RNA-based vaccines.

This has the following two consequences:

1. Plasmids generally comprise sequences encoding for antibiotic resistance; this is essential for the production process to avoid the reproduction of other bacteria, which didn’t contain the sequences encoding for the spike protein. In this



An MRI may not identify inflammation until it has progressed to severe disease.

a group of common neurological movement disorders caused by an abnormality in how the brain functions. FND is not caused by another disorder and there is no significant structural damage in the brain. The exact cause of FND is unknown. FND was thought to be a ‘conversion disorder’ by Sigmund Freud because he believed a psychological disorder converted into a neurological one,” notes an explanation by the National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke.

This diagnosis is usually given when patients’ symptoms don’t match any known neurological disease and scans and tests show no damage to the brain or neurons.

Since this diagnosis is only given when no injury is detected, patients’ symptoms are assumed to be caused by poor psychological health or stress. Therefore, treatment involves counseling, trauma therapy, mindfulness, and physical and occupational therapy.

Gazda said she has only seen a few cases of functional disorder over more than 30 years of clinical practice. Since the COVID-19 pandemic, about 90 percent of her vaccinated patients with neurological side effects were diagnosed with a functional neurological disorder prior to referral.

Several case studies documented functional neurological disorders involving movement issues following vaccination. For example, a Canadian study published in December 2022 found that roughly half of 21 patients who developed symptoms post-infection or post-vaccination were diagnosed with a functional disorder.

Functional neurological disorders also increased prior to vaccination, with one study observing a 90 and nearly 60 percent increase in pediatric and adult functional disorder patients in 2020, respectively.

Gazda and Kory argued that functional neurological disorders in vaccinated individuals likely aren’t functional but caused by the spike protein—the central pathogenic part of the COVID-19 virus that is also generated by the vaccine. This reasoning is based on the fact that patients with functional disorder diagnoses have improved once they were given treatment focused on removing the spike protein.

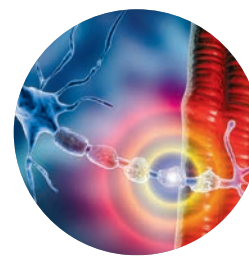
The incorrect functional disorder diagnosis can delay treatment, impeding recovery as symptoms worsen. For example, Kory recounted the case of a boy who developed strange movement disorder symptoms post-vaccine and was treated as a functional disorder patient for two years. The boy’s symptoms worsened as he was treated in various functional disorder centers, but he finally experienced improvements once he was recognized and treated as a vaccine-injured patient.

It’s dangerous to diagnose patients with functional neurological disorders, according to Gazda. As time passes, patients may start to believe that all of their symptoms are only mental, and they may stop seeking treatment for their physical symptoms.

**The Causes Behind Movement Disorder Among the Vaccinated**

Doctors believe that the No. 1 culprit behind post-vaccine reactions is the spike protein, a surface protein the virus uses to invade human cells. In vaccinated individuals, kanamycin can be exchanged with other bacteria, increasing the risk of developing multiresistant germs.

**The appearance of COVID-19 vaccine injuries may have inadvertently pushed doctors to introduce alternative medical practices into their clinics.**



The exact cause of functional neurologic disorder is unknown, but since the COVID-19 pandemic, about

**90 PERCENT**

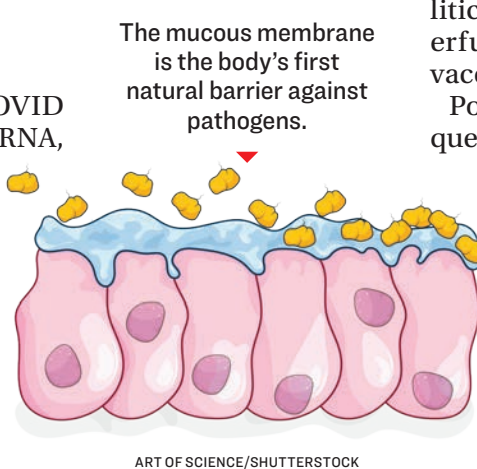
of neurologist Suzanne Gazda’s vaccinated patients have been diagnosed with a functional disorder.



## Natural Anticoagulants

The bacteria that ferment soybeans in natto, a Japanese breakfast food, create a unique enzyme called nattokinase.

Nattokinase and serrapeptase, a similar enzyme, are natural anticoagulants that may help break down spike proteins.



The mucous membrane is the body’s first natural barrier against pathogens.

ART OF SCIENCE/SHUTTERSTOCK

als, the body’s cells make spike protein to trigger the immune system’s reaction so that the person can gain protection from COVID-19.

The spike protein was chosen as the target for COVID-19 vaccine development because once the body forms an immunity against the spike protein, its antibodies can directly neutralize and block COVID-19 infections.

Both the COVID-19 mRNA and adenovirus vaccines cause the body to produce what’s likely to be high quantities of viral spike proteins for an unknown period. The Novavax vaccine, on the other hand, doesn’t cause the body to produce spike proteins but injects the body with already produced spike proteins.

However, researchers and doctors now realize that the spike protein is potentially toxic and inflammatory and may not have been a good candidate for vaccination.

Neuroinflammation from spike protein exposure may contribute to movement disorders in vaccinated patients, according to Kory.

Studies have shown that spike proteins can cross the blood-brain barrier and cause immune cells, also known as microglia cells, to become inflammatory and degenerative. Microglial cells clean up debris and infection in the brain but once switched on, it’s tough to switch them off; therefore, the person’s brain may be in a chronic state of inflammation.

Doctors can use an MRI to look for inflammation and shrinkage of the brain and nerves. Still, they may not recognize early inflammation and disease as the differences are minor and indiscernible. Gazda said that once pathology becomes visible on the MRI, the patient would likely have progressed to severe disease.

Neuroinflammation has been implicated in movement disorders, including Parkinson’s disease, Tourette syndrome, involuntary movement, and many more. The fact that patients with movement disorders improve after taking anti-inflammatory therapeutics is a sign that neuroinflammation is an underlying factor, Kory said.

Other potential effects of spike protein include its ability to induce autoimmunity. A study by immunologist Dr. Aristo Vojdani found that antibodies made against spike proteins can act against 28 different human tissues, including various tissues in the nervous system.

The spike protein can also induce clotting. Studies have found that the spike proteins from the COVID-19 infection can induce microclot formation in the blood.

Lowry believes that microclotting is a significant reason for vaccine injuries, having observed several cases of atypical stroke in which blood clots were detected in blood vessels leaving the brain, suggesting that the blood may clump together in the brain. A stroke is typically caused by a hemorrhage or clot from outside the brain that deprives the brain of blood.

**Recognition of Vaccine Injuries Important in Treatment**

Gazda and Kory highlighted that doctors should know about spike protein harms to recognize potential vaccine reactions and prescribe treatment that targets the root cause.

When a patient’s neurological disorder has a strong temporal association with the vaccine, Kory wonders if treating the patient for their vaccine injury would be more helpful than prescribing conventional treatment for the specific neurological disease. However, the lack of recognition of vaccine reactions means no studies have been done comparing treatment effectiveness.

Neurologist Dr. Diane Counce, who has seen an uptick in vaccinated patients presenting with Parkinson’s, told *The Epoch Times* that she prescribes both conventional and vaccine-targeted therapy to vaccinated individuals, hoping that it will improve patients’ prognosis.

In treating neuroinflammation, apart from common anti-inflammatory drugs such as ivermectin and low-dose naltrexone, Kory found that movement disorder patients have also been responsive to methylene blue, corticosteroids, and glutamate inhibitors.

Methylene blue shouldn’t be taken with serotonergic agents such as selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors. Corticosteroids generally aren’t recommended for long-term use. Some people may be allergic to the ingredients in glutamate inhibitors, and certain health conditions, such as blood pressure and coronary heart disease, may contraindicate with these drugs.

Antibody infusions such as IVIG may treat movement disorders linked with autoimmunity. But since the treatment isn’t approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for movement disorders, autoimmunity would need to be proven for insurance reimbursement, according to Gazda.

Counce recommends anticoagulants, such as aspirin and nattokinase, to prevent blood clot formation. Serrapeptase and nattokinase can also help break down spike proteins, preventing further harm.

**Looking for Alternatives**

Kory said long COVID and COVID-19 vaccine injuries have been very different from all previous diseases that he has treated. Previously, there were solid trends and patterns he could recognize with symptoms and the way patients responded to treatment. However, that hasn’t been the same with long-COVID and vaccine-injury patients; two patients with the same symptoms may react differently to a treatment.

Another difficulty in treating these patients is that there’s no way to verify if spike proteins have been eliminated. Doctors worry that these proteins may persist and retrigger reactions, according to Gazda.

Despite the problems, she said treating these patients has been very rewarding since doctors are now trying to treat the root cause of the disease rather than solely focusing on the symptoms.

The appearance of COVID-19 vaccine injuries may have also inadvertently pushed doctors to introduce alternative medical practices into their clinics. For example, Counce, an allopathic neurologist, said she has started looking into red light therapy and other therapies that initially would have been considered on the fringe of modern medicine.

Rather than prescribing pharmaceuticals to control symptoms, Gazda said doctors are now trying to heal patients using dietary and lifestyle changes that allow patients to become healthier rather than having their symptoms masked.

**Next week:** Musician and singer Emaline Delapaix has consulted at least 16 medical specialists, all of whom believe that her conditions are linked to the vaccine. She has been diagnosed with mast cell syndrome, a potentially deadly condition in which “everything that comes in could be an enemy,” she said.

**Acknowledgment**

The highly valuable support and discussion with Andreas Schnepf, University of Tübingen, is gratefully acknowledged.

Klaus Steger, Ph.D., is a molecular biologist with a research focus in the genetic and epigenetic regulation of gene expression during normal and aberrant sperm development. Over the past 30 years, his research projects were continuously funded by the German Research Foundation, while he headed several gene technology laboratories regularly applying RNA-based technologies. He served as a professor of anatomy and cell biology at the University of Giessen, Germany, for 23 years before retiring this year. He holds a doctorate in natural sciences from the University of Regensburg.

## FOOD AS MEDICINE

# 5 Top Anxiety-Relieving Foods

Eat and drink your way to better mental health with these time-tested and scientifically proven mood foods

Although allopathic doctors generally advocate pills to treat anxiety, there is mounting evidence showing that these medications can have many negative side effects, including addiction, depression, suicide, seizures, sexual dysfunction, and headaches.

Practitioners of natural health generally believe that lifestyle—particularly the food we eat—is the best medicine and that some foods are better than others when it comes to soothing body and mind. Here are five of the top foods to eat to stimulate feelings of calm and well-being from the inside out.

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**L-theanine is an active polyphenol in green tea that may be at the heart of its ability to calm nerves and fortify the brain.**



Salmon, sardines, trout, and mackerel are healthy, low-mercury fish that can be eaten regularly to enhance mood and decrease risk of anxiety.

## Fish

**Cold-water fish** such as salmon, cod, mackerel, and sardines are under-consumed in the United States, which culturally favors protein from sources such as beef and chicken. This is a dietary misstep if you want to quell anxious energy. Increasing your intake of clean fish may help relieve anxiety by promoting a healthy brain and enhanced mood. That's because these fish are rich in the essential amino acids L-lysine and L-arginine and healthy omega-3 fatty acids.

**Studies have shown** that individuals with L-lysine deficiency are at a higher risk of anxiety, and L-lysine supplementation lowers anxiety and reduces the effects of stress. In clinical trials, supplementing with L-arginine reduced the synthesis of cortisol, a major stress hormone, in healthy human subjects.

**Eating enough omega-3 fatty acids** has been shown to enhance mood and reduce the risk of anxiety. Supplementing for a period of three months with a high-quality source of omega-3s has even been shown to support withdrawal-related anxiety in a trial with substance abuse patients. Just a few servings of healthy fish per week may be enough to gain these benefits.

**Widespread pollution of our oceans**—and the environmental effects of overfishing—have made some people wary of eating fish. The Environmental Working Group's Consumer Guide to Seafood is a useful guide available for free online that can help you choose the most nutritious and clean fish from sustainable sources. It includes a calculator to help you customize portion sizes for optimal nutrition while minimizing any negative effects on the planet.

## Nuts

Many essential proteins and fats are available from nuts such as Brazil nuts, almonds, and walnuts. Nuts also provide vitamin E and the mineral selenium, both proven to reduce anxious feelings.

**Almonds are a potent source** of the antioxidant vitamin E, a powerful scavenger of damaging free radicals linked to a healthy brain response in fearful conditions. Vitamin E supplementation was found in one animal study to improve fear response in rats that were exposed to healthy vitamin E levels in utero. The offspring of rats that were deprived of the nutrient during pregnancy had an impaired fear response and increased anxiety. One cup of ground almonds (a great addition to many recipes) provides 125 percent of an adult's recommended daily allowance of vitamin E. Be aware, however, that almonds are a high-calorie food. One cup of ground almonds has more than 500 calories.

**Brazil nuts** are one of the best sources of selenium, an essential trace mineral that is critical for optimal health. Adults who were supplemented with 100 micrograms (mcg) of selenium per day in a clinical trial reported less anxiety than the placebo group. According to the report, the lower the level of selenium in the diet, the higher the levels of anxiety, depression, and tiredness among patients, all of which decreased following five weeks of selenium therapy.

**Adults over 14 years of age** are recommended to intake 55 mcg of selenium each day. A small handful of Brazil nuts (six to eight nuts) delivers a whopping 544 mcg of selenium—more than enough to take the edge off your mood.

**All of these nuts provide essential amino acids and fatty acids** that produce the mood-regulating hormones serotonin and dopamine, improving their effects on mood and overall mental health.



Nuts, particularly the selenium-rich Brazil, are effective at taking the edge off our mood.



Cool and refreshing, probiotic-rich yogurt has been shown to provide “robust alterations” in the brain that aid in coping with chronic stress.

## Yogurt

**Fermented foods** such as yogurt have long been acknowledged as beneficial for gut health because of the presence of friendly bacteria known as probiotics, which help protect the gastrointestinal tract against harmful pathogens and potentially dangerous microbes. As the understanding of the gut-brain connection develops, science is further acknowledging fermented foods' positive effect on brain health and even mood.

**A 2014 study** found that adults with high-trait anxiety disorder who consumed probiotic-enriched yogurt daily had healthier stress responses than those who consumed non-enriched yogurt, suggesting that eating probiotic-enriched yogurt aids in coping with chronic stress.

**This beneficial activity** may be due to probiotics' neuroprotective effect on the brain. A study on healthy women with no gastrointestinal or psychiatric symptoms showed that ingesting a fermented milk product with probiotics for four weeks led to “robust alteration” within specific brain regions that process emotion and sensation, suggesting that consuming such probiotic-rich foods prevents anxious feelings from developing.

**Other studies on animals and humans** have shown that eating fermented food is associated with fewer symptoms of social anxiety and a lowered risk of depression.

**It should be noted** that there are plenty of alternatives to cow's milk-based yogurt products today, such as coconut, almond, and goat's milk, all of which can help to prevent bovine casein-associated adverse health effects that some people experience.

## Green Tea

Having a daily tea ritual is a great way to weave in a moment of calm. Besides the benefits of taking a break from daily concerns to boil water, select a cup, and let it steep, drinking tea is a great way to boost your brain's ability to ward off stress.

**In a Singapore study of 60 healthy seniors**, the brain scans of those with a regular tea habit showed improved brain organization brought about by tea's ability to prevent disruption of interregional connections. Those seniors' different brain regions had more and healthier interconnections; they were more organized with better hemispheric symmetry.

**L-theanine is an active polyphenol** in green tea that may be at the heart of its ability to calm nerves and fortify the brain. An amino acid, theanine produces a soothing effect by stimulating the production of GABA and dopamine, neurotransmitters known to play a role in anxiety and pleasurable sensations.

**Green tea also contains** a potent phytochemical called EGCG, short for epigallocatechin-gallate, another polyphenol in green tea that has gained a lot of attention as a potential therapeutic agent for preventing neurodegenerative inflammatory diseases. And if you need any more reasons to start a green tea habit, regular tea drinking may bolster the immune system to prevent influenza infection.

**It's very hard to overdo green tea consumption.** A 2009 study conducted in Japan, one of the largest consumer countries of green tea, found that those who consumed more than five cups per day had significantly less stress than those who drank less than 1 cup per day. In other words, the more you drink, the better you feel, so put on the kettle and start feeling better.



Green tea's magical properties stimulate GABA and dopamine to enhance life's pleasurable sensations.



Dark chocolate is less indulgence and more RX for a healthy daily dose of brain function-boosting serotonin.

## Dark Chocolate

**While you engage in afternoon tea**, why not break off a square (or two) of fine dark chocolate? Don't worry about the jitters one might associate with chocolate—dark chocolate is clinically shown to improve anxiety and deliver a potent feel-good boost of serotonin.

**Look for a brand high in cocoa** and low in harmful sugars, additives, and hydrogenated oils. Cocoa contains more active phenolic antioxidants than most foods, a factor that can benefit brain function. One could argue that dark chocolate tastes better than most foods too, a factor that has been clinically shown to impart a soothing effect to individuals who are prone to mood disorders.

**Dark chocolate isn't just about taste**—it's got minerals such as magnesium that are important for brain health and mood. A large square of dark chocolate with 70 percent to 85 percent cacao provides about 36 milligrams of magnesium, nearly 10 percent of the U.S. recommended daily allowance for adults.

**Magnesium** is considered an essential supplement for psychiatric patients because of the role it plays in calming the nervous system. In a 2011 study of highly stressed individuals, participants who ate 40 grams of dark chocolate every day for two weeks reported significantly lower stress levels than participants who ate milk or white chocolates.

**Eating dark chocolate** has been shown to boost the neurotransmitter serotonin, which can lead to fewer and milder feelings of anxiety because of an enhanced ability to manage stress. By adding a serving of dark chocolate to your day, you can impart a wide array of self-care benefits to enhance your mood and increase your resilience to life's daily stressors. There is no reason not to indulge.

# 5 Surprising Things Happen After You Stop Drinking Coffee

Removing caffeine's psychoactive effects from your life can lead to several notable benefits, especially for certain groups of people

## GEORGE CITRONER

Caffeine is the world's most widely consumed psychoactive substance. It's considered psychoactive because it affects alertness and our mental state, and it's used daily by at least 85 percent of Americans.

It has addictive effects for some people, affecting the same parts of the brain as cocaine—but in different ways. Yet, according to a review in the American Journal of Drug and Alcohol Abuse, caffeine use doesn't fit the profile of an addictive drug.

“Its intake does no harm to the individual or to society and its users are not compelled to consume it, though cessation of regular use may result in symptoms such as headache and lethargy,” the review authors wrote.

Regardless, millions of people start their day with a cup of coffee and rely on it to keep them going throughout the day.

However, there are many benefits to reducing your coffee intake or giving up caffeine altogether, and it can be a great way to improve your health and well-being.

“Like any recreational drug, living without caffeine is always healthier,” Dr. Theodore Strange, chair of medicine at Staten Island University Hospital, part of Northwell Health in New York, told The Epoch Times.

## Improved Sleep Quality

One of the most significant benefits of quitting caffeine is improved sleep.

According to the American Academy of Sleep Medicine, caffeine has a half-life of up to five hours. A chemical's half-life is how long it takes a dose of it to be reduced by half in your body.

This means that if you consume 100 milligrams of caffeine (roughly one cup of coffee), after five hours, you'll still have 50 milligrams of caffeine in your system. It will take another five hours to reach 25 milligrams.

This means that “afternoon pick-me-up” could still be affecting you by bedtime that evening.

Eliminating caffeine from your diet means you'll likely fall asleep more easily and stay asleep longer, which should help improve energy and productivity throughout your day.

## Reduced Anxiety

Caffeine is a stimulant that can cause an increase in anxiety and jitteriness. Reducing intake or quitting caffeine entirely could reduce your likelihood of experiencing these symptoms and help you feel calmer and more relaxed.

**Caffeine is the world's most widely consumed psychoactive substance.**

The proverbial “cup of joe.”



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A research study conducted with college participants found that caffeine intake was associated with depressive symptoms and higher levels of anxiety.

A review from the National Institutes of Health concluded that caffeine can cause anxiety symptoms in normal individuals, especially in those who have preexisting anxiety disorders. The review also found that caffeine could induce psychosis in normal individuals who consume caffeine at toxic doses of more than 1,200 milligrams.

## Reduced Risk of High Blood Pressure and Other Diseases

Caffeine can have a negative effect on your health, especially when used in large amounts.

“Caffeine may cause a short but dramatic increase in your blood pressure, even if you don't have high blood pressure,” Dr. Francisco Lopez-Jimenez, a cardiologist at the Mayo Clinic, said in a statement.

High levels of caffeine can cause cardiac issues, including heart palpitations, and even increase the risk of heart disease. Evidence shows a strong link between high caffeine intake and headaches, due to how it can make blood vessels in the brain swell.

Strange added that a dose of 400 milligrams or less per day, or about four cups of coffee, is probably safe, but more than this can cause tachycardia, jitters, and insomnia.

“Which could have effects on one's health, especially if someone also has

heart disease or is on medications that may exacerbate effects of caffeine,” he said. Eliminating coffee from your diet can help reduce your risk of these health problems and promote overall better health.

## Better Hydration

Caffeine is a diuretic, which means that it can increase the frequency of urination and lead to dehydration.

Eliminating caffeine from your diet can help you stay better hydrated, which can improve your overall health and well-being.

Being dehydrated can adversely affect health, and a decrease of as little as 1.5 percent of your body's water can cause symptoms. These range from a simple headache to a life-threatening illness, such as heatstroke.



That afternoon cup of coffee may still be in your system when you are ready to sleep.

## Improved Digestion

Coffee can affect stomach acid secretions and may cause gastroesophageal reflux, commonly called heartburn.

This effect is also associated with a possible increase in digestive problems that include poor digestion, discomfort, nausea, and ulcers.

Reducing caffeine intake can improve digestion and alleviate these symptoms, leading to better overall gastrointestinal health.

**People Who Shouldn't Use Caffeine** Although caffeine and coffee consumption are generally safe for most people, there are some groups of people who

should avoid or limit their intake.

## Pregnant Women

High doses of caffeine during pregnancy have been linked to an increased risk of miscarriage, premature birth, and increased risk of attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder in children when they reach 4 to 11 years old.

## People With Anxiety Disorders

Caffeine can increase anxiety and jitteriness in some individuals, which can exacerbate symptoms of anxiety disorders.

## People With Heart Conditions

Caffeine can cause blood pressure to spike, which may be dangerous for those living with an underlying heart condition. Research also shows that caffeine can increase the risk of atrial fibrillation.

## People With Caffeine Sensitivity

Some people have a genetic predisposition to be more sensitive to caffeine, making them much more likely to experience adverse reactions such as anxiety or insomnia when they drink even moderate amounts.

## Children

Children are smaller and so are more sensitive to the effects of caffeine than adults. “Caffeine-containing foods and beverages can have effects on the body and mind that interfere with every aspect of what children need to thrive,” Columbia pediatrician Dr. David Buchholz said in a statement.

“Like any recreational drug, living without caffeine is always healthier.”

*Dr. Theodore Strange, chair of medicine, Staten Island University Hospital*

He also said that “there is no known safe amount” of caffeine for any child age 11 and younger.

## Cutting Caffeine and Withdrawal Symptoms

Strange explained that the symptoms of caffeine withdrawal can be different for every person.

“Common symptoms include headache, fatigue, low energy, irritability, anxiety, poor concentration, depressed mood, tremors, and sleeping issues,” he said, cautioning that the symptoms of quitting caffeine abruptly can last from a few days to a few weeks.

Strange emphasized that the benefits of living without caffeine include better sleep, better focus and concentration, and improved blood pressure, among others.



MARIA ZOTOVA/GETTY IMAGES

Living without caffeine may improve your blood pressure and overall health and well-being.

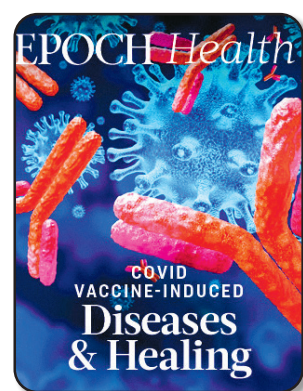
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THE EPOCH TIMES



# Impaired Mouths Implicated in Disease and Pain

More dentists are linking narrow jaws and airways to pain, sleep apnea, low energy, anxiety, and depression

Breathing orally drops the tongue out of its proper posture high in the upper palate.

AMY DENNEY

More people than ever seem to be suffering from one or more of these mouth conditions: overcrowded teeth, obstructive sleep apnea, teeth grinding, and mouth breathing.

They're all red flags that some medical and dental experts say are evidence of a pervasive problem related to our modern lifestyle.

The human jaw is shrinking, they say, and it isn't simply a cosmetic concern. It's often rooted in childhood, and while symptoms sometimes appear early in life—particularly overcrowded, crooked teeth that are addressed with orthodontics—it's usually not until adulthood that other problems arise.

A small but growing vocal group on the fringes of health care says that these symptoms can be traced back to changing facial bones that are constricting airways.

### Stunted Facial Bone Growth

The argument is that habitual mouth breathing can interrupt the widening growth of the jaws and palate. Breathing orally drops the tongue out of its proper posture high in the upper palate. It's especially problematic at night when it causes the upper airway to collapse, creating increasingly tighter respiratory passageways and leading to obstructive sleep apnea and other diseases.

One theory published in a 2020 article in BioScience blames tongue posture for the problem, saying a lazy tongue not thrust upward in the anterior palate during rest causes the upper palate to form more narrow and high as bones fuse. And that would cause the tongue to no longer fit at all.

In a response to the article, Dr. G. Dave Singh traced the root cause further, saying tongue posture is likely a response to nasal obstruction, which might occur due to anatomical deformities, allergic congestion, obesity, or habits. Singh's former company, Vivos Therapeutics, markets treatments for dentofacial abnormalities and mild-to-moderate obstructive sleep apnea.

A 2018 study of 98 children published in the journal of the Brazilian Society of Pediatrics found distinct differences in the nasopharyngeal dimensions between children who breathe through the nose and those who breathe orally. In the teenage group, there were also differences in palate length, face shape, and the hyoid bone, which aids in tongue movement.

Furthermore, radiograph scans showed that even among those children whose faces appeared to be developing normally, there was evidence of constricted airways. "When compared with nasal breathing individuals, oral breathing children present differences in airway dimensions," according to the study.

Continued on Page 17



Many scientists argue that the human jaw is shrinking, causing childhood symptoms such as overcrowded, crooked teeth.

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## Kidney Disease: A Silent Killer With 7 Early Symptoms



Kidney failure can cause the accumulation of toxins, metabolic acidosis, and electrolyte disorders in the body.

Being mindful of early signs of kidney disease can be the difference between dialysis and recovery

TERESA ZHANG

Kidney disease is known as the "silent killer" because it often has no obvious early symptoms. It's estimated that up to 90 percent of

people in the United States with chronic kidney disease are completely unaware that they have the disease until it's very advanced.

As kidney disease progresses, it can lead to kidney failure, requiring dialysis or a kidney transplant. It can also result in other serious health issues, including a heart attack or stroke.

Dr. Jingdian Yang, the founder and medical director of Yang Institute of Integrative Medicine and a Chinese and Western physician, said in the online program "Four Dimensions of Health" that he had recently

seen several patients who were not very old yet were experiencing kidney failure.

However, because they waited too long to see a doctor, their treatment options were limited. If they had been treated early, their loss of kidney function may have been prevented.

Some early symptoms of kidney disease may not seem to be related to the kidneys, but they are indeed caused by reduced kidney function.

Continued on Page 14

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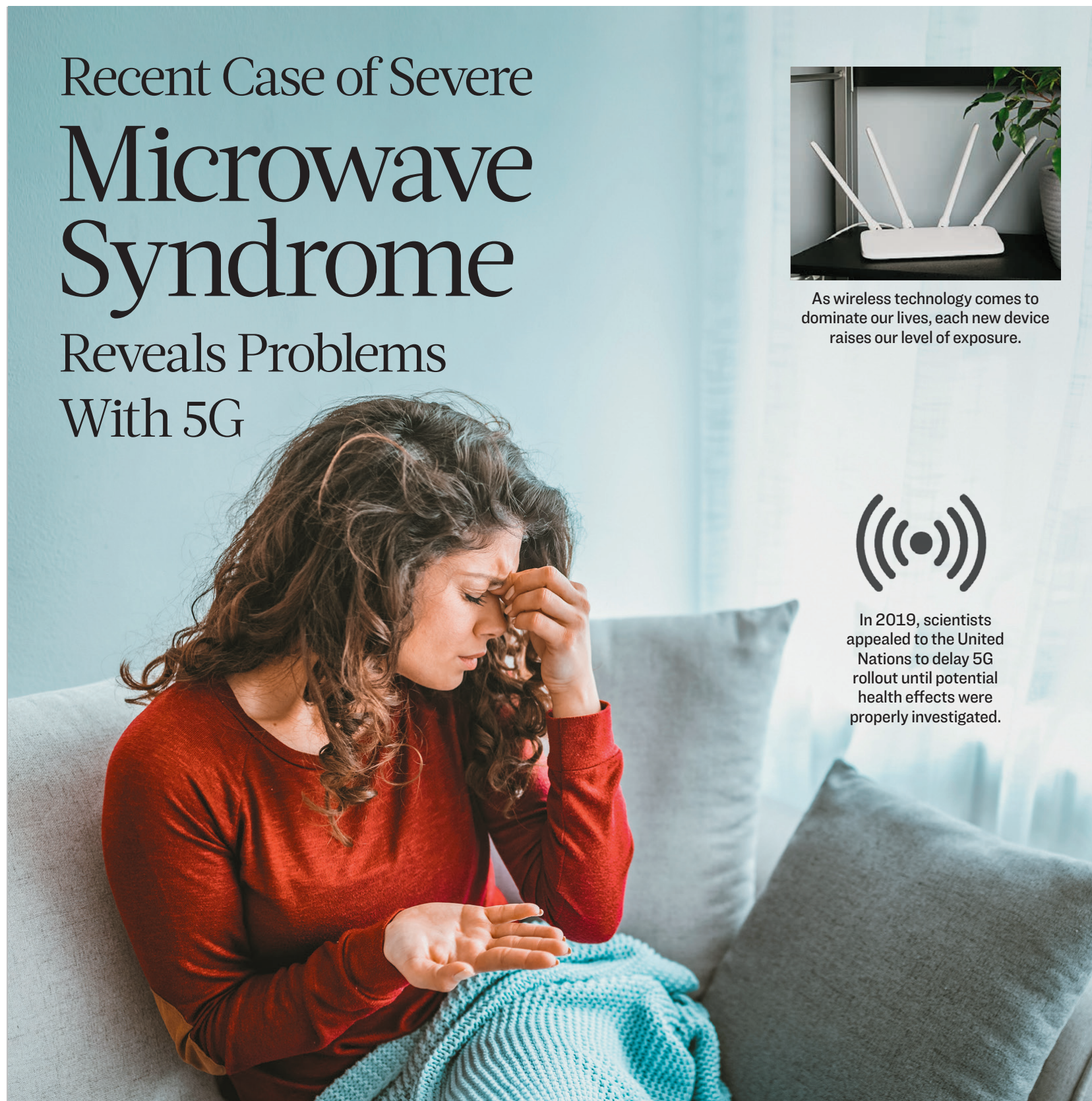


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# Recent Case of Severe Microwave Syndrome Reveals Problems With 5G



As wireless technology comes to dominate our lives, each new device raises our level of exposure.



In 2019, scientists appealed to the United Nations to delay 5G rollout until potential health effects were properly investigated.

One woman's recent illness highlights the issue of only considering radiofrequency radiation's thermal effects

DAVID CHARBONNEAU

After a 5G base station was installed within 60 meters of her second-floor apartment, a middle-aged, otherwise healthy, Swedish woman developed debilitating symptoms corresponding with radiofrequency/microwave syndrome, researchers at the Environment and Cancer Research Foundation (ECRF) in Sweden reported last month.

This was the third case documented by the researchers.

According to their case study, published in *Annals of Clinical and Medical Case Reports*, fifth-generation (5G) wireless technology is being rolled out worldwide, "despite no previous research on possible negative effects on human

health and the environment."

As a result, exposure to pulse-modulated microwave radiation has "increased dramatically on a worldwide basis." Microwave radiation is frequencies in the range of 300 megahertz to 300 gigahertz within the radiofrequency (RF) spectrum. In city environments, frequencies used for 5G are currently in the 3.5 GHz band.

Studies on possible health effects from exposure to 5G frequencies were all but nonexistent until recently. In a study published in October 2022, animals were exposed to the 5G frequency of 3.5 GHz for two hours a day, five days a week, for one month. The exposure caused oxidative stress and an increase of degenerated neurons in the hippocampus region of the brain, in addition to decreased iris levels, a hormone positively correlated with weight loss and healthy cognitive function.

In the case study, the woman quickly developed a large array of debilitating symptoms after the installation. These symptoms included headache; dizziness and balance problems; cognitive dysfunction, including memory loss, confusion, and loss of focus; extreme fatigue; anxiety; cough; nose bleeding; and disorders of urinary function and the skin, including spontaneous bruising and skin eruptions.

The 5G antenna was installed on the roof of a three-floor adjacent building and projected toward her apartment on the second floor. There was previously a 4G base station antenna at the same spot, but it was only after it was replaced by the 5G antenna that the woman quickly developed severe symptoms of microwave syndrome. The 4G antenna was removed shortly after the 5G deployment.

The woman reported that when she relocated to another apartment not near a 5G base station, her symptoms all quickly resolved, only to return within 24 hours of her return to her own apartment.

The woman's dog also showed signs of ill health after the 5G installation. Reportedly, the dog contracted diarrhea soon after the

5G antenna was installed. This disappeared during the retreat to the other apartment with no 5G but returned when they moved back to her own apartment.

Also, the dog was reluctant to reenter the apartment after being taken out for a walk. The researchers point out that "5G emits high repetitive pulses of microwave radiation" with radiation spikes that are exponentially greater than those of previous generations, including 4G.

The researchers measured microwatts per square meter within one foot of the woman's living room window over the course of one minute and found significant spikes.

High radiation was also found in the bathroom, highest in the bathtub, which was closest to the window. Considerably lower RF radiation was measured in the bedroom, which wasn't directly in the line of transmission from the base station.

Despite maxing out the commercial meter (Safe and Sound, Pro II) used by the researchers, the level of exposure was non-thermal and well below the guidelines recommended by the International Commission on Non-ionizing Radiation Protection (ICNIRP).

### A History of Exposure Disorders

RF sickness or illness resulting from microwave exposure was first reported in the 1960s and 1970s in East European countries. People most commonly suffered symptoms relating to neural, cardiovascular, and endocrine systems disruption.

International investigations of exposed workers, including U.S. military personnel, showed that microwave exposure at non-thermal levels caused symptoms such as fatigue, dizziness, headache, sleep disorders, anxiety, and problems with attention and memory.

A review of multiple human and animal studies also concluded that "a surprisingly wide variety of neurological and physiological reactions are to be expected" because of exposure to non-thermal levels of RF/microwave radiation.

The condition has been variously termed radiofrequency sickness syndrome or microwave syndrome. The non-thermal effects—effects unrelated to a buildup of heat—depend primarily on the modulation and/or pulsation of the signal as well as on the peak and average intensity.

### The Problem With Current RF Safety Standards

There are significant problems with how health effects from RF radiation are weighed, according to James Lin, a professor emeritus in the Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering at the University of Illinois—Chicago.

In an article published in *Environmental Research* in April, Lin details how safety limits for exposure to RF radiation applied by most countries around the world are still based on acute heat or thermal effects that appear within a short time from exposure, thus failing to assess other effects of long-term exposure.

The guidelines for reference values based on heating are set by the ICNIRP, a self-appointed private organization based in Germany. The ICNIRP has positioned itself with industry support to be the dominant international authority in evaluating scientific evidence of negative health effects from RF radiation.

"Their guidelines are based on evalu-

## Symptoms of Radiofrequency/Microwave Syndrome

Radiation sickness due to 5G exposure can manifest in different ways, such as experiencing severe migraines, dizziness, memory loss, and anxiety.



**The woman reported that when she relocated to another apartment not near a 5G base station, all her symptoms quickly resolved, only to return within 24 hours of her return to her own apartment.**

ations that have rejected all scientific evidence on non-thermal effects, despite growing evidence of a range of harmful effects well below the ICNIRP levels. That unscientific evaluation is in the interest of industry thereby facilitating the deployment of 5G and the wireless society," the researchers at ECRF wrote.

In his recent *Environmental Research* article, Lin, a former long-time member of ICNIRP, concluded: "There are substantial abnormalities in these putative health safety protection guidelines and standards. Some of the safety limits are irrelevant, debatable, and absent of scientific justification from the standpoint of safety and public health protection."

In 2019, 258 electromagnetic field (EMF) scientists from 58 countries appealed to the United Nations to impose a moratorium on the rollout of 5G until health effects could be properly assessed.

In the appeal, the scientists said: "Wireless communication technologies are rapidly becoming an integral part of every economic sector. But there is a rapidly growing body of scientific evidence of harm to people, plants, animals, and microbes caused by exposure to these technologies.

"It is our opinion that adverse health consequences of chronic and involuntary exposure of people to non-ionizing EMF sources are being ignored by national and international health organizations despite our repeated inquiries as well as inquiries made by many other concerned scientists, medical doctors, and advocates.

"This constitutes a clear violation of human rights, as defined by the United Nations."

*David Charbonneau, Ph.D., is a freelance journalist who has also taught literature and writing at the college level for 25 years. In addition to The Epoch Times, his work has appeared in The Defender, Medium, and other online and print platforms. A staunch advocate for medical freedom, he lives and works in Pasadena, Calif.*



### Is 5G Worth the Risk?

There are few studies on the effects of 5G frequencies and relatively little safety data to evaluate risk.

In one study, animals exposed to 3.5 GHz for two hours a day, five days a week, for one month showed an increase of degenerated neurons in the hippocampus region of the brain.

SOURCE: "EFFECTS OF 3.5 GHz RADIOFREQUENCY RADIATION ON DORSAL NESTIN+ AND IRISIN LEVEL IN DIABETIC AND HEALTHY BRAINS" JOURNAL OF NEUROANATOMY, DECEMBER, 2022

## WHAT PEOPLE ARE SAYING

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## Kidney Disease: A Silent Killer With 7 Early Symptoms

Continued from Page 13

Here are seven symptoms to watch for:

### 1 Nausea, Vomiting, and Loss of Appetite

Kidney failure can cause the accumulation of toxins, metabolic acidosis, and electrolyte disorders in the body, leading to gastrointestinal disorders and symptoms of nausea and vomiting, so be aware that digestive problems may be related to the kidneys.

### 2 Anemia and Chronic Fatigue

One of the functions of the kidneys is to synthesize erythropoietin, a hormone that stimulates the production of red blood cells in the bone marrow. It also protects cardiac muscle cells (cardiomyocytes) and stimulates the regeneration of these cells and blood vessels. Poor kidney function can lead to low levels of red blood cells (anemia), resulting in chronic fatigue symptoms.

### 3 Itchy Skin

When the kidneys aren't functioning properly, toxins aren't adequately ex-

creted through the kidneys, which can result in dry, itchy skin. Kidney disease may also cause changes in the levels of certain hormones in the body. This can also lead to itching.

If you have itchy skin, "don't just go to the dermatologist and slather on the medicine, but think about the possibility of kidney failure," Yang said.

Itchy skin can also be caused by high levels of ammonia in the blood, which can result from poor kidney function. A lack of vitamin B6 or zinc can also cause itchiness.

### 4 Urine Change

One of the main functions of the kidneys is to produce urine. If there's a kidney problem, urine may become cloudy or foamy or may have blood in it.

Is foamy urine a symptom of kidney disease? Yang said it's normal to have bubbles in urine occasionally. Still, proteinuria (the presence of excess protein in urine) can be indicative of kidney damage and can cause urine to become foamy. If there are normally many bubbles in your urine, and the bubbles don't disappear after 30 seconds, Yang recom-

mends seeking medical attention.

If the urine is dark and yellow, it may contain blood cells, meaning there is hematuria. Also keep in mind that if you take vitamin B complex, your urine may turn yellow or red.

The kidneys are responsible for producing urine; however, urine output may decrease when kidney function is abnormal. This is because the kidneys may not be able to filter blood effectively when damaged.

### If you have severe back pain, you may want to determine if there is a problem with your kidneys.

In addition, according to traditional Chinese medicine (TCM) theory, frequent daytime urination and excessive nighttime urination are symptoms of weak kidney energy, called "kidney qi deficiency." Although it may not be possible to detect kidney problems at the chemical level, they may already be present at the energetic level.

**5 Acute and Chronic Lower Back Pain** The kidneys are located in the lower back. If you have severe back pain, you

may want to determine if there's a problem with your kidneys. Chronic lower back pain should also be taken seriously. Kidney disease can cause chronic lower back pain, which radiates from the waist to the back of the legs and ankles along the bladder meridian.

According to TCM, the meridians are the channels of energy in the human body, and the energy of the internal organs will flow through the meridians throughout the body. When a disease occurs in an internal organ, the corresponding meridian feels pain and discomfort. If there's a problem with the kidneys, it will also affect the area of the bladder meridian.

### 6 Metallic Smell and Taste

When there's a problem with kidney function, you will often have a metallic taste in your mouth. In severe cases, you will smell a pungent ammonia odor when you breathe. This is caused by a high level of urea in your blood.

### 7 High Blood Pressure in Younger Patients

Hypertension is usually only seen in the elderly. If a younger person gets hypertension, it may be related to kidney disease.

High blood pressure causes damage to the elastic fibers in the walls of blood vessels. This damages the tiny blood vessels in the kidneys and prevents the kidneys from performing their filtration function.

Kidney disease can also lead to hormonal imbalance, which increases the hormones that raise blood pressure, thus creating a vicious cycle.

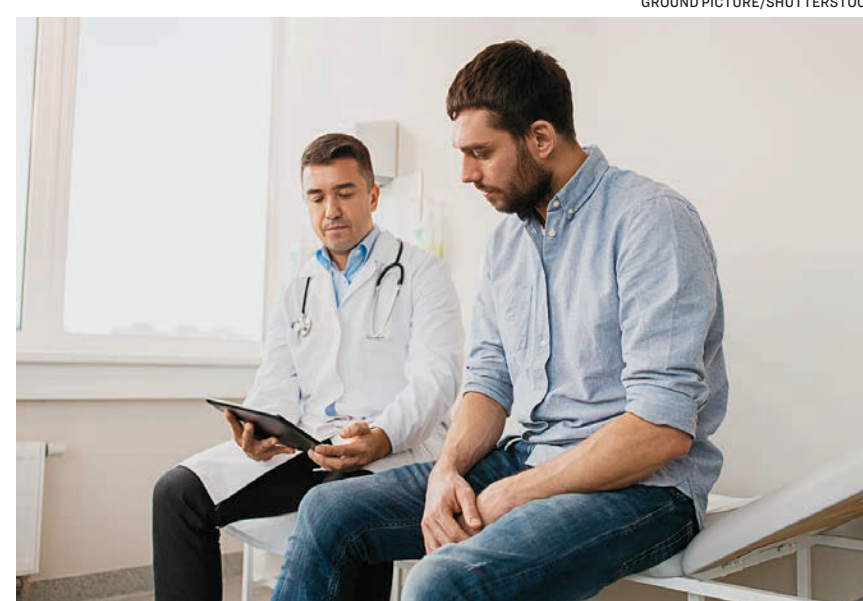
### Avoiding Factors That Cause Kidney Disease

Yang advises people to avoid behaviors that damage kidney function, including eating too much processed food. He also advised avoiding heavy metals, which can increase the amount of stress on the kidneys. He stressed that smokers are most likely to ingest heavy metals, and nicotine in cigarettes will also raise blood pressure. In addition,

melamine in plastic products can cause kidney stones and kidney failure, so avoid using plastic products for hot food.

Regarding nutrition, Yang recommends eating more foods with antioxidant and anti-inflammatory properties and supplementing with anthocyanins, curcumin, catechins, vitamins C and E, and taking a proper amount of zinc, which helps excrete heavy metals.

In addition, drinking plenty of water is essential for kidney detoxification and will help prevent kidney stones. Yang recommends drinking seven to eight glasses of water daily and more in the summer.



Seeking early treatment for kidney problems and addressing lifestyle issues are key to preventing advanced kidney disease.



# Study Links Less Exercise to More Infections

Children who don't get enough physical activity are more prone to respiratory infections, including coronaviruses

JENNIFER MARGULIS

There's a significant connection between increased physical activity in children and decreased upper respiratory tract infections. In other words, the more active children are, the less likely they are to get sick.

This observation is based on clinical research done by a team of Polish scientists. Their study, "Association of Low Physical Activity With Higher Respiratory Tract Infections Frequency Among Preschool Children," was published in the peer-reviewed journal *Pediatric Research* in January 2023.

## The More Active, the Better

The researchers designed the study to examine two groups of children, all between the ages of 4 and 7 years old.

One hundred and four children in total were enrolled in the study. Their average age was 5.3 years old.

The scientists separated the children into two different groups: a low physical activity group (made up of 47 children who took an average of 5,668 steps per day) and a higher physical activity group (47 children, who took an average of 9,368 steps per day).

Then they measured the number of days the children spent ill from upper respiratory illnesses.

They followed the chil-

dren for a total of 60 days, relying on parent reports (basically a Polish version of the Wisconsin Upper Respiratory Symptom Survey for kids).

In order for their physical activity to be accurately measured, the children in the study wore fitness monitors that tracked their daily footsteps, intensity levels of physical activity, and how much they slept. They wore these devices 24 hours a day for 40 days.

The scientists found that the more physically active the children were (based on the number of steps they took on healthy days), the less likely they were to be sick with symptoms of upper respiratory infection.

More specifically, children who took 1,000 extra steps a day had a 4.1-day reduction in the number of days they suffered from colds.

In addition, children who spent three hours or more per week playing sports had fewer upper respiratory infections than children who didn't regularly participate in sports.

**Children who spent three hours or more per week playing sports had fewer upper respiratory infections than children who didn't regularly participate in sports.**

This study was observational. First, the researchers set up parameters—these included higher versus lower physical activity, involvement in sports, and exposure to environmental toxins such as smoking and allergens. Then they defined the outcomes they were looking for, which was the number of days the children spent being sick. With this information in mind, they were able to detect a signal.

That is, they observed a definite correlation between increased physical activity and decreased number of days children spent being sick.

But since this was an observational study, it wasn't immediately clear why the children who were more active reported fewer sick days.

**No Connection Between Smoke Exposure, Sleep, Respiratory Infections** Interestingly, the study didn't find a connection between exposure to pet hair or secondhand smoke and an increased or decreased number of sick days.

There also didn't appear to be a correlation between how much sleep a child got, how many siblings they had, their gender, or whether they had been vaccinated, and the number of days they were sick with respiratory infections.



Recent generations have seen a profound loss of basic childhood experiences as computer-based activities come to dominate children's formative years.

At the same time, the children who were in sports programs did show a marginal decrease in the number of sick days.

## More Effective Immunity Improves Children's Quality of Life

"In pediatric patients up to 5 years, morbidity and mortality due to RTIs [respiratory tract infections] continue to prevail in substantial numbers," the researchers wrote in their discussion.

These respiratory infections include rhinoviruses (which cause common colds), respiratory syncytial virus, influenza and influenza-like illnesses, and seasonal coronaviruses.

"Moreover, 45 percent of preschool children who had experienced frequent colds suffered from infections later in school age," the scientists wrote. "Recurrent respiratory infections, defined as eight or more infections per year, significantly spoil the QoL [quality of life] of preschool children and may lead to asthma in the future. We demonstrated that a higher number of steps per day in preschoolers resulted in more effective immunity, reflected in fewer days with symptoms."

So, as the scientists discussed, lifestyle practices that help young children stay free from respiratory infections may improve their quality of life both immediately and in the future.

More specifically, according to this study, one very important lifestyle practice for young children is movement. In other words, more physical activity can improve children's lives.

The more active a preschooler is, the healthier their childhood will be. This study



Greater physical activity in young children will help lessen the odds of them getting respiratory infections like influenza and coronaviruses.

dovetails with hundreds of others that demonstrate that physical activity is important for both mental and physical well-being. For instance, other recently published research showed that exercise is more effective than pharmaceuticals for treating mental health ailments in adults.

The message to parents and educators seems clear: Get children off screens and outside. Preschoolers need to be running, jumping, playing, and moving their bodies in order to stay healthy.

## 'We Need a Revolution'

Dr. Collin Lynn is a family physician based in Redding, California. A father of two children, Lynn wasn't involved in the Polish study but he did review it carefully.

"Do we, as a medical community, actually 'need' this sort of data before it's accepted?" Lynn said.

"Why do I need a scientific journal to tell me that I need to exercise in order to be healthy? Kind of feels like common sense to me."

At the same time, Lynn pointed out, this study—along with literally hundreds more—calls into question many of the COVID-19 protocols that were quickly put into place by public health officials in the absence of both scientific data and common sense.

Recommendations to keep children at home made it much more difficult for them to exercise and much more likely that they would spend their days on screens, mostly playing video games.

In fact, children's daily physical exercise and activity decreased by at least 20 percent during government-mandated social distancing, according to a meta-analysis published in *JAMA Pediatrics* in July 2023.

Lynn said he hopes the scientific community and medical establishment will start to pay attention to the research.

"I do hope that this article is the beginning of a scientific revolution that will help us all, globally, become more physically active," he said. "That's how we'll live in a healthier world."

*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 nontraditional students in inner-city Atlanta. Learn more about her at JenniferMargulis.net*

# Impaired Mouths Implicated in Disease and Pain

Continued from Page 13

Studies and scientists say that health woes connected to changes in the jaw are entirely the effect of the human lifestyle, or more specifically, the shift from hunter-gatherer to agricultural/industrial societies. Even comparing archaeological mandibles over thousands of years seems to confirm the observation.

It's concerning because obstructive sleep apnea is responsible for serious illnesses such as congestive heart failure, stroke, arrhythmias, and asthma. It's associated with cardiovascular disease risk factors such as obesity and diabetes and appears with comorbid conditions such as kidney disease, thyroid disease, and psychological comorbidities including stress and depression, hypertension, fibromyalgia, excessive drowsiness, stroke, diabetes, pain, anxiety, and many others. One 2011 study of 301 patients found that up to 98 percent of sleep apnea patients were found to have abnormal mouth and jaw features.

## Correction Without Surgery

There's no official medical, dental, or orthodontic recognition of the jaw condition, but there are plenty of practitioners who are coming up with treatment strategies nonetheless.

Many practitioners believe that addressing the shrinking airway using palatal expansion appliances as part of a holistic plan or last-ditch solution can help address the root cause of many mouth problems. Other issues that they say can be helped include jaw pain, sleep quality, brain fog, poor digestion, low energy, and even pain in other areas of the body.

Oral appliances work by anchoring to the teeth with a metal bridge across the palate that can be adjusted with a key to widen the appliance, and along with it, the upper jaw. Treatment can take six months for children, who have more pliable bones, and up to two years for adults. It's been used for all ages.

## A Major Pivot in Thinking

Dr. Steven Park, author of "Sleep, Interrupted," told *The Epoch Times* he was blown away when he first heard of how much dysfunction might be linked to the jaw. It's the kind of information that calls into question medical protocols that treat seemingly unrelated conditions symptomatically. But it made sense to him.

"I was never taught this in medical school," Park said. "A lot of the things we do to treat these diseases are a consequence of this problem." Besides the symptoms listed, other signs that the human mouth is changing include a receding chin, malocclusion (misalignment of teeth), the rise in impacted wisdom teeth, and middle-aged adults in need of orthodontic work—sometimes for a second time.

But even a perfect smile can camouflage a restricted airway. Dr. Felix Liao, holistic family dentist and author of "Six-Foot Tiger, Three-Foot Cage," told *The Epoch Times*. He's worked with many patients who have straight teeth but suffer jaw pain that leaves them suicidal. Many were subjected to a once-popular orthodontic approach—pulling overcrowded teeth, which Liao said can cause even more jaw shrinkage.

"When medicine and dentistry don't evolve, sometimes the lessons are painful," he said.

Liao calls the collection of symptoms "impaired mouth syndrome"—crowded teeth jammed into short, narrow jaws with jaw joint dysfunctions and blocked airways. In his book "Licensed to Thrive," he describes ideal mouths as having fully developed jaws with room for all 32 teeth to line up naturally straight. An ideal mouth includes a wide-open airway to support sleep, providing all the oxygen the body needs.

## Seeing Narrow Airways

These specialists use CT scans as part of their diagnostic workups. This allows them to measure the width of the airway to assess whether breathing may be an issue and to follow up after treatment to compare.

Oral appliances often expand an airway to two to three times the volume, Liao said. In a recent case, Liao said, a woman's airway volume was 120 square millimeters before treatment, and 276 square millimeters afterward.

Previously, I interviewed a dentist, a breathing expert, a sleeping expert, and a functional medicine family physician who all mentioned the jaw epidemic. They're seeing the evidence of patients who had teeth removed as children suffering from sleep apnea. And then the issue reared itself in my personal life.

At a recent pediatrician appointment, I brought up concerns about my daughter's snoring and recurring illnesses since she began losing baby teeth. The pediatrician took one look inside her mouth, noted a very steep palate, and referred her to a dentist who follows a diagnostic and treatment model similar to Liao's.

Among the issues I was surprised to see on her scan were a very narrow airway indicative of childhood sleep apnea, jaw misalignment, swollen adenoids, a severe lip tie, and one sinus cavity entirely compressed, despite not being sick at that time.

## The Controversy

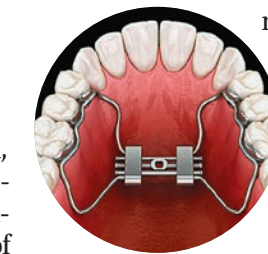
Programs to expand palates are readily available, but not in most orthodontists' offices, despite the procedure being considered orthodontic in nature. Most who offer it are dentists.

Wouldn't the orthodontics profession identify the cause, cure, and prevention for jaw disorders and constricted airways? That's what a dentist, orthodontist, and three Stanford University biology professors wrote in a 2020 *BioScience* article calling out the profession for its lack of updated training in the "jaw epidemic."

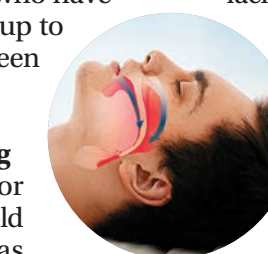
"Orthodontics is a big and successful business, and, in an era of genetic determinism, it is convenient to blame malocclusion on genetics, avoiding the complexities of prevention," they wrote. "As a result, orthodontic techniques tend toward symptom management with temporary relief of aesthetic concerns—teeth straightening for teenagers, with lifelong management strategies (retainers) usually required for permanent success."

The orthodontic profession is rather silent on the issue, though the book "Jaws: The Story of a Hidden Epidemic" did stir a reaction in the Orthodontic Professors, a blog on evidence-based practices by three professors. These professors are skeptical of claims that there's a jaw epidemic and their critical review of the book took aim at the evidence.

"Often, collaboration of individuals from different scientific disciplines can create great synergy. In this instance, it has instead produced an exercise in



Oral palate expansion devices may help widen the upper jaw and solve many mouth and jaw problems. However, treatment may take a long time, particularly for adults.



Obstructive sleep apnea is linked to cardiovascular disease, obesity, and diabetes, as well as more serious health problems like congestive heart failure, stroke, arrhythmias, and asthma.

mutual delusion," they wrote.

The book is full of weaknesses and contradictory findings, they say. They also pointed out that it isn't a new idea, that it was a theory posted 100 years ago by Alfred P. Rogers. Chairman of orthodontics at Harvard University and once president of the American Association of Orthodontists, Rogers coined the term myofunctional therapy—exercises to straighten teeth and correct jaw relationships—in an article published in 1918 in the *International Journal of Orthodontia*.

The blog writers said he never presented evidence that it worked.

**Dr. Steven Park and other holistic practitioners might offer coaching and resources for improved diet, stress management, breathing exercises, and better sleep habits.**

## The Big Picture

Clinicians continue to treat conditions related to jaw issues. Tongue and lip ties can be surgically corrected to open up space in the mouth and improve malocclusion. Park said he may also refer clients for orofacial myofunctional therapy, a physical therapy for the mouth that helps strengthen the tongue, jaw, and lips to achieve proper tongue posture.

"My philosophy is not just to treat the breathing problem but to address everything else," Park said, adding that the solution is often a multi-pronged approach often seen as less appealing than a quick fix. "This is why Americans don't do well with our health. People get so confused they get paralyzed. They don't do anything."

Park and other holistic practitioners might offer coaching and resources for improved diet, stress management, breathing exercises, and better sleep habits.

Liao pointed out that as much as we are what we eat, we are also a product of how we sleep. Dentists, he said, are on the front line for identifying patients who struggle with sleep apnea because of the mouth symptoms. He's training them with his airway mouth doctor's program.

"We always should be thinking how can I put this patient back together who's in front of me," Liao said. "You have to restore their body's ability to self-govern."

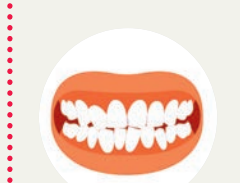
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## Common Mouth and Jaw Problems



**A receding chin** is more than a cosmetic issue, it can contribute to more serious

health problems. Exercises and surgery are sometimes used to treat it.



**Overcrowded teeth** can make it difficult to keep teeth clean and can create

pressure that leads to discomfort and headaches.

THANASIS ZOVOLIS/GETTY IMAGES



Through radiograph scans, scientists have surveyed differences in airway dimension in oral-breathing children and nasal-breathing ones.



Scientists found that the more steps children took, the less likely they would be sick with symptoms.

Children's daily physical exercise and activity decreased by at least

**20**

**PERCENT**

during government-mandated social distancing.

## AGE WELL

# The Secret of Longevity in Traditional Japanese Cuisine

Japanese food culture is guided by ideals that create uniquely healthful food, from selection of ingredients to preparation

ELLEN WAN

Japan has a consistently high life expectancy and is one of the world's leading countries in terms of longevity. According to data from Japan's Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare, as of September 2022, there were 90,526 centenarians in Japan, an increase of 4,016 from 2021.

Japanese health and longevity are closely related to the country's food culture. Traditional Japanese cuisine, or washoku, as it's called in Japan, embodies healthy principles and wisdom in ingredient selection, portioning, and cooking methods.



Fish, meat, and eggs are common staples in Japanese cuisine and are high in nutrients, healthy fats, and protein.

## Healthful Elements of Traditional Japanese Cuisine

In 2013, traditional Japanese cuisine was added to UNESCO's Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity list.

## Japanese cuisine uses a variety of fermented foods as its primary seasonings, including miso, soy sauce, vinegar, mirin, and sake.

The foundation of traditional Japanese cuisine is ichiju-sansai, which means "one soup and three dishes." The soup, called miso soup, is accompanied by one main dish and two side dishes. Rice and a small serving of pickles are also essential.

Miso is made through the fermentation of organic soybeans, rice, wheat, and other grains, mixed with koji and salt. Miso comes in many varieties, varying in color from white to light brown to red-brown and boasting a rich complexity of sweet, salty, and sour flavors. The ingredients used in miso soup are versatile, offering a range of options, such as spinach and tofu, onion and potato, cabbage and green beans, radish,



Miso soup is commonly featured in Japanese food and is made using fermented soybeans.

and scallion as mushroom flavors. Miso soup can also be made with clams, crab legs, or small fish for those who prefer a seafood flavor.

The main dishes include fish, eggs, and meat. Fish is rich in protein, fats, vitamins, and minerals, providing the body with essential amino acids. It's exceptionally high in methionine and lysine, making it a high-quality protein.

Usually, side dishes consist of a combination of vegetables, often including root vegetables and seaweed. Ingredients such as kelp, nori, and wakame (seaweed or "sea vegetables") are rich in micronutrients and dietary fiber, which can help combat hypertension and diabetes.

A study published by Fuji Women's University in the journal *Plant Foods for Human Nutrition* found that subjects who consumed

200g of rice and 4g of wakame had significantly lower blood glucose and insulin levels 30 minutes after their meal than those who consumed 200g of rice alone. The study suggested that incorporating wakame into meals may help improve postprandial glucose homeostasis.

Pickles, or preserved vegetables, are a type of fermented food. Examples include white

radishes, Chinese cabbage, plums, cucumbers, and carrots.

Brown rice is an excellent substitute for white rice, as it is high in dietary fiber, B vitamins, vitamin E, potassium, phosphorus, and other essential nutrients.



Green tea is a popular choice of drink for Japanese people and is high in antioxidants.

## Cooking Techniques That Retain Nutrients in Food

Japanese cuisine often uses cooking methods such as steaming and boiling and serves dishes cold, which all preserve the ingredients' fiber, vitamins, minerals, and other active compounds and medicinal properties. Such techniques reduce the production of carcinogens and limit the use of oil, which is significant for health and longevity.

Generally, Japanese cuisine is low in oil, salt, and seasonings. The principle of this cuisine is to maintain the original flavor of various ingredients as much as possible, reflecting the Japanese cultural ethos of respecting nature.

Japanese cuisine uses a variety of fermented foods as its primary seasonings, including miso, soy sauce, vinegar, mirin, and sake. Fermented foods contain various enzymes that can improve digestion and boost immunity. Enzymes are highly sensitive to heat and can be easily destroyed, but many Japanese dishes don't require heating, so they tend to be enzyme-rich.

Research has found that fermented foods can reduce inflammation in the body. In a study published in *Cell* by a Stanford University School of Medicine research team, 36 healthy participants were analyzed over 17 weeks. The results showed that participants who consumed fermented foods had increased gut microbiota diversity and significantly reduced inflammatory markers, including IL-6, IL-10, and IL-12b, compared with those who consumed a high-fiber diet. IL-6, or interleukin-6, is a commonly used metric of chronic inflammation, particularly in conditions such as Type 2 diabetes and rheumatoid arthritis.

Junko Tokunaga, a medical professor at the Institute of Medical Sciences of the University of Tokyo, stated in an interview with *The Epoch Times* that Japanese cuisine values diversity and strives for nutritional balance. Japanese cuisine also emphasizes consuming a wide variety of foods in small quantities. Such a dietary structure is considered ideal.

However, Tokunaga also expressed concerns: "In recent years, Japanese cuisine has been influenced by Western-style diets, and the use of refined white rice with high sugar content has become more common. Coupled with irregular eating habits, the number of patients with lifestyle diseases, such as diabetes, is gradually increasing. If the current dietary habits are not changed, the Japanese people's health status and life expectancy may be negatively affected."

90,526

centenarians live in Japan, as of September 2022.

## Green Tea Linked to Reduced Risk of Death

Green tea consumption is a long-standing tradition in Japan. Green tea contains high levels of antioxidants such as catechins and vitamin C, which help prevent atherosclerosis and lower the risk of all-cause mortality.

A study published in the international journal *Stroke* showed a negative correlation between green tea consumption and all-cause mortality in stroke or myocardial infarction survivors. Researchers followed 46,213 men and women (aged 40 to 79) for approximately 19 years, and the data analysis showed that stroke patients who drank seven or more cups of green tea per day had a multivariable risk reduction of about 62 percent, compared with stroke patients who didn't drink green tea.

## Aesthetic Food Presentation Brings Joy

In addition to prioritizing fresh ingredients and emphasizing original flavors, traditional Japanese cuisine also values the art of food cutting and plating. The harmonious unity of color, fragrance, taste, and tableware emphasizes natural colors, rich flavors, and beautiful shapes. Japanese people often decorate their dishes with seasonal flowers and leaves and select tableware based on the food served, creating a pleasant dining experience.

Japanese cuisine is highly regarded for its health benefits and low-fat content. The number of Japanese restaurants outside of Japan has been steadily increasing, making the experience of traditional Japanese cuisine available to people worldwide.

## FOOD AS MEDICINE

# Broccoli's Gut-Strengthening Effect Revealed by Research

A new study has discovered how certain molecules in broccoli can help inhibit disease

JESSIE ZHANG

Broccoli contains certain molecules that help to protect the lining of the small intestine of test animals, thereby preventing the development of disease, according to a recent study by researchers at Pennsylvania State University.

Broccoli is full of vitamins C, A, and K and is rich in fiber and potassium. This green vegetable can also help lower high blood pressure and is known to decrease the risk of cancer.

"We all know that broccoli is good for us, but why? What happens in the body when we eat broccoli?" Gary Perdew, one of the authors of the study, said in a Penn State article.

"Our research is helping to uncover the mechanisms for how broccoli and other foods benefit health in mice and likely humans, as well. It provides strong evidence that cruciferous vegetables, such as broccoli, cabbage, and Brussels sprouts should be part of a normal healthy diet."

Published in the journal *Laboratory Investigation*, the study discovered that mol-

ecules in broccoli, called aryl hydrocarbon receptor ligands, bind to a receptor within mice and this initiates a variety of activities to inhibit incidences of disease.

They fed a group of mice a diet containing 15 percent broccoli—equal to around 3 1/2 cups per day for humans—and fed a control group a diet that didn't contain broccoli.

They then analyzed their tissues to determine binding activity, quantities of various cell types, and mucus concentrations, among other factors, in the two groups.

The team found that mice that weren't fed broccoli had decreased amounts of protective mucus, decreased Paneth cells and lysosome production, and decreased number of enterocyte cells. These cells line the intestinal wall and prevent food and bacteria from entering the body while allowing beneficial water nutrients to pass through.

"The gut health of the mice that were not fed broccoli was compromised in a variety of ways that are known to be associated

with disease," Perdew said.

"Our research suggests that broccoli and likely other foods can be used as natural sources of ligands and that diets rich in these ligands contribute to the resilience of the small intestine."

These findings show that a simple diet modification can transform the gastrointestinal tract's cellular and metabolic character.

## Clot-Busters

Earlier research by Australians found that broccoli may even help reduce the risk or even reverse the effects of stroke.

The Sydney-based Heart Research Institute found that isothiocyanates, a group of chemicals found in cruciferous vegetables such as broccoli, Brussels sprouts, cauliflower, bok choy, and cabbage could reduce blood clotting, the most common cause of stroke.

According to a survey of nearly 7,000 Americans conducted by Green Giant, sweet and tender broccoli is America's favorite veggie.

Out of the 50 states, 36—plus Washington, D.C.—chose broccoli as their favorite vegetable.



KOZUEBELLI/GETTY IMAGES

SANTIPHOTOS/SHUTTERSTOCK

# The Distinct Qualities of Traditional Meditation

A psychiatric specialist details how traditional meditation soothes the mind, body, and spirit

HARRY LEE

If you've tried meditation and found that it didn't work for you, it may be that what you practiced was more of a relaxation exercise than a true, traditional meditation, according to Deborah Collins-Perrica, a board-certified psychiatric clinical nurse specialist in Hartford, Connecticut.

Traditional meditation has mind, body, and spiritual requirements.

## Traditional Meditation Is the Real Meditation

"Meditation isn't just sitting there and relaxing," Collins-Perrica told *The Epoch Times*. "The real, traditional meditations were always originally based in religion, where there was a moral fiber to it."

For example, most traditional meditations in the Buddhist tradition require one to follow the principles of being a good person, letting go of wants and longings, and having a freer and more open mind.

"If your mind is filled with anger and resentment, fighting and arguing all the time, and competing with people in selfishness, you're not going to get a good night's sleep. You can't have good relationships. You can't even have a healthy body," said Collins-Perrica, who has more than 15 years of experience treating mental illness.

Currently, there are multiple types of meditation being taught and practiced, including mindfulness meditation, focused meditation, transcendental meditation, and kindness meditation. Although many also have a spiritual element, they're not necessarily traditional meditation.

Traditional meditation is most often handed down as a spiritual or religious tradition and taught by a master or teacher, is recognized in a legitimate school of practice, and is simply a practice of sitting in a full lotus position with a mind free of any intention. It's formalized and structured, Collins-Perrica explained. A full lotus position requires sitting cross-legged, with each foot placed over the opposite thigh.

Some traditional meditation schools teach guidance by using mantras; some are movement-based, such as Tai Chi, and others are body positioning-based, such as yoga. Some visual forms of meditation use focusing intention toward an image.

"There are many unorthodox forms of meditation in the world today, and they are loosely defined as ways of thinking, pondering, contemplating, [or] reflecting intensely that aim to help people relax and improve concentration abilities," she said.

These teachings have much more in common with mindfulness relaxation techniques than they do with true meditation. Mindfulness is a popular technique in mental health today. It asks followers to focus on what is happening in the present moment with attentiveness, openness, and acceptance to attain peace of mind with a noncritical attitude. Mindfulness is widely referred to as a type of meditation.

When you lie down on the floor, clear your mind, and count your breathing, that is not meditation, Collins-Perrica said. "That's a breathing exercise. That's a relaxation exercise."

## Traditional Meditation Improves Health

Collins-Perrica acknowledged the benefits of mindfulness and other meditation practices. But real, traditional meditation may help people when those methods don't work.

One of her patients, a combat pilot in the U.S. Air Force, was exposed to chemicals during warfare, and a few years later, he was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis (MS). "The diagnosis was indisputable. All of the tests came back positive," Collins-Perrica said.

The patient saw many neurologists, and they all told him the disease was progres-

sive. They told him it was going to get worse and eventually he may be completely paralyzed and bedridden.

MS is a disease that affects the central nervous system. It causes unpredictable symptoms such as numbness, tingling, mood changes, memory problems, pain, and sometimes even blindness and paralysis.

The distraught patient visited Collins-Perrica about twice a month at the Department of Defense, where she worked for many years.

"Our conversation started to turn more towards existential topics because he was facing imminent demise and death," Collins-Perrica said. So she introduced him to meditation and ancient Chinese Qigong.

The method she introduced was Falun Gong or Falun Dafa, a spiritual practice rooted in the Buddhist tradition. Besides meditation, the practice encourages practitioners to strive to attune their lives to three principles: truthfulness, compassion, and forbearance.

A 2016 observational study found that many Falun Gong practitioners had regained health from terminal illnesses. Another study showed that Falun Gong practitioners had enhanced immunity compared with nonpractitioners.

Her patient was skeptical at first but realized the practice was different from the relaxation techniques he had previously learned. The practice of Falun Gong includes meditation and some gentle exercises.

He followed the directions on the website that Collins-Perrica provided and started exercising every day. Slowly, he could sit longer, and eventually, he began to put one leg up, then two legs up, and then he was finally able to sit in a full lotus position.

About a year later, he went back to the MS specialist, who was confounded by his current state of health, which was expected to deteriorate but had not, Collins-Perrica said.

"That was four or five years ago. He's now working full-time. He's very happy. He's full of energy. And he's perfectly healthy," she said.

## Developing Inner Strength Through Self-Discipline

Traditional meditation methods have postural requirements—most require sitting in a full lotus position—contrary to many modern practices that ask you to make yourself comfortable, often while walking around or lying down.

The lotus position has been widely seen in Buddhist and Taoist traditions and in some ancient Indian traditions such as yoga.

"In Buddhist meditation, you always see the Buddha sitting in a full lotus position with the back very straight, the head and the neck very straight, the eyes closed, and the mouth closed. These are traditions that are thousands of years old," Collins-Perrica said.

Sitting in a lotus position for a prolonged period of time can be very uncomfortable. It requires a good amount of flexibility of the hips, knees, and ankles. Most people are unable to do it initially, and to prevent injury, beginners shouldn't do it forcefully.

Collins-Perrica

True meditation is a key feature of many spiritual traditions. While many activities are now called "meditation," true meditation is rooted in the pursuit of virtue and spiritual elevation.



suggested a step-by-step approach and encouraged people to sit for as long as they can tolerate it. "The longer you sit, the stronger your willpower becomes, and the more serene your mind."

A 2017 controlled trial found that yoga practitioners sitting in a lotus position (Padmasana in Sanskrit) showed increases in subtle energy levels in all acupuncture meridians, while the group sitting in a chair produced universal decreases. Interestingly, the positive effect on the body's subtle energies could only be seen after sitting in a lotus posture for more than 20 minutes.

"Your legs ache and your mind wanders. You have to make an effort to stay focused. Then in the process of staying focused, in the process of tolerating that discomfort, your willpower gets very strong, so your mind can overcome anything," Collins-Perrica said.

When you can sit in meditation for a longer period of time, "your willpower is like a mountain."

"It's majestic," she said. With such strong willpower, real meditation can help you "overcome all of these negative things, pains, distraught, bad feelings, and bad thoughts."

## Looking at the Mind, Body, and Spirit Together

Traditional meditation can benefit people tremendously. However, Collins-Perrica explained that to have a more wholesome, genuine life, meditation is not the first step; rather, it's an option that most people find helpful.

"In my practice, the first step with the patient really is the assessment of looking at the mind, the body, and the spirit together. So it's not just about meditation."

Usually, people come to psychiatric professionals with all kinds of problems: relationship difficulties, addictions, grief from loss of all types, or suicidal inclinations. "If you have a problem with someone, or you're arguing, or someone's mad at you, or you're mad at them, you really need to look inside and ask yourself the question, 'What did I do to cause this problem?'" Collins-Perrica said.

Almost every time, you'll discover that you did something to cause the problem with the other person.

Looking inside, a principle from Falun Dafa, is something that Collins-Perrica talks about with her patients every day, and they find it helpful.

"It's about—what's going on in the mind? What's going on in your body? Can you look inside? Or can you learn to look inside? And when you do, you're naturally going to find that part of your longing is a fit for this: to be really good, to be really truthful, and to be really good and kind, and to focus this way, to hold these values."

Sitting in the lotus position is an important part of traditional meditation as it helps strengthen the mind and body and improves willpower.



OLEKSHI PROSOZONNYI/THE EPOCH TIMES

Traditional meditation practices, like Falun Gong, incorporate the mind, body, and spirit and encourages practitioners to live their lives according to the principles of "zhen, shan, ren"—truthfulness, compassion, and forbearance.



KOZUEBELLI/GETTY IMAGES

## INTENTIONAL LIVING

# A Question to Defeat Self-Pity

Moving beyond its crippling effects isn't so difficult and pays huge rewards

MIKE DONGHIA

Like everyone, I occasionally fall into the self-pity trap.

And when we're caught in that trap, it's kind of embarrassing to ask for help. On top of whatever disappointing thing happened to cause the original negative emotions, now we're stuck in a self-imposed pity party that we can't escape.

That's where I was this past week. After a full day of wallowing, a simple question popped into my head: Is this worth it?

As a minimalist, I pride myself in pruning the non-essentials from my life to make room for what really matters. What is self-pity except emotional clutter we carry around that steals our time and displaces other things we care about?

## Giving in to self-pity or procrastination or any other bad behavior only makes it easier the next time.

The more I thought about it, the sillier it seemed that I was dragging myself through this sorry state when it was mostly within my power to let it go. I couldn't immediately fix the source of my disappointments, but feeling sorry for myself was only keeping me stuck.

To seal the deal, I wrote down all the ways that self-pity isn't worth it, and by the end, I had completely convinced myself that it wasn't. And in doing so, I was able to let go. I'm a firm believer that many (certainly not all) challenges can be transformed with such a shift in perspective. For me, on this day, that

came from a simple question: Is this worth it?

Here are seven answers I came up with to that question—highlighting the many ways in which self-pity simply isn't worth the time or effort.

**It's a waste of a day.** After a day of self-pity, you will have very little to show for the hours that you were awake. Instead of investing in relationships, doing meaningful work, growing in virtue, or being grateful for the good things in your life, you made the choice to throw away those hours and feel sorry for yourself instead.

**It doesn't fix anything.** Self-pity is an immature response. Instead of addressing a problem head-on, it retreats from the problem and from the rest of life. And so, when the self-pity finally lifts, you will find yourself exactly where you were when it began.

**It's not loving to others.** One of the trademarks of self-pity is self-absorption. I know that when I'm feeling sorry for myself, I mostly engage with my family in a superficial way and am significantly more prone to distraction and procrastination. All I can think about is myself and my unhappiness, and it's those closest to me who suffer the consequences.

**It makes me an unattractive companion.** Let's face it: Nobody wants to be around someone who is feeling sorry for themselves. It's not a good look on anyone. And although your closest friends will stick with you through thick and thin, after a while, it does become a strain on the relationship. Don't exclude yourself from the company of great people and one of life's greatest joys simply because you couldn't get your self-pity habit under control.

**It isn't fun at all.** I say this somewhat tongue in cheek, but at least some vices and self-defeating behaviors are fun while you are doing them and it's only after the fact that you have to pay the consequences. Self-pity, however, is unhappiness all the way down. It only trades the sharp pain of disappointment for the dull ache of restlessness.

**It's a distorting mode of thought.** When you're feeling sorry for yourself, it's common to also deal with feelings of inadequacy, loss of self-confidence, and even envy of other people's good fortune. Unfortunately, these thoughts don't disappear the moment your self-pity lifts. Your thoughts shape your beliefs, which influence your actions. Self-pity sets in motion a train of distorted thoughts that is not easy to stop.

**It's a bad habit to reinforce.** One of the dangers of your self-defeating bad habits is that they aren't isolated events. Giving in to self-pity or procrastination or any other bad behavior only makes it easier the next time. Once the pathway is established, it's that much easier to slide into that groove in the future. This is exactly why habits, positive and negative, are so powerful.

## Can Self-Pity Be Stopped With a Single Question?

If you've wrestled with self-pity, you know how strong the emotion can feel. And so I understand any skepticism you may have about the idea you can simply ask yourself a question to pull yourself out of it. But my experience has shown me that, yes, one question can be enough.

Self-pity is a reflex that many of us go toward when we're hurt and feeling powerless.

But as we've seen in the list of reasons above, a person thinking clearly would never choose to feel sorry for themselves—it's not worth it.

The beauty of a question is that it pulls you out of a reflexive state into a reflective one. So the next time you feel stuck in a state of self-pity, just ask yourself a single question:

Is this worth it?

*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.*

Identifying harmful tendencies such as self-pity can help prevent thoughts and emotions from escalating into something worse, or becoming a bad habit.

ELDAR NURKOVIC/SHUTTERSTOCK



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