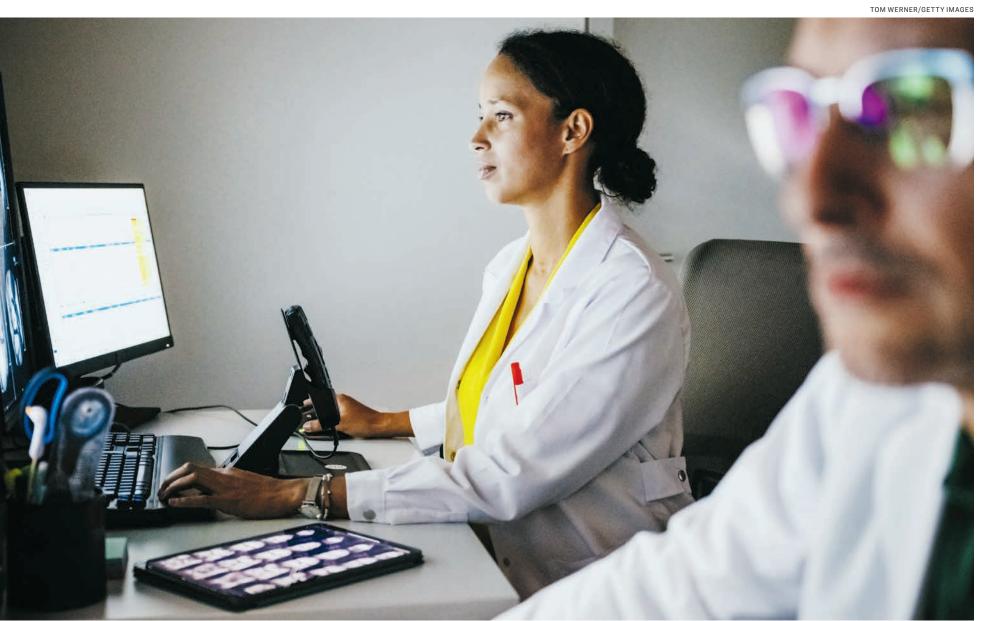
THE EPOCH TIMES



Doctors are the target of immense marketing efforts by pharmaceutical companies attempting to steer how patients are treated.

Pharmaceutical Companies Help Pay for Doctors' Continuing Education

Digestive Disease Week sponsorships put drugs front and center, but research says lifestyle should lead the way

By Amy Denney

laire Davidson was socializing with colleagues at the Digestive Disease Week conference when the group realized the table they were gathered around was covered with ad-

Anywhere else, a table wrapped in brightly colored pharmaceutical branding might stick out, but this small table fit in amid the sea of advertising in its enormous home. McCormick Place, with its 170 meeting rooms and 2.6 million square feet of exhibit halls, is North

America's largest convention center, a small town inside the city of Chicago.

Greeting thousands of guests in the grand concourse were larger-thanlife vinyl banners—one just inside the main entrance hanging 75 feet by 30 feet—and vinyl advertisements on the stairs, the stair rails, windows, and stacked cubes. Sitting areas beckoned weary conferencegoers with comfortable seats, tables, and charging stations all plastered with company colors and logos. Even the information booth was wrapped in branding.

"You can't get away from it. I think it's a little out of hand," Davidson told The

Epoch Times. She's the research lead with Mindset Health, a company that researches and develops hypnotherapy solutions for disease. "The amount of money they spend on it is unbelievable."

Together with registration fees, sponsorships help cover conference costs for doctors, students, researchers, and industry professionals from more than 100 countries to gather and learn about the latest studies and products that can help people with digestive problems. Many also attend to earn necessary hours of continuing medical education (CME).

An Epoch Times review found that sponsorships for the Digestive Disease Week (DDW) conference—predominantly from pharmaceutical companies—appear to represent more than half of conference funding. In contrast, the research presented over the course of the event seemed to favor lifestyle solutions rather than drugs. Events such as DDW reflect an ongoing concern in health care that's not being addressed: Pharmaceutical companies dominate health care, reinvest profits in marketing, and continue to influence patient care in a feedback loop that runs counter to the bulk of evidence

Continued on Page 6

AGE WELL

Longevity Isn't Really About Our Genes, Study Reveals

A new study adds to mounting evidence that our health and longevity are primarily a result of our environment and lifestyle



By Emma Suttie

How often have you pondered your dad's diabetes or the heart disease that runs in the family and thought, "Am I going to get that? Is it inevitable?"

With all we've learned about genetics, it seems reasonable to think that some of our health outcomes will be determined by those invisible forces buried deep in our DNA. But a new study has shown that how long we live has more to do with our behavior than with our genes, implying that our choices may have a much more profound impact on our longevity than we may have thought.

The Study

The authors of the study, published in the Human Kinetics Journal, sought to analyze the relationship between physical activity and sedentary behavior, and their associations with mortality based on a score that evaluated genetic risk factors. The study involved 5,446 postmenopausal women 63 years of age or older. The women were put into three groups based on their genetic risk factors. These risk factors were measured by a "small selection of single-nucleotide polymorphisms" that are well-known to affect longevity.

Single-nucleotide polymorphisms

(SNPs) are variations in a genetic sequence that affects one of the sequence's basic building blocks—adenine, thymine, cytosine, or guanine. SNPs help predict an individual's response to certain drugs, his or her susceptibility to environmental factors such as toxins, pesticides, or industrial waste, and his or her risk of developing certain diseases.

The study authors conclusively found that, regardless of their genetic risk factors, participants who had a higher rate of physical activity showed a lower risk of mortality, and those who had a higher level of sedentary behavior increased

Continued on **Page 6**

Our parents affect our longevity mainly by teaching us a lifestyle that either improves or undermines our health.

KATARZYNABIALASIEWICZ/GETTY IMAGES

The Miraculous IMMUNE SYSTEM

When bone marrow is compromised by stress and environmental factors, it can trigger this dangerous cancer

PART XI PROTECT AND STRENGTHEN BONE MARROW TO PREVENT LEUKEMIA

By Yuhong Dong & Makai Allbert

In this series, eukemia, one of the top 10 "The Miraculous blood cancers in the United *Immune System," we'll* States, is an abnormality of *explore the true power* bone marrow stem cells. of human immunity Bone marrow is vulnerable and the organs that work tirelessly to tions and explore measures to keep *Previously:* Bone this crucial cellular workshop healthy.

A Prevalent and Deadly Cancer Nora Ephron, the famous director,

marrow is a bustling factory pumping out blood cells—including immune cells—that support and protect the body.

protect the body.

Ephron died in 2012 after keeping her acute myeloid leukemia diagnosis secret for six years, for fear it would interrupt her career. Her memorial service at Lincoln Center was attended by an A-list crowd of mourners that included Meryl Streep, Tom Hanks, to a variety of harmful factors and life- Steven Spielberg, Martin Scorsese, styles. We will delve into these condiand many more.

Few victims of leukemia, common ly known as blood cancer, get such a send-off. Leukemia accounts for about 3 percent of all newly diagnosed cancer cases and nearly 4 percent of all screenwriter, and producer, delighted cancer deaths, making it the 10th most millions with romantic comedies such prevalent cancer in the United States. as "When Harry Met Sally ...," "You've Based on earlier reported data, Got Mail," and "Sleepless in Seattle." the American Cancer Society proj-

SYMPTOMS OF LEUKEMIA

- Fatigue
- · Shortness of breath Dizziness Fast or irregular
- heartbeat
- Fever Sore throat Swollen lymph
- nodes Prolonged bleeding from cuts or
- nosebleeds Frequent bruising

ects 59,610 new leukemia cases and 23,710 deaths in 2023.

bone marrow to replenish numerous blood cells. Many factors from the internal or external environment can lead to mutations in stem cells, causing them to grow abnormally and divide too rapidly. The resulting cancerous cells can outnumber the healthy cells in the blood.

Because of this, leukemia patients

Stem cells constantly divide in the

might bleed or bruise because of a lack of properly functioning platelets, or they might fatigue very quickly because of a lack of normal red blood cells. They also become highly susceptible to infection because of a lack of normal white blood cells.

Protect, Strengthen Bone Marrow Function

There are various factors associated with increased risk of different subtypes of leukemia. Avoiding them and taking other measures helps maintain healthy bone marrow.

Avoid Toxic Chemicals

Benzene exposure is a known risk factor for leukemia. Unfortunately, this chemical is used in abundance in products ranging from clothing to plastics. It's added to so many other chemicals that it ends up as a frequent contaminant in cosmetic products.

Easier to avoid is Azathioprine, an immunosuppressive medication that has also been linked to bone marrow

Exposure to chemotherapy such as alkylating agents and topoisomerase II inhibitors can increase the risk of leu-

Avoid Electromagnetic Radiation When a cell divides, cellular DNA needs

to be duplicated and split. A group of Russian geneticists and linguists, led by Peter Garyaev, conducted scientific studies that demonstrated that DNA possesses a unique capability to attract photons to travel along the helical structure of the DNA molecule.

This suggests DNA is not only a biological molecule but also an energycarrying molecule.

Exposure to ionizing radiation, including X-rays, is particularly harmful to the DNA of bone marrow cells, increasing the risk of leukemia

Medical radiation therapy for cancer patients increases the risk of a subsequent second type of leukemia.

A study conducted on a cohort of 308,297 radiation-monitored workers from France, the United States, and the United Kingdom revealed significant evidence linking protracted low-dose radiation exposure to various types of leukemia with an increased risk of mortality.

Results of a case-control study in Italy suggest an excess risk of leukemia among children exposed to magnetic fields from power lines.

Avoid Viral Infections Certain viral infections, such as the

human T-cell leukemia virus and Epstein-Barr virus, are associated with specific subtypes of acute lymphoblastic leukemia.

Human immunodeficiency virus, the virus that causes AIDS, can also affect bone marrow, causing a chronic state of can help offset radiation exposure. inflammation and immune activation, which can exhaust the bone marrow's ability to produce new blood cells.

For a long time, bone marrow fat (BMF) was considered insignificant and was overlooked in its contribution to organism development and disease.

Avoid a High-Fat Diet and Obesity

However, recent research has shed light on the significant effects of BMF on health. Accumulation of BMF is now

associated with conditions such as osteoporosis, Type 1 diabetes, Cushing's disease, estrogen deficiency, anorexia nervosa, and bone metastasis in prostate and breast cancers.

Bone marrow is also an early and

diet induced a state of low-grade inflammation affecting not just the fat cells in adipose tissue, but also the bone

stances that enhance the production of more fat cells, creating a self-perpetuating cycle of inflammation.

flammation and associated diseases.

Take Vitamins, Minerals, and Antioxidants

When the bone marrow is healthy and has the necessary raw materials, such as iron, folate, and vitamin B12, it can respond quickly to increased demands.

- Vitamin A is essential for the production and function of many types of cells in bone marrow and for sup-
- Vitamin B12 and folic acid are involved in DNA synthesis and repair and are critical for producing red blood cells in the bone marrow.
- to maintain the health of bones and teeth and support the function of bone marrow cells.
- the bone marrow. • Zinc supports immune function,

which is closely related to the process of cellular production in the bone marrow.

Unsurprisingly, exercise is one of the best ways to foster healthy bone marrow. Exercise can increase the number of bone marrow stem cells, increasing blood formation and tissue and organ rejuvenation.

Control Stress Chronic stress takes a toll on overall

sensitive responder to changes in diet, particularly the fat content. In a recent animal study, a high-fat

This is mediated by a particular

subset of white blood cells, which are particularly inflammatory and aggressive. These cells migrate to adipose tissue, triggering inflammation before proinflammatory macrophages increase. Bone marrow fat cells release sub-

This indicates that bone marrow plays an important role in diet-induced in-

A whole food diet rich in nutrients can enhance the health of bone marrow. The following vitamins and minerals are particularly critical for bone marrow health:

- porting immunity.
- Vitamin D and calcium work together
- Iron is required to produce hemoglo-
- bin, a component of red blood cells in

Additionally, antioxidants can help reduce bone marrow oxidative stress. Eating foods rich in antioxidants, such as berries, nuts, and chocolate, can reduce oxidative damage to bone marrow and

accumulate in the arteries, heightening the risk of heart attack or stroke. Another study of patients with relapsed or refractory chronic lymphocytic leukemia found that stress is related Supplementing a to immune and inflammatory processes

essential vitamins and minerals may improve the health of your

UMPAPORN/SHUTTERSTOCK



Some medications apy treatments can increase your risk of bone marrow toxicity and leukemia.

THANA PRASONGSIN/GETTY IMAGES

lation," said Robert Rankin, president

"For the millions of people who rely

on low- and no-calorie sweeteners to

help manage body weight and reduce

the risk of non-communicable diseases

like diabetes and obesity, it is important

to know the facts, which is sucralose has

been rigorously stud-

ied by scientific and

regulatory authorities

around the world and

In response to a

previous study on su-

cralose, the American

Beverage Association

shared a statement

from the European

Food Safety Author-

ity reconfirming the

safety of the ingredi-

ent found in many

foods and beverages.

tant confirmation,

"This is an impor-

is safe to consume."

of Calorie Control Council.

Keeping our stress levels low and engaging in mindfulness-based acitivities like meditation can help us better cope with negative emotions that can otherwise hinder our immune system.



nection among stress, bone marrow, and the risk of heart disease. The study found that psychosocial stress overstimulates bone marrow stem cells, which then produce excessive amounts of inflammatory cells such as neutrophils and monocytes. These cells flood the bloodstream and

nutrient dense whole that contribute to a rapid increase in food diet with some cancer cells.

Be Mindful and Positive bone marrow. Because the mind and body are inter-

connected at the cellular, molecular, and energetic levels, being mindful can have a profound effect on health. Nearly 70 percent of patients with hematological cancer, including lympho-

ma, multiple myeloma, and leukemia, reported fatigue in a randomized controlled trial. After only a single session of 30-minute mindful breathing, the patients reported a significant reduction in fatigue, including difficulty initiating or finishing work, feeling washed out, and frustration.

health. A study published in Nature

Medicine revealed a fascinating con-

Leukemia can take a toll on physical and emotional health. Practicing gratitude every day has been shown to have a significant effect on health and well-being.

Next Week: The final part of our series will summarize the remarkable features of the miraculous immune system shielding the body from harmful invaders and providing lifelong protection.

Researchers Discover Popular Sweetener Damages DNA

New study reveals additional health detriments to consuming the 1998 FDA-approved sucralose

By Amy Denney

A new study on sucralose—a popular sugar-free sweetener that was put through 110 safety studies before the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approved it in 1998—finds the popular ingredient has toxicities that

vealed in the study show sucralose, sometimes sold under the brand name Splenda, is "genotoxic," meaning it breaks up DNA. That's on top of other condemning evidence revealed in the study published May 29 in the Journal of

regulatory agencies must consider.

New health and safety findings re-

BRETT HONDOW/SHUTTERSTOCK

"This is not acceptable. We can't have genotoxic compounds in our food supply," Susan Schiffman, corresponding author of the study, told The Epoch Times. "I think if it was presented to the FDA today, they would not approve it. The original claims made to the FDA just aren't true. I don't know how they missed it."

Toxicology and Environmental Health.

Years of independent research into su-

cralose have dismantled many of the

original claims made in its food addi-

How sucralose can damage DNA is a

metabolic process. When the sweetener

is digested, it forms a metabolite called

sucralose-6-acetate. But the product

itself has also been found to contain

trace amounts of this chemical com-

pound. Taken together, the results of

this study and previous research impli-

cate sucralose in a range of detrimental

tive permit.

Original Testing

Sucralose, which is about 600 times **A Trail of New Evidence** sweeter than table sugar, is used in 15 food categories including beverages, baked goods, gum, gelatins, and frozen

desserts. On its website, the FDA said it determined the safety of sucralose by reviewing studies on the reproductive and nervous systems, carcinogenicity, and metabolism. The FDA also reviewed human clinical trials to address the effects on patients with diabetes.

The permit also said it was evaluated for genotoxicity and "showed weakly genotoxic responses in some of the genotoxicity tests." However, the report goes on to say there was no evidence of carcinogenic activity, and "results from these chronic carcinogenicity studies supersede the results observed in the genotoxicity tests because they are more direct and complete tests of carcinogenic potential."

Schiffman, who is an adjunct professor in the joint department of biomedical engineering at North Carolina State University and the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill, said many of the studies were flawed because of how they were performed, such as not checking fat tissue for bioaccumulation and checking blood glucose levels in distant intervals from exposure.

"If you design your studies in such a way to have no effect, you'll have no effect," she said.

The new study bolsters other research, including some Schiffman has done over the last several years.

In 2018, her team discovered that sucralose argued to simply pass through the gastrointestinal tract without metabolizing, converts to metabolites called sucralose-6-acetate, a fatsoluble compound that stayed in the tissues of rats two weeks after they last consumed sucralose. In the new study, researchers conducted in vitro experiments exposing human blood cells to the metabolite and monitoring

for markers of genotoxicity. "We also found that trace amounts of sucralose-6-acetate can be found in off-the-shelf sucralose, even before it is consumed and metabolized," she said in the news release.

"To put this in context, the European Food Safety Authority has a threshold of toxicological concern for all genotoxic substances of 0.15 micrograms per person per day. Our work suggests that the trace amounts of sucralose-6-acetate in a single, daily sucralose-sweetened drink exceed that threshold. And that's not even accounting for the amount of sucralose-6-acetate produced as metabolites after people consume sucralose."

Because previous research has also shown a connection between sucralose and gut health, the researchers also exposed gut cells to the metabolite and observed increased activity in genes related to oxidative stress, inflammation, and carcinogenicity, showing significant risks from consumption.

Additionally, both sucralose and sucralose-6-acetate exposed to gut epithelial tissues were found to cause a condition called "leaky gut."

"Basically, they make the wall of the gut more permeable. The chemicals damage the 'tight junctions,' or interfaces, where cells in the gut wall connect to each other," Schiffman said. "A

leaky gut is problematic, because it means that things that would normally be flushed out of the body in feces are instead leaking out of the gut and being absorbed into the bloodstream."

Sorting Through Guidelines

The Epoch Times contacted the American Beverage Association. It directed

inquiries to the Calorie Control Council, which sent a statement by email. "This study was conducted in a laboratory environment which cannot mimic the complex mechanisms of the human body, even when human

cells are used. The results of the study

therefore cannot be inferred by exten-

sion to humans and the general popu-

substitutes like sucralose raise the risk of severe health conditions, such as Type 2 diabetes, cardiovascular disease, and mortality.

The World Health

Organization recently

offered a controversial

warning that sugar

as individuals worldwide rely on sweeteners, like sucralose, as safe and effective tools for both losing

weight or maintaining weight loss," it stated on its website. The Epoch Times also contacted and left a message with the marketing and communications director at Heartland

Food Products, which manufactures

The American Heart Association and other organizations label low-calorie sweeteners, artificial sweeteners, and noncaloric sweeteners as non-nutritive sweeteners (NNSs) since they offer no nutritional benefits like vitamins and

It advises replacement of sugary foods and drinks with NNSs as a way to limit calories, achieve or maintain a healthy weight, and maintain stable blood glucose levels.

"For example, swapping a full-calorie soda with diet soda is one way of not increasing blood glucose levels while satisfying a sweet tooth," said one article on the AHA's website. "We don't know for sure if using NNSs in food and drinks makes people actually eat or drink fewer calories every day. But reducing the amount of added sugar in your diet? That we know for sure is

a good thing." Unrelated to this study, the World Health Organization recently offered a controversial warning that sugar substitutes such as sucralose raise the risk of severe health conditions, including Type 2 diabetes, cardiovascular disease,

and mortality. "It's a multibillion-dollar product, and there's going to be pushback," Schiffman said. "What I'm hoping is somebody who makes these kinds of decisions does something about it. At the very least, it needs to be labeled."







MIND & BODY | 5

Easy Exercises to

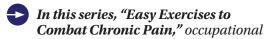
Combat Chronic Pain

PART I CHRONIC PAIN SURPASSES OTHER COMMON CHRONIC DISEASES

Resolve many forms of chronic pain by strengthening the body and improving the underlying condition

MILLION

ADULTS



therapist Kevin Shelley focuses on common issues associated with chronic pain and simple and exercises to strengthen weak muscles and enhance joint mobility, with the goal of helping you become pain-free.

By Kevin Shelley

Pain is a constant background noise of the human experience, and the volume is unfortunately rising.

A new study published in JAMA Neting increases proportionwork on May 16 using data from the 2019 - ately comparable to their 2020 National Health Interview Survey older peers. from about 10,000 U.S. adults shows a startling trend: the prevalence of chronic lead men in reported cases pain is growing and shows no signs of of chronic pain. slowing down.

than 50 million adults (20.5 percent) in **Pain** the United States, including 17 million Within the framework of human exisevery day.

In fact, chronic pain was found to ex- mild to severe, and from short-lived to ceed the incidence of other chronic ailments like depression, diabetes, and high blood pressure.

women are affected more than men, but both demographics are experiencing a within the past 30 days, both opioid and consistent rise in reported cases. Highimpact chronic pain was the highest one or more prescription opioids. among women.

While chronic pain has traditionally been associated with individuals over the age of 65, recent statistics show that all age groups are experiencing increases, with the younger populations demonstrat-

In all age groups, women More than 50 million adults (20.5 percent) in the United States suffer from chronic pain.

(almost 7 percent) with high-impact tence, pain is a constant companion. All chronic pain—pain reported to limit of us will experience many different types life or work activities on most days or of pain in the course of our lives, and all of us will experience a range of pain from longer-lasting.

Prescription pain medications are often disease, cancer, or diabetes. used to treat pain. From 2015 to 2018, over About 10.4 percent of adults with chron-

The JAMA Network study found that 10 percent of American adults reported ic pain in 2019 reported being pain-free using prescription pain medications non-opioid 5.7 percent of U.S. adults used

Pain is a leading indicator of internal disease, and the nature and intensity of that pain can help health care practitioners assess many health

problems more accurately. Pain is also one of the most consistent ways to get even the most stubborn people to seek needed medical attention.

The Cost of Chronic Pain Chronic pain, defined as pain lasting three or more months, can have a debilitating effect on a person's

ability to work and perform daily activities. It's been linked to depression, increased suicide risk, substance abuse, and dementia.

Pain is expensive. In fact, medical and economic costs associated with pain easily exceed half a trillion dollars a year, more than the annual costs for heart

in 2020, showing that chronic pain can be resolved.

Exercise Can Often Improve Chronic Pain

Not all chronic pain is directly associated with a specific medical diagnosis. Research increasingly shows a correlation between chronic pain not only with well-defined medical diagnoses but also with postural and lifestyle factors. Many of us are not as active as we should be, allowing joints to stiffen and muscles to grow weak.

A consistent regimen of safe, effective, and easy-to-perform exercises can help increase joint flexibility and muscle strength, having a positive effect in reducing and preventing chronic pain.

Next Week: Being proactive about strengthening your hip muscles is the best way to prevent hip problems from occurring in the first place. Simple exercises that target the hips can help minimize chronic pain and get you back on your feet more quickly.

Kevin Shelley is a licensed occupational therapist with over 30 years of experience in major health care settings. He is a health columnist for The Epoch Times.



ALL PHOTOS BY THE EPOCH TIMES UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED

Note: The hip bridge

sive exercise for the

chronic pain is pres-

can be an aggres-

lower back when

ent, which is why

you should only lift

up until your mus-

cles engage.

LOWER TRUNK ROTATIONS

Lower trunk rotations target the lumbar multifidous muscle-a series of long, narrow muscles that run along both sides of the spinal column and help extend and stabilize the lower spine, said Palmer. This exercise is great for providing core strengthening and flexibility for the low

back.

THE EPOCH TIMES Week 25, 2023

Step 1: Lie on your back and bring your knees up until your feet are flat on the floor.

Step 2: With your knees together and your shoulders flat, bring your knees to one side and hold for 30

Step 3: Bring your knees back up and move them to the other side and hold for 30 seconds.

It's important to keep your shoulders flat during this exercise to maximize the stretch. The goal is not to get the knees all the way down to the ground. Instead, simply progress into the stretches as far as you comfortably can. This is another exercise you can do in bed. Try doing three total sets.



PRONE PRESS-UPS

This exercise starts like the prone-on-elbows stretch and then moves past it. Train in this exercise after you have mastered the prone-onelbows stretch.

Step 1: Lie face down on the floor.

Step 2: Come slowly up on your elbows with your arms straight up and down.

Step 3: Start with your head down, and then slowly aise your head as high as you can.

Step 4: Then push up with your arms until your elbows are fully extended.

Move slowly into the full stretch, listening to what your back tells you. Intensify the stretch by keeping your hips firmly in contact with the floor. Try to hold the position for two minutes before lying back down again. Try doing three total sets.

your feet are flat on the floor and your arms are to your

Step 2: Lift your hips off of the ground while stabilizing

with your arms and feet. Hold for 10 seconds, or for as

Step 3: Return your hips to the surface and rest for as

Try doing three sets for 10 seconds at first, working up

to a longer period over time. This is an excellent core



8 Easy Home Exercises to Help Relieve Back Pain Fast

Back pain is one of the most common

medical complaints in the United States. Eight out of 10 people experience back pain during the course of their lifetime, and over half will experience symptoms severe enough to seek medical intervention.

"The spine is complex and is designed for a range of functional movements," Mike Palmer told The Epoch Times. Palmer is a physical therapist and specialist in industrial rehabilitation. Given that the back is responsible for so much, it isn't surprising that many problems arise, he said.

Fortunately, there is help for those experiencing chronic back pain through safe, effective, and simple exercises you can perform in the comfort of your own home.

Causes of Chronic Back Pain

Chronic back pain is defined as pain that continues for 12 weeks or longer, despite treatment of the underlying cause

Two of the most common causes of chronic back pain include poor posture and a sedentary lifestyle

Poor Posture: We often sit in lumbar flexion where we're bending forward, due to computers, televisions, and poor posture are back extension and spinal mobility.

Sedentary Lifestyle: Our bodies are designed to move, but many of us are too sedentary. The back can easily lose flexibility and strength over time. Many people find they can

substantially increase their back health and decrease pain by implementing

safe and effective exercises on a routine basis.

Exercises for Chronic Back Pain While being more intentional about our movement is important—such as taking breaks from sitting for long periods of time while working—regular exercise is

essential for maintaining back flexibility. Here are some stretching exercises to strengthen and balance your spine. phones. The key things people lose with They're organized by how easy they are to incorporate into your day, but they are If you are struggling with chronic back all excellent.

Walking

According to Palmer, walking is the best overall exercise you can do for your back

It introduces small rotations into the spinal column and provides mobility

for the back. Walking with an upright posture also encourages back extension. "15-20 minutes is all it takes, but try to do it at least daily," said Palmer.

People who walk consistently often present much better in the clinic, and therapists can always tell who has been walking and who hasn't.

Consider Professional Help Everyone is different, and getting a

handle on back pain can be challenging. The hip bridge engages several muscles, Step 1: Lie on your back and bring your knees up until including the transverse abdominis, the pain, consider the professional services deepest layer of the abdominal muscle. of a physical therapist, personal trainer, It's a bigger muscle group that attaches or chiropractor who is specifically directly to the spine, said Palmer, You trained to help. They can also provide individualized home exercises for the don't have to lift your hips high. Only lift particular issues you're experiencing. until you feel your muscles engaging Back pain can worsen over time so be and then hold there. diligent about taking care of yourself.

SINGLE KNEE-TO-CHEST

exercise focuses on the muscles of the low back and hips and is great for arthritis and tight muscles. It can even be performed in bed. Most people experience a pleasant stretching sensation along the back of the bent leg, and the stretch works well with lumbar pain.

The single knee-to-chest: Step 1: Lie flat on your back with your legs out straight. Step 2: Bend one knee towards your chest, using the arm on the same side to help elevate it.

> **Step 3:** Grasp the back of the knee with both hands and ease into the stretch.

Step 4: Switch legs and repeat.

Try to stretch each leg for 30 seconds and attempt three sets. Be sure to keep your lower back in contact with the surface to maximize the stretch. It's important to listen to what your back tells you—do not push into or through pain. If things start feeling uncomfortable, : stop where you are.



PLANK

A plank is similar to the prone-on-elbows stretch, except that you lift your entire body off of the floor. This exercise focuses heavily on the core muscles of the trunk, which provide better support to the whole trunk. The plank movement can be challenging at first, but it sagging. is pound-for-pound one of the best bodyweight exercises you can do.

Step 1: Start in the prone-on-elbows stretch. Step 2: Lift your body off of the floor and lockout with straight legs and back.

Step 3: Try to hold the position for one minute before lowering back down into the prone-on-elbows position. Although the goal is to be able to hold the stretch for one minute, do what you can at first, even if it is only for seconds. Have someone observe you from the side to provide feedback on your posture, because you want your body as straight as possible, without arching or



PRONE ON ELBOWS STRETCH

This stretch focuses heavily on extending the lower and middle back. It is a very direct, assertive way to move into back extension, and

is easy to hold.

the sides.

The hip bridge starts like lower trunk

rotations but then goes up instead of to

Step 1: Lie face down on the floor.

Step 2: Slowly come up on your elbows with your arms straight up and down.

Step 3: Then slowly raise your head up until you are looking forward.

long as you can.

long as you need.

strengthening exercise.

Ease into this exercise while listening to your back. Although this stretch provides you with a lot of control, don't force it. Instead, allow the stretch to develop slowly and comfortably. Try to hold the position for two minutes before lying back down again. Try doing three



DOUBLE KNEE-TO-CHEST

is a modification of the single knee-to-chest stretch. It provides the same benefits with a better overall stretch. Most people quickly move from the single knee-to-chest to the double knee-to-chest exercise due to its

superior low back stretch.

The double knee-to-chest : Step 1: Follow steps 1-3 for the single knee-to-chest

Step 2: Once one leg is up, bring the other leg up, using the hand on that side to assist.

Step 3: Hold this stretch for 30 seconds before lowering first one leg and then the other.

This exercise can also be performed in bed. Avoid trying to lift both legs at the same time and avoid trying to lift your legs by themselves without help from your arms. Keep your back flat at all times and listen to what your back tells you. If it hurts, ease off. Try doing three total sets.



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Week 25, 2023 THE EPOCH TIMES

Pharmaceutical Companies Help Pay for Doctors' Continuing Education

Continued from Page 1

"When do we stop looking at health care as a business instead of a healing tool?" Dr. Sabine Hazan, a gastroen- A Medical Conference terologist and CEO of Progenabiome, by the Numbers without influence?"

Consequences of Influence

ferences in that continuing medical education is funded primarily by drug sponded by email that the informaand medical device manufacturers. Because these events are considered education and not advertising, they sor of DDW, along with the slip under regulatory radar, according American Associato Dr. Adriane Fugh-Berman, profestion for the Study sor of pharmacology and physiology at of Liver Diseases, Georgetown University.

In her 2021 essay on industry-funded Society for Gastroeducation published in the BMJ, Fugh- intestinal Endoscopy, and Berman said studies show that most doc- the Society for Surgery of the tors do not believe that sponsorship of Alimentary Tract. CME events creates bias, despite research indicating otherwise.

"Studies analyzing content have shown consistent messaging in industry-funded CME that favors sponsoring companies' drugs and disadvantages competing products," she wrote. "The messages work: commercial CME affects prescrib-booth space rental fees. A low esing choices."

prescribing of an antipsychotic that folpresentation at the Minneapolis Veterans that began at \$210.

expenses-paid CME symposium held at a tropical resort.

let doctors practice the art of medicine at DDW for information on its total cost and the breakdown of income from sponsorships, vendors, and registration fees. Courtney Reed, manager of communica-DDW is the norm among medical contions and media relations for American Gastroenterological Association, retion cannot be shared.

> The association is a co-sponthe American

Sales figures compiled from the DDW sponsorship website show that more than \$3 million was generated in Mc-Cormick Place sponsorship opportunities. That's on top of an unknown sum from exhibition timate of at least \$2.5 million was

She cited two studies: a tripling in the brought in from registration fees, based lowed a manufacturer-paid speaking 13,000 in person and online) and fees

Affairs Medical Center and a doubling of Most of the sponsorships at DDW

prescriptions for the sponsor of an all-

told The Epoch Times. "When do we The Epoch Times asked the organizers

on 2022 attendance numbers (nearly

Drug companies try to put

their products front and

center in doctors' minds

through a variety of marketing

campaigns—including

educational conferences.

(HAT) NIRAT.PIX/SHUTTERSTOCK; (PILLS) BJARTE RETTEDAL/GETTY IMAGES

were pharmaceutical and medical device companies. For all the splash thev generated in marketing, neither industry received top billing in the research presented. Reed didn't offer specific percentages but referred The Epoch Times to the online planner and app, where all the sessions and abstracts can be found.

A quick search on the DDW app for the terms "drugs," "pharmaceutical," and "procedure" produced a combined 121 hits. On the other hand, searching the words "diet," "nutrition," and "lifestyle" yielded 566 hits for papers and topics presented. There were more than 1,000 sessions at the event.

When asked why sponsorships didn't line up with solutions reflecting that digestive disorders are largely the result of diet and lifestyle choices, Reed wrote in an email that "there have not been any conversations to our knowledge about this."

> Glitz and Giveaways

cific booths in the massive exhibition hall. Even the DDW app was full of ads. Each time users opened the app on their phones, they were greeted with a Pfizer popup message inviting them to visit its booth to explore the company's "commitment to gastroenterology."

swallowed by a cacophony of colors, noises, and even smells—far more exciting than the stuffy, dark classrooms where researchers presented findings in monotone. In many ways, the important research findings presented at the conference played a dull second fiddle to the vibrant branded "booths" as big as retail stores.

Visitors were lured into those spaces by in the days leading up to the conference. aligns with its budget: Let the research companies are no longer allowed to free treats such as a coffee and pastries or frozen yogurt with a dozen toppings. There were games, interactive exhibits, and offers to gather for a free dinner and lecture off-site. Tucked behind the booth of the company. Marketing took sharp front of McCormick Place. visual precedence over education.

smaller booths was featured on DDW gastroenterology TV, a channel with about a dozen progroup—said he anticfessionally produced, upbeat videos from ipated marketing but

gram app along with all other sessions.

About 70 percent of attendees had prescribing capabilities, according to sold to. I think they have to tune it out," DDW sponsorship marketing informa- she said. tion, and physicians were the target of Her co-worker, Dr. Anthony Tang, was marketing well before the event. One mesmerized by efforts that companies \$10,000 to \$20,000 for single email blasts ventiongoers. His company's strategy tinuing education seminars, and drug tion from a biased presenter."

McCormick Place was hit with marketing doctors, and listen to their needs. at the check-in desk, around columns in

the lobby, and on digital screens through-

None of that research or any of the director of Argentina-based Gedyt—a product to use."

The Sales Game

ments, and testing not covered by insur-

Davidson said she met many sincere cause bias has led some organizations to physicians at her booth looking for nonpharmaceutical options. Most doctors, included in a folder they were handing free CME conferences since 2010. out and completely ignored the simple one-page marketing sheet.

"Don't get me wrong—if I had the option to put a big ole billboard up somewhere, 2021 Journal of General Internal Mediout the hotel before they even set foot in I'd do it," Tang, health care relationship cine opinion article on the Physician space against a dull backdrop was often a the venue. There was even a billboard lead, told The Epoch Times, "The more Payments Sunshine Act, The authors lonely-looking table with a person or two being towed on a flatbed trailer up and frequent and the more recent you are in wrote that transparency hasn't worked representing the medical/research arm down Martin Luther King Jr. Drive in someone's mind, the more likely they to change doctor behavior in relation to are to make the informed decision on conflicts of interest with pharmaceuti-Dr. Luis Caro, gastroenterologist and whether or not your product is the right cal companies.

> When do we stop looking instead of a healing tool? Dr. Sabine Hazan, gastroenterologist for large, repeated ad campaigns with that information.

> > "It's a fun environment to be in," he said

everyone's trying to do good."

Bias, Business, and Misplaced Trust Some may not be doing good though, received payments. and the concern that sponsorships may

The Society for General Internal Medicine doesn't accept funding from for-prof- and a concrete reason to present biased "I think doctors are so used to being it companies at its national or regional meetings. Instead, you'll find medical organizations, health systems, and nonprofits in its expo and career fair.

Anyone staying at the Hyatt Regency at do the talking, form relationships with have booths in its exhibit hall during conferences.

Both examples were pointed out in a

Enacted by the Obama administra-Drug companies tion as part of the Patient Protection and are simply using a Affordable Care Act, the Sunshine Act common marketing was intended to clean up the bias. Since ploy, he said, popu- 2014, it has required disclosure of payat health care as a business larized by compa-ments from drug companies and device nies such as Nike, manufacturers to physicians, physician Coca-Cola, and oth- assistants, advanced practice nurses, and ers. Bigger budgets afteaching hospitals. An online open payford the opportunity ments database allows anyone to search

> At DDW, each session was preceded by conflict of interest statements. Papers ofmation. Only 12 percent know about the database, and just 5 percent have knowledge about whether their doctors have

Worse than that, disclosures of conflicts of interest may actually increase put on conferences without the support the potency of marketing because those of Big Pharma or Big Tech. One of those, professionals who are transparent in con-PharmedOut, has been holding pharma- flicts of interest may be viewed as honest and trustworthy. It could also give an author or speaker "moral licensing information."

"[Disclosure] does not cleanse tainted information, straighten distorted perspectives, or filter out marketing mes-In 2008, the Oregon chapter of the sages," the article reads. "Disclosure may company paid \$25,000 for an ad on all used to cut through the noise and get Academy of Family Physicians decided lull audiences into believing, wrongly, pre-conference emails, and several paid their message out to the throng of conthat no grants would be used for its conthat they can extract unbiased informa-



HERBAL FIRST AID

Treat Acute Injuries With Natural Medicine

TURMERIC: THE CRITICAL FIRST INGREDIENT

This bright and potent root has a much-deserved place in traditional herbal medicine

common injuries

and ailments.

By Sina McCullough

This series Modern first aid kits usually consist of build an herbal first aid kit to salicylic acid, is derived from benzene, 20 years. treat acute injuwhich is a petroleum byproduct. ries. Each week, vou'll learn how to use natural medicine to treat

leum and is widely used in medications or fever. I reach for turmeric, instead of including capsules, tablets, and topicals ibuprofen or acetaminophen (Tylenol). because it increases solubility of medicine. Vaseline, for instance, is made from crude oil. In addition, artificial colorings and

flavorings are commonly added to pain medication, as well as cold and cough syrups. Artificial sweeteners, such as aspartame, are used to offset bitter taste. to be similarly efficacious and safe as Antimicrobials, such as benzoates, are ibuprofen for the treatment of knee OA used to extend shelf life. Preservatives, fillers, and binders are also common inactive ingredients, which are often derived when a second study concluded that from genetically modified corn or soy.

solution for acute conditions, you might stiffness. Importantly, turmeric suppleconsider an herbal first aid kit.

What's an Herbal First Aid Kit?

First aid kits provide the immediate tools you need to treat common acute health issues, such as cuts, scrapes, bruises choose not to consume, such as: corn burns, splinters, bee stings, fever, and pain. Those tools in an herbal first aid kit should be completely natural, have ethylene glycol and even "white ink." a long shelf life, and carry little risk of overdose or negative side effects.

In this series, I share the contents of headaches, pain, swelling, and fever by my herbal first aid kit along with how making or purchasing turmeric remto easily make and use these natural edies that contain whole ingredients. remedies.

Turmeric: The First Remedy

The number one remedy in my first aid kit is turmeric. I do not leave home without it.

Turmeric is a spice that comes from • Pain reduction the rhizome of the Curcuma longa plant, which is a perennial in the ginger • Swelling reduction family. The best-known active ingre• Insect repulsion dient in turmeric is curcumin, which • Relief from itching gives turmeric its yellowish color. Cur- • Faster healing of skin cumin is a powerful anti-inflammatory,

antioxidant, antiviral, antibacterial and antifungal.

Turmeric has been safely used as medications made from synthetic chemboth food and medicine for more than icals produced in a laboratory. For ex- 5,000 years and has inspired hundreds ample, the active ingredient in aspirin, of studies into its efficacy in the past

Like our ancient ancestors, when I Propylene glycol is derived from petro- experience a headache, pain, swelling, Although manmade drugs are com-

monly believed to be "more effective" than natural medicine, some research suggests otherwise. For example, a study published in The Journal of Alternative and Complementary Medicine in 2009 [osteoarthritis]."

This finding was confirmed in 2014 turmeric is "as effective as ibuprofen" If you are looking for a more natural for the treatment of knee pain and joint mentation resulted in significantly lessened side effects, including less abdominal pain or discomfort, compared with ibuprofen.

Additionally, ibuprofen can contain several "inactive ingredients" that I starch, titanium dioxide, iron oxide yellow, iron oxide red, polysorbate 80, poly-You can avoid those manmade chemicals and still experience relief from

When to Use Turmeric

Turmeric has been shown through scientific studies to have the following uses:

- Headache relief
- Fever reduction
- wounds, such as minor cuts,

Turmeric has been safely used as both food and medicine for more

> hundreds of studies into its efficacy in the

> Many consumers are

not aware that the

headache remedy

they regularly reach

for is derived from

the petroleum

byproduct Benzene.

than 5,000 years and has inspired

past 20 years.

Different Forms of Turmeric While direct consumption of raw turmeric root is an effective remedy, the

muscle damage

scrapes, and bruises

Improved digestion and gas relief

Faster recovery from cough or sore

• Faster recovery from exercise-induced

root is perishable, rendering it impractical for a first aid kit. Likewise, turmeric tea is an effective remedy; however, it requires warm water and time to steep, which is not ideal when a quick remedy

The best options for a first aid kit are turmeric tincture, poultice, and capsules. I keep all three on hand.

For skin irritations, I prefer turmeric poultice. For nearly all other conditions, I prefer turmeric tincture. It's potent, easy to make, ready to dispense without any preparation, and easier to administer to my children, who are uncomfortable swallowing capsules. In case I run out of tincture, turmeric capsules are my backup.

These remedies can be made in your kitchen or purchased pre-made. Below are my favorite recipes for turmeric tincture, poultice, and capsules along with common dosages and pre-made

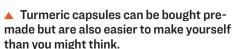
Pepper is an important ingredient in turmeric medicines because piperine, pepper's bioactive compound, increases the absorption of curcumin.

Contraindications

Turmeric is a natural blood thinner; therefore, do not consume turmeric if suffering from a wound that involves blood loss. Consult with a health care provider before consuming turmeric if you are taking a blood thinner or immunosuppressive drug, have gallbladder disease, diabetes, iron deficiency, blood-clotting disorders, gastroesophageal reflux disease, endometriosis,

receiving chemotherapy,

or if pregnant or nursing.



over North America and often considered a "weed" even though it's an essential herbal remedy.

Dr. Sina McCullough is the creator of the online program, "GO WILD: How I Reverse Chronic & Autoimmune Disease," and author of "Hands Off My Food," and "Beyond Labels." She earned a Ph.D. in Nutrition from UC Davis. She is a Master Herbalist. Gluten Free Society Certified Practitioner and homeschool mom of three.

Turmeric poultice can be applied directly on the skin for irritations, such as a bite or itching, or to relieve pain, inflammation, and swelling. It's effective but can temporarily stain the skin and other surfaces it contacts. There are two versions of this recipe which one you use depends on what kind of

If you have fresh turmeric root available, clean it well and chew the root until it forms a slurry in your mouth then apply to affected area then cover with bandage. Re-apply as needed.

If your patient finds that uncomfortable, you can grind the root in a mortar and pestle or place in a food processor. You can add extravirgin olive oil or other oil as desired

TURMERIC ROOT POWDER

You can make turmeric root powder, but I purchase it from a company I trust, Health Ranger Store. Dissolve the powder in warm water until it forms a thick consistency like that of Greek yogurt. Apply to affected area then cover with bandage. Re-apply as needed.

Tinctures used to intimidate me. I was afraid that if i made them incorrectly, mold would

Next Week: Plantago major grows all

TURMERIC POULTICE

turmeric you have available.

FRESH TURMERIC ROOT

grow or the remedy would be too potent and my tamily would get sick. Consequently when i began consuming turmeric tincture, it was purchased from a company i trust, kauai farmacy. A few months later, i wanted to order more, but the company was out of stock, so i began making my own. I have never ordered it again because making this tincture is so cost effective and so simple

▲ Turmeric is a flowering plant in the ginger family cultivated for its rhizome,

TURMERIC CAPSULES

While I prefer the tincture, turmeric cap-

to carry when hiking or biking.

sules provide a backup, and they are easier

You can make turmeric capsules with the

purchase them. I began consuming turmeric

making my own. Once again, I was pleasant-

ly surprised that doing it myself was so easy,

2 teaspoons freshly ground organic black

Put on gloves to avoid staining your fingers.

In glass dish, mix turmeric powder and black

Open one capsule. Using the larger capsule

segment, push the capsule down into the tur-

meric mixture to fill with powder. Repeat until

Store in glass jar away from heat and sunlight.

Use as needed. Common dosage is one or two

capsules, but dosage varies per individual.

According to the World Health Organization,

the acceptable daily intake of curcuminoids

as a food additive is up to 3 milligrams per

kilogram of body weight, which is roughly

equivalent to 46 milligrams turmeric per

pound of body weight. If possible, consume

TURMERIC TINCTURE

Slide on the shorter segment until secure.

pepper until thoroughly combined.

the powder feels compact.

turmeric with fat.

cost-effective, and empowering.

Size "00" vegan capsules

2/3 cup organic turmeric root powder

INGREDIENTS

SUPPLIES

Glass dish

capsules by purchasing them from a company I trust, PaleoValley. Eventually, I began

recipe below, but the easiest option is to

a subterranean plant stem.

MAKES A BIT LESS THAN 24 OUNCES, WHICH I STORE IN 2-OUNCE BOTTLES FOR EASY USE

that even my kids can easily make it without

1 cup organic fresh turmeric root, shredded 2 cups Ocean Organic Vodka or other organic vodka (80 proof)

1 teaspoon organic freshly ground black

A single 24-ounce wide mouth glass jar (for

12 2-ounce glass bottles (brown or blue to reduce light exposure) with eye droppers

Thoroughly wash and dry glass jar and glass

Gently wash turmeric root under filtered water and shred using a cheese grater or food processor. Place in jar. Add ground peppercorn to jar.

Add alcohol to jar. Place lid on tightly. Gently

Allow to steep for 6 weeks away from light and heat; a cool cabinet works well. Gently shake

After 6 weeks, use a nut milk bag or cheese cloth to strain the mixture over a bowl. Squeeze the solids to release all the liquid.

Use funnel to store liquid in 2-ounce glass

Dispense orally as needed using eye dropper. DOSAGE

Use as needed. Common dosage is 15 drops, but dosage varies per individual. Place under the tongue for one minute before swallowing.



4 Common Medications May Increase Depression Risk

Many Americans may be suffering depression due to frequently prescribed drugs

By George Citroner

Depression is a significant mental health issue, affecting about 21 million Americans, roughly 8.4 percent of the U.S. population. Medications commonly prescribed for unrelated conditions can increase the risk of developing depression as a side effect.

Dr. Timothy B. Sullivan, chair of psychiatry and behavioral sciences at Northwell Staten Island University Hospital in New York, told The Epoch Times that various mechanisms have been suggested to explain this problem.

"But the range of medications involved and their disparate mechanisms of action, suggests that it is unlikely that we will identify a specific cause," he said.

People taking benzodiazepines, corticosteroids, blood pressure medication, and certain antibiotics are at a particularly high risk. Research has shown that most of these drugs work by affecting the balance of chemicals in the brain and the production and regulation of neurotransmitters involved in mood regulation.

Americans Unknowingly Exposed to Higher Risk of Depression

A 2018 study from the University of Illinois-Chicago that involved more than 26,000 adults found that 37.2 percent of participants used at least one prescription medication that might cause depression or increase the risk of suicide.

Researchers identified more than 200 commonly used prescription drugs, including blood pressure and heart medications, antacids, and anti-inflammato ries, that listed depression or suicide as possible side effects.

The study found that adults who simultaneously used three or more of these medications had a 15 percent likelihood of experiencing depression. In comparison, those not using any of the drugs had a 5 percent chance of becoming depressed, and people using only one medication had a 7 percent probability of developing depression.

This risk is significant, considering that these medications are usually not prescribed to treat depression, leading 3. Lifestyle changes. Eating a healthy to a lack of awareness of the correlation among patients and doctors.

Benzodiazepines

Benzodiazepines, such as Valium and Xanax, are commonly used to treat anxiety, insomnia, and seizures. However, they can increase the risk of depression and other mental health disorders by altering the levels in the brain of the neurotransmitter gamma-aminobutyric acid, which helps regulate mood.

A 2017 review of 17 studies found a consistent association between benzodiazepines and increased suicide risk. Possible reasons include increased impulsivity or aggression, rebound or withdrawal symptoms, and overdose toxicity. The risk of suicide also appeared to be dependent

If you are using benzodiazepines and important to consult a health care provider. They may suggest reducing the dosage or prescribe an alternative medication without depression as a possible side effect.

Non-pharmacological treatments can changing negative thoughts and bedepression.

Other treatments such as meditation, reduce stress and improve mood, helping any concerns you have with your doctor.

with anxiety and insomnia management.

Corticosteroids

Corticosteroids, such as hydrocortisone and prednisone, are used to treat inflammation and autoimmune diseases such as rheumatoid arthritis.

Although they can be effective in managing these conditions, they may also increase the risk of depression because they reduce the level of serotonin, a hormone that regulates mood, sleep, and pain perception. The risk of developing depression is particularly high when corticosteroids are taken in high doses.

Other drugs that can be effective in managing conditions for which corticosteroids are used are nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs. NSAIDs are usually taken to relieve pain and fever and can effectively reduce inflammation without the associated risk of depression. NSAIDs may even improve depressive symptoms. However, NSAIDs should not be used for an extended period because of the potential for serious side effects.

Blood Pressure Drugs

Certain blood pressure medications, including angiotensin receptor blockers, beta blockers, and calcium channel blockers, may increase the risk of depression, according to a systematic review of studies involving almost 415,000 people. The exact mechanisms are not fully understood, but one theory is that these medications affect neurotransmitters involved in mood regulation.

Alternatives that don't carry the potential side effect of depression include:

1. Diuretics. These medications help eliminate excess sodium and fluids from the body, reducing blood volume and pressure.

2. ACE inhibitors. They help the body produce less angiotensin, a hormone that constricts blood vessels and raises blood pressure. Research suggests that ACE inhibitors may even have a protective effect against

diet, exercising, and quitting smoking can contribute to maintaining healthy blood pressure levels.

depression, especially in older adults.

Antibiotics

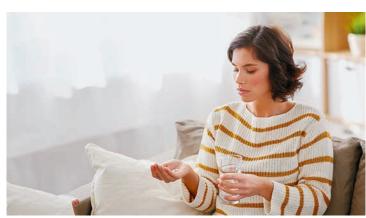
A recent study involving children and young adults found a link between the use of broad-spectrum antibiotics to treat infections and an increased risk of anxiety and depression, particularly in male participants. Another study suggested that this effect could be attributed to the effect of certain antibiotics on the gut microbiome.

"A large body of research over the past decade or more has shown that our gut microbiome has a profound effect on mood and behavior," Sullivan said.

Changes in gut flora have been associated with various psychiatric conditions. Although probiotics and prebiotexperiencing depression symptoms, it's ics have been investigated as a potential solution, there is currently no consistent approach for effectively managing gut flora, according to Sullivan. He recommended dietary management aimed at promoting a healthy gut microbiome.

"But as yet, we do not have specific be effective in managing anxiety. Cog-recommendations that would reliably nitive behavioral therapy focuses on reduce the risk of depression," Sullivan noted. "Eating a diet low in red meat, and havior patterns and has shown effec- higher in fruits and vegetables, such as tiveness without increasing the risk of the Mediterranean diet, may help to reduce risk."

Antibiotic drugs may be necessary to mindfulness, and aerobic exercise may treat infection, and you should discuss



prescribed medications such as benzodiazepines, corticosteroids, blood pressure drugs, and even certain antibiotics dramatically increases the risk of developing depression or thoughts of suicide.

GROUND PICTURE/SHUTTERSTOCK

A physician shares tips to get the most out of your cup of green tea—with best taste

By Kane Zhang & JoJo Novaes

reen tea, a beverage with . health benefits. Studies have shown that drinking green tea regularly can help prevent cognitive decline in older people and reduce stress and depression.

Because some people find green tea bitter and experience gastrointestinal Canada, shared tips on selecting and larly consumed black tea or coffee. brewing green tea to maximize its health benefits on The Epoch Times'

"Health 1+1." Green tea is rich in tea polyphenols, which are powerful antioxidants that can neutralize free radicals produced during the body's metabolic processes. Free radicals are highly reactive molecules can damage cells and tissues. Green tea also contains many vitamins, amino acids, and trace elements.

Green Tea's Catechins Fight Cognitive Decline

Green tea contains a high catechin con-

Neuroscience and Therapeutics in 2008 highlighted the neuroprotective effects of epigallocatechin gallate (EGCG), a Japanese teas, sencha demonstrated beta rich history, offers many catechin found in green tea, which can ter antidepressant effects than matcha. The temperature of the tea should not exreduce the risk of diseases such as Al-

zheimer's and Parkinson's.

A study conducted at Kanazawa University in Japan found that among 490 cognitively normal elderly individuals aged 60 and above, those who frequently consumed green tea had a significantly discomfort after drinking it, Jonathan lower rate of cognitive decline during Liu, a professor at Georgian College in subsequent years than those who regu-

Green Tea Alleviates Stress and Promotes Longevity

Animal experiments have also demonstrated that green tea has mature aging caused by excessive stress.

A study conducted at Shizuoka in adrenal enlargement and brain inflammation after consuming green tea extract. Furthermore, abnormal behaviors associated with depression were try lightly fermented white or yellow after the meal is recommended. Drinking

caffeine and EGCG to theanine and ar- sues they should pay attention to. ginine was approximately 4 to 5. Among

or hojicha.

Another study at Shizuoka University found that male mice living together in a cage experienced higher stress levels, resulting in shorter lifespans. However, geal cancer. when these stressed mice consumed water containing green tea extract's theanine, their lifespans were comparable to normal mice's.

Additionally, when normal mice ingested theanine from green tea extract, their lifespans did not increase, suggesting that theanine extended the first set's lives by reducing stress.

9 Taboos for Drinking Green Tea

antidepressant effects, According to traditional Chinese medhelping to prevent pre- icine, foods have the properties of cold or hot. Green tea is cold, so it can have **Stomach or Before Meals** a cooling effect on the body. People Drinking tea on an empty stomach can with a constitution leaning toward dilute gastric juices and reduce digestive University in Japan, published in coldness may experience discomfort function. Nutrients in 2022, revealed that mice if they consume excessive amounts of with depression exhibited improvements green tea, especially those prone to di- **5. Drinking Strong Tea**

arrhea after drinking cold beverages. Liu advises that people who feel While drinking tea after a meal can aid discomfort after drinking green tea digestion, waiting at least half an hour reduced. The study also identified that tea, which has similar benefits but strong tea immediately after a meal may the greatest improvement in depression milder properties. For those that have affect the absorption of nutrients such as centration. A review published in CNS \ occurred when the combined ratio of \ no such concern, there are other is- \ iron and proteins.

1. Drinking Scalding Tea

ceed 140 F (60 C) and is ideally between 77 and 122 F (25 and 50 C). Drinking excessively hot tea can damage the esophageal mucosa and increase the risk of esopha-

2. Drinking Cold Tea

As green tea's properties are cold, consuming tea below 50 F (10 C) can harm digestion, leading to bloating and stomach pain.

3. Drinking Strong Tea

Strongly brewed tea contains a high concentration of tea polyphenols, which can cause headaches, nausea, insomnia, restlessness, and other adverse reactions.

4. Drinking Tea on an Empty

Immediately After a Meal

6. Repeatedly Steeping Tea Leaves

Tea leaves lose most of their nutritional value after being steeped three to four times.

ALL PHOTOS BY GETTY IMAGES UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTE

3 TIPS FOR

BREWING TEA

Some individuals

may find green tea bitter and need to

to it. Improper tea

methods can also

affect the flavor.

attention to the

1. Tea Selection

moldy smell.

Liu advises paying

when brewing tea:

become accustomed

selection and brewing

following three points

Choose fresh green tea with

a vibrant green color and

a noticeable aroma. Avoid

tea with a smoky, burnt, or

The ideal water temperature for brewing green tea is

2. Water Temperature

around 185 F (85 C). The

steeping time should not

be too long, usually two to

three minutes, with some

adjustments based on the

specific type of green tea.

The recommended tea-to-

3 grams of tea leaves for

water ratio is 1 to 50, using

150-200 milliliters of water,

resulting in a balanced and

moderate strength of green

tea. If the water is too hot or

will be bitter.

3. Choice of Teaware

transparent glass cups

for drinking green tea is

recommended. Metal cups

Green tea can also be used

as a seasoning ingredient

or tea-infused chicken.

in baking to make treats

matcha cakes

for foods such as tea eggs

Matcha powder can be used

like Longjing tea cookies or

The flavor

of matcha

vith sweet

and creamy

ingredients

making it

a "matcha

made in

heaven"

for healthy

delicious

desserts.

pairs well

are not suitable as they can

Using porcelain or

react with the tea.

the tea is steeped too long, it

7. Drinking Overnight Tea

Tea polyphenols, vitamins, proteins, and other substances in tea can undergo oxidation while promoting microbial growth, leading to potential health issues.

8. Taking Medication With Tea

Tea may interact with the components of certain medications.

9. Drinking Tea Before Bed

Individuals with neurasthenia or insomnia should avoid drinking tea before sleep.



MINDSET MATTERS

The Mental Health Benefits of a Simple Life

Trying to do it all can leave us stressed when we could have a calm and contented life by focusing on less

give up quicker,

put off hard

things, and give

in to temptation

Our happiest

work.

By Mike Donghia

I have always been driven by a desire to never be bored, to do more, to achieve more, and to experience all that life has to offer.

This is an exciting way to live, but it comes with a price. My never-ending quest to "have it all" has, at times, taken a toll on my mental health. Stress builds when I pull myself in too many directions.

In an effort to lead a more balanced life, I've been refocusing on the idea of a simple life that first fascinated me long ago when I read a story about ranchers living in the American West. There was something attractive in the simplicity and austerity of their lives and the landscape they lived in.

In my current efforts to simplify my life in the pursuit of a clear and healthy mind, several benefits are becoming clear. Many of these benefits have already been studied by researchers

Less Decision Fatigue In 2008, a team of re-

at higher rates. searchers performed four laboratory studies to measure the effects of decision fatigue of my phone, I find time and emotional on human self-control. You probably won't be surprised to hear what they learned: The more decisions a person had to make, the less self-control they displayed afterward.

Making a lot of decisions causes us to feel tired, give up quicker, put off hard things, and give in to temptation at higher rates. Knowing this about our nature, how do we set ourselves up for success? I believe the answer is to shape our lives so that we're making fewer decisions and focusing our energy on the decisions that matter most. A simpler life naturally means fewer choices to of my favorite moments in my day are make and more mental space for everything else.

Greater Focus on Relationships

A happy and meaningful life is filled with good friendships. And yet, somehow, we can't seem to leave unrushed time to nurture these relationships. It's as if we expect these things to just take care of themselves, like they might have when we were kids and spent all day in school and playing with our peers. In my experience, intention-

ally leading a simple life is the

best way to create time for experiences relationships. As we put less often come from emphasis on productivity and passion projects and personally distractions, our brain rewires meaningful itself to enjoy the slower pleasures of an unfolding friendship. Need more evidence that this is the way we were designed to live? A 2010 meta-review there is something valuable waiting for found a direct correlation between the us on the other side. quality and quantity of relationships and a person's mental health and longevity. We are social beings, made for each other.

A Calmer Physical Environment

In an unusual study from 2010, the way people described their homes in a walk-

ing tour correlated with measurable stress levels. People who described their homes as disorganized or cluttered had cortisol profiles associated with adverse health outcomes. Is this any surprise? Of course not!

Winston Churchill once said, "We shape our buildings; thereafter they shape us." And while he was referring to architecture, I think the same principle applies to interior design and the organization of our homes. The fact is, most people feel calmer and more at peace in a clean, clutter-free environment.

Freedom From Digital Distractions

If you've ever taken an extended break from your smartphone, you know the feeling of calm this can bring. It's

strange that something we choose to use, and enjoy using, can so eas-Making a lot of ily become an unhealthy decisions causes addiction. us to feel tired,

A simpler life means reducing the clutter that distracts us from deeper goals. For many, their smartphone—and the apps it hosts—is a major distraction from long-term goals. By clearing away space in my day to be free

freedom to dream bigger dreams.

Time for Passion Projects

In a fascinating research paper, psychologist Mihaly Cziksentmihalyi makes the case that some of our happiest experiences in life come when we lose ourselves in deeply engaging and personally meaningful work. He calls this exhilarating emotional state "flow."

When we remove distractions, we have more time to pursue projects for their own sake and more opportunity to get lost in our work. Indeed, some when I'm writing and completely lose track of time.

Discovering the Power of Less

If there's one thing I've learned from trying to live a minimalist lifestyle, it's that less truly can be more.

> It's a fantasy that chasing everything all at once leads to the kind of satisfaction I so deeply desire. In the real world, it leads only to stress, scattered attention,

and abandoned projects. The road to simplicity is one on which you choose to focus on fewer things, but you do them well. The itch to run to something new doesn't go away, but it does get weaker. And while there is real effort involved in saying no and choosing to pare down your pursuits, the many benefits listed here demonstrate that

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

from vour phone can help you feel lighter, more relaxed, and able to enjoy the present moment.

BECOMING MINIMALIST The Misconception of Materialism in Creating Happy Families

We can't buy a happier family but research has some insights on how to give Most advertisements these days don't our loved ones what they really need

By Joshua Becker

meaningful

children is

a stronger,

happier, more

family.

often the key

Advertisements have a way of constantly promising better things. In fact, in both subtle and obvious ways, every advertisement promises we will have a better ments show joyful family scenes with the

life if we buy whatever they're selling. even tell you about the product. They sell us something else: a happier life, a better party, more friends, a better body, a be happier.' cleaner home, and so on.

And often, nestled among these promises is this one: a better family.

Just consider how many advertise-

problems than we think. This sentiment rings equally true when thinking about what our families really need from us.

this couldn't be further from the truth.

rarely the answer. And less solves more

product or experience at the center—the

board game, the vacation, the restaurant,

"Buy this product, and your family will

even the new car.

Consider this: When we fall into the trap of believing that our next purchase or vacation will finally bring our family closer together, we are often led away from the very thing they crave and need most—our time and attention.

When we fall into the trap of thinking that buying more will bring true happiness and bring deeper bonds within our families, we inevitably end up sacrificing

precious time and energy. We pursue the money needed for the purchase that we believe will bring our family closer together—often neglecting the everyday moments of connection and growth that naturally occur within our family lives.

This messaging subtly suggests that the path to family happiness and bliss lies in Our children, more than anyone else, acquiring more. But, from my perspective, are keenly aware of this. Despite what they say, what they yearn for isn't the lat-As I've journeyed toward minimalism est video game, the next grand vacation, over the years, I've learned that more is or a pool table in the basement.

> What they need, first and foremost, is our attention. They need conversation. They need parents present in their lives. They need to feel the security and stability that comes from a family in which parents are not running toward accumulation, but are present and engaged with their children—and each other.

> Of course, providing for our families is crucial, and there is value in hard work and ambition. But a problem arises when the pursuit of material possessions and consumerism begins to overshadow the deepest needs of our family.

But you don't need to take my word for

it; numerous studies have highlighted suggests that high consumer debt and to be the big moments. the resulting financial stress negatively affect family relationships.

next purchase that promises to deliver energy and time to invest in our families. "the perfect family" may actually be keeping you from it!

We work hard to provide for our families financially. We must work hard to and our presence. provide for their other needs as well. Because more money and more purchases session can ever fulfill. won't supply all they need.

If our constant desire for the next thing that promises to deliver a happier family is actually pulling us away from our family, it's time to pause, reflect, and change

How do we accomplish this? Well, that what our children need most from for one thing, by focusing less energy us is time and attention. In fact, one on what we want to buy next and more study, published in April in Frontiers on valuing what we already have, we in Psychology, found that "the more create space for more meaningful contime parents spent with children, the nections. We make room for shared higher their children's well-being will experiences, for open conversations, be." And other research, cited by the for appreciating the small, everyday American Psychological Association, moments that, in retrospect, turn out As we begin to unburden ourselves

from the consumer-driven cycle of seek-In other words, constantly chasing the ing more, we'll find that we have more At the end of the day, our families don't need more things; they need more of us—our time, our attention, our love,

And that's a promise no product or pos-

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

time with family and to achieving connected

or 50 million Americans, the picture of life is tarnished by

chronic pain. Whether it's a mi-

graine, knee pain, or backache, chronic pain restricts what we

Grandparents can attest to this. Middleaged professionals realize it. Stay-at-home moms know this all too well. High school

Millions of Americans rely on nonsteroidal

anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs)—such

as ibuprofen, naproxen, and aspirin—to

reduce pain's effect on their quality of life.

the side effects that can come from rely-

ing on NSAIDs to manage pain. Extensive

research shows that NSAIDs can cause gas-

trointestinal ulcers, serious cardiovascu-

lar events, hypertension, and acute renal

failure, and can exacerbate pre-existing

What often goes untold, however, are

VANCE VOETBERG

aspire to accomplish.

heart failure.

A Major Drawback

athletes are faced with it, too.

PROSTOCK-STUDIO/SHUTTETSTOC

In Our Own Words

The Woman Behind the Hotline (Part 1)



66

We take your feedback very seriously. Usually when you send feedback ... we read your messages one by one and give serious thought to areas for improvement.

Teresa YouManager, Customer Service

Dear Epoch VIP,

I started working for The Epoch Times back in 2011 as a reporter for the Chinese-language edition of the paper. In 2017, I switched over to the customer-facing side of the business. Having been a psychology major back in college, I wanted to go back to people and relationships.

Like many career moves, this one came with a huge learning curve.

When a lot of people talk about customer service, maybe they think it's talking to customers on the phone, or maybe over email, but it's actually more complicated than that. So many dots have to be connected to make it work—from hiring, to training, to quality control, to keeping up with changes in the entire company. In short, things were a lot more complicated than I first thought.

We've grown in the last few years because of the support from readers like you. On the hotline, we've been trying to hire more people to reduce wait times which then create more efficient workflows to better accommodate our customers. We're also trying to provide more technical support for problems with our digital products, like our Epoch Times app. We've also been working on more self-service tools to help you better help yourself, like the online Help Center and your subscriber Account Portal.

And your feedback has been super valuable in telling us whether we're heading in the right direction.

We take your feedback very seriously. Usually when you send feedback (or if other departments forward us your feedback), we read your messages one by one and give serious thought to areas for improvement. We don't want to be just any other company doing customer service: we hope to really get connected with every one of our readers, every one of you.

You are so important to us. And because of that, we really value making you happy.

One of my favorite parts of the job is being able to get the firsthand feedback from you, our readers—including hearing your support and seeing your reaction to our media.

Week 25, 2023. THE EPOCH TIMES

For example, a subscriber sent us a letter saying that when he first saw our newspaper he sat down for a while because of being in shock—he couldn't believe that a newspaper like this still existed! And his letter isn't the only one I remember. We keep all your letters and put them up around our New York office so we don't lose sight of why we do what we do.

For me, my job is not about money or fame or power. It's about the subscriber who calls in, and we can hear his concern for this country in his voice. It's about the subscriber who breaks into tears on the phone because she was so worried about things that she couldn't sleep.

I can relate to these subscribers because I came from a communist country: China. My parents, who had been arbitrarily detained in China, sent me here to the United States at the age of 17 because they wanted me to enjoy this country's freedom. I don't want the same things that have happened to the Chinese to happen to people here—even though in some ways, I think they already have.

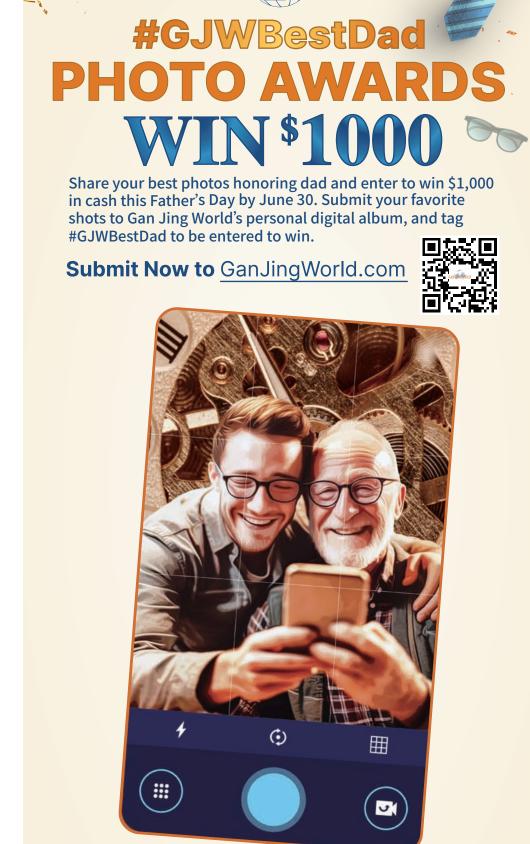
I want to end by telling you that especially because I am an immigrant from China, I really appreciate the freedom I enjoy in this country. Because of that, I want the best for this country and its people, and I

will do my part by supporting a media that I believe has the interests of this country and its people at heart: The Epoch Times.

In Truth and Tradition,

Teresa You The Epoch Times THE EPOCH TIMES

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NATURAL THERAPIES

Natural Remedies for 5 Types of Pain

Avoid ibuprofen and other NSAIDs by treating pain with scientifically proven herbs and supplements



SIMOTO/SHUTTETSTOCK



Is Mouthwash Ruining Our Health?

7 alternative mouthwash solutions that can do the job without the risk

CHRISTY PRAIS

A growing number of dentists and medical professionals are cautioning against the indiscriminate use of popular mouth rinses, suggesting that they may inadvertently contribute to cavities and persistent bad breath.

There is also an emerging correlation between regular mouthwash use and more serious health issues, including high blood pressure, heart disease, and oral diseases.

The Evolution of Mouth Rinses

The origins of formal oral rinsing as a practice can be traced back to traditional Chinese medicine (TCM) to around 2700 B.C. when it was first used for treating gum diseases.

A May 2023 study published in The Journal of Ethnopharmacology notes that "The Book of Rites" ("Li Ji," written around 221 B.C.) from the period of the early Qin Dynasty recorded that rinsing with salt water was used as a tooth cleaning method during that time.

But our modern-day mouth rinse products are far from a simple salt water rinse. In fact, they were originally not even intended for oral rinse purposes.

The antiseptic mouth rinses Listerine, acquired from Pfizer by Johnson & Johnson in 2006, was originally developed as a surgical antiseptic in 1865 and named after Joseph Lister who performed the first antiseptic

According to the book "Health & Drugs, Disease Prescriptions & Medication" by Nicolae Sfetcu, after its use as a powerful antiseptic, it was distilled and sold as a floor cleaner and as a cure for gonorrhea. In the 1920's it was rebranded and sold as a cure for "chronic halitosis," and was the first over-the-counter mouth rinse to receive Continued on Page 16



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WHAT PEOPLE ARE SAYING

"This is true journalism. This is what the Founding Fathers meant by

'freedom of the press."

- DARRYL AGEE

You have been my source of hope. The truth is so scarce in media. The quality of my life is subject to the quality of truth in my life. Friends, work encounters, community interactions, all hinge on truth. The meticulous delivery of all sides of issues you cover permit me to sustain my hope in humanity. You have my deep respect and gratitude. I have told many, many patients (I am a physician) about you and will continue to do so. Truth + trust = hope + health."

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- STEPHEN SZYMANSKI

Love the Epoch Times. Wonderful to see news honestly presented...You have a good mix of uplifting, traditional, family, health & art/science. I know the truth when I finish reading the Epoch Times...I would recommend it to almost anyone."

- ANNE KELLY

FOOD AS MEDICINE

The Magnificent Mango

This delicious tropical fruit has medicinal properties few people even know about

SANDRA CESCA

The mango (Mangifera indica), a member of the cashew family, originated in the Himalayan foothills of India more than 5,000 years ago. The mango has been prized in indigenous medicine for its myriad healing properties. All parts of the mango, including leaves, bark, flesh, peel, roots, and flowers, have pharmacological potential. There are more than 300 different varieties of mangos in the world.

Benefits of Mango

Phytonutrients are substances produced by plants to protect themselves. They include carotenoids, flavonoids, coumarin, and indols. Many are bioactive compounds known to promote human health and manage chronic diseases and include anticancer, antioxidant, anti-inflammatory, antibacterial, and antiviral properties.

These compounds play an essential role in addressing the increasing prevalence of metabolic syndrome—a cluster of risk factors associated with the development of heart disease, heart failure, stroke, and diabetes. Nearly 1 in 3 Americans have metabolic syndrome, according to Dr. Chiadi E. Ndumele, a cardiologist at Johns Hopkins.

A Healthier Heart

According to the American Heart Association, this juicy fruit's fiber, vitamins, potassium, and magnesium help reduce the risk of heart disease, including high blood pressure. Mangiferin, a potent antioxidant found in high concentrations in mango leaves, is linked with reduced heart inflammation.



Bevond tasty, the brightly hued mango is worthy of superfood status with more than 20 different vitamins and minerals.

Mangos are also rich in vitamins C and K. Vitamin C helps the body maintain blood **MILLIGRAMS OF** vessels and absorb iron. Vitamin K, es-POTASSIUM sential in prothrombin generation, is

Anti-Cancer

GRAMS OF

PROTEIN

Mangos are rich in beta carotene, a pigment responsible for their bright yelloworange color. Beta carotene is an antioxidant known to fight cell-damaging free radicals that can potentially lead

vital for the regulation of blood clotting.

GRAMS OF

According to a study in the Journal of Lipids, published in 2017, mangiferin protects against a variety of human cancers, including lung, colon, and breast cancer, by suppressing tumor necrosis.

Studies suggest that mango extracts containing phytochemicals inhibit breast cancer cell growth, proliferation, migration, and invasion. More research and clinical studies are needed to explore its potential as a therapeutic agent.

Better Brain Health

Mangiferin has been shown to improve

A high concentration of tryptophan,

NUTRITIONAL

QUALITIES

According to the U.S. Department of

Agriculture's FoodData Central, one

medium-sized mango contains the

an amino acid that converts to serotonin, makes mangos a happy fruit while being a precursor to

melatonin.

long-term object recognition memory in rats. In a study on rats published in the European Journal of Pharmacology, scientists suggested that mangiferin has the potential for preventative and thera-

amnesia, and Alzheimer's.

peutic use in memory impairment dis-

eases, such as schizophrenia, dementia,

MILLIGRAMS

OF VITAMIN C

MILLIGRAMS OF

MILLIGRAMS

OF TRYPTOPHAN

The vitamin B6 in mangos may help with brain function by lowering high levels of the chemical homocysteine, which is linked to a higher incidence of dementia, Alzheimer's, and cognitive decline, according to the Harvard School of Public Health.

In addition to being low in fat, mangos can aid in weight loss because their rich fiber content helps to promote the sensation of satiety. One study reported choices, and whole-person medical care. that mangiferin protected rats against Her background includes allopathic weight gain from a high-fat diet and im-*medicine, naturopathy, homeopathy,* thus lowering the risk of obesity.

Healthier Gut Microbiome

The fiber and water in mangos can help stabilize the digestive system, thus preventing constipation and reducing the risk of colon and rectal cancer. In a recent study published in the journal Food Science and Nutrition in 2023, researchers at San Diego State University found that consuming fresh mango improves gut health by increasing the population of certain important gut bacteria.

Improved Sleep Quality

When eaten at night, mangos can help improve sleep quality. Mangos are rich in vitamin B6, which stimulates serotonin to produce melatonin, the sleep hormone. A high concentration of tryptophan, an amino acid that converts to serotonin, makes mangos a happy fruit while being a precursor to melatonin. Mango's high magnesium content has been linked to

helping combat insomnia.

Healthier Skin

In addition to vitamins A and E, vitamin C helps the skin's natural aging process by shielding it from UV rays and pollution impurities. Vitamin Calso promotes collagen production, allowing the skin to maintain elasticity. Potent antioxidants in mangos inactivate the free radicals known to damage skin.

Mango Skin—Handle With Care

Mango skin contains a compound called urushiol, an oil that can cause the skin to erupt in rashes in some people. The oil is found in the leaves, stems, roots, and skin, particularly around the stem. Before peeling a mango, it's wise to wash and lightly scrub the skin in warm water.

Tips for Eating Mangos

- To obtain the best nutritional qualities, flavor, and taste, eat tropical fruit fresh and raw.
- · If you're eating dried mango, keep in mind that drying fruit concentrates the sugar content.
- Though mango skin is edible, it has a strong bitter flavor and is difficult to chew and digest.
- Keep mangos at room temperature and eat them in their prime, because overripe fruit loses much of its nutritional value and disease-fighting qualities soon after picking.
- Eating mangos can be very messy—or an art form worth learning.

Sandra Cesca is a freelance writer and photographer focusing on holistic health, wellness, organic foods, healthy lifestyle

MD or DO? It's All the Same in the Hospital Room, Study Finds

New research asserts that allopathic and osteopathic physicians' quality and cost of care in hospital settings are virtually identical

SHERAMY TSAI

An age-old debate quietly rumbles on in the hushed corridors of hospitals across the nation. Which qualification is best: MD (doctor of medicine) or DO (doctor of osteopathic medicine)?

A recent study, monumental in its scope, dared to ask this question, delving into more than 300,000 Medicare hospital cases. The verdict was startling: When it comes to the quality and cost of care in a hospital setting, MDs and DOs provide the same value.

Unveiling the Intricacies of the Study With support from the National Institute on Aging, a diverse team of researchers from various institutions rolled up their sleeves and joined hands. Their shared mission? To explore the potential ties between a doctor's type of medical degree and how it might reflect the quality and cost of care they offer hospitalized

Adopting a retrospective observational design, the researchers ventured into the depths of Medicare fee-for-service data. The data were meticulously selected, focusing on a random 20 percent sample of beneficiaries hospitalized with medical conditions from 2016 to 2019. These patients were under the care of hospitalist physicians, either allopathic (MDs) or osteopathic (DOs).

The team assessed key indicators of health care outcomes and costs, including 30-day patient mortality, 30day readmissions, length of stay, and

health care spending (Part B spending). These parameters, adjusted for patient and physician characteristics, painted a comprehensive picture of the care delivered by the two types of physicians.

The Verdict

Dr. Atsushi Miyawaki and his team found that when it comes to caring for patients, the distinction between a doctor having an "MD" or a "DO" after his or her name makes very little difference.

The team's work highlighted the finding that the adjusted 30-day mortality rates were strikingly similar between the two groups—standing at 9.4 percent for MDs and 9.5 percent for DOs. Mortality rates reflect the proportion of patients who didn't live past 30 days following their hospital admission.

In their extensive analysis, the researchers cast an eye on the rates of 30-day readmission, a key indicator tracking the frequency of patients' return to the hospital within a month of their initial departure. They found that MDs and DOs performed equally well, clocking in readmission rates at a strikingly similar 15.7 percent and 15.6 percent, respectively.

The uniformity in the quality of care spread beyond mere mortality and readmission figures. Be it an MD or a DO at the helm of a patient care team, the average duration of a hospital stay hovered around the same mark—about 4 1/2 days.

And as for the bottom line—the impact on health care expenditure—the differences were practically negligible. On average, patients under the care of MDs accounted for a health care expense of \$1,004, while the costs of those treated by DOs came in at a dollar less, at \$1,003.

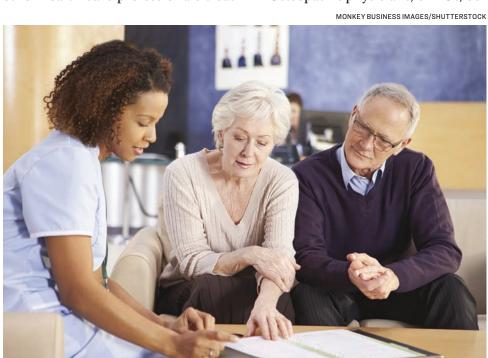
A Closer Look at MDs and DOs

Allopathic medicine, the path of study taken by doctors of medicine (MDs), has its roots in a traditional medical curriculum. The National Cancer Institute defines allopathic medicine as "a system in which medical doctors and other health care professionals treat

symptoms and diseases using drugs, radiation, or surgery." Tracing its origin back to the ancient Greeks, this pathway adheres to the Hippocratic Oath, a pledge to "do no harm."

Osteopathic medicine, the study of which results in a doctor of osteopathic medicine (DO) degree, supplements traditional medical education with specialized training in touch-based diagnosis. This manual medicine uses hands-on work to treat various health issues in the joints and tissues.

"Osteopathic physicians, or DOs, be-



With its "whole person" philosophy, osteopathic medicine is attracting a growing number

lieve there's more to good health than the absence of pain or disease. Their whole-person approach to medicine focuses on prevention, helping promote the body's natural tendency toward health and self-healing," the American Osteopathic Association states on its website.

According to a 2020 census conducted by the Federation of State Medical Boards, approximately 90 percent of licensed physicians in the United States at that time were MDs, while the remaining 10 percent were DOs. However, the 2022 Osteopathic Medical Profession Report shows that the number of DOs is growing dramatically. In 2022, 7,300 new DOs joined the workforce. Moreover, in the past decade, the number of osteopathic medical school students has grown by 77 percent.

Rethinking the Future of Health Care "Although often described as two dis-

tinct philosophies, modern osteopathic and allopathic medicine have more commonalities than differences," wrote Dr. Charlie M. Wray, a DO, and Dr. J. Bryan Carmody, an MD, in a collaborative editorial published in the Annals of Internal Medicine.

Regardless of the pathway chosen, both MDs and DOs are fully qualified physicians, and both are required to complete a residency in their chosen specialty after graduation. Both have equal opportunities to apply for residencies, and the privileges and scope of care granted to them are the same.

And, according to the editorial, both specialties attract academically outstanding students, with average Medical College Admissions Test scores well

above the national average. Moreover, according to the authors of the observational study report, the curricula of both allopathic and osteopathic medical schools have evolved to be substantially similar, requiring accreditation from governing bodies recognized by the U.S. Department of Education.

The professional divide between MDs and DOs is fast narrowing. This parity in performance not only demonstrates the evolving landscape of medical practice in the United States, but also reaffirms the idea that quality patient care isn't determined by the specific medical degree a doctor holds.

Ending on a note of unity, Wray told The Epoch Times, "Studies like this will continue to solidify the bonds between allopathic and osteopathic physicians while [they] also signal to patients that the care they receive is not dictated by the letters after their doctor's name.'

Sheramy Tsai, BSN, RN, is a seasoned nurse with a decade-long writing career. An alumna of Middlebury College and Johns Hopkins, Tsai combines her writing and nursing expertise to deliver impactful content. Living in Vermont, she balances her professional life with sustainable living and raising three children.

THE EPOCH TIMES Week 25, 2023

Natural Remedies for 5 Types of Pain

Continued from Page 13

Normally, the inflammatory response is brief and lasts only until the body heals itself. Unfortunately, we often suffer inflammation due to chronic conditions caused by problems in our lifestyle or environment. That means the inflammation is prolonged. When inflammation is chronic, pain is chronic, and many people then turn to NSAIDs to block inflammation directly.

While the drugs provide immediate pain relief, they don't resolve the root cause. Sometimes, they even impair the healing and work to facilitate healing.

"There's actually a lot of evidence that shows blocking inflammation can make removing dead cells and other debris, our pain last longer," Kahla said.

One study, published in Burns & Trauma in 2018, found that NSAIDs inhibited proper bone and wound healing. Another study, published in Science: Translational Medicine in 2022, showed that people who more likely to end up with chronic pain.

However, there is good news: Nature has provided us with pain relievers that can work as well or better than pharmaceuticals while also promoting healing.

Back and Neck Pain

Specialized pro-resolv**ing mediators.** SPMs are a class of molecules that

also available as supplements. Naturally occurring SPMs are lipid mediators converted from the essential fatty acids in our diet. When inflammation emerges due to injury or sickness, SPMs are signaled to the inflamed area

Unlike how NSAIDs block inflammation, SPMs resolve inflammation by thereby enabling the inflamed site to return to homeostasis.

"The beauty of using SPMs is you don't shut down the natural inflammatory process that leads to healing and regeneration of tissue as you do with NSAIDs," Dr. used NSAIDs to treat lower backpain were Matt Angove, a functional health care provider, told The Epoch Times.

In a study published in the Journal of Translational Medicine, SPM supplementation decreased pain and increased the quality of life of patients dealing with

There's actually a lot of evidence that shows blocking inflammation can make our pain last longer.

Dr. Courtney Kahla, chiropractic doctor

chronic pain. Another study found simi-

Some doctors are witnessing the positive effects of SPM supplementation in their clinical practices.

In one case, Angove had a 76-year-old female with multiple broken ribs and fractured thoracic vertebrae. This patient also experienced bad reactions from standard pain medications and NSAIDs.

"Unfortunately, rib fractures hurt with every breath, so we put her on 6 grams of SPMs a day, and she was able to sleep and heal fantastically without excruciating pain," Angove said.



Migraines and Headaches

to a significant body of scientific literature, migraines and headaches

Magnesium. According

are often caused by a lack of magnesium. Therefore, when individuals with chronic migraines supplement with magnesium, they often experience a total reprieve from pain, because the root issue—nutrient deficiency—is being addressed.

trolled studies have shown that magnesium supplementation can efficiently

Noland's clinical observations have shown that magnesium supplementation significantly reduces and prevents migraines for his patients.



Ginger and magnesium.

published in The Journal of Alternative and Complementary Medicine compared the efficacy of ibuprofen to ginger. Researchers discovered that

ginger was as effective as ibuprofen in

managing pain associated with men-

A systematic review published in Cureus found similar results, noting that the review "verified the possibility of ginger efficacy in the treatment of primary dys-

Multiple double-blind, placebo-con-

help target the source

of pain and reduce the

need for painkillers

such as

mitigate pain caused by migraines. "I've had multiple patients with migraines that were driven by magnesium deficiency," Dr. Joel Noland, an Idahobased naturopathic physician, told The Epoch Times.



Injuries Topical capsa-

icin cream and grounding. Capsaicin is a chemical

Sports-Related

derived from chili peppers, and depending on the athlete's type of injury, it can be an effective way to reduce pain. This molecule reduces inflammation

by blocking a neurotransmitter that ignites pain. It's most commonly used in high concentrations as a topical solution for individuals battling pain from tendonitis, muscular injuries, or arthritis. Some studies indicate capsaicin can

menorrhea (menstruation pain)" and that the use of ginger was "very useful

and [as] effective as NSAIDs."

menstrual pain.

The Epoch Times.

chronic knee pain.

ate their pain.

ensure pain relief.

A robust body of research also sup-

ports magnesium's role in alleviating

Dr. Amadea Angove, a functional doc-

tor and acupuncturist, said that these

studies' findings have been mirrored in

her practice. "While the cause of severe

pain from menstrual cramps should be

investigated, magnesium can alleviate

pain quickly and effectively," she told

thousands of years. Moreover, curcumin has demonstrated efficacy in treating

A meta-analysis published in Comple-

mentary Therapies in Medicine exam-

ined curcumin's efficacy in treating pain caused by knee osteoarthritis.

Researchers found that curcumin is

Because turmeric's anti-inflam-

matory effects are well known, many individuals take turmeric

supplements, hoping it will allevi-

However, Dr. Matt Angove warned

that many individuals do not experi-

ence symptom remission because tur-

meric supplements often do not contain

significant amounts of curcumin, the

active agent that reduces inflammation.

Therefore, he advises finding high-

quality curcumin supplements to better

more effective than NSAIDs.

Knee Pain

Curcumin. The active

agent of turmeric, cur-

cumin has been used

as a pain reducer for

anti-inflammatory

The earth is like a huge battery that contains a subtle electrical charge. And to put it simply, our body runs off this electricity.

Dr. Courtney Kahla, chiropractic doctor



Ginger's antiinflammatory properties may be helpful in treating menstrual pain.



Turmeric's antiinflammatory effects can relieve knee pain

accelerate tendon repair and mitigate muscular injuries.

Another therapy that has been shown to help athletes recover from injuries is the practice of grounding, or earthing. Grounding has been shown to reduce painful inflammation in multiple studies, including one published in the Journal of Inflammation Research. It even has been used as an effective healing therapy for professional bikers in the Tour de France.

"It's basically connecting the surface of your skin to the surface of the Earth, like your hands or feet to grass, dirt, or trees," Kahla said. "The earth is like a huge battery that contains a subtle electrical charge. And to put it simply, our body runs off this electricity."That energetic connection also can work in another way. Just as a home's electrical system has a grounding wire planted deep in the earth, the human body also needs a way to defuse any excess negatively charged (hot) electrons. When this charge builds up in the body—or in any electrical system—it creates a risk.

Researchers in the Journal of Inflammation Research study wrote that grounding "enables free electrons from the Earth's surface to spread over and into the body, where they can have antioxidant effects."

Getting to the Root of Inflammation

Addressing the cause of pain is foundational if you wish to live a pain-free life. "Instead of saying, 'I am in pain. I need a pill to feel better,' we should ask ourselves, 'What is my body trying to tell me?'" advised Kahla. "If you have menstrual cramps, that could be your body's way of saying, 'Your hormones aren't balanced.' If you have muscle pain, that's your body's way of saying, 'Hey, don't use this area of your body for a while.'

"Our body is so good at telling us what it needs and sending messages to us. We just have to listen to it."

Vance Voetberg is a freelance journalist for The Epoch Times based in the Pacific Northwest. He holds a B.S. in journalism and aims to present truthful, inspiring health-related news. He is the founder of the nutrition blog "Running On Butter."



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

be okay to have around starts prolifer-

ating, and gets out of control. An over-

abundance of free iron can occur when

our bodies are out of balance and have

inadequate levels of copper, magnesium,

We can minimize oxidative stress through

diet and lifestyle choices. Avoiding things

like sugar, chemicals from different sources,

pesticides, heavy metals, and food addi-

tives and adding nervous system-regulating

activities such as grounding, physical exer-

cise, meditation, and acupuncture can help

As mentioned above, dry mouth can be

caused by drying agents such as alcohol but

can also be exacerbated by mouth breath-

ing. Kall notes that there are remineralizing

sprays that can help as well as mouth ap-

paratuses that can be worn at night to avoid

Although on their Listerine website,

they do note that they conducted a one

week study to determine if two of their

commercial mouth rinses, one alcohol-

based and one nonalcohol-based, affect-

ed salivary flow or caused symptoms of

After 1 week of use, the study concluded

"There were no differences in objective

prolonged mouth breathing.

minimize oxidative stress, Kall says.

and retinol, Kall notes.

Is Mouthwash Ruining Our Health?

Continued from Page 13

the American Dental Associations' prestigious seal of approval.

Over the years the mouth rinse market has quickly grown, and as of 2021 the global market was valued at \$8.5 billion dollars and expected to grow to \$15.7 billion by the end of 2032, according to Persistence Market Research.

Dr. Jack Kall, a practicing biological dentist of 46 years and the executive chair of the board of directors of the International Academy of Oral Medicine (IAOMT) says he through the process of nitrate reduction typically does not recommend using mouth rinses regularly.

"I would reserve their use for very limited times such as if you're going on a job interview, or you have something happening close up to where you want to be covering up garlic breath," Kall told The Epoch Times response, and microbial homeostasis. in an interview.

Problems Revealed by Research

Kall warns that there has been research showing that overuse of antibacterial products including mouth rises can have negative effects on different aspects of our health.

According to Kall and recent studies, overuse of antibacterial products can be harmful in several ways.

Oral Microbiome Dysbiosis

Regular use of these rinses can disrupt the oral microbiome and shift it out of balance, a state known as dysbiosis. Antibacterial products not only kill the "bad bacteria" but also the good bacteria that are needed for many vital functions, including fighting off bacterial and viral infections.

Several studies reveal connections between diseases, viruses, and alterations when imbalances occur within the oral

microbiome, they can prompt gut microbes to generate carcinogenic toxins, triggering gut inflammation and metabolic complications.

High Blood Pressure

Kall also stressed that the antiseptic ingredient in mouth rinses can also interfere with the nitrate-nitrite-nitric oxide (NO) pathway which occurs at the back of the tongue. This pathway is important in the oral mi-

crobiome because nitrates from our diet are converted into nitrites by oral bacteria which are then further converted into NO. NO is one of the most important signaling

molecules in our bodies and plays a crucial role in regulating many physiological functions, including blood flow by helping with the dilation of blood vessels, immune

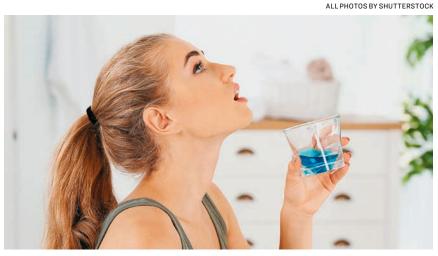
A study published in Frontiers in Cellular and Infection Microbiology in 2019 warns that the use of "oral antiseptics resulted in increases in systolic blood pressure."

The study looked specifically at chlorhexidine, an antiseptic used in mouthwash.

Overuse of

antibacterial products

including mouth rinses can have negative effects on different aspects of our health.



in the oral microbiome. For instance, Regular use of harsh mouth rinses may disrupt the oral microbiome and contribute to dysbiosis.

"Twice-daily chlorhexidine usage was associated with a significant increase in systolic blood pressure after 1 week of use and recovery from use resulted in an enrichment in nitrate-reducing bacteria on the tongue," it reads.

Another study published in the American Journal of Hypertension had similar findings and concluded, "Results of this study suggest that use of antibacterial mouthwash by treated hypertensive individuals could have a detrimental effect on blood pressure. Of concern, is the widespread use of mouthwash in the general population."

Dry Mouth, Cavities, and Fungal Infections

Many mouth rinse products contain alcohol which has a drying effect that can be problematic over time, warned Kall. That's because saliva has several important roles that are compromised when the mouth is dry.

According to the National Institute of Dental and Craniofacial Research (NI-DCR) having a sufficient amount of saliva is crucial because saliva contains minerals like "calcium and phosphate that help keep teeth strong and fight tooth decay."

An insufficient amount of saliva can lead to an increased risk of tooth decay. Saliva also keeps invading germs in check, so a reduction in saliva can contribute to fungal infections, and bad breath.

Softening Effect on the Composite **Filling Materials**

Kall also notes that the harsh ingredient in many mainstream mouth rinses has a softening effect on the composite filling materials (the tooth-colored filling materials).

"Alcohol can be problematic for composites and cause a quicker breakdown, shortening the amount of time that those composites will hold up," Kall said. A study published Journal of Clinical and

Experimental Dentistry warned "The use of mouthwashes triggered changes on the structure of both dental materials: composite resin and resin modified glass ionomer."

Chemical Soup

mouth rinse.

must, advises Kall.

Aside from alcohol, Kall said chlorhexidine is another mouthwash ingredient to avoid. Chlorhexidine is used as a surgical scrub and diluted down and flavored for use as a

Some oral surgeons will recommend it after a person's had some kind of surgery to reduce the risk of infection, Kall noted but "you definitely don't want to be using that for very long." Aside from disrupting the oral microbiome, it can also stain the teeth. Reading the labels on mouth rinses is a

"Unfortunately, when you look at the inactive ingredients, it's a chemical alphabet or flavoring agents in them. Why expose yourself to these chemicals?" he said.

"They can be problematic, particularly with chronic long-term consumption. Even though you're not swallowing the material intentionally, there's still some that gets down into your gut and now your body has to deal with these irritating chemicals that can possibly cause leaky gut issues or chemical sensitivities," Kall continued.

Harmful ingredients to look out for include alcohol, chlorine dioxide, chlorhexidine, cocamidopropyl betaine, parabens, poloxamer 407, formaldehyde, and saccharin.

Alternative Solutions

There are many types of effective home made mouth rinses that can have antiseptic effects and help heal gum tissues. Dr. Kall noted a few options.

Saltwater or peroxide. Both can have antiseptic effects.

Baking soda. Has a mildly abrasive effect that can help remove plaque and has natural whitening properties.

Herbal products and essential oils. Herbal extracts such as cinnamon bark oil, Papuamace extracts, clove bud oil, peppermint, much free iron in our tissues, the tea tree, eucalyptus oil, and thyme oil are small level of bad bacteria which could

shown to be very helpful at killing germs and healing gum tissue.

Oil pulling. From Ayurveda, the ancient holistic system of medicine that originated in India 3000-5000 years ago. It involves swishing oil, such as sesame oil or coconut oil, in the mouth for 3-5 minutes then expelling it.

According to a review in the Journal of Ayurveda and Integrative Medicine, oil pulling is mentioned in the Ayurvedic text Charaka Samhita and "claimed to cure about 30 systemic diseases ranging from headache, migraine to diabetes and asthma," and used to prevent decay, oral malodor, bleeding gums, dryness of throat, soup. A lot of times there are various dyes cracked lips, strengthening teeth, gums, and the jaw.

> **Oral probiotics.** A randomized clinical trial published in the Journal of Medical Microbiology in 2013 found that a specific strain of good bacteria called Streptococcus salivarius strain M18, has been shown to improve dental health and reduce cavities by recolonizing your mouth with good bacteria and crowding out the bad bacteria.

> Kall notes that although herbal-based products and alternatives are the healthier choice, he again cautions to be careful as some of these herbs are very effective antimicrobial agents and can be over**done** similarly to the chemical options.

To the Root

As a biological dentist, Dr. Kall approaches dentistry in a holistic way using the least toxic treatment op-

Kall says that there are several factors that cause dental issues and bad breath. Some of the main ones are dysregulation of the body, oxidative stress, and dry mouth.

For example, problematic or bad bacteria love it when there's too

An insufficient amount of saliva can lead to an increased risk of tooth decay.

> Baking soda used as a mouth rinse may help remove tooth plaque and

aid in whitening.

or subjective measures of mouth dryness between alcohol- and nonalcoholcontaining mouth rinses after 1 week in nonxerostomic subjects."

dry mouth adults.

The Epoch Times reached out to Johnson & Johnson regarding recent studies and concerns around the ingredients in mouth rinses like Listerine but they have not yet responded.

> ness 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.

Christy A. Prais received her busi-



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foods have been

shown to benefit

our mental health

and cognitive

For example, according to a review published in Preventive Nutrition and Food Science, fermented foods may improve cognitive function by modulating the release of neurotransmitters like brainderived neurotrophic factor (BDNF), glutamate, gamma-aminobutyric acid (GABA), and serotonin, which are involved in learning and memory.

bage, contains choline, an amino acid essential for the production of acetylcholine. Acetylcholine is a neurotransmitter involved in muscle control, circadian rhythm, and memory, and research shows it may have a protective effect against Alzheimer's disease.

Fermented foods are also a source of

Tryptophan is present in milk, tuna, and many types of meat, such as turkey.

Tryptophan is also an essential precursor for serotonin, a neurotransmitter that influences a huge variety of brain functions, including mood.

Research has also shown that eating fermented foods may have long- and shortterm impacts on brain function, resulting in improved mood and reduced stress.

Researchers from APC Microbiome, University College Cork, and Teagasc (Ireland's Agriculture and Food Development Authority) in Moorepark, Cork, Ireland, are conducting a large study to figure out which fermented foods are best for the brain. The research team is comparing data from more than 200 foods from all over the world in search of a variety of metabolites that are known to be beneficial for brain health.

Fermented Foods for Brain Health Although the study is still in its prelimi-

nary stages, researchers have been surorised and delighted at the results thus far. "I expected only a few fermented foods would show up, but out of 200 fermented foods [tested], almost all of them showed the ability to exert some sort of potential to improve gut and brain health," Ramya Balasubramanian, one of the study authors, said.

More research is needed to determine

Another study adds to neurological health

study out of Ireland suggest.

tryptophan—an important amino acid. The body can use tryptophan to make the hormone melatonin (which regulates our sleep-wake cycles).

findings that bacteriarich foods can help us preserve mental and

ermented foods, which we all know are good for the gut, are also beneficial for our brains, preliminary findings from a new

Foods can significantly impact our mental health, and certain foods in particular

Sauerkraut, a type of fermented cab-

THE GUT-BRAIN AXIS The gut-brain axis is quickly becoming known as the microbiome-gut-brain axis because of the important role microbes in the colon have in producing certain neurotransmitters and other key metabolites. The axis is mediated by a significant number of neurons that are conveying a tremendous

amount of information between the gut and

Fermented

foods with

are called

probiotics

and they are a

simple, cost

to improve

digestion,

mood, and

brain health.

Fermented sugars

found in fruit, many

carbohydrates, and

the lactose found in

dairy products.

vegetables, other

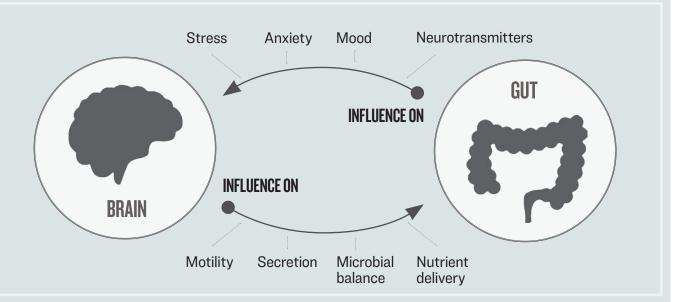
can include those

effective way

live bacteria

the brain, allowing each to meaningfully respond to messages from the other and

THE EPOCH TIMES Week 25, 2023



which foods have the most significant impact on brain health, but a couple already stand out.

regulate several functions.

"Fermented sugar-based products and fermented vegetable-based products are like winning the lottery when it comes to gut and brain health," Ramya said.

"For all that we see on sugar-based products being demonised, fermented sugar takes the raw sugar substrate, and it converts it into a plethora of metabolites that can have a beneficial effect on the host. So even though it has the name 'sugar' in it, if you do a final metabolomic screen, the sugar gets used by the microbial community that's present in the food, and they get converted into these beautiful metabolites that are ready to be cherry-picked by us for further studies."

Fermented sugars can include those found in fruit, many vegetables, other carbohydrates, and the lactose found in dairy products.

As the study moves forward, Ramya said she hopes the public can use their preliminary results and consider including fermented foods in their diet to support their mental health and general well-being.

How the Gut Affects Mental Health

The microbiome is the collection of all the microorganisms, such as viruses, bacteria, and fungi, that live in a particular environment, such as in a human body. The gut is the most populated residence of the human microbiome. The gut microbiome helps with digestion, destroys harmful bacteria, protects against pathogens, and produces countless important metabolites. In recent years, there has been

considerable interest in the gut microbiome, and scientists are learning that it affects an enormous number of health issues. Our understanding of mental illness is also evolving based on new studies involving the microbiome. Rather than seeing mental health as localized to the brain,

research demonstrates that our gut plays an active role in affecting mood and behavior through the microbiome-gut-

A research article published in Microbial Ecology in Health and Disease discusses how research into the gut microbiome is disrupting the long-held assumptions in disciplines such as psychiatry. "Research into the active role that the

microbiome-gut-brain axis plays in affecting mood and behaviour may lead to the conclusion that mental health is more than an internalized problem of individual brains," it notes.

One example is how studies have linked a disruption of the gut microbiome (dysbiosis) with stress, anxiety, and depression.

In a research review published in Clinics and Practice, the researchers from Texas Tech University note that the twoway communication between the central nervous system and gut microbiota, referred to as the microbiome-gut-brain axis, has been of significant interest in

"Dysbiosis and inflammation of the gut have been linked to causing several mental illnesses including anxiety and depression, which are prevalent in society today," they note.

The researchers also note that probiotics can restore normal micro-

bial balance, giving these foods and supplements a potential role in preventing and treating mental disorders.

Fermented Foods for Mental Health

then continue living in killed off by additional processing, a common occurrence with many foods, such as lower-end yogurts. Fermented foods

with live bacteria are called probiotics and they are a simple, cost-effective way to improve digestion, mood, and brain

While the findings from the Irish study above may provide a wider scope of insight into the brain-boosting metabolites in fermented foods, other studies have also explored the benefits of eating fermented foods on cognitive function and brain health.

Much research has focused on the role of strains of Lactobacillus (L.) bacteria that break down sugars, including those

A study involving older adults aged 60 to 75 who ate Lactobacillus helveticus in the form of mediated fermented milk found that the fermented milk improved the subjects' cognitive function.

In healthy middle-aged adults in Japan, a study found that participants who consumed probiotic milk (L. helveticus CM4) also had improved cognitive performance.

In a study of 60 Alzheimer's patients aged 60 to 95 in Iran, participants consumed probiotic fermented milk (Bifidobacterium bifidum, L. casei, L. fermentum, L. acidophilus). The study concluded that the patients who drank the probiotic milk had improved cognitive abilities.

A review in Clinical Nutrition and Metabolic Care published in 2022 states that dietary changes to the microbiome impact brain health and behavior but that this knowledge is seldom incorporated into clinical practice.

That means that even though researchers have proven the therapeutic benefits of these foods, that information isn't being acted upon by doctors. The result is that our medical treatments rarely reflect the impact food has on our overall Foods are fermented health. Current and future research into by bacteria that can the microbiome will inevitably give us more details about fermented foods and foods as long as they aren't how they improve the health of the body, including the brain.

For now, adding fermented foods such as yogurt, kimchi, miso, and sauerkraut to your diet is an excellent way to enhance your gut microbiome and improve brain health.

Look for Joy to Find Well-Being

New book says caring for your health can be fun and filled with joy

CATHERINE YANG

There may be a glut of health information currently available, but the best things in life—and health—are free, according to mindbodygreen founders Jason and Colleen Wachob. Their new book, "The Joy of Well-Being," is a realistic, ultra-practical guide to good health that cuts through the cacophony of wellness information out there.

Health advice often focuses on what one should do or not do, eat or not eat, and can often contain confusing contradictions. Sometimes the science supporting a certain practice is clear, but to actually carry out the recommendations is too difficult for the average person.

"We are at the forefront of this health and wellness movement, but we can't even do these protocols that have a lot of rigidity, and it's not just because of our life-stage as parents and entrepreneurs. It's a lot, and it can be overwhelming,"

they had health scares that led to the too much."

building of mindbodygreen in 2009.

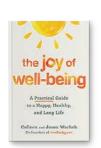
"The Joy of Well-Being" was two years in the making, and the advice included had to meet three key criteria: be backed by science, be accessible, and offer the possibility of joy.

In the Wachobs' view, joy is not just a happy byproduct of one's wellness journey; instead, it should be a starting point and accompany you throughout the journey. In fact, the first chapter includes this takeaway: "If you only remember one sentence from this book, let it be this one: Any healthy change you make has to be a joyful one."

"So much of [health and wellness] is about adding and restriction and scarcity. We believe in abundance," Jason said. Rather than take things away, it is about what you can add, revise, or integrate, he suggested. That includes in discussions about longevity. People are now focusing less on "lifespan," the number of years you live, than on "healthspan," the number of healthy years you live.

Jason added that it's worth looking at "joyspan" as well. "What's the point of living that long and being healthy, fit, and mobile, if you're not having fun?" he said.

"We feel like our world has gotten a Jason and Colleen had been busy, ac- little bit too serious with the biohacktive entrepreneurs and executives when ers and all of the things—it's just a little



"The Joy of Well-Being: A Practical Guide to a Happy, Healthy, and Long Life" By Jason and Colleen Wachob, May 2023.

Small changes can create momentum and lead to a wellness wave that helps other parts of your life fall into place.

80 Percent Health

The Wachobs offer eight main pieces of advice that can take you to about "80 percent of maximum well-being." Why 80? By any measure, Americans are not healthy. We suffer from stress, live sedentary lifestyles, and have one of the least healthy diets in the world. At 80 percent, you wake up energized and feel good about the day, joyful even. That's a major improvement.

Breath, sleep, food, movement, stress, regeneration, connection, and purpose each get a chapter in the book with the science and statistics needed to support simple, actionable takeaways that can take you to 80 percent health. There are also tips for optimizing for that last 20 percent if you so wish.

"The beauty of having been in this business for 14 years and being obsessed with health is that though the science has evolved, so much of the science points to the practices and modalities that require very little time and are low cost or zero cost," Jason said. The book focuses on the biggest "needle-movers" in health, tips that give you the greatest

"And they tend to be time-tested and a lot more simple than the things that get a lot of airtime on TikTok," Colleen added.

For instance, the chapter on breath reveals that a startling 50 to 80 percent of adults have dysfunctional breathing patterns, which in turn can ruin sleep, throw off psychological stress state, change blood chemistry, and create a whole host of other factors that impair

The solution? Breathe through your nose. Do so consciously for a few minutes per day and you train yourself to do so automatically, even in your sleep. Then you can enjoy the improved immunity, cardiovascular health, stress management, and other benefits that come with optimal breathing.

The rest of the chapters are similarly practical, scientific, and potentially joy-

"In the chapter [on stress], we mentioned sauna because there's a lot of great science on sauna, but, look, saunas are not that accessible, because buying a sauna is expensive, unless you can get into a gym or YMCA that has one. Unlike cold therapy," Jason said. "You can hack it with a cold shower."

Start With Joy

When the Wachobs started writing the book, a statistic that stood out to them was that half of Americans reported not having meaningful daily interactions. That was bad enough, but this was a 2019 poll and the numbers had likely worsened during and after the pandemic.

Recently, the surgeon general reported that three hours of social media a day doubled incidence of depression. Amid a widely recognized mental health crisis, the Wachobs have also seen some positive signs. With the growing awareness, more people are taking charge of their

going to be an exciting tidal wave of reawakening our relationship to all of these topics, but most importantly redefining and reclaiming how we want to live," Col-

"We have a series of questions that people can ask themselves [in the book], and one of the ones I think is so important is: What is it that brings you joy? And there's a lot of times in life when we're unable to answer that question, but I think getting closer to the things that make your heart sing, that make you realize the uniqueness of the human spirit, that bring us joy, are going

to get us closer to the answers. "When you do things that bring you joy, you're more likely to find more community, more people who have shared connections and shared values."

The following are some of the questions posed in "The Joy of Well-Being."

- What about your life feels sweet and fulfilling?
- What about your life feels rushed and chaotic? How does your body feel? • Are there any health issues that you are
- working with? • What could be better: energy levels, sleep?
- How about that big brain of yours? Are you challenged and engaged? Or are you on intellectual autopilot? • Would you say your days are filled with

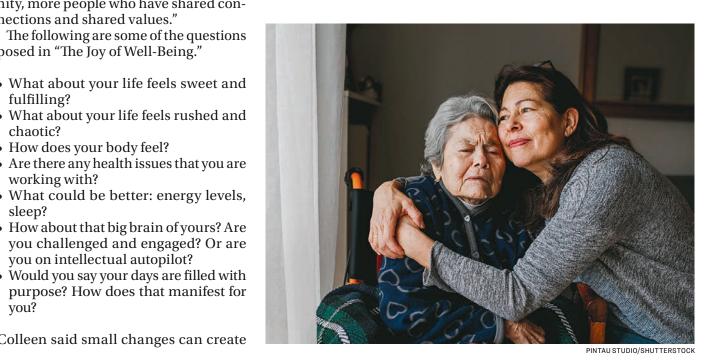
momentum and lead to a wellness wave that helps other parts of your life fall into place.

The Wachobs' book isn't meant to be a checklist. One needn't try to complete every one of the tips. Instead, the reader should pick the ones that bring them joy and fit into their lifestyle and make them their own.

"Make wellness work for you; don't work for wellness," Jason said.

"We all deserve to be healthy and happy, and you can do it. It doesn't have to be time consuming or a pain in the butt. It doesn't have to be expensive. There are so many great things you can do for your health. Pick the ones that bring you joy."

The pathway to joy and wellbeing is paved by celebrating life with family, friends, and community.



"I think we're at the beginning of what's Colleen said small changes can create

20 | MIND & BODY

INTENTIONAL LIVING

DIMABERLIN/SHUTTERSTOCK

The Rewards of Mindful Parenting

Being present with your children creates the emotional security needed to pass along your love and values



Something I really hate is the feeling of lying in bed at night, thinking back through my day, and knowing I really blew an opportunity to be present with my kids. I love being a dad, so it's hard for me to admit that these days are far more common than I would like.

Being present with the people you love, particularly young children, still requires intentionality. The everyday chaos of life, work commitments, and daily chores compete for our attention, and their seeming urgency can easily consume our focus if we're not making space for what we value most.

But there's good news in all of this that I hope you'll take to heart. We don't have to be perfect parents to have a

positive effect on our children.
Admitting our failures and speaking openly about them can be a growing opportunity for everyone. And guess what: For those of us still in the thick of raising kids, every day is a new opportunity to practice being present with them and connecting more

What does it mean exactly, to be present with children? I've come to believe that it's as simple as patiently giving them our undivided attention. When you do this, you'll naturally be more attentive to

Listening to children and letting them explain their thoughts and emotions is a good way to practice mindful parenting. their needs, emotions, and experiences. And in doing so, you'll be creating an environment of emotional security where they can flourish. The bond between you and your children will grow as you invite them to connect with you on a deeper level.

The Art of Mindful Parenting

All right, so we know what it means to be present with our children and the benefits of living this way—let's talk about some practical tips for embracing a more mindful approach to parenting that you can start applying today.

Put Away Your Phone

When given the choice between an effortless and pleasurable activity, such as checking my phone, and one that requires my engagement but is more meaningful, such as playing with my kids, my mind too often prefers what is easy. This is especially true if I'm physically or emotionally tired.

Knowing this about myself, I know that one of the best things I can do is to leave my phone out of sight when it's family time. When I do this, and I resolve to do it more often, I find it immensely easier to be present and savor the company of my little friends.

Listen Intently

Children aren't wired for efficiency like many adults seem to be. Their stories and explanations tend to take a long and winding path toward a conclusion. One thing I like to remind myself is that I have a choice whether to see this "feature" of children as an annoyance or as an invitation to slow down and appreciate that productivity is far from the highest value in life. Try really paying attention when your children speak, and resist the urge to interrupt or speed them along.

Practice Empathy

Spend some time with young children and you'll quickly see that their emotions have a much wider range than adults'. It's easy

to let yourself feel annoyed by their lack of self-control.

Compared with yours, their behavior probably makes no sense. But what if instead of dismissing them as being immature, you really tried to see the world through your child's eyes? What if you cultivated curiosity around this aspect of your kids and spent time trying to understand them?

I think this approach would result in more calm and less stress. And it's a lot easier than simply telling yourself to stay calm. All of us are curious in some areas of our lives, and it's not hard to expand that interest into a new area.

Challenges and Rewards

Mindful parenting isn't a cure-all for every challenge a parent faces, but I do consider it to be the foundational attitude with which nearly everything else starts taking care of itself. What's the opposite of being mindful? It's being stressed, rushed, and distracted.

Parenting in all its complexity simply doesn't work well under those conditions. It's hard to convey your love and values to your children when there isn't a calm base of emotional security for those interactions to occur within.

Of course, it's not easy to change your family culture overnight. Like any meaningful life change, the key is a long, sustained effort in a new direction. Start small by practicing mindful presence at particular times in the day, and build until it becomes your default response.

Your kids be grateful for your newfound patience, and I think you'll find that parenting itself is so much more fun when you approach it in this way.

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.

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