

MIND & BODY

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Eating within a limited time frame, or eating very few calories on certain days, gives the body a critical opportunity to carry out cellular housekeeping.

Fasting: A Game Changer for Spike Protein Injuries

Fasting has important metabolic effects that can also combat Alzheimer's, reduce body fat, and starve cancer cells

By Marina Zhang

Numerous doctors treating long COVID and COVID-19 vaccine injuries now suggest fasting as a potential therapy for overall symptom improvement.

Before the COVID-19 pandemic, fasting was primarily used to treat metabolic diseases, with a number of doctors recommending it for weight loss and diabetes management. However, this therapeutic approach may also benefit individuals without these specific needs or ailments.

Recent studies have revealed that fasting contributes to reduced inflammation and improved immunity, enhanced cognitive function, and a potentially lower risk of cancer.

The Ancient Wisdom of Fasting

Fasting, an ancient practice of abstaining from food, has a rich history spanning thousands of years. The word "breakfast" itself signifies breaking the overnight fast.

Throughout history, fasting has been widely observed across various religions and cultures. For instance, Chinese Buddhists traditionally fast after their noon meal until the following morning, while Muslims observe fasting from dawn to dusk during the month of Ramadan.

Medical applications of fasting date back to at least the 5th century B.C. Hippocrates, a revered figure in medicine, advocated against eating while ill, stating that "to eat when you are sick, is to feed your illness."

Although there is no concrete evi-

Consuming food generally triggers inflammation, while fasting promotes an anti-inflammatory response.

dence supporting the notion of "starving a cold," Dr. Jason Fung, a nephrologist and fasting expert, suggests that fasting may tap into the body's innate wisdom, depriving viruses and harmful bacteria of nutrients and thus aiding in fighting them off.

Can Fasting Reset the Immune System?

Fasting encompasses two main forms: prolonged fasting, lasting for at least 36 hours, and intermittent fasting, a popular lifestyle intervention involving shorter fasting periods of 12 to 24 hours. Prolonged fasting tends to be more effective than intermittent fasting at activating the reset and renewal of cells and tissues.

The body experiences two primary states during the day: the fed state and

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Rates of Medical Autopsies Plummet During Pandemic

GOGA SHUTTER/SHUTTERSTOCK



With autopsy rates falling, there is less insight into why people are dying and what to do about it.

Declining autopsy rates reach record low, leaving critical questions unanswered

By Harry Lee

The autopsy rate in 2020 reached a record low of 7.4 percent, marking the lowest rate between 1972 and 2020, according to a recently released report by the National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS), a subagency under the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. In 1972, the autopsy rate stood at 19.1 percent, but it has since experienced a steady decline.

The decline in autopsy rates hampers diagnostic accuracy, limits medical research and public health understanding, impairs legal and forensic investigations, hinders quality assurance and education, and deprives grieving families of closure about their loved one's cause of death, experts say.

The report distinguishes between two types of autopsies: hospital/clinical autopsies requested by families or doctors to determine the cause of death, and medicolegal autopsies ordered by legal officials to investigate death circumstances.

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Autopsies involve significant work, with a routine adult autopsy alone taking a few hours.

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Adopting a lifestyle that nurtures our immune system can keep it strong as we age.

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The Miraculous IMMUNE SYSTEM

PART XII A MASTERPIECE OF DESIGN AND RESILIENCE FOR LIFELONG HEALTH

This intricate, adaptive system keeps us alive in the face of ever-changing dangers

In this series, "The Miraculous Immune System," we'll explore the true power of human immunity and the organs that work tirelessly to protect the body.

Previously: Bone marrow is vulnerable to a variety of harmful factors and lifestyles, but there are measures we can take to keep this crucial cellular workshop healthy.

By Yuhong Dong & Makai Allbert

The immune system often behaves like an enigmatic cloud, following its own mysterious rules, leaving us wondering when it will work its magic and when it might let us down. We often only think about our immune system

when it unexpectedly falters.

Remember that time when a relentless flu struck and left you with fever, sore throat, body aches, and swollen lymph nodes? Those sensations were the might of your immune system as it valiantly fought against the invading forces, determined to protect you. Your immune system is just as vital

as your beating heart and the breath in your lungs. In fact, it's one of the largest and most widespread organ systems in your entire body—and its significance is often overlooked.

Throughout this series, we've explored important aspects of the immune system, unraveling its mysteries and remarkable features. Our goal has been

PFAS with numerous health issues, such as decreased fertility, high blood pressure, and an increased risk of certain cancers. Because of their widespread presence and potential for harm, understanding these forever chemicals and their impact on human health and ecosystems is paramount. "One common characteristic of concern of PFAS is that many break down very slowly and can build up in people, animals, and the environment over time," the EPA stated.

Behind the Scenes: Industry's Own Studies on PFAS

Very little was known about the toxicity of PFAS for the first half-century of their use. A New England Journal of Medicine paper published in 1962 claimed that Teflon was "physiologically inert, insoluble, nonirritating to the skin and nontoxic when taken by mouth."

However, as early as 1959, there were warning signs of the hazards associated with these substances when a report emerged detailing a worker's death from Teflon inhalation. According to the study authors, this incident didn't immediately spur broader investigations into PFAS safety. In 1961, DuPont dismissed the worker's death as a rumor.

The new study drew from 39 documents obtained through two landmark lawsuits, Tennant v. DuPont in 1998 and Leach v. DuPont in 2002, in which DuPont was charged with contaminating local environments and endangering public health. These documents were donated to UCSF

and the filmmakers of the documentary "The Devil We Know."

Throughout the paper, researchers highlight several examples of large corporations' awareness of the potential dangers. In 1979, DuPont's private study, conducted by Haskell Labs, revealed the alarming toxic effects of the chemical APFO, a variant of PFOA. Exposure in rats caused liver enlargement and eye damage, while inhalation was found to be highly toxic. Two dogs given a single dose died within 48 hours, showing signs of cellular damage.

In 1980, DuPont and 3M surveyed employees' pregnancies, identifying three abnormalities among eight pregnancies, including birth defects and detectable PFAS in cord blood. The companies later learned that some women suffered miscarriages. However, these findings were neither published nor disclosed to their employees.

Instead, DuPont decided to remove female employees from PFAS-exposed areas, presenting the move as precautionary rather than reactionary. In a 1981 memo, it denied any evidence of adverse health effects or congenital disabilities from exposure to C8, downplaying its toxicity by comparing it to substances such as table salt and water.

Yet these findings were neither published in the scientific literature nor reported to the EPA as required by the Toxic Substances Control Act. The documents were kept confidential. In certain instances, industry execu-

97%

OF AMERICANS have detectable levels of PFAS in their blood.

TIPS TO BUILD IMMUNE RESILIENCE

There are many ways to support our immune function. Below, we use the acronym "RESILIENCE" to remind us of practical ways to protect and strengthen immunity.

R Retain necessary components; avoid unnecessary removal.

E Eat healthy whole foods, rich in nutrients, vitamins (D, A, C), and micronutrients (zinc); avoid processed foods.

S Sufficient water intake.

I Include green tea and natural herbs.

L Luxuriate in restful sleep.

I Isolate from environmental toxins, smoke, and harmful radiation.

E Engage in regular exercise and movement.

N Nurture stress reduction through mindful practices.

C Cultivate altruism and empathy towards others' suffering.

E Embrace a connection with nature.



A healthy whole food diet will support a healthy immune system.



Regular exercise keeps your lymphatic system detoxifying effectively.



Staying hydrated helps your body flush out contaminants.



Herbs contain compounds that support your immune system.

to empower you with knowledge on how to fortify and maintain a robust and healthy immune system.

The Immune System "Design" Throughout the series, we repeatedly used the word "design" to describe the different functions of the immune system. Design implies intent and the absence of randomness.

For instance, when we look at Thomas Edison's light bulb, a designed object, we understand that its purpose was to bring light to people during the night. The arrangement of its components serves a specific function. On the other hand, a random assortment of wires and glass balls without a clear purpose wouldn't be considered a design.

Similarly, when people build a house, every aspect is carefully designed to serve the purpose of providing a comfortable living space. The layout, furniture, and utilities are all thoughtfully

arranged to fulfill that objective.

Design also implies sophistication and optimal resource utilization. Consider an airplane, where space is limited. Every inch is meticulously designed to maximize its functionality and efficiency.

Likewise, our human immune system is a natural marvel that showcases these design-like characteristics. It works tirelessly with a clear mission to protect us from harmful invaders and maintain our overall health. It's made up of a complex network of molecules, cells, tissues, and organs, all with specific roles in defending the body.

From the moment of birth, the immune system learns to recognize and target specific pathogens, adapting and evolving to provide lifelong protection. It has the remarkable ability to distinguish between self and nonself, effectively identifying and eliminating harmful substances such as viruses,

bacteria, and cancer cells.

Operating through mechanisms such as white blood cells, antibodies, and memory cells, the immune system detects, neutralizes, and remembers threats that it has previously encountered. This adaptability allows it to generate a diverse array of immune cells with unique capabilities, ensuring a tailored response to specific dangers. Its memory function also enables quicker and more efficient responses to recurring infections.

In essence, by using the term "design" to describe the immune system, we highlight its purposeful organization, efficiency, and ability to adapt and protect using an intricate network of components.

Highlights From Our Series

Tonsils are an often overlooked yet integral component of the lymphatic system, providing a strategic defense mechanism in the throat, functioning both as gatekeepers and messengers for the immune system. While a tonsillectomy is considered a "minor" procedure, it has the potential to increase long-term risks of respiratory diseases, infection, and even certain types of cancer.

The lymphatic system operates as an "immune network manager," designed to keep internal and external toxins and invaders away from the body. A healthy lymphatic system, with a constant smooth flow of lymphatic fluid, can remove cancer cells, viruses, toxins, and more from tissues and cells, preventing the vicious cycle of disease.

Unfortunately, the COVID-19 mRNA vaccines, surrounded by a lipid shell, are specially designed to be absorbed by lymphatic cells and distributed to the whole body via the lymphatic system, causing serious adverse events and injuries in some people.

Although small, the spleen performs a multitude of critical functions. Sitting like a reservoir in the circulatory system, the spleen primarily regulates immune defense functions, produces antibodies, and filters the blood to remove pathogens, especially encapsulated germs.

Removing the spleen, which is often done because of a traumatic injury, can have serious repercussions.

The thymus is an organ with essential functions that continue into adulthood. It plays a crucial role in training T cells, the most powerful adaptive immune cells, and produc-

ing important hormones that regulate the immune system.

Although it may shrink with age, the thymus gland remains critical for long-term health. Dysfunction of the thymus can lead to increased vulnerability to infection and autoimmunity. There are many factors we can control to reduce the rate of thymus atrophy and keep it functioning well. Although the thymus can degenerate, it also has a powerful ability to regenerate.

The bone marrow plays a critical role in the production of blood cells that nourish and protect the body.

Interestingly, blood seems to also originate from the intestines and gut bacteria, which has significant implications. By recognizing the influence of the gut and taking steps to promote a healthy gut microbiota, we can potentially enhance blood cell production and strengthen immunity.

A malfunction of bone marrow can lead to serious consequences, such as leukemia, a form of blood cancer caused by abnormalities in bone marrow stem cells. Various factors, such as exposure to toxic chemicals, electromagnetic radiation, viral infections, a high-fat diet, and obesity, can affect the health of bone marrow.

As covered in this series, the immune system's coordination and communication are awe-inspiring. It orchestrates intricate cellular interactions, releasing signaling molecules to summon reinforcements and regulate immune responses. This complex coordination ensures a delicate balance of defending against pathogens and avoiding harmful overreactions.

The resilience of the immune system is evident in its ability to overcome countless challenges, heal wounds, and restore balance even in the face of adversity. Its capacity for self-regulation and self-repair is nothing short of miraculous.

By writing this series, we hoped to inform our readers of the latest scientific evidence for a broader understanding of the immune system while inspiring critical thinking about conventional medicine practices and current paradigms often presented as absolute truth. As we treasure these divine gifts and do our best to protect them, we'll reap the lifelong benefits of stronger immunity and resilience.

This concludes our series: The Miraculous Immune System.

TOXINS

The Alleged 'Forever Chemicals' Conspiracy

Industry conspired to conceal PFAS 'forever chemicals' hazards for decades, study shows

By Sheramy Tsai

In a shocking exposé of global significance, confidential documents reveal that the chemical industry hid the harmful effects of substances known as "forever chemicals."

Investigation by researchers from the University of California-San Francisco (UCSF), and the University of Colorado revealed the industry's strategic measures to hinder public knowledge of the toxicity of per- and poly-fluoroalkyl substances (PFAS). Employing similar methods first used by Stan Glantz in his research on the tobacco industry, researchers analyzed documents from chemical companies DuPont and 3M.

Newly published in the Annals of Global Health, "The Devil They Knew: Chemical Documents Analysis of Industry Influence on PFAS Science" states that these chemical manufacturing giants were privy to the detrimental effects of PFAS as far back as the 1960s. Yet this crucial information remained a secret from the public until the late 1990s.

A statement from the study noted that these companies had "deliberately suppressed, distorted, and obfuscated evidence of PFAS harm." The analysis claimed that these corporations withheld crucial health information from employees and regulators.

"These documents reveal clear evidence that the chemical industry knew about the dangers of PFAS and failed to let the public, regulators, and even their own employees know the risks," Tracey J. Woodruff, senior author of the paper, said in a statement. Woodruff is a professor at UCSF, the director of the UCSF Program on Reproductive Health and the Environment, and a former senior scientist and policy adviser at the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

Decoding the Dangers of Forever Chemicals

PFAS are a group of synthetic chemicals that have become deeply embedded in our environment and everyday life. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reports that there are more than 9,000 types of PFAS substances, including PFOA and PFOS, formerly known as C8. PFAS toxins aren't only present in everyday items such as textiles, nonstick pans, and food packaging, they also lurk in our drinking water and food, so they affect the human population on a mass scale. According to the CDC, a staggering 97 percent of Americans have detectable levels of PFAS in their blood.

The persistence and accumulation of these chemicals pose significant health risks. Studies have linked exposure to

PFAS with numerous health issues, such as decreased fertility, high blood pressure, and an increased risk of certain cancers. Because of their widespread presence and potential for harm, understanding these forever chemicals and their impact on human health and ecosystems is paramount. "One common characteristic of concern of PFAS is that many break down very slowly and can build up in people, animals, and the environment over time," the EPA stated.

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tives called for their destruction.

Same Story, Different Industry

The sway of industry over science and regulatory agencies, predominantly steered by financial interests, has become a formidable factor in molding public health outcomes. This influence isn't unique to the chemical sector. It has been consistently observed across various industries, including tobacco, pharmaceuticals, lead, and polyvinyl chloride, according to studies by researchers such as Bero and White in 2010.

Applying this analysis to the PFAS scandal, DuPont and 3M appear to have engaged in systemic nondisclosure of evidence pointing toward harm, making this an example of science concealed for commercial interests.

This example highlights a troubling industry-wide practice. When faced with evidence that may damage their financial standing or reputation, many corporations opt for suppression and silence, undermining the public's trust and potentially putting lives at risk.

Billion-Dollar Settlements in Chemical Pollution Cases

As the dangers of PFAS become increasingly apparent, lawsuits related to PFAS have surged dramatically. At the beginning of June, three large corporations jointly agreed to resolve PFAS-related drinking water claims from a defined class of public water systems serving a significant portion of the U.S. population. Chemours, DuPont, and Corvea collectively agreed to establish a \$1.185 billion settlement

fund, as announced in a statement.

Earlier this year, the EPA proposed a federal standard to regulate several PFAS substances in drinking water, marking a critical step in public health protection. The EPA stated that it plans to finalize this regulation by the end of 2023.

While some states have established laws to control certain PFAS in drinking water, there is no federal mandate, leading to uneven testing and filtering practices among public water systems. However, according to the National Law Review, eight states have already filed PFAS lawsuits in 2023 alone.

Dupont, 3M Respond

3M has largely downplayed the study's revelations. "The paper is largely comprised of previously published documents," it stated, pointing out that the sources cited go as far back as 1962.

"3M has previously addressed many of the mischaracterizations of these documents in previous reporting," 3M told The Epoch Times in an email.

The company maintains that it hasn't withheld information about the toxicity of PFAS, a contention challenged by the UCSF study. DuPont stated that the paper's accusations don't

apply to its current operations. In 2019, DuPont de Nemours was established as a specialty products company, separate from the historical operations of E.I. du Pont de Nemours (EID), a commodity conglomerate that spun off its chemical businesses in 2015.

DuPont de Nemours, which inherited specialty products manufacturing from both EID and Dow Chemical, stated that it had never produced harmful substances.

"DuPont de Nemours has never manufactured PFOA or PFOS. Safety, health and protecting the planet are core values at DuPont de Nemours. We are—and have always been—committed to upholding the highest standards for the wellbeing of our employees, our customers and the communities in which we operate," Dupont stated.

"To implicate DuPont de Nemours in these past issues ignores this corporate evolution, and the movement of product lines and personnel that now exist with entirely different companies."

Pushing for Transparency, Accountability in Chemical Industry

As the gravity of the PFAS scandal continues to unfold, it has stirred a public demand for transparency and accountability in the

chemical industry. Deliberate attempts to obscure the harmful effects of PFAS has provoked both anger and fear, according to research published in the International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health in 2020.

"As many countries pursue legal and legislative action to curb PFAS production, we hope they are aided by the timeline of evidence presented in this paper," Woodruff said. "This timeline reveals serious failures in the way the U.S. currently regulates harmful chemicals."

Feeling the increased pressure, some chemical makers have significantly scaled back their use of these toxins. DuPont states on its website that "the company's use of PFAS is limited," reporting that it does not make or use PFOA or PFAS in the development or manufacturing of its products.

3M vowed to stop manufacturing PFAS by the end of 2025.

"We have already reduced our use of PFAS over the past three years through ongoing research and development, and will continue to innovate new solutions for customers," it said in a December 2022 statement. "3M will discontinue manufacturing all fluoro-polymers, fluorinated fluids, and PFAS-based additive products."

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.



Nonstick cookware can contaminate our food with PFAS that accumulate in the body. DIMA SOBKO/SHUTTERSTOCK



All exercise can keep us well, but some exercises can help with certain kinds of pain.

Easy Exercises to Combat Chronic Pain

PART II | A THERAPIST'S 5 BEST EXERCISES FOR CHRONIC HIP PAIN

Simple exercises can ensure your hips have the muscle support they need to function well

In this series, "Easy Exercises to Combat Chronic Pain," occupational 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

The hip joint is a strong structure connected to large, powerful muscles. It's the principal connection between your legs and your trunk. It allows for a great range of movement and is critical for maintaining your balance when standing.

The hip is constantly in motion while you are on your feet. It powers your steps, lets you negotiate the terrain, and helps maintain your balance, whether you are moving or standing still. The hip is the primary part of your body you sit on.

Hip pain can easily reduce your quality of life and limit your mobility. Worse, unilateral pain (pain on only one side of your body) can cause you to over-compensate and develop maladaptive walking patterns that can create other problems.

"The key to healthy hips is flexibility, strengthening, and core stabilization," Heather Elliot told The Epoch Times. Elliot is a physical therapy assistant with 29 years of experience and expertise in soft tissue mobilization and postural restoration.

Thankfully, many people find that a regimen of safe, effective, and simple exercises can help them get their otherwise healthy hips free from pain.

Causes of Chronic Pain in Healthy Hips

Chronic hip pain is often defined as pain

that lasts for more than 12 weeks. Although there are many diseases and pathologies associated with the hip, our focus is on chronic pain in otherwise healthy hips, which often comes down to functional patterns or muscle weakness.

Functional Patterns

Chronic hip pain is often related to functional patterns. Jobs that require extended standing on hard surfaces, especially when the hips are kept relatively still, can be highly aggravating to the hips and other joints. Sitting for long periods of time can also cause chronic hip pain. Repetitive motions, even involving small recurring movements, can eventually result in debilitating hip pain.

Muscle Weakness

Hip problems often don't originate from medical diagnoses but from muscle weakness, Elliot noted. For example, weak gluteal muscles can allow the lower back to arch while the pelvis rotates to the anterior, which can lead to chronic lower back and hip pain.

Being proactive about strengthening your hip muscles is the best way to prevent 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.

Next Week: Our knees are one of the most stressed joints in the body, and weak muscles are a leading cause of knee injuries. Simple exercises can strengthen the muscles around our knees, providing greater balance and stability, while helping to keep them pain-free.

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.

The 4 muscle groups of the hip

The muscles of the hip are categorized into four groups:

Iliopsoas

The iliopsoas muscle is located on the front of the pelvis and comprises the joined psoas major and iliacus muscles. It's the strongest flexor of the hip and plays a major role in standing, walking, and running. The iliopsoas muscle also plays a role in stabilizing the femur.

Adductor

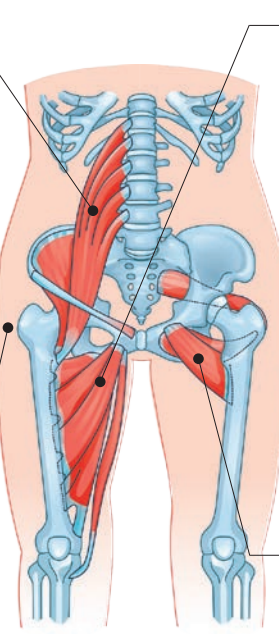
The adductor muscles include the adductor magnus, adductor longus, and adductor brevis, which enable us to pull our legs together. These muscles contribute to posture when standing, walking, and running. The adductors help to stabilize and balance the pelvis.

Gluteal

The glute muscles are in our buttocks and include the tensor fasciae latae, gluteus maximus, gluteus medius, and gluteus minimus. They play a significant role in hip extension, allowing us to push down with our legs. Our gluteal muscles help us to walk, stand, sit, run, and jump. They also help to prevent injuries, maintain an upright posture, and contribute to optimal athletic performance.

Lateral Rotator

The lateral rotator muscle group includes the piriformis, obturator internus, and quadratus femoris muscles, which are responsible for the external rotation of our legs. This muscle group allows us to rotate our feet outward with straight legs. These muscles help us to maintain our balance when walking on rough surfaces and also play a role in stabilizing the head of the femur in the pelvis.



VECTORMINE/SHUTTERSTOCK

3 GLUTE MUSCLES

The gluteal muscles are comprised of a group of three muscles—the gluteus maximus, gluteus medius, and gluteus minimus, and together are commonly referred to as the buttocks.

EXERCISES FOR CHRONIC HIP PAIN

Bodyweight exercises are very effective when done properly. They can also be performed anywhere and without equipment. These five, in particular, can strengthen important muscles that will help relieve chronic hip pain.

STANDING HIP ABDUCTIONS

This exercise focuses on the three gluteal muscles and the tensor fasciae latae, which are all muscles that facilitate hip abduction and will help to keep your hips flexible.

- Step 1:** Start in a standing position. It's best to hold onto a stabilizing surface.
 - Step 2:** Standing straight, slowly bring one leg out to your side as far as you can; pause for one second.
 - Step 3:** Slowly bring the leg back down.
- You can do one leg at a time or both legs in an alternating pattern. Usually, one leg at a time is best because it allows for more accurate movements and pacing.
- Don't underestimate this exercise—it definitely gets harder as you go. Be sure to maintain good form.
- Try 10 repetitions at first, increasing to 30 when you can. Try to do three total sets.



SQUATS

Squats strengthen almost every muscle of your lower body. When performed properly, they target your gluteal muscles and quadriceps and can even strengthen your core.

These are sometimes referred to as "kitchen sink squats" since they can be done using the stability of the kitchen sink.

Step 1: Hold on to the back of a stable chair or the edge of your kitchen sink while standing.

Step 2: Slowly lower straight down, allowing your hips and knees to bend while keeping your stomach tight.

Step 3: Go as low as you comfortably can, hold there for a second, then rise back up.

Step 4: Avoid locking your knees out in a standing position; instead, they should be slightly bent to keep the muscles engaged.

Keep your head and shoulders tall and proud during squats; don't "bow" into the squat. Don't rush the movements; instead, take your time to enjoy the stretch, while maintaining a consistent pace with repetitions.

Only go down as low as your hips and knees will allow; you can go lower as you progress in your abilities.

Keep your toes pointed forward and make sure your knees are bending in a forward direction during squats.

Start with 10 repetitions, advancing up to 30 repetitions as you grow stronger. Try to do three sets.



Lower squat (high intensity)

Shallow squat (low intensity)

STANDING LEG LIFTS

The previous exercises focused on muscles involved with hip extension, while leg lifts target hip flexion.

These exercises are very simple to perform yet surprisingly effective.

This exercise can be performed either in a free-standing position or while holding on to a stabilizing surface such as a counter or the back of a sturdy chair.

Step 1: Start in a standing position.

Step 2: Slowly raise one leg at a time until the upper leg is straight out in front of you.

Step 3: Slowly lower the leg back down to the ground.

Pace yourself, and don't rush. My clients tend to perform this exercise most accurately when they repeat one leg at a time, but alternating legs may also work well for you.

You can intensify this exercise by keeping your knee straight and swinging the entire leg up as far as you comfortably can. However, always listen to your body, and never push into pain or stress.

Try 10 repetitions at first, moving up to 30 repetitions over time. Try to do three sets.



Hip pain can be alleviated by regular, properly performed exercises that strengthen the joint muscles and increase mobility.

SIT-STANDS

Sit-stands are a great functional accompaniment to squats, adding your back muscles to the leg muscles that squats already engage. Elliot says these are great for hips and increase balance and stability.

Elliot recommends sit-stands because they are highly practical for all-around strengthening. The advanced level—30 repetitions without using your hands—can build surprisingly powerful muscles and can help eliminate chronic hip pain.

Step 1: Sit on a surface that keeps your knees bent and your feet touching the floor.

Step 2: Slowly rise into a fully standing position.

Step 3: Slowly move back into a sitting position.

Using a chair with armrests will allow you to use your arms as a support to help you stand. You can intensify the exercise by crossing your arms and only using your legs to stand and sit.

It's important to control the rate of descent when you move into a sitting position. Avoid plopping down as you sit, as that can place strain on your lower back. Always come down slowly and gently.

Start with 10 repetitions, advancing up to 30 repetitions as you grow stronger. Try to do three sets.



STANDING HIP EXTENSIONS

These humble exercises are highly effective since they target the gluteal muscles while also providing mobility and stretching for the hip.

Step 1: Start in a standing position. As with standing hip abductions, it's best to hold on to a stabilizing surface.

Step 2: While standing straight, slowly raise one leg straight out behind you.

Step 3: Slowly lower your leg back down.

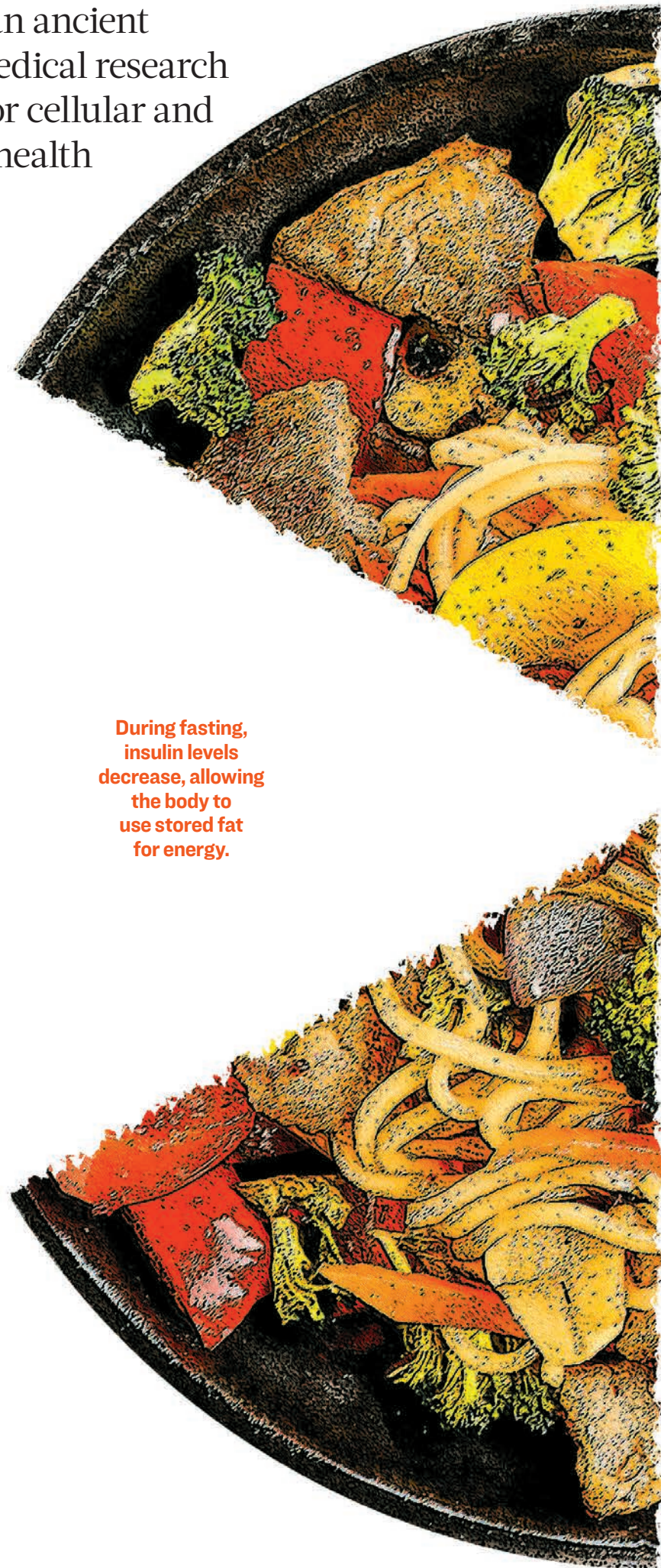
Try 10 repetitions at first, moving to 30 when you can. Try to do three sets in total.

Perform these exercises at least once a day, working up to twice a day, once in the morning and once in the evening.



Fasting: A Game Changer for Spike Protein Injuries

Fasting is an ancient practice medical research validates for cellular and metabolic health



During fasting, insulin levels decrease, allowing the body to use stored fat for energy.

Continued from Page 1

the post-fed state, also known as the fasting state. These states coexist and have opposing effects, much like yin and yang.

Consuming food generally triggers inflammation, while fasting promotes an anti-inflammatory response. Individuals are not isolated entities; they interact with various pathogens, bacteria, and fungi in their environment. Eating introduces both nutrients and pathogens into the body, triggering the immune system.

Studies have shown that after each meal, there is a temporary period of inflammation as the immune system eliminates pathogens. This inflammation is beneficial, as it helps prevent infection and supports the body's defense mechanisms.

However, frequent snacking and constantly being in a fed state can lead to chronic inflammation, which has negative health effects including increased stress on the body, elevated blood pressure, reduced insulin sensitivity, cell and tissue damage, and impaired healing. That's why chronic inflammation is often associated with conditions like Type 2 diabetes, Alzheimer's disease, cancer, and more.

In contrast, both intermittent and prolonged fasting activate genes that suppress inflammation, reduce inflammatory immune cells, and show signs of mitigating autoimmunity. Notably, a study published in Cell Stem Cell found that a three-day fasting period can reset the immune system by degrading old immune cells and regenerating new ones.

Does Fasting Help People With Long COVID and Vaccine Injuries?

Fasting is suggested as a potential first-line treatment for long COVID and post-vaccine symptoms, according to the Front Line COVID-19 Critical Care (FLCCC) Alliance, a prominent medical group focusing on these conditions.

The purpose of fasting in these cases is to stimulate autophagy, a process that breaks down and recycles cellular components and proteins, including COVID-19 spike proteins.

FLCCC doctors believe that spike proteins, whether from the infection or the vaccine, play a significant role in patients' symptoms. These spike proteins can lead to inflammation, microclotting, mitochondrial dysfunction, autoimmunity, neurological issues, and other complications.

A selective form of autophagy, known as chaperone-mediated autophagy, specializes in protein degradation and typically activates after 24 hours of fasting. Therefore, the FLCCC recommends prolonged fasting of 72 hours or more, if tolerated.

Patients often see an improvement in their brain fog in the later hours of their 72-hour fast, said Scott Marsland, a nurse practitioner treating long COVID and vaccine injury.

He said that fasting has likely helped reduce all known symptoms of long COVID and vaccine injury.

Internist Dr. Syed Haider said that he has had patients who experienced a complete reversal of symptoms during prolonged fasts.

Although there is no definitive test for spike protein reduction, Marsland said he has observed decreased spike protein levels in patients following diligent adherence to a fasting schedule, particularly with prolonged fasting.

Hippocrates, a revered figure in medicine, advocated against eating while ill, stating that 'to eat when you are sick, is to feed your illness.'

Anti-spike antibodies, which are immune proteins that target and combat foreign invaders such as spike proteins, can provide insights into symptom alleviation.

Dr. Jordan Vaughn, an internist who has analyzed data from more than 800 patients, noted that as patients' symptoms improve, their anti-spike antibody levels tend to decrease.

However, the antibody test is not fool-proof, according to Marsland. Some patients may not show positive antibody results despite the presence of spike protein remnants in their bodies. Factors such as immune dysregulation, immunosuppression, or immune deficiencies may limit the production of antibodies. Furthermore, initial negative results on the anti-spike antibody test can occur in obese and overweight individuals, Marsland added. Spike proteins tend to hide in fat, evading immediate detection.

Is Fasting a Good Idea for Weight Loss?

Fasting is known for its potential to improve conditions such as diabetes and

to support weight loss. During fasting, insulin levels decrease, allowing the body to use stored fat for energy.

Fasting interventions are often compared to the ketogenic diet, which is high in fat and low in carbohydrates. This dietary approach maintains low insulin levels and promotes the breakdown of fat, including the potentially harmful visceral fat associated with inflammation.

Low insulin levels facilitate fat breakdown and weight loss. When insulin is high, energy storage is prioritized over fat breakdown, leading to limited fat use.

To maintain weight loss, Fung said that it's important to not overeat when breaking a fast. Consuming excess calories can result in weight gain, as the body stores the surplus as fat.

Is Fasting a Good Idea If You Have Diabetes?

Fasting has shown promise in achieving Type 2 diabetes remission for at least a year. Both intermittent and prolonged fasting reduce meal frequency, leading to decreased insulin release and improved management of blood sugar levels. Fasting also promotes the breakdown of visceral fat, linked to inflammation and insulin resistance.

While fasting has been implemented in diabetes treatment protocols, it is important for patients to consult with their doctors before starting a fasting regimen. Additionally, children, pregnant women, and breastfeeding mothers are advised to avoid fasting.

Fasting and Alzheimer's Treatment

Intermittent fasting has potential benefits for cognitive function and memory, with some people reporting improved mental clarity and memory from intermittent fasting or while fasting for prolonged periods. Studies show fasting increases the brain-derived neurotrophic factor. This is a protein that supports the survival of old neurons and encourages the formation of new neurons and connections. Autophagy during fasting may regenerate neurons and clear protein debris.

While there's limited human evidence, several studies have suggested ketogenic diets improve cognition. Similar to fasting, these diets force the body to use fat and ketones, rather than glucose, as the primary energy source. Alzheimer's disease takes decades to develop, so it is difficult to show that short-term interventions like fasting help, Fung said.

He pointed to Dr. Dale Bredeben, the author of "The End of Alzheimer's" and the chief science officer of Apollo Health.

According to Bredeben, some of his patients reversed their symptoms after following his protocol, which included fasting. Patients followed a 12-hour to 14-hour daily fast, along with other interventions such as exercising, getting sufficient sleep, and eating a diet rich in low-glycemic whole foods

and Pasture-Raised Meats, with Few Grains.

It is unclear whether the patients' improvement resulted from fasting or other interventions. But because diabetes and insulin resistance may put people at risk of developing Alzheimer's disease, reversing diabetes through fasting may help prevent such diseases, Fung said.

Fasting and Cancer Treatment

The same concept applies to obesity-associated cancers, as fasting may help reduce their occurrence.

"There are a lot of obesity-associated cancers," Fung said. "There are about 13 cancers that are well accepted that they are associated with obesity; fasting might help decrease that."

Fasting can potentially starve cancer cells. When fasting, the body uses fats and produces ketones for energy. Cancer cells rely heavily on glucose, making them less efficient at using ketones. Additionally, fasting reduces insulin levels. Elevated insulin levels are linked to an increased risk of breast, prostate, and colorectal cancers.

"Not proven," Fung said in response to this theory, "but certainly an interesting hypothesis."

Things to Consider Before Fasting

Fasting can have certain side effects, including mood swings and, notably, hunger. In today's culture, where snacking and constant indulgence in food are common, fasting can be seen as equivalent to starvation.

However, Fung would argue that fasting is a purposeful way of managing



one's day by allocating specific times for eating.

The benefits of fasting can vary among individuals, and the preferred type of fasting can also differ. Intermittent fasting is generally safe, but not everyone responds well to prolonged fasting.

During prolonged fasts, the body primarily breaks down fat, rather than muscle, for energy. However, the extent to which fat or muscle is targeted can vary based on an individual's body composition. Those who have more fat to lose may lose more fat and less muscle, while those with higher muscle mass may experience a greater breakdown of protein stores.

Studies have shown that lean muscle mass loss occurs within the first day of prolonged fasting, regardless of an individual's fat and muscle proportions. Therefore, individuals with significant muscle mass may experience more muscle loss and less fat loss during prolonged fasting.

There are different approaches to incorporating fasting into one's lifestyle—such as intermittent fasting, or longer fasting periods every few months. Social norms, like having dinner together, can discourage extended fasting, so it's important to choose a fasting style that suits one's lifestyle and preferences.

FOOD AS MEDICINE

Blueberries Boost the Brain and Ease the Heart

New study finds eating blueberries daily can improve brain function and lower blood pressure

By Sarah Cownley

According to recent studies, eating a handful of blueberries daily may improve brain function and lower blood pressure. New studies are providing compelling evidence that eating blueberries could be an easy way to improve long-term health, including physical and mental well-being.

One of the most recent studies touting blueberries' benefits was published in the American Journal of Clinical Nutrition and involved researchers from King's and the University of Reading. It analyzed the results of a randomized, double-blind, placebo-controlled trial of 61 healthy men and women aged 65 to 80 who consumed a beverage made with 26 grams of freeze-dried wild blueberry powder (the equivalent of about 178 grams of whole berries). The control group drank a matching placebo.

Over the 12 weeks, researchers found that participants who consumed the berry power had better memory and improved accuracy on attention tasks. They also had lower blood pressure compared to the placebo group. This blueberry group also had increased flow-mediated dilation (FMD), leading to a lower risk of cardiovascular disease.

This study, the first of its kind, helps to bolster previous studies that suggested eating blueberries daily could help lower the risk of cardiovascular disease by lowering blood pressure and improving blood vessel function.

Previous studies had found potential advantages to consuming blueberries, but this study went further by analyzing how a certain amount of dietary blueberry consumption could benefit cognitive and cardiovascular health simultaneously.

Researchers believe the blue pigments in blueberries, called anthocyanins, are behind the effects. These polyphenols are noted antioxidants and are also present in other foods, such as raspberries, strawberries, red grapes, and purple vegetables.

"It's clear from this study that consuming wild blueberries is beneficial to cognitive function and vascular health," professor Claire Williams, chair of the neuroscience department at the University of Reading, said. "The group who had the wild blueberry powder showed signs of better memory and greater mental flexibility when completing cognitive tasks. This is consistent with what we already know about the health benefits of anthocyanin-rich foods. It points to an important role of polyphenols in healthy aging."

Sarah has a diploma in Nutritional Therapy from Health Sciences Academy in London and enjoys helping others by teaching healthy lifestyle changes through her personal consultations and with her regular contributions to the Doctors Health Press. This article was originally published by Bel Marra Health.

Eating blueberries is a tasty, nourishing way to improve overall physical and mental well-being.



AARON MCCOY/GETTY IMAGES

Rates of Medical Autopsies Plummet During Pandemic

Continued from Page 1

It notes the stability of autopsy rates from the 1950s to the early 1970s.

Between 1972 and 2020, hospital autopsies declined, while medicolegal autopsies remained stable or increased. Notably, in deaths caused by external factors such as drug overdose, homicide, or suicide, the autopsy rate rose from about 19 percent in 1972 to 60 percent in 2020.

In an email to The Epoch Times, the NCHS noted that the distinction between medicolegal autopsies and autopsies for deaths from external causes is not clear, suggesting that the increase in autopsies for external causes may reflect the rise of medicolegal autopsies, while "hospital autopsies" may refer to autopsies for deaths resulting from diseases.

Possible Reasons for the Decline

The report attributed the decline in autopsy rates to the removal in 1971 of the 20 percent to 25 percent autopsy rate requirement in hospitals set by the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Hospitals.

Two other possible reasons are doctors' reluctance to order autopsies because they fear potential lawsuits if errors

are discovered—despite such occurrences being relatively rare—and a perception that autopsies as less valuable than they were in the past because of advancements in medical technology, as described in a perspective by Dr. Lee Goldman published in Circulation in 2018. The cost of autopsies and the fear of lawsuits need to be addressed, it warns.

"Our collective inability to address the financial and medicolegal disincentives to higher autopsy rates is a societal shortcoming, undoubtedly reinforced by overconfidence in modern diagnostic technology," wrote Goldman, then dean of the faculties of health sciences and medicine at Columbia University Irving Medical Center.

A lack of insurance reimbursement and diminishing academic importance are two other primary reasons for the consistent decline over the past 50 years, Dr. Harry Sanchez, director of autopsy services in the pathology department at the Yale School of Medicine, told The Epoch Times.

Lack of Reimbursement

Sanchez said that shortly after Medicare and Medicaid were created in 1965, pathologists could no longer bill an autopsy to the patient or the insurance company because it was no longer considered an individual procedure.

Autopsies are considered part of the hospital's administrative and quality assurance work, covered by Medicare. "You get the same payment whether you do one autopsy or 100 autopsies," Sanchez said. "So there's really no financial incentive for the hospital to do more autopsies."

"For pathologists, you can't bill for the autopsy. So there's no reimbursement to the pathologist who does the autopsy."

Before the implementation of Medicare, autopsies were typically billed as a fixed proportion of the total medical bill, according to a 1980 report.

Autopsies involve significant work, with a routine adult autopsy taking a few hours. However, pathologists do not receive direct reimbursement for their

efforts, including examining slides and generating reports.

Lack of Career Incentives

The declining academic importance of autopsies has been influenced by significantly increased federal funding for medical research since the 1950s. As grant money has become the primary measure of academic success, pathologists have shown less interest in autopsies and have focused more on research. "There was increasingly less incentive to engage in things like quality assurance and teaching," Sanchez said. "That continues to be true today."

The federal budget for medical research rose from \$3 million to \$76 million between 1941 and 1951.

In the 1940s and 1950s, approximately half of all hospital deaths were autopsied. By the mid-1960s, it had declined to about 25 percent to 35 percent.

"Very few pathologists want to do autopsies," Sanchez said. "The incentives are just not there for them to change their minds... economically and professionally."

Why Autopsies Remain Indispensable

Autopsies have long been regarded as the gold standard for investigating a

7.4 PERCENT

The autopsy rate in 2020 reached a record low of 7.4 percent.



NASTASIC/GETTY IMAGES

HERBAL FIRST AID

Treat Acute Injuries With Natural Medicine

PART II PLANTAIN: A COMMON WEED WITH UNCOMMON PROPERTIES

This long-revered plant is an essential and easy-to-find treatment for cuts, stings, and more

When to Use Plantain

Research supports the use of plantain for the following acute situations:

- Bee or wasp stings
- Mosquito bites or other bug bites
- Minor cuts and scrapes
- Poison ivy or poison oak
- Bruises
- Sunburn
- Eczema or Psoriasis
- Cracked skin or lips from dryness
- Different Forms to Choose From

Different Forms to Choose From

When available, I use fresh plantain. Simply pick a plantain leaf, chew it into a slurry, and then apply the poultice directly to the affected skin area.

When fresh plantain isn't available, plantain salve is a great option. It's portable, effective, and has a long shelf-life. Plantain salve can be either purchased online or made in your kitchen.

Plantain is a good alternative remedy for insect bites, minor cuts, poison ivy stings, and even sunburn.

In this series, "Herbal First Aid Kit," we look at natural alternatives to modern first aid kits, which usually consist of medications made from synthetic chemicals. If you are looking for natural solutions for acute conditions, these herbs are safe, effective, and easily available.

By Sina McCullough

Plantain (*Plantago major* or *Plantago lanceolata*) may share a name with the banana-like fruit found in grocery stores but it's completely different. This plantain is the perennial herb often identified as a "weed" growing in backyards, in lawns, along driveways and hiking paths, and in gardens.

Plantain meets important requirements for inclusion in a herbal first-aid kit because it's excellent for treating acute conditions (such as cuts, scrapes, and bee stings), is easy to administer, and has little risk of causing side effects.

The Easiest Medicine

My first experience with plantain was during a summer play date when my son was stung by a wasp at our home. He was crying in pain when I suddenly remembered hearing that plantain pulls toxins from the skin and alleviates pain.

I quickly searched the ground and found plantain, chewed it until a slurry formed in my mouth

(it was disgusting), and then placed the poultice directly on the sting location. Within a few seconds, my son stopped crying. The pain was gone and he felt well enough to rejoin the play date. From that moment, I was hooked on plantain!

Plantain is used in nearly every part of the world. Its use in wound healing dates to at least the ancient Greeks, who prescribed the leaves for the treatment of dog bites. The Vikings also used plantain to heal wounds. Due to its popularity in the 14th century, plantain was revered in Shakespeare's play "Romeo and Juliet" for its ability to heal a broken shin.

In traditional medicine, plantain combined with honey was recommended for wounds, while plantain boiled and eaten with butter was said to heal any organ in the human body.

Science has confirmed that plantain has anti-inflammatory, antibiotic, antiviral, pain-blocker, antidiarrheal, antidiabetic, antioxidant, anti-tumor, and immune-modulator properties.

Because of its diverse array of healing properties, plantain can replace several man-made medications commonly found in a modern first-aid kit.

Topical Pain Killer

When experiencing pain and itching from a bee or wasp sting, I reach for plantain instead of an over-the-counter pain killer such as acetaminophen or Benadryl.

Plantain has an excellent drawing effect and can remove a stinger or venom. As an antinociceptive, plantain also stops pain. While plantain is a natural remedy for stings, pain, and itching, the man-made alternative is often Benadryl, which contains synthetic ingredients such as D&C Red No. 27, polyethylene glycol, polysorbate 80, and titanium dioxide.

Topical Antibiotic

For minor cuts and scrapes, I reach for plantain instead of Neosporin.

Plantain is a versatile "first-aid ointment" that can be used to treat minor cuts and scrapes. It's referred to as the "band aid" plant because it contains allantoin, which rapidly regenerates skin cells by removing necrotic or sick tissue and forming new epithelial or skin tissue.

Plantain also contains aucubin, which is anti-inflammatory, and aucubigenin, which is antibacterial. Studies have concluded that plantain is effective for tissue repair and skin healing, including closing the wound faster and accelerating wound healing time. The man-made alternative is often Neosporin, which contains petrolatum, a synthetic chemical made from fossil fuels.

You can avoid man-made chemicals and still experience relief from bee stings, insect bites, and minor cuts and scrapes by making or purchasing plantain remedies.

A Word on Plantain Quality

No matter which form of plantain you choose, make sure it's organic or wasn't sprayed with pesticides or herbicides. When foraging for plantain, make sure not to harvest in areas near freeways or where dogs have gone potty.

Plantain has an excellent drawing effect and can remove a stinger or venom.

Plantain Salve

I always carry plantain salve in my purse. I use it regularly for dry or chapped lips and dry skin. My children call it "magic cream" because when they experience bumps, bruises, scrapes, or bites, plantain salve quickly soothes the pain and reduces the redness and swelling.

When making plantain salve, in addition to plantain, I add comfrey (*Symphytum officinale*) and rosemary essential oil.

Comfrey has been reported to be effective for topical treatment of pain, swelling, and inflammation, as well as blunt trauma and skin wounds.

Rosemary essential oil increases the shelf life of the salve. It also contains antibacterial and antifungal properties and reportedly can accelerate wound healing.

Next Week: Peppermint is a culinary herb with medicinal and aromatherapeutic properties. It can be used to treat indigestion, headache, nausea, and more.

Dr. Sina McCullough is the creator of "GO WILD: How I Reverse Chronic and Autoimmune Disease," and author of "Hands Off My Food" and "Beyond Labels." She holds a doctorate in nutrition from the University of California-Davis. She is a master herbalist, Gluten Free Society certified practitioner, and homeschool mom of three.

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

MY PLANTAIN SALVE RECIPE

MAKES 3/4 CUP SALVE

2 cups fresh plantain leaves (foraged from an area that wasn't sprayed with chemicals) or 8 tablespoons dried plantain leaves

1 tablespoon dried comfrey root powder or 1/2 cup fresh comfrey leaves or root

1 1/4 cup carrier oil such as organic olive oil or organic avocado oil

Roughly 3 tablespoons beeswax pearls

40 drops of organic rosemary essential oil

If using fresh leaves, start with step one. If using dried leaves, begin with step two.

Harvest plantain leaves on a dry, sunny day. Pull off any parts that look sick or diseased. Brush off dirt with a dry cloth, if needed. Arrange leaves in a single layer on a clean, dry towel. Allow to air dry for 2-3 days.

Once dry, coarsely chop leaves, then place in clean, dry pint glass jar. Add comfrey, then cover with oil; the leaves should be completely covered with oil. If not, add more oil. Place lid on jar.

Place a kitchen towel on the bottom of the crockpot and place your jars on top of the towel. Add enough water to the pot to come halfway up the jar. Set on the lowest possible setting, which is usually "keep warm." Leave lid off the slow cooker and allow the oil to infuse for 4-6 hours, adding water if needed to prevent the basin from drying out. Periodically, shake the jars. You can infuse for 12-24 hours for a more potent salve, but will need to keep checking the water level.

Remove jars from crockpot. Strain the oil through a cheesecloth or fine mesh sieve. Let oil sit for several hours to cool. If there's any water in the oil, it will collect in the bottom of the jar. Remove the water using a turkey baster by siphoning the infused oil off the top, leaving the water behind. Alternatively, slowly pour the oil off the top, leaving the water behind.

Heat beeswax in a double boiler over low heat. Once melted, add plantain oil and stir thoroughly until mixed. For a firmer salve, add more beeswax. Once the mixture has cooled, stir in rosemary essential oil.

Pour salve into clean, dry containers. Allow to cool. Plantain salve has a shelf life of several years if there's no water in the salve and it's stored in a cool place.

DOSAGE

FOR EXTERNAL USE ONLY. Apply salve directly to skin. Cover with bandage. Re-apply to skin as needed (just as you would if using Neosporin). While not common, skin reactions have occurred. Therefore, when using for the first time, apply a small amount to the skin. If no irritation or negative reaction occurs, apply liberally as needed.

PRECAUTIONS AND POSSIBLE INTERACTIONS

Consult with a health care provider before consuming plantain if you are pregnant or nursing. Plantain is a known laxative. Avoid plantain if taking lithium or carbamazepine. While plantain applied topically is generally well tolerated, skin reactions have been reported. Additionally, oral consumption has been known to cause the following adverse reactions: anaphylaxis, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, bloating, chest congestion, sneezing, and watery eyes.

TRADITIONAL CHINESE MEDICINE

Acupuncture Improves Outcomes for Dialysis Patients: Study

New research adds to mounting evidence that supports integrating complementary and traditional medicine into clinical practice

By Emma Suttie

A recent study out of Portugal found that incorporating acupuncture into dialysis treatments had noteworthy benefits for patients—and was quite comfortable despite the needles. Acupuncture treatments were administered simultaneously alongside dialysis treatments.

In the study, "Integrating Acupuncture Into a Dialysis Center," published in *Healthcare* in May, the authors note that there's a growing interest in creating a more comprehensive approach to health care by integrating traditional Chinese medicine (TCM) into conventional medicine.

"Scientific evidence supports acupuncture as an integrative treatment for specific health conditions," they note.

The study aimed to evaluate how well patients accepted acupuncture and how easily it could be integrated into conventional treatments. It also aimed to assess the effect of acupuncture on functional capacity and quality of life in patients receiving hemodialysis over the study period.

Patients were split into two groups. One received traditional acupuncture and the other received "sham" acupuncture—meaning the insertion of acupuncture needles in locations that don't correspond to acupuncture points.

The study involved 48 patients who participated in the patient-assessor-blinded randomized controlled trial, meaning that the patients and the people assessing the results didn't know which patients got real acupuncture and which ones got fake acupuncture.

Acceptance of the acupuncture treatment was measured by assessing both the percentage of patients who completed treatments and opinions about acupuncture by the patients and health professionals using questionnaires before and after the treatments.

Viability was measured by safety (the number of reported adverse events) and effectiveness using changes in functional capacity, peripheral muscle strength, and health-related quality-of-life scores after the treatments.

Study participants who had kidney failure and had been receiving weekly hemodialysis treatments for more than three months were chosen.

Hemodialysis is a treatment used to filter waste and water from the blood, as the kidneys do when they're healthy. Hemodialysis helps control blood pressure and balance vital minerals, such as potassium, sodium, and calcium, in your blood.

Participants were men and women above 18 years of age who were considered medically stable and had previously tried acupuncture. Those with comorbidities were excluded. The participants who received real acupuncture had nine total treatments, and the study ran from August 2021 to February 2022, with a 12-week post-treatment follow-up.

The Study's Conclusions

The researchers found that those who received the traditional, or "verum," acupuncture had better results than those who received the sham acupuncture.

The traditional acupuncture group could walk farther and demonstrated increased peripheral muscle strength in their lower limbs and handgrip strength. The group also achieved higher scores in health-related quality of life, which is defined as an individual or group's perceived physical and mental health over time.

The traditional acupuncture group also had greater physical functioning, decreased body pain, and improved general health, vitality, and social functioning. They saw an improvement in overall health; improvement in specific areas targeted by kidney disease, including specific symptoms and effects related to kidney

disease; experienced an increase in cognitive function; and had improved sleep.

When asked about the degree of discomfort felt during the acupuncture treatment, 17.8 percent said it was "neither comfortable nor uncomfortable," 35.6 percent said it was "comfortable," and 46.7 percent said it was "very comfortable." Furthermore, the majority, or 91.1 percent, said they would recommend acupuncture treatment to others based on their experience.

As for acupuncture's effectiveness and clinical applicability, 8.3 percent had a neutral opinion, while 33.3 percent felt it was "positive," and 58.3 percent were "very positive" about the experience.

According to the study, all those involved thought the acupuncture treatments didn't interfere with routine hemodialysis. Throughout the trial period, patients, as well as health professionals, didn't observe or report any acupuncture-related adverse events, suggesting that using acupuncture during hemodialysis sessions can be considered safe.

The study authors were interested in the patient's opinions about acupuncture as well as the opinions of the doctors and nurses who administer their care.

Integration: The Future of Health Care?

The study authors note that the rise of traditional and complementary medicines in the past two decades have prompted regulators to assess their safety and integration into health systems.

"As a result, through its first traditional medicine strategy, the WHO has defined global policies with national and regional rules to promote the regulation of products, practices, and practitioner education and training to ensure the rational, safe, and effective use

of TCM [traditional and complementary medicine]," they said.

In Portugal, where the study took place, they have been integrating traditional and complementary medicine—designated nonconventional therapies, or NCTs—into their health care system for the past two decades. These nonconventional therapies include acupuncture, phytotherapy, homeopathy, TCM, naturopathy, osteopathy, and chiropractic.

The regulation of NCTs began in 2003 and was recognized in 2019.

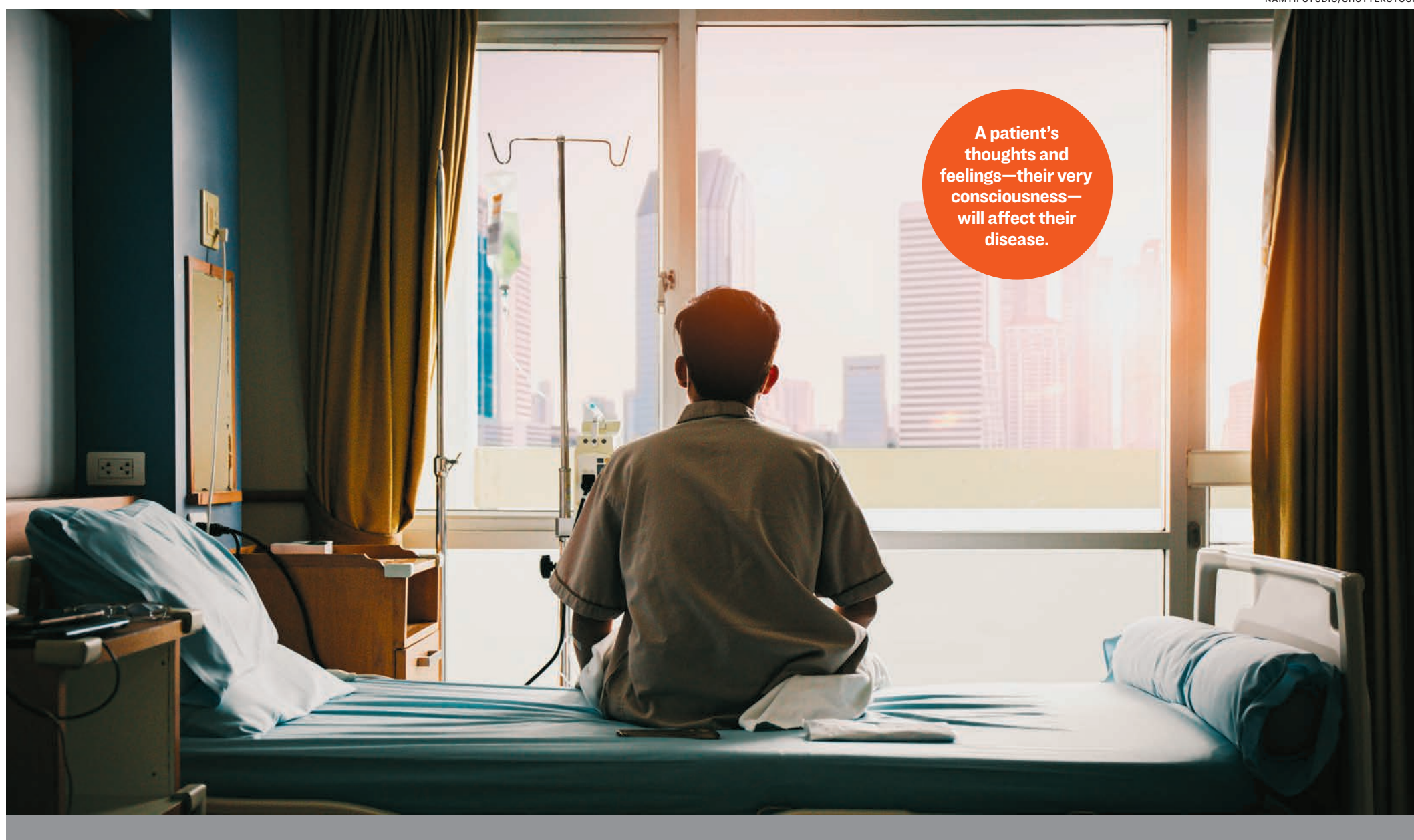
According to the study authors, this action toward regulation resulted in the attribution of 6,311 professional licenses, which contributed to the clients' safety when using the NCTs because of the certainty that an accredited practitioner provided them.

"It is worth mentioning that acupuncture and TCM have the highest number of certified professionals," the study authors noted.

As studies such as this one accumulate data about the benefits of traditional and complementary therapies, it's likely that patients will see greater integration of these types of therapies into their health care systems. This integration could ultimately offer benefits to all patients who would like the option of more holistic approaches or who simply want more choices when it comes to their health care needs.



▲ Integrating complementary therapies into conventional care can give patients more holistic treatment options.



HEALTH VIEWPOINTS

Expanding the Broken Biomedical Model

Conventional medicine is finally recognizing that treating cancer or any disease in isolation from the human condition is fundamentally inadequate

By Wu Kuo-Pin

"Cancer" is a dreaded diagnosis and one of the most pervasive diseases of our day. However, there have been cases where cancer cells have mysteriously disappeared, even in patients deemed hopeless by medical professionals.

Mainstream medicine describes these cases as "spontaneous remission."

The prevailing medical mindset struggles to explain spontaneous remission and experts have various interpretations. For those who are open to it, this long-documented phenomenon opens up new and critical ways to understand cancer and how to treat it.

Medical scientists and doctors have long known that the mind is a critical factor in the progression of disease, but current conventional medicine has largely ignored this aspect. In some cases, modern medicine even ignores

the patient, focusing almost exclusively on the disease.

Dr. Bernard Lown, a pioneering cardiologist and humanitarian who founded the Lown Institute, wrote about this in his book "The Lost Art of Healing: Practicing Compassion in Medicine."

"Patients will not acquiesce to the ultimate alienation of being reduced to standardized objects. No one will accept for long being merely identified by their illness, as nothing but an assemblage of broken-down biologic parts. Patients crave a partnership with their physicians who are as sensitive to their aching souls as to their malfunctioning anatomy. They yearn not for a taunt drafted business contract but for a covenant of trust between equals earned by the doctor exercising the art of caring," he wrote.

Lown's statement highlights the shortcomings and challenges faced by

“Patients crave a partnership with their physicians who are as sensitive to their aching souls as to their malfunctioning anatomy.”

Dr. Bernard Lown,
founder, Lown
Institute

modern medicine. To transcend these shortcomings, medicine must account for the whole person—the sum total of their being, including their thoughts, feelings, and character.

Modern Medical Paradigm: Neglecting the 'Whole Person' Care

Parasitic diseases, infectious diseases, and nutritional deficiencies were once the primary threats to human health. However, diseases related to psychology and social factors have emerged as significant health issues in modern society. Traditional biomedical approaches to diagnosis, treatment, and prevention fall short in treating such diseases.

Modern medicine focuses on studying biological changes—delving into anatomy, physiology, pathology, biochemistry, and other aspects to investigate the causes and treatments of diseases.

Due to the emphasis on biomedical aspects, modern medicine only sees the "disease," relying on drugs and surgeries to eliminate disease in clinical practice. If that illness is depression, treatment protocols often reduce the ailment to a biochemical imbalance best addressed with drugs that have cascading influences of uncertain consequences.

But besides the physical body, humans possess intangible elements such as the mind and consciousness. In the causes and progression of diseases, the mental and conscious aspects often

ideas or beliefs we haven't consciously chosen for ourselves. Some spiritual practices call these "attachments."

Acknowledging and feeling these emotions allows them to pass, and we don't have to spend so much energy resisting and suppressing them. We become more relaxed around these emotions when we grant ourselves permission to feel them.

I Love Myself When I Feel Stuff

When you feel certain emotions, if you're like most people, you'll not only resist them, but also make yourself feel bad for feeling them. You may become angry at yourself for feeling angry, or disappointed and sad that you are depressed.

If you simply noticed that you're feeling the emotion (let's say frustration or sadness) and gave yourself some love, some breath, and some space, it would be an entirely different experience. You would not make a big deal about having the emotion; you'd simply give yourself some love. It's a game-changer.

I'm Not Stuck in Right Versus Wrong

It's incredible how often we make ourselves wrong: "I shouldn't have done that," "I suck for not doing this," "I should feel ashamed for how I am." And we do the same thing to other people: "They suck for doing this or not doing that." We stress out trying to do things right.

play a dominant role. This crucial reality is finally gaining recognition in the medical community, though hasn't quite penetrated clinical practice. That said, the World Health Organization does now define health as "a complete physical, mental, and social well-being, and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity."

The "biomedical model" separates the person from the disease and looks at the patients' excreta (waste matter) and pathological tissues in isolation from the rest of the patient, solely seeking the causes of diseases, while neglecting the influence of social, psychological, and behavioral factors, thus wholly erasing the human image.

But if medicine's subject is the human being, treating any significant disease, especially cancer, requires mind-body integration.

Personality Traits Associated With Cancer

Regarding cancer research in modern medicine, the focus often concerns tangible and measurable carcinogens and genetic factors. Lifestyle factors are starting to also gain attention and some experts even explore the causes of cancer from different perspectives.

According to Andrew Goliszek, a professor at North Carolina A&T State University, there's a correlation between emotions and our susceptibility to illness and disease. Goliszek cites research that links negative emotions such as depression, anger, and hostility to a greater risk of cancer, while positive attitudes such as hope, optimism, and happiness are linked to a lower risk. These character traits can calm the sympathetic nervous system and strengthen immune function, thereby protecting us from disease.

There are biochemical factors involved in this, such as stress hormones, and these often get the most attention. But here again, we run the risk of reducing the patient to their physiology.

Goliszek discusses certain "cancer-prone personalities" that research links to a greater risk of cancer. These characteristics include:

- Repressing both positive and negative emotions
- Displaying anger, resentment, or hostility toward others
- Taking on extra duties and responsibilities, even when they cause stress
- Reacting adversely to and struggling to cope with life changes
- Having a pessimistic outlook
- Easily experiencing depression or feelings of hopelessness
- Worrying frequently and excessively about others
- Feeling the need for approval and constantly seeking to please others

Lawrence LeShan, a psychotherapist in New York, observed similar patterns in clinical cancer treatment. Individuals often exhibit deep sadness, discouragement, and loss in response to unfavorable life events while suppressing their inner emotions. This negative attitude can significantly weaken the immune system, which creates opportunities for cancer cell proliferation.

In his years of interaction with cancer patients, LeShan found that some cancer patients made significant physiological, psychological, and spiritual improvements when faced with cancer. This seemed to affect the course of their disease.

In recent years, more people have begun recognizing the importance of positive thinking and emotional detoxification for physical health.

Louise L. Hay, a renowned American healing practitioner known for her work on the mind-body connection, provides an apt example of spontaneous cancer remission. After being diagnosed with cervical cancer at 52, she released accumulated anger and resentment from childhood abuse. Six months later, the cancer cells in her body disappeared.

There is also a growing trend of patients turning to complementary and alternative medicine approaches such as traditional Chinese medicine (TCM), acupuncture, meditation, mindfulness, and qigong when facing a cancer diagnosis.

Caring for Patients' Well-Being Is Crucial to Mitigating Cancer's Internal Turmoil

To address the limitations of the biomedical model in modern medicine, people have started to reflect on and revise the biomedical approach.

The book "Healing Cancer from Within: The Key Report on Cancer Psychology" highlights that cancer is a comprehensive and systemic disease caused by "internal disorders" resulting from disruptions in multiple aspects of the body. Comprehensive adjustments to these disorders are equally necessary, even crucial, for preventing metastasis and recurrence.

Cancer isn't a malfunction of only basic cellular reproduction, but also internal immune functions that should

recognize and clear out problematic cells. Researchers have now verified, through several mechanisms, that the state of a person's mind has immediate and significant effects on their physiology. Ongoing stress is also known to contribute to chronic disease states. Even loneliness has been linked to significant increases in disease risk.

George L. Engel, a psychologist, proposed in an article published in the journal *Science* that the "biopsychosocial model" overcomes the limitations of the biomedical model by emphasizing the comprehensive and systematic integration of biological, psychological, and social perspectives in understanding human health and disease. It recognizes the importance of addressing individuals' psychological needs and social factors.

Another emerging model, the "ecological model," encompasses a broader scope. The National Cancer Institute describes this model as "the interaction between, and interdependence of, factors

within and across all levels of a health problem. It highlights people's interactions with their physical and sociocultural environments."

It studies the relationship between health status and the internal and external environment of the human body through the concept of an ecosystem.

In the initial stages, this model focused on the external environment, including the effects of the natural

and social environment on the human body. In later stages, it recognized the role of the human body's internal environment, emphasizing the maintenance of inner microbial balance. In summary, it underscores the need for internal and external environments to be unified, achieving harmony and coordination for long-term health and well-being.

The ecological medical model emphasizes the harmony between humans and nature and the internal coordination of the human body, which aligns with TCM principles. From a macro perspective, TCM focuses on the whole and utilizes comprehensive analysis methods to study the internal connections within the human body and its relationship with the internal and external environment. In essence, the ecological and traditional Chinese medical models are compatible.

The Western medical approach, which often focuses on localized treatment, and the holistic and macro-regulation approach of TCM, can join hands and organically integrate to contribute to the fight against cancer and promote overall human health. This is a promising development.

Dr. Wu Kuo-pin is the superintendent of Taiwan Xinyitang Heart Clinic. In 2008, he started to study traditional Chinese medicine and obtained a bachelor's degree from China Medical University in Taiwan.



▲ A caring doctor/patient relationship creates trust and a healing effect that reaches beyond the physical.

What if we got out of the game of right and wrong? What if we accepted that each person has a path we are not privy to and that we ourselves can't be certain that the mistakes today are not essential steps toward becoming the person we need to be tomorrow?

Of course, there are times when an action is clearly wrong and needs to be recognized as such, but all too often, we apply great mental energy to judging trivial things. What if we

played a whole different game, one unconstrained by indiscriminate judgments? It would be free of "shoulds" and shame, and we would be free to play, invent, explore, create, and have a joyful time.

I Trust Myself

What would life be like if you trusted yourself? Most of us are caught up in worry and anxiety because we don't trust ourselves. When we fail to make a desired change or continue to fall short in a specific area, we suffer a loss of self-trust. But what if we viewed these failings as inevitable steps on an incremental path of improvement? What if we didn't give up? What would become possible if you started to trust yourself? For one thing, you could take

failings more lightly and through that find a life of greater ease and playfulness. This is an incredible way to live.

I Choose My Life

We often do things because we feel we should or feel we have to. We are under an obligation and acting without choice, we tell ourselves. Ours is a life of victimhood and burden, we seem to believe. Most people don't even notice when they feel this way because it's so ingrained. When

you shift to a mindset of choosing your life, a powerful reality emerges. You feel a new sense of freedom and energy.

You have a profound ability to change your circumstances. Often, the feeling of being stuck is due to a fear of what may come from making significant change. Sometimes we are even afraid to recognize that we have that power and that our life is a reflection of our choices.

Going Forward

These shifts in mindset can reframe how we view ourselves and our world. So how do you work with these? Sometimes you can do it on your own, but it can also be significantly easier to have someone help you. As a coach, I work with people who

find it difficult or impossible to do this work without support. Often, we just can't see what we can't see. That said, here are some keys to working with these mindset shifts on your own.

First, notice your current mindset. As often as possible, notice when you're stuck in an old, opposing mindset and the effect this has on you, your loved ones, and the course of your life. Have grace for yourself, and love, when you notice. Breathe.

Second, practice the new mindset. What if you believed the new mindset was absolutely true? Empower it. Be it.

Third, when you get trapped in the old mindset—you'll revert to it often—get support, whether from a coach, a therapist, a meditation teacher, or someone else outside of yourself. Our self-talk is often the least forgiving and rational. Find someone who can help you see this and help you bring love to it, help you practice a new set of beliefs about yourself.

And then keep practicing! This takes a lot of practice, a lot of messing up the practice, and a lot of getting yourself back into it. It's not easy work, but I promise, it's transformative.

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



INTENTIONAL LIVING

How Contentment Leads to Ambition

Appreciating what we have lays the groundwork for achieving greater heights

By Joshua Becker

Contentment can easily be misunderstood.

Before I jump into the misunderstanding that many people have, let me begin by saying that contentment is desired by most people.

A definition might be helpful. To be content is to feel or show satisfaction with one's possessions, status, or situation.

And there is a beautiful freedom that accompanies contentment: a freedom to be who you are, enjoy who you are, and live the life you were destined to live.

Most people, I believe, desire to be content with what they have.

But there still exists, it seems to me, a sneaking suspicion that contentment might lead to complacency. "If I were satisfied with all that I have, I would lose the drive to succeed," some might think. And this whisper of uncertainty holds some people back.

For others, their fear of complacency causes them to argue against the entire idea of contentment. But I have found the exact opposite to be true.

Contentment isn't about giving up or not wanting more. It's actually a powerful force that can provide the groundwork and inspiration to reach higher than we ever dreamed.

Contentment doesn't squelch ambition. Contentment fuels it.

Contentment isn't about settling. It's about recognizing what you already have, valuing it, and deciding to make the most out of it.

And correctly understood, it's acknowledging that while you have enough, you also have so much potential that's waiting to be unlocked.

Here's how: When we are content, we better focus our energy on what truly matters. When we're no longer pursuing endless material acquisitions, we're able to redirect our efforts toward our passions. We get to invest our time, our resources, and ourselves in the things that bring real meaning and fulfillment into our lives.

Contentment leads us to make deliberate choices about how we spend our lives. No longer are we running the rat race, trying to keep up with everyone else. We choose our own path—embracing what gives us meaning, and letting go of what doesn't.

A mindset of abundance brings ambition because we are not acting out of scarcity, but out of gratitude for what we already have, enthusiasm for what we can achieve, and a desire to share our gifts with others.

Even more, contentment compels us to redefine success. When we are no longer tied down by society's expectations of what we should be or how we should spend our time and money, we're free to set our own goals and aspirations. We get to decide what matters to us, what success looks like, and what kind of life we want to lead.

And contentment sparks perseverance. You see, as we learn to be satisfied with what we have, we become better equipped to deal with life's ups and downs. We're more prepared to tackle obstacles and to persist in the face of adversity because nobody's life has been perfectly easy, and yet the secret of contentment was found.

It would be wise for all of us to redefine what it means to be content. Contentment isn't about giving up on our dreams or settling for less. It's about appreciating what we have, recognizing our potential, dreaming even bigger dreams for our lives, and channeling our resources into our most meaningful ambitions.

Contentment doesn't drain ambition from our lives. It fuels it.

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

WISE HABITS

Powerful Ideas to Shift Your Self-Belief

These 6 mindset changes can transform how you see yourself and live your life

▶ Letting yourself feel unpleasant emotions can be difficult at first but also liberating because you stop resisting them so much.



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TRUTH and TRADITION

In Our Own Words



“It finally seemed like there was someone out there listening to me—to my parents—and hearing us.”

Teresa You
Manager, Customer Service

The Woman Behind the Hotline (Part 2) A Ray of Hope

Dear Epoch VIP,

To say that The Epoch Times is a special media to me would be an understatement. It's been there for me ever since I was a little girl in China, and one of the few places where I know I can read the truth, regardless of what the government's media outlets may say or do.

When I was nine, my parents were arrested before my own eyes from our home in Beijing. They weren't criminals: just Falun Gong practitioners.

My mother, a hospital worker, had just been looking for a spiritual practice, a way to live around her many illnesses. My father, a professor and Chinese Communist Party (CCP) member, followed suit after he saw my mother's improvement in health.

When I was younger, my mom would tell me stories about how people would commit suicide during the Cultural Revolution because they were so humiliated. And before that, how the landlords had all of their money taken away, simply because everyone had to be "the same."

My parents used to tell me these stories about other people, but when the Falun Gong persecution began, **it finally happened to them too—even though my dad was a Party member who taught communism, socialism, and Marxism in school.**

In an instant, my parents were handcuffed and taken away from me to a labor camp, to a place I had no idea about. A place that the news never talked about. I had no idea what the authorities would do to my parents and it worried me.

I saw the brutal treatment of Falun Gong practitioners in labor camps for the first time in the Chinese-language edition of The Epoch Times (via a VPN). Though this knowledge made me extremely scared and gave me nightmares, it also brought a sense of security in finally knowing the kind of place my parents were taken to and that people like my parents were not forgotten. They wouldn't just disappear, no matter how much the CCP wanted them to.

Having lived through this experience, I can say there's no platform in China that gives a voice to the human rights victims. **For all the people who are persecuted and their loved ones—it's really a very alienating experience.**

But because there was a media like The Epoch Times, I felt less alone. It finally seemed like there was someone out there listening to me—to my parents—and hearing us.

When I was in high school, my parents (who had returned from labor camp by then) sent me to the United States as an exchange student. They told me to enjoy the freedom in America since by then, we all knew too well what a country without freedom for its people was like.

The American people that I've come across since then have been very nice, friendly, and helpful, and it's had a wonderful effect on me. But at the same time, it's always felt like some of them didn't really know what was going on outside of America.

In China, all of the elites and intellectuals—including those I saw on the news when I was younger—always said that due to differences in ideology, sooner or later there will be armed conflict between China and America. If you watch Chinese state-run news, the narrative (though it fluctuates based on the CCP's diplomatic needs) has always been anti-American.

It's not the Chinese people themselves, of course, that have something against America. But many Chinese people live in this environment where they're being brainwashed, and every day they're being told that America is the enemy. It was so strange to me that Americans, and the American government, didn't seem to have any reaction to this at all.

A media doesn't just keep things that people know about from being forgotten, like with my parents; it also brings into view things that people didn't previously know about, that they should know. That is why I take my job at The Epoch Times very seriously—so that the people I've met in America can have the knowledge they need to protect their freedom, and the people living in fear in China can have the knowledge they need to win it back.

In Truth and Tradition,

Teresa You
The Epoch Times



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Top 4 Nutrients Men Need Most: Expert

Ensuring you get enough of these vitamins can improve immunity and lower your risk of cancer and dementia

VANCE VOETBERG

Too often, the topic of men's health goes overlooked. It's a well-known fact that men are more likely to succumb to chronic illnesses, and various statistics indicate that American women outlive their male counterparts. As of 2021, the latest year for which data are available, life expectancy at birth for women in the United States is 79.1 years, while for men it's 73.2.

These statistics may not come as a surprise, considering that women tend to be more intentional with their dietary choices and exercise habits. However, statistics don't tell the whole story.

Given the widespread prevalence

of nutrient deficiencies across the country, nutrient supplementation emerges as one approach for men to achieve and maintain long-lasting health.

Men often experience deficiencies in four essential nutrients, according to Dr. Sage Wheeler, medical director of SageMED in Bellevue, Washington, and a naturopathic physician with more than 15 years of experience specializing in men's health.

These deficiencies can have health consequences, including an elevated risk of dementia and increased susceptibility to cancer. By supplementing these nutrients, men may potentially enhance their strength, fortify their immune systems, and improve their overall quality of life.

Continued on Page 14

Vitamin D, often called the 'sunshine vitamin,' is frequently lacking in American men.



About

42

PERCENT of the U.S. population is deficient in vitamin D.



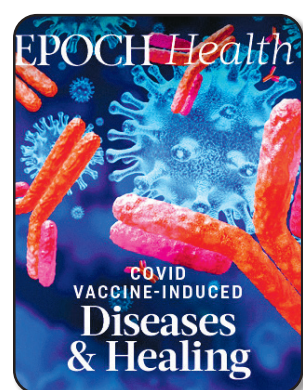
Fathers may play a greater role in their children's eating habit than previously thought.

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Top 4 Nutrients Men Need Most: Expert

Continued from Page 13

Vitamin D

Vitamin D, often called the “sunshine vitamin,” is frequently lacking in American men, Wheeler told The Epoch Times. The National Institutes of Health estimates that nearly 42 percent of the U.S. population is deficient in vitamin D, with higher prevalence observed in specific clinical subgroups, such as Black individuals and Hispanics.

Although vitamin D primarily supports bone health, maintaining levels of 60 to 80 nanograms per milliliter can also improve immune function, providing defense against colds, flu, and even COVID-19, according to Wheeler. Spending time in the sun and consuming oily fish such as salmon, sardines, and cod, along with egg yolks, can help reach this optimal vitamin D range.

He also highlighted the vitamin’s potential to alleviate depression and anxiety, particularly benefiting those with seasonal affective disorder.

When supplementing, vitamin D3 should be combined with vitamin K2, especially in higher doses, according to Wheeler.

“When combined appropriately as D3/K2, it can be dosed more aggressively for faster optimization,” he said.

Given that our skin synthesizes vitamin D from sunlight, regular blood tests measuring 25-hydroxy vitamin D3 are recommended for those who get little sun, especially during the winter months, when sun exposure is limited.

Omega Fatty Acids

According to Wheeler, omega-3 fatty acids, ranking second only to vitamin D, are frequently lacking in his patients. Initial screenings reveal that approximately 95 percent of men exhibit a deficiency. Some research indicates that up to 68 percent of adults in the United States don’t consume sufficient omega-3 fats to meet their nutritional requirements.

“Omega-3 fats are essential for optimal heart health, buttery smooth joints, supple muscles, and brain health,” he said. Cold-water fish such as salmon, herring, mackerel, and sardines, along with plant sources such as chia seeds, hemp seeds, and walnuts, are rich in omega-3 fatty acids.

The OmegaCheck fasting test is widely used to assess omega-3 status. Wheeler noted that maintaining an optimal range of above 8 percent for omega-3 fatty acids has been demonstrated to reduce the risk of cardiovascular disease by approximately 30 percent compared to individuals in the average 4 percent range.

A study published in April found that long-term consumption of omega-rich foods and supplements led to a 20 to 64 percent decrease in dementia, especially Alzheimer’s disease.

Omega-3 fatty acid supplements come in three types: inexpensive ethyl esters, high-quality triglycerides, and superior monoglycerides. Monoglycerides are two to three times more potent because of better absorption, making 1,000 mg of monoglyceride omegas equivalent to approximately 2,700 mg of triglyceride-based omegas, according to Wheeler.

“I recommend eating fish two to three times per week and taking 2,500–3,000 mg of a monoglyceride formula or 5,000 mg of a triglyceride formula once per day with food,” he said.

Vitamin B12 and Folate

Vitamin B12 and folate, essential B vitamins with multiple health benefits, are often insufficiently consumed by men, according to Wheeler. Inadequate levels can lead to fatigue, depression, anxiety, neuropathy, erectile dysfunction, and dementia.

“The data on dementia are particularly exciting, showing a substantial slowing of cognitive decline in those with a folate-rich diet or supplementation,” Wheeler said.

B vitamin testing, even for experienced physicians, can be perplexing, he said. Tests such as serum folate and serum B12, which evaluate the transfer of vitamins from the gut to the bloodstream, only identify severe deficiencies. To assess vitamin delivery into cells, including brain cells, the examination focuses on waste products eliminated by B vitamins, such as homocysteine and methylmalonic acid. These waste products are inflammatory and undesirable, making them “the garbage of cellular energy production,” he said.

Vitamin B12 and folate, essential B vitamins with multiple health benefits, are often insufficiently consumed by men.

High levels of homocysteine indicate a need for increased B vitamin intake. The optimal level of homocysteine is somewhere between 5 and 7 micromoles per liter (mmol/L), although some sources suggest as much as 15 mmol/L, and methylmalonic acid should be 0.07 to 0.27 mmol/L.

According to Wheeler, the richest sources of B vitamins are found in meat such as beef and chicken; in seafood such as clams, oysters, and salmon; and in dark leafy greens. While a diet abundant in these foods should fulfill the body’s requirements, optimizing these nutrients may require supplementation.

Unlocking Fatherhood’s Potential: Optimize With Nutrients



Consuming greater amounts of fatty seafood like wild salmon, herring, mackerel, and sardines can help boost levels of omega-3.

Prioritizing their health is crucial for fathers because it can have far-reaching benefits. By optimizing essential nutrients, fathers can enhance bone health, preserve memory, and strengthen the immune system.

A 2021 study that investigated the impact of parents’ eating habits on their children found that fathers have a greater influence over mothers in shaping their children’s dietary choices.

While similarities exist between both parents, these findings highlight the unique role fathers play in influencing their children’s eating behaviors. Consequently, interventions aimed at promoting healthy eating habits should take into account the significant contribution fathers make, according to the report.

It’s clear, therefore, that fathers’ commitment to healthy eating not only benefits their own well-being but also positively affects the health of their children. By leading by example and adopting nutritious eating habits, fathers can create a positive ripple effect that extends to their entire family’s overall health and lifestyle.

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Men spending more time in the sunshine may be doing themselves a big favor by absorbing more vitamin D.

HPV Ignites Unexpected Cancer Surge in Middle-Aged Adults

The prevalence of this sexually-transmitted disease highlights that the key to lowering risk is to limit sexual partners.



The escalating tide of HPV-related throat and mouth cancers threatens to redefine the landscape of common adult malignancies

SHERAMY TSAI

The mounting wave of deadly throat and mouth cancers—particularly in adults older than 45—has raised an alarm in the medical community, as a link between a common virus and vulnerability to these illnesses has become starkly evident. Dr. Matthew Old, a head and neck surgeon at The Ohio State University Comprehensive Cancer Center, points directly to human papillomavirus (HPV) as the main catalyst of this surge.

Nearly 55,000 Americans are diagnosed with throat or mouth cancer each year, and this number is climbing. The findings of a study published in JAMA Otolaryngology-Head and Neck Surgery highlighted a 2.7 percent increase per year in the incidence of oropharyngeal cancer cases in men, with a surge of more than 3 percent per year among white males above the age of 65.

Older adults grappling with oropharyngeal cancer are now being seen as the new face of the HPV epidemic. Current trends paint a sobering picture, with medical experts cautioning that this particular cancer could soon rank among the top three affecting older adults in the United States. Even more concerning is that it may even become the most common cancer in this age group within the coming decade, signaling a significant public health concern on the horizon.

Typically characterized as a sexually transmitted disease, HPV is passed along through intimate contact with others, whether skin to skin or oral.

Unraveling HPV and Its Role in the Surge of Cancer Rates

HPV is a sprawling family of more than 100 related viruses. Typically characterized as a sexually transmitted disease, it’s passed along through intimate contact with others, whether skin-to-skin or oral. While these viruses have garnered a reputation as significant contributors to the prevalence of cervical cancer, they cast a wider shadow than previously recognized. High-risk HPV is emerging as a considerable driving force behind head and neck cancers, notably those affecting the mouth, base of the tongue, and throat—the swath of conditions commonly categorized as oropharyngeal cancers.

An encounter with HPV isn’t rare; by the age of 45, approximately 80 percent of people in the United States will have encountered it. However, not everyone who comes into contact with the virus will

face cancer down the line. The spotlight falls on specific strains—particularly HPV 16 and HPV 18. Known as the “high-risk” duo, these strains have a notorious correlation with various cancer types.

According to the American Cancer Society, HPV manufactures two key proteins: E6 and E7. These proteins have the ability to switch off important genes that generally help to keep cell growth in check, namely Rb and p53. When HPV makes itself at home in the throat, these proteins run rampant, potentially setting the stage for abnormal cell growth that has the potential to lead to cancer.

The chance of developing oropharyngeal cancer is linked strongly to one’s sexual history—specifically the number of partners with whom oral sex was practiced. A 2021 study in the medical journal Cancer sheds light on these startling connections. Those who have had oral sex with five or more partners in their lifetime face a risk of HPV-related cancer that’s 2.5 times greater than individuals with fewer partners. The risk jumps to 4.3 times higher for those with 10 or more partners.

Studies indicate that the body’s immune system is able to purge most HPV infections within a couple of years. Yet, in about 1 in 10 cases, the virus plays a longer game, laying low within the body for many years, sometimes even decades.

In these instances, after the initial contact and infection, the virus lays dormant, causing no noticeable symptoms in the infected person, until it springs back to life, causing health issues and potentially manifesting as cancer many years down the line. This period of dormancy is why HPV-related cancers are often diagnosed in middle-aged adults, despite the initial infection likely occurring much earlier in life.

Scrutinizing the Vaccine’s Role in the HPV Cancer Landscape

Medical experts disagree as to whether the significant rise in HPV-related cancers can be attributed to a lack of immunization.

“We have a long way to go in educating the public about the importance of HPV vaccination in youth, and of the risk factors and warning signs of HPV-related cancers for adults who did not have an opportunity to get vaccinated in childhood,” Old said. “Data increasingly show this is a powerful tool to prevent cancers later in life.”

HPV is a risk factor for both men and women, experts say.

A preventive measure against the virus, the HPV vaccine is typically administered in two doses to those aged 9 to 14 and three doses to those aged 15 to 26. In October

2018, the FDA expanded use of the vaccine to include women and men aged 27 through 45.

Strides have been made in controlling HPV infections and cervical pre-cancers since the HPV vaccine was introduced. Vaccines have demonstrated a high level of effectiveness—between 90 percent and 98 percent—in combating the rapidly growing, abnormal cells that could potentially lead to cancer.

A 2021 systematic review of nine studies involving 48,777 participants found a significant decrease in vaccine-type oral or oropharyngeal HPV infections among those who had been vaccinated, with a relative prevention percentage of around 83 percent. And nearly all of the participants developed HPV-16 IgG antibodies in oral fluids post-vaccination, indicating a potentially strong protective effect.

However, the vaccine may not provide the anticipated comprehensive solution. Research spearheaded by the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health has called into question whether HPV vaccination is financially sensible for individuals older than 26. The study indicates that the health benefits tend to diminish with age while

the expense attached considerably surpasses the quality-adjusted life years acquired.

“Our study found that the added health benefit of increasing the vaccination age limit beyond 26 years is minimal, and that the cost-effectiveness is much lower than in preadolescents, the target age group for the HPV vaccine,” Jane Kim, professor of health economics and lead author of the study, said in a statement.

In addition to economic considerations, there have been safety issues linked with the vaccine. Reports from the FDA and CDC have underlined several concerning incidents related to Gardasil, the HPV vaccine. Side effects have been reported



The HPV vaccine was introduced in 2006 to prevent the transmission of the human papillomavirus. However, scientists have since found many potential side effects associated with it.

to span a broad range, from less severe issues such as fainting, fever, and dizziness to more alarming conditions such as Guillain-Barré syndrome, blood clots, nervous system disorders, and autoimmune disorders.

Moreover, the potential impact on fertility has prompted further concerns. Case series and VAERS report analyses have found a possible link between Gardasil and premature ovarian failure, leading to further investigations.

Finally, assessing the actual effectiveness of the HPV vaccine against any cancer is complex due to numerous challenges. Indeed, a significant issue is the relatively brief follow-up periods in most HPV clinical trials, which constrain the comprehensiveness of their results. There’s a pressing need for more extensive, longer-term investigations to grasp the full spectrum of the vaccine’s effects.

Preventing HPV-Related Cancer

Through Awareness, Lifestyle Changes Because HPV-related throat and mouth cancers, often asymptomatic, are spread via intimate contact, awareness is vital to prevention. Research shows that minimizing or abstaining from oral sexual activity can diminish the risk, but it’s not the only game-changer. Lifestyle choices are pivotal. Doctors single out alcohol, tobacco, and poor nutrition as extra risk escalators for oropharyngeal cancer. Thus, adopting a healthier lifestyle could serve as a vital shield.

According to CDC guidelines, consistent and correct use of condoms and dental dams can lower the risk of HPV transmission. Nevertheless, completely avoiding genital contact remains the most effective prevention method. Engaging in monogamy or limiting the number of sexual partners also can play a pivotal role. While condoms provide some level of protection, it’s important to acknowledge their limitations due to potential skin-to-skin contact beyond the coverage.

Nutrition also enters the battle against head and neck cancers. A diet abundant in fruits and vegetables, especially those laden with antioxidants, offers valuable health advantages when it comes to battling HPV. Moreover, various nutritional elements—from spirulina and selenium to green tea and certain medicinal mushrooms—have shown promising signs in the fight against oropharyngeal cancer.

“We monitor women for HPV, but this should be a concern for people of all genders because partners expose partners,” Old said.

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.

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HU NAIWEN

Tomatoes belong to the Solanaceae (nightshade) family and are widely cultivated all over the world. Colorful and ripe with a sweet, tangy flavor, tomatoes are a versatile culinary fruit that can be eaten raw or cooked into delicious dishes.

Tomatoes not only taste good but are also high in nutritional value. Rich in vitamins, minerals, fiber, protein, essential amino acids, monounsaturated fatty acids, carotenoids, phytosterols, and more—tomatoes are an excellent source of nutrients and bioactive compounds.

Let's explore the benefits of tomatoes and the best ways to eat them.

1. Tomatoes Protect the Heart

According to traditional Chinese medicine (TCM) theory, the five colors and five flavors of food correspond to the five internal organs of the human body. Chapter 10 of the TCM classic "Yellow Emperor's Canon of Internal Medicine" states: "The color and taste are linked to the five internal organs. White and spicy should be for the lungs, red and bitter for the heart, green and sour for the liver, yellow and sweet for the spleen, and black and salty for the kidneys."

"Red and bitter for the heart" means that red and bitter foods nourish the heart. If we cut a tomato sideways, we can see that it has four fluid-filled chambers similar to the ventricles of the heart. "Form complements similar form," according to Chinese folklore, and tomatoes are accordingly analogous to the heart in both color and shape.

What nutrients in tomatoes are good for the heart? Tomatoes contain lycopene, a red carotenoid with powerful antioxidant properties found to reduce the risk of cardiovascular disease. Studies in recent years have found that the antioxidant capacity of lycopene is twice that of beta carotene and 10 times that of vitamin E.

The redder the tomato, the higher its lycopene content. Tomatoes ripened at room temperature will contain more lycopene than those stored in the refrigerator. Ordinary nutrients are easily destroyed by heat during cooking, but fat-soluble lycopene is different. After cooking with fat, the absorption rate of lycopene may increase by two to three times. However, once it comes into con-



tact with air, it's easily oxidized, so immediate consumption of open products or cooked tomato dishes is recommended for optimum nutrient absorption.

A research report published in the Journal of Functional Foods in April 2018 found that cooked tomatoes help probiotics avoid erosion by gastric acid, thereby greatly promoting the health of the intestinal tract. In plainer language, tomatoes help beneficial bacteria get through the stomach to the colon where they can work their metabolic magic in the microbiome. Cooking tomatoes also releases more of their antioxidants, including lycopene.

2. Nourish the Eyes and Protect the Skin

In addition to lycopene, tomatoes also contain a variety of antioxidants, such as beta carotene, vitamin C, lutein, and phenols, which can aid in the prevention of age-related macular degeneration and other eye diseases. Tomatoes can also effectively relieve menopausal symptoms such as anxiety, hot flashes, and irritability.

Tomatoes are good for skin health, and eating them can help to prevent sunburn, which in turn may reduce the appearance of sunspots on the skin in later years.

Human clinical data also suggest that regular consumption of tomato paste can lessen UV-induced skin erythema.

3. Tomatoes Protect Joints and Clear Heat

Tomato eaten raw has the effect of promoting body fluid and quenching thirst. Body fluid is very important because it moisturizes the skin, moistens the mucous membranes, and delivers nutrients to various internal organs. Stored within the joint bursa, its function is to

lubricate the joints and maintain their flexibility.

In TCM, it's held that a bad temper (irritation and heat in the heart) causes the body to lose water quickly, resulting in dry mouth, restlessness, poor sleep, and fatigue. Eating raw tomatoes while in this state can help reduce the internal fire. Put a tomato in your mouth and crush it without swallowing it immediately. Keep the tomato juice there for three to five minutes, then swallow. Doing this several times can improve many discomforts caused by anger.

During the summer, replacing hot tea with tomato water can aid in the prevention of high-temperature heatstroke.

4. Tomatoes Strengthen the Stomach, Improve Appetite

Representatives of ancient traditional Chinese medicine include the Four Great Masters of the Jin and Yuan Dynasties, one of whom is Li Dongyuan, founder of the "spleen-stomach theory" of TCM. In his book "Treatise on the Spleen and Stomach," he stated that "injury to the spleen and stomach can trigger all sorts of diseases."

The spleen lies in the center of the abdomen, irrigating the liver, heart, lungs, and kidneys—organs considered in TCM to be the "four viscera in the south, east, north, and west."

Tomatoes are good for the spleen and stomach because of their stimulating effect on the appetite.

People with a weak spleen and stomach are prone to insufficient qi (vital energy) and blood, which will affect the liver. TCM holds that "the liver finds its pathway up to the eyes." When the liver is weak, the eyes will tire easily and affect eyesight.

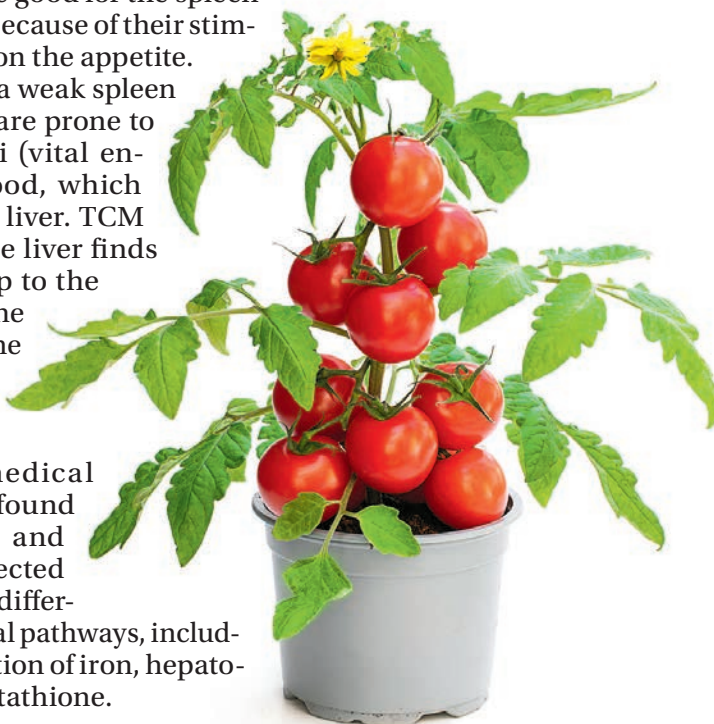
Modern medical research has found that the liver and eyes are connected through a few different biochemical pathways, including the regulation of iron, hepatokines, and glutathione.

A VERSATILE FRUIT

Incredibly versatile, tomatoes can be eaten raw in sandwiches and salads or just on their own—or cooked into rich sauces, soups, and stews.

BOUTIFUL HARVEEST

Growing your own tomatoes can be rewarding and cost-effective—a great way to bring colorful nutrients to your garden and plate. They are easy to grow and often prolific.



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AGE WELL

How to Reduce the Risk of Debilitating Sarcopenia

This age-induced form of muscle loss can lead to falls and mobility problems if you don't take steps to avoid it

WU KUO-PIN

As we age, many of us may experience decreased hormone secretion, reduced physical activity, and a lack of nutrients in our diets, which accelerates the loss of muscle mass. When a person loses too much muscle, sarcopenia sets in.

Sarcopenia is characterized by a degenerative loss of skeletal muscle mass that reduces daily function. People with sarcopenia are more prone to falling and lack the strength to get up from sitting or to move around. Walking slowly is also a symptom of sarcopenia.

The Risk of Sarcopenia

Sarcopenia causes muscle strength decline, affects mobility and quality of life, and increases the risk of chronic diseases, cognitive impairment, and even death.

After age 50, men and women experience more apparent signs of bodily aging. The risk of osteoporosis and cardiovascular disease may also increase as we age.

While many people are concerned about chronic diseases, only a few know the hidden dangers of sarcopenia. Here, we will focus on proper diet and why muscle mass is essential to the health of adults who are older than 60.

9 Functions of Muscle

Muscle mass naturally declines as we age, and the rate of decline tends to accelerate after the age of 60. On average, individuals may experience a decrease in muscle mass of approximately 3 to 8 percent per decade after reaching the age of 30. Muscles age as soon as you stop moving your body.

Other than ensuring our mobility, our muscles function in the following ways:

- Maintain balance and keep us from falling: Many older people experience fractures due to accidental falls, leading to health decline.
- Help the body exercise and move around effectively and safely.
- Support joints and maintain mobility: Muscles also reduce pain from diseases such as arthritis.
- Support the proper functioning of the heart and lungs.
- Aid in chewing.
- Promote appetite.
- Ensure practical insulin usage: Muscles help prevent diabetes or keep it from worsening.
- Prevent senile dementia by supplying energy to the brain.
- Protect the body from medicinal side effects.



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Protein Maintains Muscle

In terms of their biochemical impact, our muscles have another significant role: They serve as the body's storehouse for protein.

Protein helps the body to repair itself. The cells of your body are wearing out every second. Every cell in every organ—from the skin to the digestive tract, to the blood, to all the substances that sustain life—has a certain lifespan. Some have a lifespan of a few hours, days, or months before they are replaced and renewed. This continuous renewal process requires protein.

Protein also helps to fight inflammation and provides energy to the brain.

There are three fundamental mechanisms of muscle reconstruction: hormonal signals, nerve signals, and muscle activity.

When our bodies encounter adversity at a young age—such as trauma, surgery, a cold, or a fever—muscle reconstruction is relatively straightforward. At that time, the muscles can be regenerated quickly with food consumption.

As we age, however, the body loses hormones. Hence, nerve signals also decrease. Hormonal and nerve signals can weaken as early as age 30 or as late as one's mid-60s, meaning their ability to strengthen the muscles is reduced. The only tool, then, to reconstruct muscle is muscle activity; when the muscles are being exercised, it can initiate repair and reconstruction. Luckily, this mechanism continues to function effectively even in old age, as long as the muscles are kept active.

Aside from needing exercise, the aging human body requires sufficient protein to maintain muscle mass.

In modern health and diet circles, some believe that eating more fresh fruit and vegetables and less meat is healthier. While the more-green diet is acceptable for people younger than 60, it might pose a health risk for anyone older than 60 or anyone in their 80s or 90s who has undergone surgery or severe illness. This is because if the body doesn't have enough muscle or stored protein, its ability to repair itself deteriorates.

Exercises that incorporate flexibility or stretching can help maintain muscle strength and elongation.

Sarcopenia is characterized by a degenerative loss of skeletal muscle mass that reduces daily function.



An ideal type of workout to build muscle strength combines aerobics, resistance training, flexibility, and balance.

Only sufficient protein intake can quickly repair an aging or weak body and maintain its physical strength. Therefore, the older we get, the more protein we need.

Good Sources of Protein

Here are some excellent sources of protein:

- All meat and seafood, such as beef, pork, chicken, horse mackerel, sardines, salmon, and tuna, as well as eggs
- Dairy products, such as milk, goat's milk, cheese, and yogurt, excluding fresh cream and whipped cream
- Soybean products, such as soy milk, soy yogurt, tofu, and dried tofu
- Legumes, such as lentils, chickpeas, dried beans, and peas
- All nuts and seeds
- Whole grains

Ideal Exercises for Muscle Maintenance

An ideal type of workout to build muscle strength combines aerobics, resistance training, flexibility, and balance.

You can start with safe exercises that can be done independently and pose no risk of falling. Consistency and perseverance are crucial to effectiveness. Household work such as mopping, sweeping, gardening, and lifting objects are conducive to maintaining muscle and preventing aging.

1. Aerobic Exercise

- Incorporate aerobic exercises such as jogging, walking, and swimming.
- Build a workout routine at least three days per week and slowly increase the exercise time.
- The goal is to exercise 30 to 60 minutes daily, slowly increasing the duration by 10-minute intervals.
- The workout should be at least 20 to 30 minutes of high-intensity exercise that makes you sweat and need to catch your breath.

2. Resistance Training

- Resistance workouts include squats, dumbbells, and lifting your legs to stretch your knees while sitting.
- Weight lift at least two days per week.
- Exercise all major muscle groups, including legs, hands, shoulders, chest, abdomen, back, waist, and hips. If possible, you can ask a fitness trainer to guide you in building a safer and more effective routine.
- Do 10 repetitions for each movement. Once comfortable, increase the load or do a few more reps to strengthen your muscles.

3. Flexibility Workout

- Stretch the primary muscle group at least twice per week.
- Choose static stretching, such as pilates or yoga with fixed posture, to maintain muscle elongation for more than 15 seconds instead of dynamic movements.

4. Balance Exercises

- Improve balance by standing on one foot, walking on tiptoe, and doing tai chi.
- Begin with once per week and slowly advance the frequency to daily.

Dr. Wu Kuo-pin is the superintendent of Taiwan Xinyintang Clinic. In 2008, he started to study traditional Chinese medicine and obtained a bachelor's degree from China Medical University in Taiwan.

Fasting Diet for People With Fatty Liver Disease

A recent study found that alternate-day fasting reduced weight, improved insulin sensitivity, and more

SARAH COWNLEY

When it comes to treating certain health conditions, such as nonalcoholic fatty liver disease, traditional diet and exercise plans aren't realistic options for everyone. Alternate-day fasting (ADF) is a safe and effective form of intermittent fasting that provides patients with another way to improve their overall health and well-being, a recent study suggests.

Here, we will explore what alternate-day fasting is all about and its potential benefits for those dealing with liver fat.

What Is Nonalcoholic Fatty Liver Disease? Nonalcoholic fatty liver disease (NAFLD) occurs when there's a buildup of oily fat deposits in the liver. To make matters

worse, this accumulation of fat causes inflammation and can lead to organ damage over time. Nonalcoholic fatty liver disease affects those who drink in moderation or abstain from alcohol altogether.

If left unchecked, NAFLD can lead to complications such as liver failure or cirrhosis. It's often linked to obesity and Type 2 diabetes, which is why regular activity and healthy eating habits are important steps to reducing the risk of developing this condition.

What Is Alternate-Day Fasting?

ADF has become a popular way to lose weight and improve overall health. It's a type of intermittent fasting whereby individuals fast every other day. During the days when an individual is fasting, they may eat little to no food, typically 500 calories or less on that day.

On the days when they aren't fasting, they can eat normally. This way of dieting can provide many benefits due to short-term calorie restriction and reduced inflammation in the body. Studies have shown that alternate-day fasting can re-

duce weight loss over time and improved overall health, including the reduction of cholesterol levels and improved insulin sensitivity.

The Study

The recent study, published in Cell Metabolism in January, involved organizing participants into one of four groups: an alternate-day fasting group, an aerobic exercise group, a combined group, and a control group (in which participants made no changes to their lifestyle behaviors). Participants in the exercise groups used an elliptical machine in a lab for one hour, five days per week, and those in the diet groups tracked their food intake.

The findings were "pretty amazing," study author Krista Varady said in a University of Illinois—Chicago article.

"When we compared the results of our study groups, we saw clearly that the most improved patients were in the group that followed the alternate-day fasting diet and exercised five days a week. The people who only dieted or only exercised did not see the same improvements, which reinforc-

es the importance of these two relatively inexpensive lifestyle modifications on overall health and on combating chronic diseases like fatty liver disease."

The study found that hepatic steatosis was reduced by a significant 5.5 percent. "Body weight, fat mass, and waist circumference also decreased," the study authors noted.

Insulin sensitivity also increased. Researchers also noted that there were no serious safety events during the trial and that all participants were able to maintain the exercise and diet regimens for the three-month study.

The study results indicate that alternate-day fasting could be an effective option for people with fatty liver disease who want to improve their health without using medications by losing weight and eating healthier.

Sarah Cownley has a diploma in nutritional therapy from Health Sciences Academy in London and enjoys helping others by teaching healthy lifestyle changes through her personal consultations and with her regular contributions to the Doctors Health Press. This article was originally published by Bel Marra Health.

TOMATO STEWED WITH PORK RIBS

If your eyes tire easily and you suspect that your liver is weak, traditional Chinese medicine recommends a delicious medicinal meal of tomato stewed with pork ribs.

PREPARATION

Cut 8.8 ounces (about 250 grams) of pork ribs into smaller pieces and place in a pan.

Add 17 fluid ounces (500 ml) of water, stew on low heat until it turns about 80

percent soft, then add 5.3 ounces (about 150 grams) of sliced tomatoes.

Add some ginger slices and salt and stew until fully soft. If so desired, add pepper to taste, and eat once or twice while hot.

SOME CAUTIONS IN EATING TOMATOES

• Avoid eating raw tomatoes on an empty stomach as they can cause hyperacidity, bloating, and abdominal pain. It's better to

eat raw tomatoes with or after meals.

• People with a "cold constitution" (those who often have cold hands and feet and are prone to diarrhea) aren't suited to eating raw tomatoes.

• Women who suffer from menstrual pain should avoid eating tomatoes during their menstrual cycle.

• Avoid unripe, green tomatoes because they contain a high level of solanine, which is mildly toxic and can cause stomach discomfort.



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Treating Menopause Symptoms With Dietary Estrogen

Hot flashes, night sweats, brain fog? Here's what we know about phytoestrogens for menopausal symptoms.

CAROLINE GURVICH, JANE VARNEY, & JAYASHRI KULKARNI

While some women glide through menopause, more than 85 percent experience one or more unpleasant symptoms, which can affect their physical and mental health, daily activities, and quality of life.

Hot flashes and night sweats are the symptoms for which the most women seek treatment, affecting 75 percent of women. Others include changes in weight and body composition, skin changes, poor sleep, headaches, joint pain, vaginal dryness, depression, and brain fog.

While many doctors consider menopause hormone therapy to be the most effective treatment for menopausal symptoms, it's sometimes not recommended (such as following breast cancer, as there is conflicting evidence about its safety in that circumstance) or avoided in favor of non-hormonal therapies. In Australia, it's estimated that more than one-third of women seek complementary or alternative medicines to manage menopausal symptoms.

But do they work? Or are they a waste of time and considerable amounts of money?

What's on the Market?

The complementary or alternative interventions for menopausal symptoms are almost as varied as the symptoms themselves. They include everything from mind-body practices (hypnosis, cognitive behavioral therapy, and meditation) to alternative medicine approaches (traditional Chinese medicine and acupuncture) and natural products (herbal and dietary supplements).

There is some evidence to support the use of hypnosis and cognitive behavior therapy for the treatment of hot flashes, and these therapies are even recommended in clinical treatment guidelines. But there is less certainty around the benefit of other commonly used complementary and alternative medicines, particularly nutritional supplements.

The most popular nutritional supplements for hot flashes are phytoestrogens (or plant estrogens). This trend has been driven in part by supplement companies that promote such agents as a safer or more natural alternative to hormone therapy.

Natural remedies can help relieve hot flashes and night sweats.



85%

of women experience one or more menopausal symptoms which can affect their physical and mental health, daily activities, and quality of life.

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What Are Phytoestrogens?

Phytoestrogens are plant-derived substances that can show estrogen-like activity when ingested.

There are numerous types including isoflavones, coumestans, and lignans. These can be consumed in the form of food (such as whole soybeans, soy-based foods such as tofu and soy milk, legumes, whole grains, flaxseeds, fruits, and vegetables) and commercially produced supplements. In the latter category, extracts from soy and red clover yield isoflavones, and flaxseed gives us lignans.

Because declining estrogen levels drive menopausal symptoms, the theory is that consuming a substance that acts like estrogen will provide relief.

What Does the Evidence Say?

In the case of isoflavones, initial support came from epidemiological data showing that women in Asian countries who consumed a traditional, phytoestrogen-rich diet (that is, one including tofu, miso, and fermented or boiled soybeans) experienced fewer menopausal symptoms than women in Western countries.

However, several factors may influence the effect of dietary phytoestrogens on menopausal symptoms. This includes gut microbiota, with research showing that only about 30 percent of women from Western populations possess the gut microbiota needed to convert isoflavones to their active form, known as equol, compared with an estimated 50 to 60 percent of menopausal women from Japanese populations.

Circulating estrogen levels (which drop considerably during menopause) and the duration of soy intake (longer-term intake being more favorable) may also influence the effect of dietary phytoestrogens on menopausal symptoms.

Overall, evidence regarding the benefit of phytoestrogens for hot flashes is fairly mixed. A Cochrane review synthesized study results and failed to find conclusive

Many women do find relief from menopause symptoms with remedies such as red clover and soy, which both contain phytoestrogens.

evidence that phytoestrogens, in food or supplement form, reduced the frequency or severity of hot flashes or night sweats in perimenopausal or postmenopausal women.

The review did note that genistein extracts (an isoflavone found in soy and fava beans) may reduce the number of hot flashes experienced by symptomatic postmenopausal women, though to a lesser extent than hormone therapy.

Another recent study showed marked reductions in hot flashes in women following a low-fat, vegan diet supplemented with daily soybeans. However, it was questioned whether concurrent weight loss contributed to this benefit.

In Australia, clinical guidelines don't endorse the routine use of phytoestrogens. Guidelines for the United Kingdom note some support for the benefit of isoflavones but highlight that multiple preparations are available, their safety is uncertain, and interactions with other medicines have been reported. In the United States, the Office on Women's Health notes that many women do find relief from menopause symptoms with remedies such as red clover and soy, which both contain phytoestrogens.

Can Phytoestrogens Help the Psychological Symptoms of Menopause?

Less research has explored whether phytoestrogens improve psychological symptoms of menopause, such as depression, anxiety, and brain fog.

A recent systematic review and meta-analysis found that phytoestrogens reduce depression in post- but not perimenopausal women. A more recent clinical trial found no improvement.

Some research suggests phytoestrogens reduce the risk of dementia, but there are no conclusive findings regarding their effect on menopausal brain fog.

The Bottom Line

At present, there is uncertainty about the benefit of phytoestrogens for menopause symptoms.

If you do wish to see whether they might work for you, start by including more phytoestrogen-rich foods in your diet, such as tempeh, soybeans, tofu, miso, soy milk (from whole soybeans), oats, barley, quinoa, flaxseeds, sesame seeds, sunflower seeds, almonds, chickpeas, lentils, red kidney beans, and alfalfa. These are nutritious and good for overall health, irrespective of the effects on menopausal symptoms.

Try including one to two servings per day for about three months and monitor symptoms. Before you try any supplements, discuss them first with your doctor (especially if you have a history of breast cancer); if your symptoms don't improve after three months, stop taking them.

Caroline Gurchich is associate professor and clinical neuropsychologist at Monash University in Australia. Jane Varney is senior research dietitian in the department of gastroenterology at Monash University, and Jayashri Kulkarni is professor of psychiatry at Monash University. This article was originally published by *The Conversation*.

Foods high in dietary estrogen, or phytoestrogens, include whole soybeans and soy-based foods, as well as legumes, whole grains, flaxseeds, and many fruits and vegetables.

WISE HABITS

Embarrassment Is an Integral Part of Growth

If you're striving forward, you are going to stumble, and that can be embarrassing

LEO BABAUTA

A well-known climbing coach said that the biggest obstacle in the way of people's growth as climbers is, basically, fear of embarrassment.

When people want to get better at climbing, they try to do it privately, so that no one can see them doing things badly. They'll go to the climbing gym when no one is watching, or hang out in a corner hoping no one is looking. But they're missing out on the biggest opportunity—feedback from people who can see things they can't see. And the thing getting in the way is fear of embarrassment.

I've found that this is true no matter what you're trying to learn, no matter what you're trying to grow in. Fear of embarrassment will stop you from achieving real growth and transformation.

It isn't that we should just get over that fear—we should learn to see embarrassment as an integral part of the growth process.

I'll talk about why in a moment. But first, let's look at a few more situations in which the fear of embarrassment stops people from growing:

Writing a Book or Blog

This one might be a bit obvious—you want to write, you might start writing, but the fear of embarrassment (or being judged) stops you from writing or making the writing public.

We even resist getting feedback from people that might improve our writing because we're worried that the writing is bad. Many people cringe at the idea of showing their "embarrassing" writing to people who might judge them, but feedback from readers and more experienced writers can help you get to the next level.

Getting Coaching or Support From Others

Most people avoid getting a coach or getting real support from other people because they are embarrassed to admit how their growth process looks. They might think, "I haven't been doing the things I said I would, I'm struggling, I don't like things about myself."

We have judgment for all of that, and we are embarrassed to show that to others. This stops us from getting support through all of this struggle.

Taking Your Business to the Next Level

Whether you're starting a new business or wanting your existing business to get to the next level, it can be hard to see where you're getting stuck. Leadership is lonely, and we can see only what we've already learned to see.

Getting to the next level often requires getting feedback from someone who can see what we can't see. But this can feel embarrassing. We avoid getting that kind of support, and that means we struggle to do anything other than what we already know to do.

Hopefully you can see that this can be applied anywhere we want to grow—personal development, taking care of ourselves, deepening a relationship, dealing with the overwhelming chaos of life. We struggle to

Most people avoid getting a coach or getting real support from other people because they are embarrassed to admit how their growth process looks.

Fear isn't the end of the world; it's simply our companion in the unknown, in the deep place of transformation.



Learning something new means you won't be good at it—but you'll improve more quickly with feedback and support.

get beyond where we are because we are too embarrassed to get support, feedback, or coaching that might take us to the next level.

Why Embarrassment Is Integral to Growth

We hope to grow and learn without embarrassing ourselves. If we can learn in private, and then show how good we are after we're really good at whatever it is, then we won't feel embarrassed. We want to avoid that feeling at all costs, even if it means never learning at all.

But that isn't how it works. We have to be willing to be bad at something before we can be good at it. The growth process requires us to mess up, to learn from experience rather than just reading about it or watching videos. The growth process requires us to be messy and to stumble in the unknown—and then to get some support. That is especially the case if we feel like giving up.

And that is embarrassing. It has to be embarrassing, because we are necessarily pushing beyond the boundaries of the self-image we've created for ourselves. We've stepped into a new area of growth, which means we can't be the person who has everything figured out. We want to be the person who has it all together, but that's only possible if we aren't growing.

So we choose to grow and learn, to transform, but that means letting go of who we think we are and who we're trying to get others to think we are. That's a loss of sorts, and it's embarrassing.

If we avoid that embarrassment (which is natural), we will stunt our growth.

How to Work With the Fear of Embarrassment

OK, so you have a fear of embarrassment and you can see how it's holding you back. How do you work with this fear? It's a deep topic, but here are some ways to start:

1. Recognize when it's coming up. When you're avoiding sharing with people, notice the fear. When you don't want to get feedback or coaching or support, notice

the fear. When you're trying to stay safe or hidden, notice the fear. Just name it "fear" and don't get too caught up in what the fear is about.

2. Notice the effect the fear has on your life. Where is it holding you back? What is it keeping you safe from? What would be possible if you didn't have to worry about the fear? How do you feel about all this?

3. Ask yourself whether you want something different. What would you like that's outside of the world created by this fear? What would you like to try instead?

4. Try something different. What else can you try that isn't constrained by the fear of embarrassment? If you're learning to climb, you might try climbing in front of other people and letting yourself do it badly. Dance badly in public and have fun! Write badly in public, sending it out to everyone you know, and ask for feedback. Ask for help. Let yourself be in the unknown. Get support from a coach or a group. Ask a teacher to rip your creation apart. Let yourself be open to the depth of learning and growth.

5. Let yourself be with the fear with love. The fear of embarrassment will definitely show up as you open yourself to something different such as getting feedback, coaching, or other support. That's OK! Fear isn't the end of the world; it's simply our companion in the unknown, in the deep place of transformation. Can you let yourself feel it and let it simply be there in your experience? Can you give yourself love as you feel the fear?

As you let yourself feel the fear and feel the embarrassment, you start to shed your old self. You no longer need to be constrained by doing things perfectly, impressing anyone, or showing your good side because you are growing into a new person.

What would be possible if you let yourself go through the transformation process?

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

Could Stress Be Causing Your Stomach Pain?

Constant signals between the nervous system and stomach may result in stomach issues

MAT LECOMPTÉ

Sometimes, stomach issues can be hard to understand. If you didn't eat any "problem" foods or don't have a stomach bug, what could possibly be causing your digestive issues?

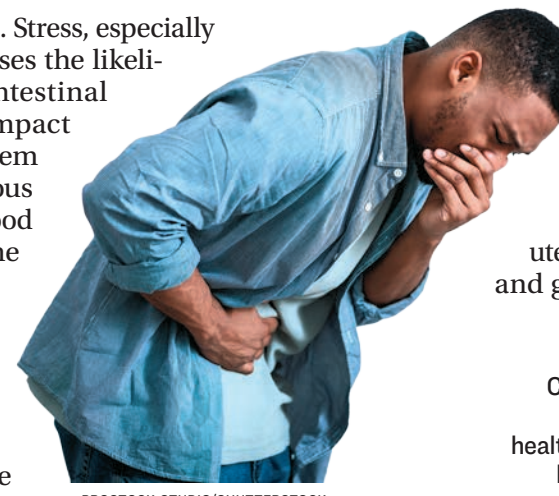
It might be stress. Stress, especially chronic stress, raises the likelihood of gastrointestinal issues. It can impact the digestive system through the nervous system, affecting food movement and the balance of gut bacteria. Stress can also cause people to eat poorly, which may also lead to symptoms.

Outside of the

brain, the gut has the greatest area of nerves. Neurons lining the digestive tract signal muscle cells to contract to help move food through, breaking it down into nutrients and waste. The interaction between the enteric system in the gut and the central nervous system

is known as the "gut-brain axis" and may help explain why stress can cause digestive problems. Stress may contribute to bloating, burping, and gassiness by making

Chronic stress can wreak havoc on your digestive health, causing bloating, gas, heartburn, and diarrhea.



PROSTOCK/STUDIO/SHUTTERSTOCK

swallowing difficult. It can also slow the digestive process, allowing gut bacteria to create gas. Exercise may help alleviate this.

Emotional stress may lead to increased stomach acid production, which can lead to heartburn, acid reflux, and exacerbate GERD. To help alleviate these systems, avoid smoking, eat a healthy diet, eat smaller meals, and avoid eating too close to bedtime.

Stress hormones can also lead to diarrhea or constipation and divert blood away from the intestines and cause the digestive process to come to a halt.

It's possible your stomach issues are caused by stress. Think about how potential stressors in your life could be manifesting in your gut, and work on ways to manage them.

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

Diseases and Conditions Caused by Chronic Stress

According to the American Psychological Association, stress may exacerbate or increase the risk of the following conditions:

- bloating, burping, gas
- heartburn, acid reflux, gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD)
- nausea and vomiting
- diarrhea
- constipation
- ulcers
- inflammatory bowel syndrome



Intelligent Brains Slow Down for Complex Problems: Study

Researchers found that the brains of people who are better at solving complex problems gear down when their work gets difficult

IRINA ANTONOVA

You might think that intelligent people think more quickly.

However, a recent study has found that this is only partially true and applies only to simple problem-solving. When the difficulty level is higher, those with high IQs take their time.

This surprising finding was made by researchers at the BIH and Charité-Universitätsmedizin Berlin, with a colleague from Barcelona, who published their conclusions in the journal Nature Communications.

The researchers arranged a test involving 650 participants, who were shown patterns and asked to find the rules governing those patterns. The patterns become progressively more challenging.

The scientists measured the IQ of the participants using conventional tests, and they measured the connection among the measured IQ, the activation patterns, and the overall test performance.

"It's the right excitation-inhibition balance of neurons that influences decision-making and more or less enables a person to solve problems," one of the researchers, professor Petra Ritter of the Berlin Institute of Health in der Charité, said in a statement published by IFLScience.

The Surprising Results of the Test

The participants with higher IQs could quickly see the solutions to the easy problems. However, that wasn't the case when the complexity of the problems increased.



New research suggests intelligent people take the time to think through a problem before arriving at their conclusion. The more complex the problem, the slower they think.

They still produced the correct solutions, but it took them much longer to answer the questions.

The researchers suggested that this was explained by how those participants' brains functioned. They seemed to show more patience as all areas of their brain did the required processing instead of jumping to conclusions.

The researchers explain that this slow response was derived from the coordination of their mental pathways because people with higher IQs have more synchronized brains. This means that the neural circuits of their front lobe are held back from decisions until all the parts of the brain take the time to process the requested information.

"In more challenging tasks, you have to store previous progress in working memory while you explore other solution paths and then integrate these into each other," said the lead author of the paper, professor Michael Schirner, a scientist at the Department of Neurology with Experimental Neurology, Charité-Universitätsmedizin Berlin.

"This gathering of evidence for a particular solution may sometimes take longer, but it also leads to better results."

Comparison With the Silico Brain

Ritter and her colleagues decided to compare their data with data from a "general" human brain model, a computer simulation of a human brain that was generated from brain scans and mathematical models and is known as a "silico brain."

"We can reproduce the activity of individual brains very efficiently," Ritter said.

The results showed that the responses of the participants and those of the artificially created brains match.

"We found out in the process that these silico brains behave differently from one another—and in the same way as their biological counterparts. Our virtual avatars match the intellectual performance and reaction times of their biological analogues," Ritter said.

The researchers said they hope that their experiment will help understand the brain's

function and how to find specific intervention targets for people who suffer from neurodegenerative diseases.

What Is a Silico Brain?

The silico brain was first conceived as part of a project by researcher Henry Markram, who initiated the Human Brain Project and the Blue Brain Project (BBP), which sought to simulate the human brain inside a computer.

Silico brain refers to a computational model or simulation of the brain created using computer algorithms and techniques. Markham's goal was to replicate the structure and functionality of the human brain within a computer system, which involves modeling the complex interactions of neurons, synapses, and neural circuits that underlie brain function.

He had some success with the BBP project in 2015, releasing a simulation of 30,000 rat neurons. However, this is a mere 0.15 percent of the rodent's brain.

Markham hopes that by simulating the brain in the computer, scientists and researchers can better understand how the brain works, study its behavior under different conditions, and potentially develop treatments for brain disorders and diseases.

However, the projects run by Markham have been heavily criticized, with many neuroscientists arguing that the idea that one could map how neurons connect and cooperate and how the brain forms decisions and memories is ridiculous.

"It's not obvious to me what the very large-scale nature of the simulation would accomplish," Anne Churchland, from Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory, told The Atlantic.

Churchland and her team work on simulating networks of neurons to study how brains combine visual and auditory information.

"I could implement that with hundreds of thousands of neurons, and it's not clear what it would buy me if I had 70 billion," she said.

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