

WHAT DOCTORS DON'T TELL YOU



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As all of us observe growing polarization in our societies, we look to our respective governments to overcome these divisions. What we tend to forget is that throughout history it was the governments themselves that were mainly responsible for creating an 'us' and demonizing the 'thems.'

After 1865, despite the abolition of slavery by US constitutional amendment and the passage of federal legislation supposedly protecting civil rights, so-called 'Jim Crow' laws passed on the state and local level mandated the segregation of schools, public transportation, restaurants, restrooms and even drinking fountains between black and white people.

African Americans were largely deprived of their right to vote, thanks to measures requiring them to take literacy tests or provide papers establishing proof of residence, for instance.

In Russia, after the Revolution of 1917–18, in order to expropriate privately owned land and agriculture for the Bolsheviks, Lenin labeled small, prosperous farmers—some with only five or six acres—as “bloodsuckers” and decreed that these ‘kulaks’ should be hung without trial.

Later, Josef Stalin announced that the kulaks be deprived of certain privileges, such as the use of land or the right to hire farmhands. “The kulaks are the furious enemies of socialism,” he announced, fanning the anger of poorer peasants. “We must repulse the kulak ideology.”

Pravda, the official newspaper of the Communist Party, participated in the demonization of these farmers, claiming that they dominated the wealthy countryside, hoarded food and infiltrated Communist Party cells.

Under Stalin's plan of “dekulakization,” millions of small farmers and their families were

murdered or deported to Siberia to work in labor camps.

And of course, the most infamous modern example is Nazi Germany, when Adolf Hitler beguiled many Germans into believing that the enemy of Germany, responsible for German impoverishment after the First World War, was the Jew.

From 1933, national legislation deprived the vast majority of Jews of steady employment and even the right to vote. And after war was declared in 1939, Jews were no longer allowed to enter particular areas of cities. There were strict limits on where and when Jews



could purchase food or supplies, and they received smaller rations than their non-Jewish peers.

By 1941, Jews were not allowed to use public transportation. Anyone older than 6 had to wear a yellow Jewish star sewn onto their clothes.

We all know where all this eventually led: denial of rights, seizure of property, death camps, mass extermination.

Each of these tragic examples began with a government agenda that institutionalized, via state and federal law, certain methods to keep the ‘them’ apart from the ‘us.’

The US, German and Russian governments all used the ‘thems’

as scapegoats, blaming African Americans, Jews and kulaks, respectively, for whatever ills their societies were suffering.

Each government enshrined into law the curtailment of ordinary freedoms for the ‘thems,’ whether to travel, to purchase things available to other citizens or to have the “inalienable” rights enshrined in that country’s constitution.

In each instance, governments used the media as an instrument to foment hatred and prejudice among the other members of the population toward the ‘thems,’ condemning them for views and ideologies that threatened the

“Whether you are pro- or anti-Covid vaccine, whether you have been vaccinated or not, let’s stand together against vaccine passports”

health and prosperity of the nation.

Each government signposted the ‘thems’ with some sort of identification, whether registration cards or yellow stars to keep them segregated, inferior and ineligible for ordinary legal rights.

Compare that with what is going on today, where countries and cities around the world are launching vaccine passports and other restrictions (see page 26).

These passports favor one sector of society and limit the rights of others to travel to certain places, enter particular venues and possibly gain employment. Some politicians even noted that the

unvaccinated should not be able to walk into a store to buy food.

Please understand: this emphatically is not a comparison between the fate of the unvaccinated and the horrific fate of the Jews during the Holocaust or the ongoing plight of African Americans. It is also not an argument for or against Covid vaccination, although it should be pointed out that overwhelming evidence now shows that none of the Covid vaccines stops transmission of the virus, but only protects the individual at risk (see News Focus, page 18).

It’s a warning about where the necessity of carrying a card saying whether you are an ‘us’ or a ‘them’ can lead.

The Communist state newspaper *Pravda* referred to the kulaks as “hesitant allies” of the state, and thus less committed or patriotic, just as the media today has labeled people “vaccine hesitant” for asking perfectly reasonable questions about a brand new and largely untested gene technology.

In announcing new laws that companies with 100 employees or more require staff to be vaccinated or tested weekly, President Joe Biden told the 25 percent of Americans who refuse that they were “costing all of us” and “blocking public health.”

Discrimination doesn’t require conflict or indeed much besides the flimsiest designation of otherness. As American psychologist Henri Taifel demonstrated in a 1970 study, when a batch of adolescent boys were told that certain others had scored the same as they had on a computer task, they began to band together and discriminate against those who hadn’t achieved the same score.

All it takes is any kind of a wall, no matter how insubstantial.

Or any kind of passport.

Whether you are pro- or anti-Covid vaccine, whether you have been vaccinated or not, let’s stand together against vaccine passports. We already have too many ‘thems’ in our world.



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Lynne McTaggart and Bryan Hubbard

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"Clinical data from some 900,000 Americans who were hospitalized for Covid in 2020 revealed that 64 percent suffered from at least one cardiometabolic condition"

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WHAT DOCTORS DON'T TELL YOU

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Janet Balaskas, who named and inspired the Active Birth Movement in the 1970s, helped revolutionize maternity practices worldwide. Janet is the founder and director of the Active Birth Centre in North London and author of nine books including *Active Birth*, *Preparing for Birth with Yoga* and *Easy Exercises for Pregnancy*.



Sally Bunday is founder of the The Hyperactive Children's Support Group, the first organization to draw attention to the role of diet and nutrition, particularly food additives and essential fatty acid deficiencies, in childhood behavior problems. The charity has helped thousands of families in its more than 30-year history.

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CBD for epilepsy

I am a retired medical doctor who is very concerned by the number of young persons who are suffering from epileptic seizures that are only partially controlled by standard NHS medication. Thus I was perturbed to read of the statements made by the British Paediatric Neurological Association (BPNA) about the use of CBD products.

It doesn't take much effort to find on the internet good studies recommending the efficacy of CBD products in assisting such difficult cases.

Clearly no one type of treatment can be used for any one medical condition. I was well aware when in practice the need for a combination of treatments in such cases.

CBD products surely have now established their position as part of the therapies/treatments available to the NHS?

Dr Anthony D Fox (retired), Hampshire

Kitchen cupboard remedy

Regarding your article on kidney stones in the September 2021 issue, you missed one of the most obvious remedies—apple cider vinegar in a bit of water daily. Take this and they'll go away and won't return.

Maliya Price, via email

Headaches and hearing aids

In your July/August issue, Karren wrote about her mother's experience with Bluetooth hearing aids and her concerns about them emitting radiation. I thought you might be interested in my own experience with them.

Having no luck with NHS aids, I went to a high street retailer

“It doesn't take much effort to find good studies on the efficacy of CBD products”



and spent almost £2,000 on aids. I only became aware they were Bluetooth when I went for a check-up and the audiologist knew from his computer how often I'd been using them.

I had noted headaches, and as time went on I wondered if there was a connection.

A friend checked the aids with her EMF (electromagnetic field) meter, and they were as high as it registers!

I wrote to the retailer about my concerns, but the letter I got in response did not acknowledge the headaches or high levels of radiation.

I stopped wearing the hearing aids, and all the headaches have gone.

R. Tobitt, Carmarthenshire, Wales

Not just hot air

I read about ozone therapy in *WDDTY* some years ago and shared the article with my husband. Up until then, he thought the magazine was rubbish! But after reading the article, he made an appointment in London for ozone therapy and ended up having six treatments

over six months. He found the treatment wonderful.

Thank you so much for producing the magazine.

E. Carnie, via email

Fighting fatigue

Thank you for your interesting article “The five personality patterns of fatigue” in the October 2021 issue. I suffer from fatigue and can identify with a couple of the personality patterns mentioned.

I think it's definitely beneficial to be aware of these patterns, and I am hoping I can change them going forward to help improve my energy

levels. I have started journaling and already found that useful to catch some of my draining behaviors.

Sally, via email

Let children lead the way

I've just been rereading the September 2016 issue of *WDDTY* and came across an excellent article by Rob Verkerk, in which he states, “I for one would vote to keep our minds wide open to the insights of children and see where it takes us”.

I agree. As many adults aren't listening to the obesity issue, I believe our children could teach them.

We need excellent, stimulating nutrition programs in all primary classes. I'm sure this would work.

In the 1980s, I taught “cooking” lessons to young children. They never heard the words ‘raw’ or ‘vegan,’ just how wonderful the ingredients were for them.

The parents commented on their enthusiasm for eating more healthily and were learning from them. So simple but so very beneficial.

Alwynne Cartmell, Southport

Dancing is the best remedy after menopause

Women should take up dancing after menopause—it's one of the best exercises to keep the weight off and stay healthy.

Going to a dance class three times a week also improves bone health and reduces the risk of osteoporosis, a common problem after menopause.

Researchers from the North American Menopause Society tracked the health of a small group of postmenopausal women who regularly went to a dance class.

Standard exercise doesn't seem to be able to keep the weight off after menopause, but dancing does that and more. It manages cholesterol levels, improves overall fitness, and helps shape the body, which also improved the women's self-esteem.

Menopause, 2021; doi:10.1097/GME.0000000000001818

Fasting could protect you from viruses

Occasional fasting can protect you from a viral infection, or at least ensure symptoms are mild.

Reducing your calorie intake changes the gut microbiome—the universe of bacteria—and this makes any infection far less virulent, say researchers from the University of British Columbia in Canada.

A 48-hour fast before and during infection with the *Salmonella* bug, one of the most common causes of food poisoning, reduces intestinal tissue damage and inflammation, the researchers discovered. But the usual symptoms returned when normal eating started again.

Fasting seems to deprive the virus of the energy it needs to fully infect the host, the researchers say.

Their research so far has been limited to tests on laboratory mice, and so the same effects may not be seen in people, they warn.

PLoS Pathog, 2021; 17: e1009719





Start walking after a stroke —you'll live longer

If you've had a stroke, start walking (or gardening or biking). Getting active for just four hours a week will dramatically reduce your risk of premature death.

If you're 75 or older, a little activity every week will more than halve your risk of an early death, and the reduction in risk is even more impressive if you're under 75, dropping by 80 percent.

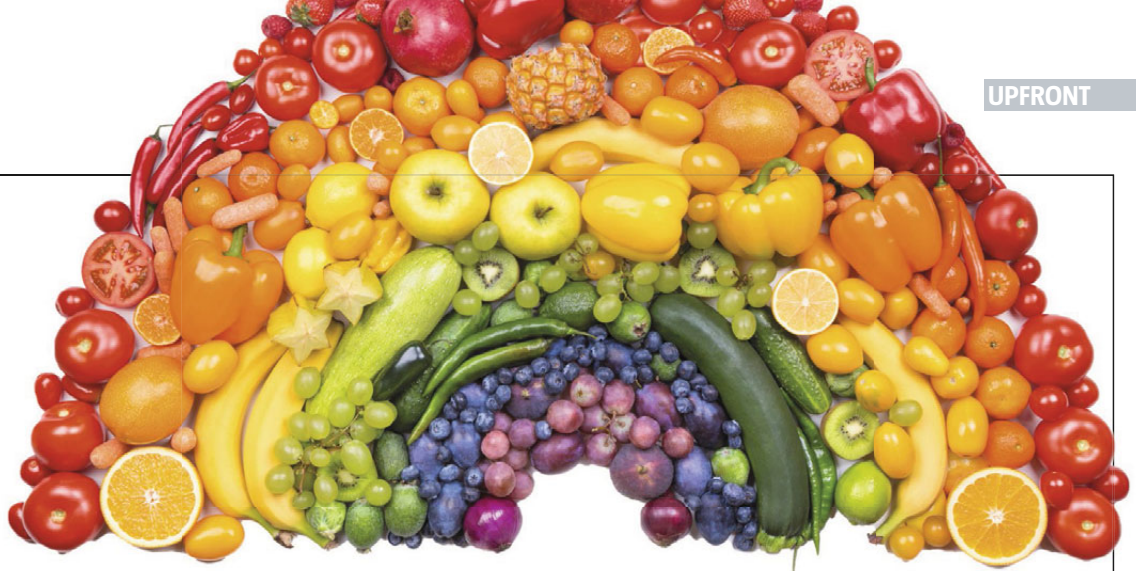
Not surprisingly, the mortality risk drops even further in those who exercise for more than four hours a week.

Most older people can maintain that level of gentle exercise even if they have had a stroke, say researchers from the University of Calgary. To discover the positive impact of exercise, they tracked the health and activity levels of 895 people with an average age of 72 who had suffered a stroke and compared them to more than 97,000 people with an average age of 63 who hadn't had a stroke.

During the four years of the study, around 15 percent of those in the stroke group who walked for three to four hours a week died, but that rate rose to 33 percent among those who didn't exercise. In the non-stroke group, 4 percent who exercised had died, but that rate doubled in the non-exercise group.

Walking for at least three to four hours a week, or cycling for two to three hours, was the minimum required to live a longer life.

Neurology, 2021 Aug 11;10.1212/WNL.00000000000012535



Eat the rainbow and stay sharp

Eating a 'rainbow diet' reduces your risk of cognitive decline.

A plate of colorful fruits and vegetables—such as strawberries, oranges, peppers and apples—reduces your risk of memory loss and cognitive decline by around 20 percent.

The 'rainbow' foods are packed with antioxidant flavonoids—especially flavones and anthocyanins—that help protect our mental capabilities, especially as we get older. Flavonoids are "powerhouses" that help arrest memory decline, often a forerunner of dementia and Alzheimer's disease.

Researchers from Harvard University tracked the health and diets of nearly 50,000 women with an average age of 48 and 28,000 men with an average age of 51 for 20 years. Their ability to recall events or remember short lists was regularly checked through a questionnaire.

Those who ate the most flavonoids—around 600 mg, or half a serving a day—also had the highest scores on the tests and were 20 percent less likely to suffer cognitive decline compared to those who ate the lowest level of flavonoids.

Strawberries are especially rich in flavonoids, the researchers said, while flavones give the greatest protection against cognitive

decline. These are found in spices and in yellow or orange fruits and vegetables.

Flavones alone reduced the risk of cognitive decline by 38 percent, which equates to a brain that is biologically four years 'younger.' Anthocyanins, found in blueberries, blackberries and cherries, reduced the risk by 24 percent.

The other piece of good news is that it's never too late to start. Even those who took up the rainbow diet later in life enjoyed similar protective effects to others who had been eating the diet for 20 years.

Neurology, 2021;97:e1041–56

Glass of wine reduces chances of second heart attack

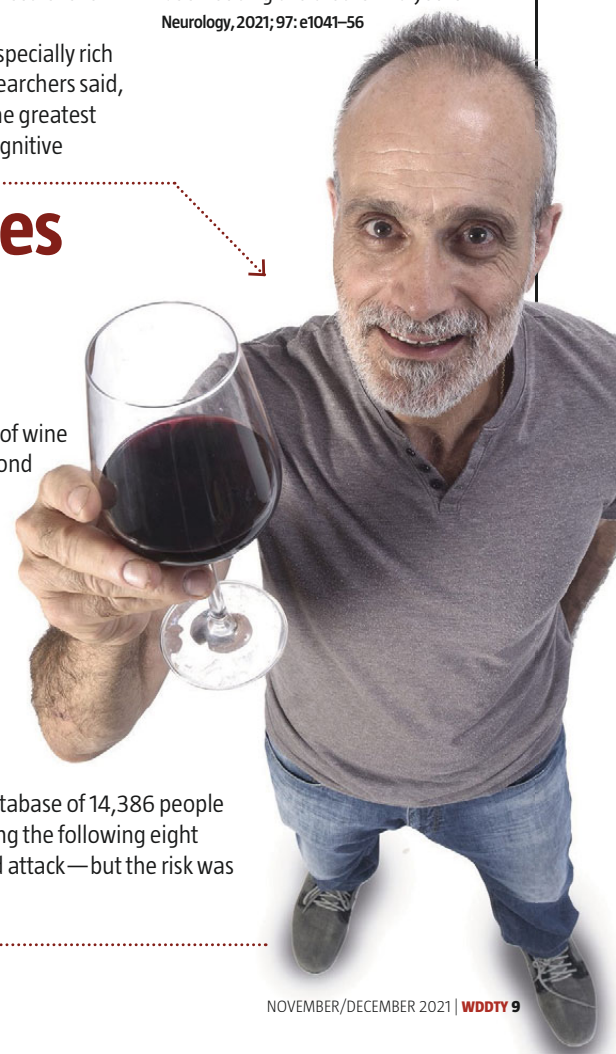
If you've survived a heart attack or stroke, add a small glass of wine to your daily routine—it could reduce your chances of a second attack and may even save your life.

People who drink one glass of wine, spirits or beer every day reduce their chances of a second attack by around 27 percent compared to teetotalers.

Those who drink 8 grams of alcohol a day—equivalent to one unit, or a small glass of wine—enjoyed the greatest protection. But you can have too much of a good thing, and those who drank more didn't lower their risk further, but instead raised their chances of other alcohol-related health problems.

Researchers from University College London studied a database of 14,386 people who had experienced a heart attack, angina or stroke. During the following eight years, 1,640 of the group died, and 2,950 suffered a second attack—but the risk was far lower in those who drank moderately.

BMC Med, 2021; 19: 167



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Stig Bengmark, Professor emeritus at London University and former Professor of surgery at Lund University in Sweden, has spent over 60 years researching the impact of nutrition on health. In 1999, Stig together with his research colleagues, launched a project which was the beginning of Synbiotic. The researchers collected and studied around 500 different lactic acid bacteria and dedicated specific attention to the bacteria's ability to enhance each other's characteristics. The goal of the research project was to find an elite among anti-inflammatory bacteria.

Based on the studies, four unique lactic acid bacteria were patented. Early in the process the researchers were able to establish the fact that the bacteria could multiply in the colon when fibres were added. The bacteria were combined with four plant fibres and this unique composition was named Synbiotic2000.

Over the coming years, a number of studies were conducted with Synbiotic2000 which showed very positive results. Synbiotic2000 has proved to be effective, among other things, in being antiinflammatory, reconditioning the intestinal flora and strengthening the immune system.

Based on the research on Synbiotic2000, the dietary supplement Synbiotic15 was developed. Over a short period, the demand for Synbiotic15 has grown rapidly and is today recognised as one of the leading and most trusted supplements on the Swedish market.

Most children with ADHD still have the condition as adults

ADHD (attention deficit hyperactivity disorder) is generally considered a problem of childhood, but 90 percent go on to experience symptoms—such as speaking impulsively or not being able to make decisions—as adults.

It's important for people to recognize that ADHD carries on into adulthood, and there will be times when a person can't manage situations or feels less in control, said researchers from the University of Washington School of Medicine.

It was thought that half of all children diagnosed with ADHD would still suffer from it as adults, but the Washington researchers estimate the true figure is much higher and could be as much as 90 percent of cases. They followed the health of 558 children from when they were eight until they reached the age of 25. All the children had been diagnosed with ADHD.

The researchers aren't sure why ADHD symptoms flare up in adulthood but suspect it could be related to stress or not following a healthy lifestyle with good nutrition and sleep. Symptoms come and go, the researchers found, and many in the study group had worked out their own coping mechanisms.

Adults with ADHD are much more likely to be in a creative profession. "The key is finding a job or life passion that is compatible with ADHD. You are going to see a lot of creative people who have ADHD, whereas ADHD people who may be required to do very detail-oriented tasks at a computer will find it very difficult," said Margaret Sibley, one of the researchers.

ADHD has two main clusters of symptoms: inattention can manifest as disorganization, forgetfulness or having trouble focusing, while those who are more hyperactive can be verbally impulsive, indecisive or compulsive when they grow up.

Am J Psychiatry, 2021; appiajp202121010032

Children aren't eating real food

Children aren't eating real food. An alarming two-thirds of the calories they consume are coming from 'ultraprocessed' foods such as fast-food burgers, sugary breakfast cereals and French fries.

It's a health time bomb that could trigger an explosion in cases of diabetes, obesity, cancer and heart disease, say researchers.

Children as young as two are getting 67 percent of their calories from highly processed foods, and it's a problem that's getting worse. When the survey was last conducted in 1999, ultraprocessed food contributed to 61 percent of total calorie intake.

The only bright spot was a drop in the consumption of sugar-sweetened drinks, which contributed 5.3 percent of total calories compared to 10.8 percent in the 1999 survey.

The biggest rise was in frozen pizza and burger consumption, which now accounts for

11 percent of calories consumed, compared to just 2.2 percent 20 years ago, say researchers from Tufts University.

Not surprisingly, children ages two to 19 were eating fewer healthier options, such as fruits and vegetables, which represent just 23 percent of the overall diet. The rest of the average diet was made up of 'moderately' processed foods, such as cheese and canned fruits and vegetables.

Ultraprocessed foods are high in added sugars, sodium and flavor enhancers, and low in protein, vitamins and minerals.

JAMA, 2021; 326: 519–30



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“Light is the medicine of the Future” Dr. John Ott, Pioneer in Photobiology author of Health and Light

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Moderate exercise is the best for getting fit

What's the best exercise to get fit and stay that way? The good news is that moderate activity, and even walking, takes the prize over intense workouts.

The key is in finding an activity you can do frequently. Moderate exercise a few days a week is more effective than just walking—but if you are a walker, the more steps you walk will help offset the negative effects of hours spent just sitting around.

To uncover the gold standard of exercise, researchers at the Boston University School of Medicine studied the impact of exercise, or a lack of it, on the

hearts of 2,000 participants. Habitual, dedicated exercise regimes that were moderate to vigorous in intensity were the key for having a healthy heart, the researchers concluded.

And as fitness has a big impact on heart disease, as well as diabetes, cancer and longevity, the sooner you start regularly exercising, the better.

Eur Heart J, 2021; ehab580



A healthy diet halves heart disease risk

Eating plenty of fruit and veg can halve your risk of heart disease, including heart attack and stroke. People eating the healthiest diets—which included fruits, vegetables, fish and nuts and excluded

processed foods—were 52 percent less likely to develop heart disease. Young people who start eating a healthy diet by the time they're 30 and postmenopausal women seem to get the greatest protection, but it's a strategy that works for everyone, at all ages, researchers say.

The importance of a healthy diet has been highlighted by two major studies that tracked the link between “plant-centered” eating and heart health. In one, nearly 5,000 young adults were tracked for 32 years, during which time 289 developed heart disease. Those who ate the healthiest diet at the start of the study had the lowest risk of heart disease—and encouragingly those who took up a healthier diet up to the age of 50 reduced their risk of further disease by 61 percent.

A similar picture was seen in a separate study of 123,000 postmenopausal women between the ages of 50 and 79. Those who ate a healthy diet were 17 percent less likely to suffer heart failure and had a 14 percent lower risk of coronary artery disease.

J Am Heart Assoc, 2021; 10: e020718 (young adults); *J Am Heart Assoc*, 2021; 10: e021515 (postmenopausal women)

Can't lose the pounds? Could be the pesticides on your fruit and veg

Can't get the weight off? It could be because of the pesticides that are sprayed on the fruits and vegetables you're eating.

The pesticide chlorpyrifos slows our ability to burn calories and interferes with the healthy functioning of our brown fat, which is being recognized as a major controller of our weight.

Chlorpyrifos is widely used around the world, and it had the biggest impact on brown fat of the 34 common pesticides and herbicides that researchers from McMaster University in Canada tested. “Brown fat

is the metabolic furnace in our body, burning calories, unlike normal fat that is used to store them . . . and we know brown fat is activated during cold weather and when we eat,” explained Gregory Steinberg, one of the researchers.



Pesticides need only slow down our energy use by 40 calories a day to cause an annual weight gain of 5 lbs (2.26 kg), which could eventually lead to obesity.

Although chlorpyrifos is banned in Canada, where the university is based, the country still imports fruits and vegetables that have been sprayed with chlorpyrifos. Any imported produce should be washed thoroughly before eating, the researchers advise.

Nat Commun 2021; 12: 5163

Concerned about your gut health? We tailor-make the solution.

As a crucial contributor to health and disease, your gut needs attention like never before.

Your gut bacteria are 90% unique. So why shouldn't your gut supplement be unique too? You house trillions of microbes in your gut. Keeping these in balance is key to a healthy digestive system and optimum health. But how do you actually achieve this? The answer lies in populating the good microbes and reducing the unfavourable ones.

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Floré utilises next generation gut analysis to design a gut supplement specifically for your gut and its needs. A personalised in-depth digital report indicates the bacteria, fungi, yeast, parasites and archaea present and the impact that they are having. Importantly, it also outlines any key missing probiotic strains or enzymes. Your own Floré gut supplement is blended with prebio and probio live bacteria, digestive enzymes and botanical ingredients to not only repopulate your gut with what it needs but it also feeds the microbes that are present.



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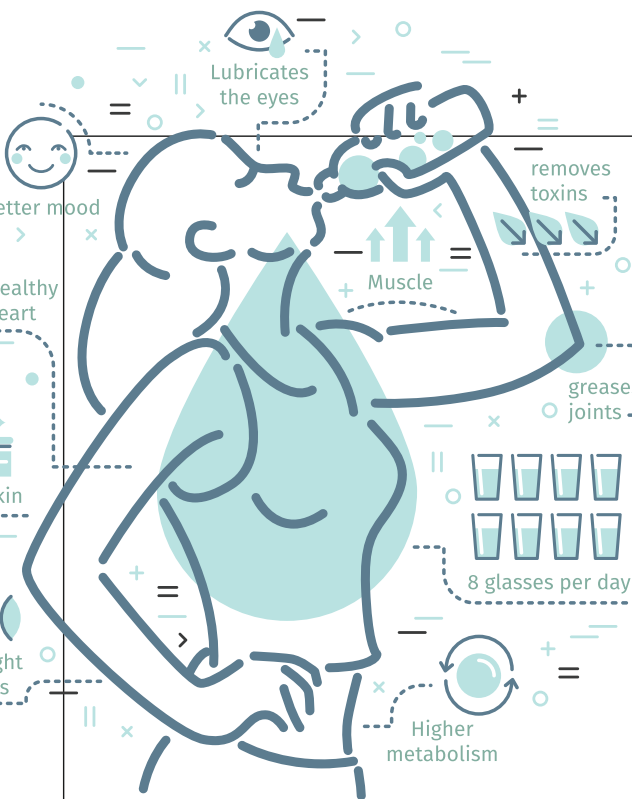
Receive your easy-to-understand comprehensive gut analysis report, categorised and explained with diet recommendations based on your analysis.



Step 3

Receive your custom Floré.





Drink up to 3 liters of water a day for a healthy heart

Staying hydrated is good for your heart. Drinking up to 3 liters (5 pints) of liquids every day reduces your chances of heart failure—and probably an awful lot more besides.

Few people drink nearly enough liquid every day—but it's an essential fuel for the heart's pumping mechanism.

Our ideal liquid intake varies between the sexes; women should be drinking between 1.6 to 2.1 liters a day, and the range for men is 2 to 3 liters.

You know if you're drinking enough liquids from the amount of sodium in your blood. A high serum sodium reading suggests you should be drinking more; if you're not, your body will

try to conserve the water it has, and this can eventually lead to heart failure.

Researchers from the US National Institutes of Health tracked the sodium levels of 15,792 adults over a 25-year period. High sodium levels were a reliable predictor of heart failure over the duration of the study, with each 1 mmol/L increase in sodium increasing the odds of heart failure by around 20 percent.

Although water is the most obvious source of liquid your body needs, tea and natural juices also count toward your daily intake.

European Society of Cardiology Congress, August 24, 2021.

It's the fructose sugars, stupid

What is it about processed foods and drinks that make them so bad for us? The key ingredient seems to be fructose, because it changes our digestive tract in a way that makes us put on weight.

Although fructose is a natural sugar in fruit, it's also found in high concentrations in sugar additives like high-fructose corn syrup (HFCS) found in processed foods.

And it's the amount that really makes the difference, as researchers from the Weill Cornell Medical

Center have discovered. "Fructose itself isn't harmful; it's a problem of overconsumption. Our bodies are not designed to eat as much of it as we do," said Marcus DaSilva Goncalves, one of the researchers.

It also makes sense from an evolutionary standpoint. People would harvest and eat fruits in the autumn to absorb more nutrients in preparation for the long winter ahead.

Fructose differs from other sugars like glucose, and it changes

the way the villi—hairlike structures that line the inside of the small intestine—function. Villi expand the gut to help it absorb nutrients from the food we eat. But consume too much glucose, and the villi can lengthen by as much as 40 percent, causing the gut to expand and absorb more nutrients. Eventually, this process will cause weight gain and obesity.

Nature, 2021; 597(7875): 263–7



Clench your fist to help lower your blood pressure



You don't have to sweat it out at the gym to control your blood pressure—a special type of exercise you can do while sitting at your desk could work just as well.

Isometric resistance training (IRT) is as effective as aerobic and dynamic resistance exercises in controlling blood pressure levels if you're hypertensive, a new study has found.

IRT is a form of strength training where you push against a wall, squeeze your fist or hold out a heavy object with both arms while sitting down—and for that reason it was always thought to be dangerous for people with high blood pressure.

But researchers from the University of South Wales have discovered it is safe and effective, and it's something that everyone can

do. Just 12 minutes a day for two to three days a week is enough to keep high blood pressure under control.

Although the researchers used a specialized handgrip for their tests, they think that a simple fist-and-squeeze action could work just as well and could even be done while sitting down and watching television.

IRT also has knock-on benefits. It reduces central blood pressure—the pressure in the aorta, the heart's largest artery—and ambulatory pressure, the average level when walking.

Far from being dangerous, the researchers found that there were fewer adverse reactions than might be seen in other types of exercise. "This makes IRT a very appealing mode of exercise, especially in those with mobility restrictions who may not be able to do other exercises like aerobic," said researcher Matthew Jones.

Hypertens Res, 2021. doi:10.1038/s41440-021-00720-3



COVID-19 NEWS

Covid jab protection falls to just 16% after six months

People who were among the first to get a Covid vaccine are now vulnerable to infection. The vaccine's effectiveness wanes, and as of June, it provided just 16 percent protection to those vaccinated in January.

The decline in the vaccine's effectiveness is rapid. People vaccinated three months later in April still had 75 percent protection, says Israel's Health Ministry.

The country has almost exclusively adopted Pfizer's experimental mRNA vaccine for its Covid response, which has been one of the most comprehensive and efficient in the West.

But cases have been rising suddenly, and scientists fear serious cases requiring hospital treatment could triple in the coming months.

Researchers from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem were commissioned to explore the sudden rise in serious cases. "We looked at tens of thousands of people tested in June, alongside data on the time since their second shot, and found that those vaccinated early were more likely to test positive," said Dr Yotam Shenhar, the lead researcher.

This gradual waning of the vaccine's effectiveness is exposing the country's most vulnerable to the risk of a serious Covid infection, as they were the first to get the vaccine last January.

Times of Israel, July 27, 2021. "Vaccine effectiveness in preventing serious illness falls to 80%—Israeli study"

Most Covid cases caught in hospital and care homes

Around 60 percent of cases of Covid were caught in care homes for the elderly or in hospitals, and not in the general population.

These alarming figures represented a failure of care and preparation, such as the lack of proper PPE equipment, but they weren't lessons learned. During the first wave, around 11 percent of cases were caught in hospitals, but this doubled in the second wave that peaked around last May.

Lancet, 2021; S0140-6736(21)01786-4

Covid cases 60 % higher than official figures suggest

How many people have had Covid? The actual number of infections could be 60 percent higher than the official figures show, suggesting there have been around 122 million cases around the world that have never been recorded.

The high rate of unrecorded cases also suggests that Covid is far less lethal than estimates suggest, nearly halving the fatality rate.

Although we know how many people have died with Covid or needed hospital treatment, there's been no way to track the true infection rate among those who had mild symptoms or were asymptomatic or never diagnosed.

Researchers from the University of Washington created a computer model to determine the true extent of Covid infections, and they estimate that up to 60 percent of Covid cases were undetected up to last March.

Proc Natl Acad Sci USA, 2021; 118: e2103272118



Moscow residents defeat vaccine passport scheme

Moscow residents defeated a vaccine passport scheme in the city in just three weeks, as vaccinated and non-vaccinated collaborated in a show of consumer force.

Any public establishment—such as a restaurant, bar or cinema—was boycotted if it was demanding visitors show a vaccine passport before being allowed entry.

And the vaccinated and unvaccinated came together in a show of unity to defeat the scheme, which had been introduced by the city's mayor Sergei Sobyanin. His vaccine passport scheme blocked the unvaccinated from eating in a restaurant, going to a cinema or gym or even getting their hair cut.

The restrictions were so severe—essentially making the unvaccinated second-class citizens—that everyone came together to defeat them.

Businesses were quickly feeling the pinch and pleaded with Mayor Sobyanin to abandon the program, and within three weeks, Mayor Sobyanin had rescinded the passport scheme, claiming it was because Covid cases in the city had suddenly fallen.

The World We Live In blog: luis46pr.wordpress.com/2021/08/14/brilliant-how-russians-crushed-moscows-dumb-vaccine-passports-in-just-3-weeks

One in three people has had Covid

At least one in three people has had Covid. More than 103 million Americans had the infection up to the end of last year—around four times more than official estimates suggest—and today the rate could be much higher still.

Around half the residents of some US cities have had Covid, including 52 percent of Los Angeles's population and 48 percent of people in Chicago.

Only around 22 percent of cases have been included in the official figures, say researchers from Columbia University's Mailman School of Public Health. To arrive at a truer picture of Covid's spread, they carried out simulations from confirmed cases to include population density and mobility.

The upper Midwest states have had the highest levels of infection, with more than 60 percent of the populations of the Dakotas, Minnesota, Wisconsin and Iowa having had Covid. Prevalence was also high in metropolitan areas, with infection rates of 42 percent in Miami, 44 percent in New York City, 52 percent in Los Angeles and 48 percent in Chicago.

Most of the unreported cases were mild or symptomless, and so hadn't been detected. On December 31, 2020, around one in 130 Americans—or 0.77 percent of the nation's population—was contagious, and a similar number had the infection but weren't contagious yet.

Using the new figures, Covid's fatality rate falls to around 0.3 percent of people infected, suggesting it is only slightly more lethal than seasonal flu.

Although vaccines have protected the most vulnerable from suffering a severe reaction or even dying, they haven't stopped the virus from spreading, especially with the mutations that may be milder, the researchers say. The high number of infections could also include people who have been reinfecting with the SARS-CoV-2 virus.

Nature, 2021; doi:10.1038/s41586-021-03914-4

Covid: why it's bad science to blame the unvaccinated

The majority of serious Covid cases are the direct result of a bad diet—something health authorities have known about, but ignored, since the epidemic started

Covid-19 is being characterized as a pandemic of the unvaccinated. The vaccinated are safe and can lead a normal social life, while the unvaccinated are treated almost as social pariahs, and in some countries are not being allowed in restaurants or bars. In Moscow, for a few short weeks, the unvaccinated weren't even allowed to get a haircut.

But the vaccine appears to offer protection for just six months or so, and the real story is that Covid is ultimately a pandemic of a bad diet, although this is not being promoted by health agencies or the media.

People who suffer from one of the four conditions of obesity, diabetes, hypertension (high blood pressure) or heart failure—collectively known as cardiometabolic conditions—make up two-thirds of hospital admissions for serious Covid infection. Each of these can be the result of poor lifestyle choices, and especially a diet of processed foods.

Eating well should be promoted alongside vaccinations and mask-wearing as the three best ways to beat Covid, a new study has concluded after discovering that around 41 percent of serious Covid cases would likely never

have happened in the first place had people been eating a healthy diet.¹

The findings echo those of another study earlier in the year that estimated 64 percent of the people needing hospital treatment had lifestyle-related conditions and might have suffered a much milder reaction had they followed a healthy diet. As a result, eating proper food would, on its own, have removed an enormous burden from an overstretched healthcare system.²

Although vaccination is undoubtedly one of the best ways to protect the most vulnerable, for a short while at least, its effectiveness may have been overstated by health agencies who have been playing fast and loose with the data, a new analysis has found.³ If true, a healthy diet could upstage vaccinations as the most effective—and long-lasting—way to beat Covid, at least as a life-threatening disease.

Good diet, mild Covid

Plant-based foods including vegetables, fruit and legumes are the cornerstone of a healthy diet, and people who follow such a diet are far less likely to suffer a severe Covid infection. They even reduce

their chances of getting the disease in the first place, say researchers from Harvard Medical School and Massachusetts General Hospital.⁴

After analyzing data from nearly 593,000 users of a smartphone app, the Covid-19 Symptom Study, the researchers discovered that people who were eating a poor diet or lived in socially deprived areas—two risk factors that often go hand-in-hand—were far more likely to suffer a serious Covid infection.

Nearly 32,000 of the participants had caught the Covid virus, SARS-CoV-2, but those who were eating the healthiest diet had a 41 percent lower risk of developing severe Covid. They also had a 9 percent lower chance of ever getting the virus at all.

As the vaccine's effectiveness drops from around 75 percent two months after inoculation to just 16 percent after six months, a good diet appears to offer better long-lasting protection.

Overall, nearly a third of all Covid cases could have been avoided had people eaten a healthy diet, the Harvard researchers estimate. Extrapolated globally, this suggests at least 76 million cases could have been avoided. "People can reduce their risk of getting Covid or having poor outcomes by paying attention to their diet," said Andrew Chan, one of the researchers.

It's time for governments to prioritize healthy eating as a proven way to protect against Covid, and it should be part of a three-pronged approach that also includes vaccination and mask-wearing, they conclude. And since a poor diet is common among the socially deprived, governments need to come up with ways to make better food more accessible and affordable.

Not a disease just of the elderly

The impact of a healthy diet could be even more significant than that on Covid's severity, researchers from Tufts University found in an earlier study. They analyzed around 900,000 people with Covid who needed hospital care in the US last year and discovered that 64 percent suffered from at least one cardiometabolic condition. Of these, 20 percent had the "lifestyle disease" type 2 diabetes, 30 percent were obese, 26 percent had hypertension and nearly 12 percent had heart failure.⁵

Despite the widespread uptake of vaccines, Covid cases continue to rise, as do sales of processed and fast foods. Perhaps one day health agencies will stop blaming the unvaccinated and instead connect the dots that lead straight to a bad diet



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Although a healthy diet might not have prevented all those cases needing hospital treatment, it may have kept nearly 600,000 people out of emergency care in the US alone last year, which would have made Covid a far more manageable disease for doctors and nurses to deal with.

A diet of fast and processed foods is the real culprit, and the statistics bear this out. Although the US makes up just 5 percent of the world's population, it accounts for 25 percent of all Covid deaths worldwide. And with half of Americans being diabetic or prediabetic and half again being hypertensive, while three-quarters are obese, it's no wonder the US is witnessing more Covid deaths than any other nation, says the Tufts team.

Although Covid is seen as a disease of the elderly, these chronic health problems even trump age. A 35-year-old suffering from one of the four conditions has the same risk of needing hospital care for a Covid infection as a healthy 75-year-old and has a similar chance of dying from the infection as a healthy 65-year-old. In other words, these four conditions are aging people metabolically by up to 40 years.

The good news is that it's a problem that can be reversed, and quickly. People who adopt healthier diets and lifestyles, including regular exercise, can get themselves out of the Covid danger zone within two months. As researcher Dariush Mozaffarian said: "We know that changes in diet quality alone, even without weight loss, rapidly improve health within six to eight weeks."

A vaccine is no silver bullet, but changing to a healthier diet just might be—and one that can be long-lasting.

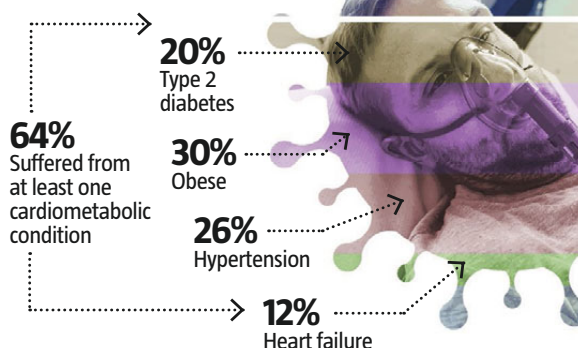
Known from the start

Although health agencies never promote the importance of a healthy diet, the relationship between cardiometabolic conditions and serious Covid infection has been known from the earliest days when the virus started to spread.

Researchers in Wuhan, China, considered the epicenter of the pandemic, were some of the first to identify diabetes, hypertension and cardiovascular disease as three of the biggest risk factors, and their findings were quickly endorsed by researchers in Italy, where the virus also peaked early.¹

Covid-19: the latest lifestyle disease?

Clinical data from some 900,000 Americans who were hospitalized for Covid in 2020 revealed that 64 percent suffered from at least one cardiometabolic condition. Of these, 20 percent had the "lifestyle disease" type 2 diabetes, 30 percent were obese, 26 percent had hypertension and nearly 12 percent had heart failure.²



An analysis by the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) revealed that 89 percent of people hospitalized with Covid had at least one of the five risk factors of hypertension, obesity, chronic lung disease, diabetes and cardiovascular disease, with hypertension and obesity being the most prevalent.³

Another study published earlier this year underscored the importance of healthy eating. The study, which included 3,000 healthcare workers in six countries, discovered that a diet that was either plant- or fish-based reduced the chances of a moderate to severe Covid infection by more than half.⁴

Chronic inflammation is the common bond between the cardiometabolic conditions, and this could trigger the escalation of lung injury, cytokine storm and respiratory failure, three of the life-threatening reactions to a serious Covid infection.

A poor diet completes the circle, the Tufts researchers say. A diet of processed foods lacks in essential virus fighters including zinc, selenium, quercetin and vitamins A, C, D, E and B6, which have all been used in high doses to treat seriously ill Covid patients. Long-chain omega-3 fatty acids and polyphenols—found in plant-based foods—also support a healthy immune system and help control cytokine storms.

It works, for a while

A good diet can help bolster the immune system for many years, but a Covid vaccine's protective effects appear to last for just six months or so. Alarmed by the sudden escalation of cases in Israel—one of the first countries to achieve mass vaccination—its government commissioned researchers to investigate.

A team from Hebrew University in Jerusalem discovered that the Pfizer vaccine, which Israel chose for its mass vaccination program, had only a 16 percent protective effect after six months, and yet gave 75 percent protection two months after inoculation,

suggesting its effectiveness wanes quickly.⁵

Despite these shortcomings, health agencies still maintain that Covid is a pandemic of the unvaccinated, but they may be manipulating the data to support that narrative. Last July, the CDC proclaimed that 97 percent of people needing hospital treatment for Covid are unvaccinated—but revealed a month later that the figures were based on hospital admissions from January to June. In those first four months or so, most Americans had not yet been double-vaxxed. In other words, most Covid cases in hospitals would not have had the chance to be vaccinated.

It seems perverse that health agencies, having known about the long-term protective qualities of a healthy diet from the outset, instead extol only the importance of vaccination. Despite the widespread uptake of vaccines, Covid cases continue to rise, as do sales of processed and fast foods.

Perhaps one day health agencies will stop blaming the unvaccinated and instead connect the dots that lead straight to a bad diet.

Bryan Hubbard

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Rob Verkerk The Politics of Health

THE LOGIC OF LIFESTYLE MEDICINE

Lifestyle medicine has the answers that the conventional medical model doesn't, says Rob Verkerk

Four lifestyles are killing us, why don't we make lifestyle medicine mainstream? It's logical, yet this very logic appears to defy public health authorities and the medical establishment.

Lifestyle medicine is not taught at medical school, and those responsible for the design of modern healthcare seem happy to allow physicians to dispense their pharmaceutical repertoire to a public that continues to believe it's the best modern medicine can offer, without recognizing that it's largely just symptom management—and even that often doesn't work particularly well.

It's a business model that keeps delivering for its architects: Big Pharma.

Roughly 70 percent of all ailments that bring people to a doctor are the result of preventable disease caused by our lifestyles. We're also seeing two worrying trends in most industrialized countries: one, people are becoming chronically diseased at an ever-younger age, and two, we now appear to have passed "peak lifespan," with life expectancy in the US and elsewhere becoming shorter for the first time since 1990.

Writing in the *Permanente Journal* back in 2018, a distinguished group of American physicians led by Balazs Bodai MD, Director of The Breast Cancer Survivorship Institute in Sacramento, made an appeal to fellow doctors to get serious about lifestyle medicine. They stated, "By ignoring the root causes of disease and neglecting to prioritize lifestyle measures for prevention, the medical community is placing people at harm."

Superficially, the authorities have an adequate answer to

such criticism: "We're doing it already." They uphold that we've got healthy eating and exercise guidelines delivered through our public health programs, and primary care physicians are working tirelessly to help patients with sleep and stress-related problems. (They do prescribe sleeping pills and antidepressants like Smarties after all.)

Sound plausible enough? Definitely not to me or Dr Bodai—or to a growing band of health professionals around the world. Their

consume more than 6 grams of salt (2.4 grams of sodium) a day to reduce their risk of high blood pressure (hypertension). But they probably haven't heard that this message is not founded on science. Researchers at McMaster University in Canada—a hub of salt research for decades—consistently have been saying health authorities are misinterpreting their findings.

What McMaster scientists actually found was that women who consume less than 4 grams of salt a day put themselves at



Lifestyle medicine encourages you to deal with the upstream causes of disease

justification doesn't hold water because everything they're doing is failing spectacularly.

Healthy eating guidelines metered down from on high have never worked. That's partially because of the very complex reasons why people eat unhealthy diets, but also because some of the advice is patently wrong.

For instance, the advice on low-fat diets was never based on high-quality scientific evidence. And the delusion behind the proposed cholesterol–heart disease link has been more about selling statins to an unsuspecting public.

Most people have heard the message that they shouldn't

increased, not decreased, risk of hypertension, and you'd need to consume around 15 grams of salt to create a hypertension risk.

In other words, the advice designed to protect public health is now causing a public health problem.

The advice is wrong on at least three counts: 12 grams of salt would have been a more appropriate upper limit to warn the public about, and it additionally should have stressed the importance of consuming at least 4 grams daily along with plenty of potassium-rich plant foods, because it is a sodium-potassium imbalance that causes hypertension.

As with everything else to do with the way our lifestyles impact our health and resilience, the situation is complex. Not only are many people not consuming enough leafy green and colored vegetables, they're also eating too many processed foods, sugars and refined carbohydrates.

Many foods people buy in supermarkets, and those they buy in take-outs, fast food joints and even restaurants, are killing them prematurely—especially when eaten too often. The science says unequivocally that people who eat home-cooked meals most of the time do much better long-term.

Lifestyle medicine is rapidly advancing. We now understand so much about how to personalize advice and encourage meaningful and life-long behavior change. Despite this, the deeply intertwined nature of the medical establishment and Big Pharma means lifestyle medicine is unlikely to be openly embraced. Therefore, we have no option but to bring on this revolution from the bottom up.

In that light, I'm very excited to be working with a UK charity, the Health & Wellbeing Trust, founded by a pioneer in integrative medicine, Dr Rosy Daniel, to launch a 10-hour discovery course in lifestyle medicine. It's designed not only for health professionals from any background but also for members of the public with nothing more than a keen interest in health.

Done properly, lifestyle medicine totally changes your perspective on health, encouraging you to deal with the upstream causes, or causes of causes, of disease—and also of health and resilience. That seldom requires taking patented drugs.

Find out more about Dr Verkerk's new course, *Lifestyle Medicine 101: Universal Medicine for the 21st Century*, at www.healthlearning.online

Robert Verkerk PhD is the executive and scientific director of the Alliance for Natural Health International, a consumer group that aims to protect our right to natural healthcare and nutrition. For more information and to get involved, go to www.anhinternational.org, or check out ANH's Facebook and Twitter pages (www.facebook.com/ANHInternational and www.twitter.com/anhcampaign).

The time bandits

Some foods will add minutes of disease-free living—and some will steal those minutes away. Researchers have done the math to give you the real takeaway on fast foods

We all want to live a long and healthy life, free from disease and chronic illness. And we want every minute of every day to be like that.

We also know that processed food is bad for us—in fact, the US population of 328 million people loses 10 million years of healthy life every year just from eating fast food.

Put that another way—and a sobering way, at that—every time you eat a hot dog, you lose 36 minutes of healthy, disease-free life. Talk about the real takeaway.

Researchers from the University of Michigan have estimated the impact on our health—for good and bad—of 5,853 foods. They discovered that for every hot dog stealing those minutes of healthy living, a serving of nuts can add 26 minutes to your healthy life expectancy.¹

Looking at the food we eat in terms of minutes lost or gained could drive home the dangers of a diet of processed and fast food, the researchers say.

Substituting just 10 percent of calories from beef and processed meats for a serving of fruits, vegetables, nuts, legumes (such as lentils and peas) or seafood could gain you 48 minutes of disease-free living.

It doesn't sound like much, perhaps, but do that every day, and eventually it starts to add up to months, even years, without chronic illness. Eating a healthy diet every day for 30 years will add a year of disease-free time to your life.

The healthier diet also has a positive impact on the environment and releases fewer pollutants into the atmosphere.

It all comes down to healthier food choices. Eat less processed meats and greenhouse-grown vegetables and replace them with field-grown fruits and vegetables, legumes, nuts and sustainable seafood, and you'll live a longer, healthier life.

You knew that already—but now you know how many minutes of healthy life you'll gain or lose.

The foods that STEAL minutes of disease-free living

(per 1 serving)



Chicken wings
MINUS
3.3
MINUTES



Macaroni and cheese
MINUS
4
MINUTES



Pizza
MINUS
4
MINUTES



Fast-food breakfast sandwiches
MINUS
5
MINUTES



Sugar-sweetened drinks
MINUS
9
MINUTES



Cured meats/
poultry
MINUS
30
MINUTES

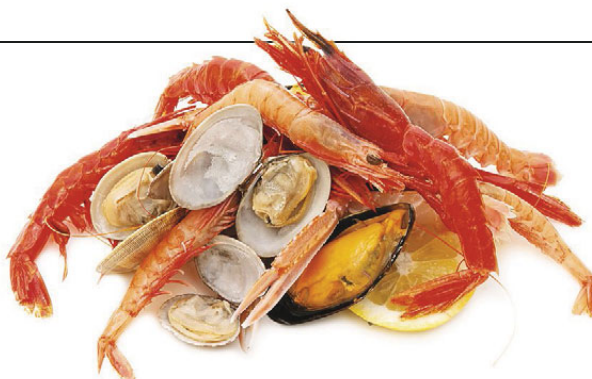
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The foods that ADD minutes of disease-free living

(per 1 serving)

Seafood
PLUS
5
MINUTES



Legumes
(lentils, peas,
beans)
PLUS
10
MINUTES



Fruit
PLUS
12
MINUTES



Nuts and
seeds
PLUS
26
MINUTES



Celeriac
PLUS
3
MINUTES



Hot dog
MINUS
36
MINUTES



Vegetable
pizza
MINUS
1.4
MINUTES





NOT-SO-PASSIVE RESISTANCE

Millions are being threatened with losing their livelihoods or education, or being marginalized in society unless they get the Covid vaccine. Celeste McGovern examines your legal rights to refuse

Dr Julie Ponesse's most memorable lesson to her students must have been her farewell video that went viral this September before it was banned by Internet censors.

"Today I am going to teach you a short lesson on the universally accepted ethics of coercing people into medical procedures," the Canadian professor of ethics at Western University began.¹

"My employer has just mandated that I must get a vaccine for Covid-19," Ponesse said. "If I want to keep working at my job as a professor, I have to take this vaccine. Here's my conundrum: My school employs me to be an authority on the subject of ethics. I hold a PhD in ethics and ancient philosophy. And I'm here to tell you it's ethically wrong to coerce someone to take a vaccine. If it happens to you, you don't have to do it."



Ponesse explained that she was facing "imminent dismissal after 20 years on the job, because I will not submit to having an experimental vaccine injected into my body."

She had taken plenty of vaccines before, but never under coercion, she said in her post—which YouTube deleted within 12 hours—and never with such concerns about the safety of the jab.

Myocarditis is one unexpected safety signal that has emerged just months into the global Covid shot rollout, along with lethal blood clotting disorders, the paralyzing neurological condition Guillain-Barré syndrome, and face-paralyzing Bell's palsy. These are among the more than 700,000 reports of adverse events logged with the US Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting System (VAERS) including nearly 15,000 deaths, 19,000 permanent disabilities and more than 60,000 hospitalizations.

Doctors had reported 812 cases of myocarditis in Canada, most in people under 30, by September 24.²

But the safety question was only one of Ponesse's problems with the shots. "There are questions about how well they work. Nobody's promising that I won't get Covid or transmit Covid if I get the vaccine," she said. Indeed, more than 10,000 "breakthrough cases" of Covid had occurred among fully vaccinated Americans back in April, when the CDC announced

it would no longer be counting cases in the vaccinated unless they led to hospitalization or death.

In Israel, when vaccine protection began failing and the nation introduced its third 'booster' shot, new breakthrough cases among the triple-vaccinated began appearing almost immediately.

From conspiracy to reality

Hundreds of millions of people worldwide are being backed into a corner like Ponesse, ordered to submit to one or more Covid injections or lose their jobs, forfeit their education, and be barred from society if they don't comply.

Digital vaccine passports, dismissed as conspiracy theory in 2020, are the reality in 2021 in cities from Melbourne and Tel Aviv to Toronto and New York. In Ontario, Canada, you can't even attend a family member's funeral if you can't prove you've had two experimental injections.

Hundreds of colleges and universities are harassing students with notifications that they are not welcome on campus if they are unvaccinated.

Churches are even more exclusive. The Vatican itself is treating those skeptical of the mass injection rollout like lepers, barring their entrance without a vaccine passport or a negative Covid test.⁵¹

In fact, the unvaccinated are worse than heathens for some churches. Entire diocese like the one in Moncton, New Brunswick, are telling parishioners to forget about baptisms, weddings, even bingo, unless they've been "fully" vaccinated—the meaning of which will be in constant flux as booster shots three, four and five come into play.⁵²

Israel was the first to introduce a vaccine identity card—the Green Pass—that allows people to access public venues such as restaurants and beaches. A medical apartheid system rapidly emerged in the country.⁵³ President Joe Biden followed suit on September 9 when he declared that all American employers with more than 100 employees would soon be required to force those employees to receive Covid injections or face mandatory testing.

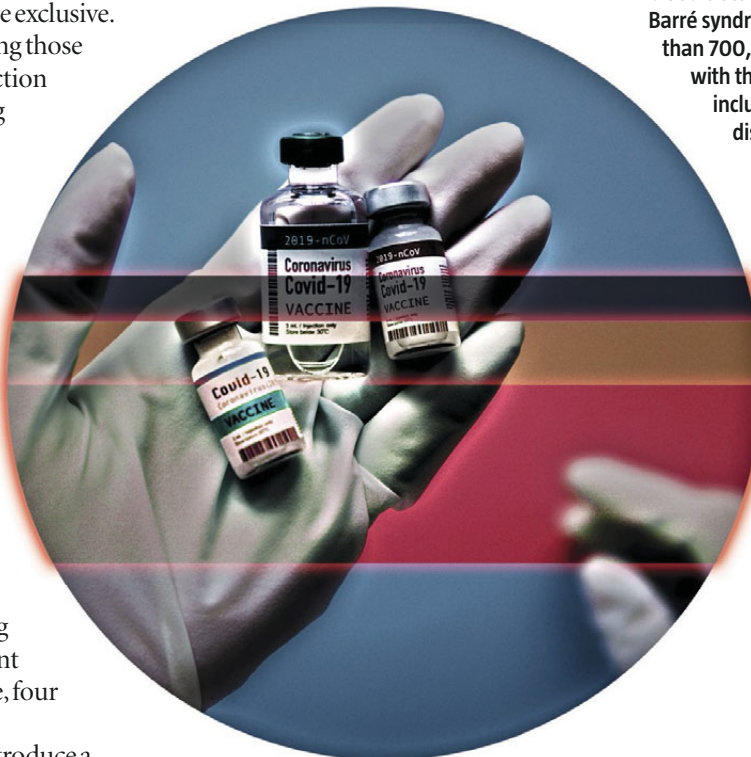
For federal employees, contractors and any healthcare workers at federally funded facilities, the testing option was removed and religious and medical exemptions not mentioned.

From experimental to mandatory

The US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) "approval" of Pfizer's vaccine in August was based on only six months' data from clinical trials that are not scheduled to be complete until May 2023. The vaccines are all still in phase III clinical trials, which makes them, by definition, experimental.⁵⁴

Since drugs given only emergency use authorization may not be mandated, the FDA rammed Pfizer's vaccine through to make the experimental shots seem not-so-experimental.

As soon as Pfizer's \$33 billion blockbuster injections got the FDA stamp of approval, a tsunami of companies issued vaccine mandates. The same day as the approval, the Pentagon announced it would be requiring all US troops to get vaccinated, and New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio announced that all public school workers in the city must be vaccinated by September, without the option of regular testing.



Unresolved safety concerns

Many unexpected health concerns have emerged just months into the global Covid shot rollout, including myocarditis, lethal blood clotting disorders, the neurological condition Guillain-Barré syndrome, and face-paralyzing Bell's palsy. In all, more than 700,000 reports of adverse events have been logged with the US Vaccine Event Reporting System (VAERS) including nearly 15,000 deaths, 19,000 permanent disabilities and more than 60,000 hospitalizations

15,000
deaths

19,000
permanent disabilities

60,000
hospitalizations

"If you're a business leader, a nonprofit leader, a state or local leader who has been waiting on FDA approval to require vaccinations, I call on you now to do that; require it," Biden declared. "Do what I did last month: call on your employees to get vaccinated or face strict requirements."

It didn't take long for other governments to follow. On September 18, the Italian government mandated that all private and public sector employees show proof of vaccination, a negative test or a recent recovery from infection and stipulated that private-sector employees without a vaccine "green pass" will not receive a salary starting October 15. Since March, when Italy ordered health workers to get vaccinated or face suspension, 728 doctors have been suspended, according to the Italian doctors' federation.

A similar measure in France came into effect in September. Health Minister Olivier Veran said around 3,000 health workers had been suspended, but some 300,000 healthcare workers remained unvaccinated.⁵⁵

Defending our rights

Across the world, governments and businesses are imposing vaccine mandates. The only way to fight back is for individuals to stand up to protect their rights to have their own deeply held convictions and to make their own medical decisions.

Tactics differ across countries and regions depending on the statutes in place. Currently, the vaccine passports are shifting rapidly as employers, schools and public venues adapt their policies to pushback. If there is no pushback, they will only advance.

Although we cannot predict the consequences of sending any letter, notice of liability or exemption claim, we have heard of many favorable responses in situations where employers backpedaled on requirements, schools relaxed draconian edicts or expanded options to students after receiving notices, and even where suspended employees were reinstated after simply issuing a letter from a lawyer reminding the employer of their client's rights.

Though illegal and unethical, vaccine diktats also violate various countries' and regions' own human rights acts and constitutions; they all violate international codes as well.

The Nuremberg Code—considered one of the most important documents in the history of medical ethics—was drafted after the atrocities of medical experimentation on Jews in World War II. Its first principle is that “voluntary consent” of people to any medical procedure is “absolutely essential.” It states people must have the legal capacity to give consent, without any form of constraint or coercion, and should have sufficient knowledge and comprehension of the risks in order to freely consent.^[2]

Article 6 of UNESCO's Universal Declaration on Bioethics and Human Rights states, “Any preventive, diagnostic and therapeutic medical intervention is only to be carried out with the prior, free and informed consent of the person concerned, based on adequate information.”^[3]

Certainly having your career, livelihood and ability to participate in society threatened would nullify any idea of “free and informed consent.”

Here, we provide resources with websites, sample legal notifications and template letters for students and employees in three main regions: the UK and Europe, the US and Canada. Each of these regions and the countries, states or provinces within them may have their own distinct Covid regulations, but many of the concepts apply universally and could be adapted to specific local regulations.

We urge you to consider your options carefully and construct your own response.

Options for Americans

The divide between “red” and “blue” states in the US has never been so apparent. While support for mandates is high among Democrats, just 30 percent of Republicans support the measures. By mid-September, 24 Republican state attorney generals had vowed to take legal action against the Biden administration for its “disastrous and counterproductive” vaccine mandate.

“Mr. President, your vaccination mandate represents not only a threat to individual liberty, but a public health disaster that will displace vulnerable workers and exacerbate a nationwide hospital staffing crisis, with severe consequences for all Americans,” their joint letter reads.

Florida's Republican governor Ron DeSantis was one of the first governors to issue an executive order in April, banning “vaccine passports, vaccine passes or other standardized documentation for the purpose of certifying an individual's Covid-19 vaccination status to a third party.” At least 10 other states have similar bans or partial bans preserving medical privacy.

For huge corporations like Amazon, Walmart and Costco trying to install company-wide mandates with employees in many states, this is a formidable barricade. But for many individuals working in smaller businesses in pro-mandate states like New York and California, resisting government and corporate vaccine edicts is harder—but not impossible.

Generally in the US, employees or students being mandated a vaccine have three options: obtain an exemption to the requirement, ask for accommodation (such as requesting to work from home) or sue. These strategies can apply to other countries as well when adapted to local statutes.

Do not quit

The advocacy group America's Frontline Doctors (AFLDS) has advised citizens who are being pressured to get vaccinated to not quit their job under pressure. “Make your boss fire you and do not sign anything or agree to anything that says otherwise,” they advise. “Do not agree with ‘voluntary resignation.’ If you are fired, you are eligible for unemployment. Anything else and you are not.”

“If you are fired, you place the costs back on them, and you get or you fight for unemployment benefits. Let them experience the burden associated with their choices.”

AFLDS advises people to use all government tools and resources for the unemployed including the CDC's rent relief mandates.^[4]

“You have rights. You just need to assert them,” according to the Chicago-based Thomas More Society, a not-for-profit, national public interest law firm that has published guidelines for people seeking exemptions to vaccines. Exemptions do not protest the mandate itself, but give individuals a way around it. There is a possibility the exemption may be rejected, but that gives an employee grounds for other defensive tactics including a lawsuit or civil rights complaint.^[5]

Religious exemptions

“You should request a religious accommodation even if you do not believe it will be granted,” advises the Thomas More Society. With a few exceptions (such as for work in a religious ministry), Title VII of the Civil Rights Act prohibits religious discrimination in most employment situations. That means employers must recognize and accommodate employees' religious beliefs if doing so does not impose an undue burden upon the employer.

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GOVERNMENTS AND
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AND TO MAKE THEIR
OWN MEDICAL
DECISIONS

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US resources for religious exemptions

There are many reasons that you may oppose the vaccines on the grounds of your convictions. Dozens of websites offer advice and sample letters of religious exemption for employees and students from a wide range of perspectives including Christianity, Judaism and Islam. Organizations with free information include:

Children's Health Defense. Robert F. Kennedy Jr.'s organization has been battling mandates and fighting to preserve individual medical freedom rights for years. Its website has information for military, students and employees. childrenshealthdefense.org

America's Frontline Doctors. AFLDS provides exemption forms and notices specific to firefighters, city workers, airline pilots and more. americasfrontlinedoctors.org/2/religious/

The Liberty Counsel offers guidance concerning religious exemptions for members of several faiths, as well as legal advice. lc.org/exempt

Orthodox Ethos, an Orthodox Christian organization, has compiled a list of resources for people of many faiths seeking vaccine exemption on either a religious or medical basis. orthodoxethos.com/post/religious-exemption-resources-and-collections

The Founding Freedoms Law Center, the legal arm of the faith-based Family Foundation of Virginia, has sample forms and letters for students and employees. www.foundingfreedomslaw.org/covid19

The National Catholic Bioethics Center has assembled resources and religious exemption template letters. www.ncbcenter.org/ncbc-news/vaccineletter

Most states (44 states and Washington, DC) accept religious objections to vaccines. To see if your state is included, check here: www.ncsl.org/research/health/school-immunization-exemption-state-laws.aspx. This legislation also applies to school-age children; however, depending on the state, religious exemptions may not apply to all pediatric immunizations.

Most colleges also permit religious exemptions to shot mandates. Be careful to ask the administration to provide proof in writing of this before you sign up or pay tuition fees.

According to the Thomas More Society, other non-discrimination policies may also protect students against discrimination based on religious beliefs. Students in public universities are protected by the First Amendment's free exercise clause of religion, for example.

The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (the agency that enforces Title VII of the Civil Rights Act) has issued guidance for employers about the meaning of "religion" in the context of employment. Your religion does not necessarily reflect that of the church you attend; it is a statement of your sincerely held beliefs.

For example, many people are opposed to the fact that all available Covid vaccines and those to come for the foreseeable future have used cells from aborted babies in their manufacture or testing.¹²

Whether or not your church or pastor holds the same belief as you, this is a valid reason for refusing a vaccine, similar to an Orthodox Jew refusing an injection containing non-Kosher ingredients.

Religious exemptions are not statements of philosophical positions, such as explaining why you believe Pope Francis is wrong about such-and-such or the correct interpretation of scriptures, etc. It should be a relatively brief, personal statement of your beliefs and their basis.

A "pastor verification letter," like the one Liberty Counsel (an international nonprofit litigation, education and policy organization dedicated to advancing religious freedom) provides as a free template on its website, is not necessary, but it may be helpful (see box, right).

Religious accommodations must be "reasonable, and not constitute an undue hardship on the employer or institution," says Liberty Counsel. If your company or school was able to accommodate you in 2020, before the Covid shots were available, it is not "undue hardship" to accommodate you now.

If the Covid shots are as effective as they are advertised to be, it can be argued that it is not an undue hardship for vaccinated coworkers to work with unvaccinated individuals, as those who have received the shots are protected.

Medical exemptions

Pregnant and nursing women, people who are allergic

to an ingredient in available vaccines, those who have had a previous reaction to a vaccine or a previous Covid infection or even those who suffer from autoimmune disease may want to get a doctor or nurse practitioner to write them a medical exemption letter.

If you are one of the hundreds of thousands of Americans who has reported an adverse event to VAERS, from a heart condition to blood clots to facial paralysis or seizures, or you are one of those who had a reaction that wasn't reported, insist that your doctor or pharmacist give you a record. Photograph skin reactions and swelling, document any ill effect and keep your medical records. These can be used to augment exemption requests, if necessary, as booster shot after booster shot mandate comes down the line.

Pregnancy and nursing

White House medical advisor Anthony Fauci advised pregnant and breastfeeding women to take the experimental Covid-19 shots in an August interview, saying it's "not only safe, but it's a good idea . . . you should know that you're doing something positive to protect the baby," he said.¹²¹

It's a grossly cavalier statement considering that all Covid vaccines in use are still in phase III clinical trials, and none have been approved for infants—the most drug-susceptible humans on the planet.

A legal letter to an employer reminding them of horrible historical medical tragedies where 'approved' medicines, like thalidomide and diethylstilbestrol (DES), resulted in disasters may be useful. Thousands of babies born to women who took thalidomide died or were born with severe limb deformities and distorted organs. In the case of DES, the side-effect of vaginal and cervical cancer was not discovered until the infant girls who were exposed in utero reached reproductive age.

VAERS reports contain numerous descriptions of nursing infants becoming ill and at least two reports of babies dying after their mothers received Covid vaccine injections.¹²²

Simply issuing an employer a notice of liability may be helpful in obtaining an exemption.

Natural immunity

An estimated 20–30 percent of Americans (65 to 80 million people) are believed to have had Covid already. Requiring them to be vaccinated defies accepted immunology about protection after natural infection, which is far more robust and enduring than the waning vaccine efficacy requiring endless booster doses.¹²³

In a preprint study by Pennsylvania immunologist Hooman Noorchashm looking at nine clinical

studies comparing vaccinated individuals to those with previous infection, all the studies found "at least statistical equivalence" between the protection of full vaccination and natural infection, and three studies found "superiority of natural immunity."¹²⁴

In fact, a national analysis of Covid data in Israel found that vaccinated Israelis were 6.72 times more likely to get infected after the shot than after natural infection.¹²⁵

Preliminary evidence also suggests that people with prior Covid infection are more likely to have adverse reactions to Covid shots.¹²⁶

Allergies

A study of American healthcare workers reported that "severe reactions consistent with anaphylaxis occurred at a rate of 2.47 per 10,000 vaccinations" or about one in every 4,050 doses.¹²⁷

People with known allergies to Covid vaccine ingredients such as polyethylene glycol (PEG), found in both the Moderna and Pfizer shots, should seek an exemption. A September 2021 study reported that among 22 people who suffered anaphylactic reactions to Covid shots in one US hospital network, all but one had negative skin prick tests for allergy, but 10 of 11 (91 percent) had positive basophil activation test (BAT) results to PEG and 11 of 11 (100 percent) had positive BAT results to their administered mRNA vaccine.

The BAT is a functional measure of how a person's blood cells—specifically the basophils responsible for acute allergic reactions including anaphylaxis—respond to a potential allergen. The researchers concluded that "women and those with a history of allergic reactions appear to have an elevated risk of mRNA vaccine allergy."¹²⁸

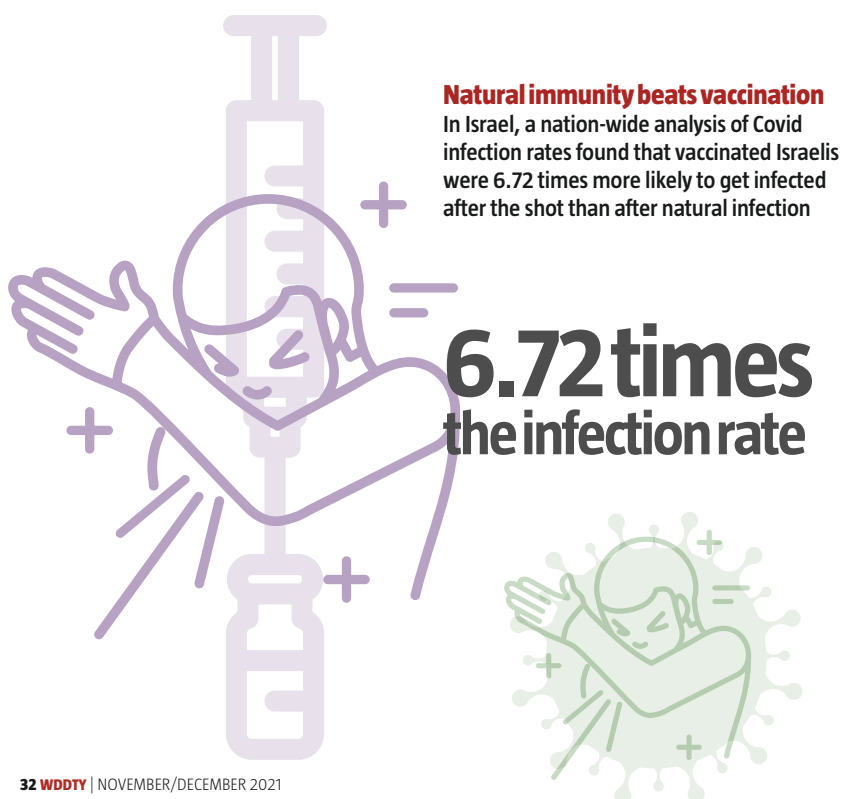
Other studies have found that PEG allergy often overlaps with an allergy to polysorbate, an ingredient in the AstraZeneca and Johnson & Johnson injections.¹²⁹

The CDC warns people against taking shots with ingredients they are known to have had reactions to in the past.¹³⁰ If an employer or public health official tells you not to worry about your attack of breathlessness or blistering rash after your first dose or that your negative skin prick test says you are fine to take another shot, tell them they're wrong and seek an exemption.

A number of the US websites listed in the box on page 31 can also help with a medical exemption. If you have been denied an exemption and want to take legal action, America's Frontline Doctors is one agency that can help connect you with a lawyer in your state.¹³¹

If you are in the EU and UK

Many of the strategies above apply to the United Kingdom and elsewhere, but the relevant British laws are different. "It is an established principle in English Law that an individual with the capacity to consent cannot and should not be compelled to have any medical treatment against their wishes," states Lawyers for Liberty, an independent British organization of



ON TOP OF THE WORLD

Lynne, a married Mum of four and pharmacist dispenser from Northumberland, was diagnosed with osteoarthritis. For years she managed to keep potentially crippling symptoms at bay but eventually her world ground to a halt, quite literally. Unable to practice sport, Lynne went from being a healthy, active person who would run on a near daily basis to someone who would plan journeys so as to avoid standing for long periods of time. Then she discovered Flexicoll™. Lynne, now 60, explains...

“

An MRI scan revealed I had osteoarthritis in my back. Prior to this I had suffered problems with my knees and for years had taken glucosamine supplements, but these had stopped having an effect.

I had always managed to remain active, despite my diagnosis. I used to run on a near daily basis, hike and play badminton. However, the pain eventually became too much and my physical movement became more restricted. I was unable to run or play sport and standing for long periods of time was painful. If I could avoid climbing stairs then I would. I was also taking a lot of 'heavy duty' pain relief.

The turning point came when a friend recommended I try a collagen supplement called Flexicoll™. I was sceptical, however, I agreed to give it a go.

I purchased 2 months' supply and by the time I was halfway through the second pot I was definitely starting to see an improvement.

My mobility was improving and I was in less pain. By the time I'd finished my third month on Flexicoll I'd started running again and eventually began hiking and fell walking.

My physiotherapist was so impressed he wanted to know what I'd been doing! I explained I'd been taking Flexicoll™. He said "Well it seems to be working, so continue with what you're doing!" at this point I was released from future appointments, as I had fully gained all of my mobility. I had also stopped taking all of my pain medication, as I no longer needed it.

I felt amazing! So much so that on a holiday to Germany I decided to take my hiking a step further and climb Mount Laber. I wasn't entirely sure I'd make it to the top and if I did, I was convinced I'd be in agony by the time I got down. However, I not only reached the 2000-metre summit, I came back down and spent the afternoon swimming! I was achy for a few days, but this soon disappeared.

Since then I've been zip-wiring and regularly hiking. Flexicoll™ has in every sense of the word put the spring back in my step.

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UK and EU vs. US “no jab, no job” orders differ

In the US, huge companies from Walmart to Google and Facebook have ordered some or all of their employees to receive experimental Covid-19 vaccines before entering work premises.

Since Joe Biden pronounced that all companies with more than 100 employees issue vaccine demands, millions of Americans have found themselves being coerced into the shots to keep their jobs.

Employers in the UK have not issued similar diktats and have generally tread lightly on employee rights to privacy, with most firms viewing vaccine status as private medical information.

Charlie Mullins, the founder of Pimlico Plumbers, stoked controversy in January when he said he would introduce a “no jab, no job” policy for its 400 employees. The company’s lawyers would have to draft new contracts for employees since the existing contracts don’t mention injections. Mullins repeated that every employee would be required to get the shots by January 1, 2022, but then recently sold the company, leaving question marks about his draconian policy.

Bloomsbury, the publisher behind Harry Potter, also informed its UK staff they need to receive two Covid injections before being permitted to return to company offices or they would be forced to work from home as in lockdown.

The company would have to prove that this demand of getting

an experimental injection was a “reasonable request” and also overcome the hurdle of demanding employees reveal such sensitive “personal data.” It could find itself facing charges of breach of contract or wrongful dismissal and in violation of EU General Data Protection Regulation guidelines.

For now, most companies are avoiding the conflict with employees. Only NHS healthcare workers in Britain are facing vaccine mandates. An administrative court in France handed down a precedent-setting decision on October 4 that could impact unvaccinated healthcare workers in the UK as well.

The court of Cergy-Pontoise ruled a hospital that suspended a caregiver due to her unvaccinated status and put her on leave must reinstate the worker and pay her back wages for lost employment.

“This is an encouraging decision for all caregivers placed in this position,” according to French online news service *The Strategist Courier*.¹

Lawyers have suggested this decision could open floodgates of claims by thousands of unvaccinated healthcare workers who have been suspended from work in France, where more costly temporary workers have been hired to replace them.

Paris lawyer Maître Maud Marian provided an adaptable template letter to the *Courier* to allow those seeking compensation to enforce the Cergy-Pontoise ruling.

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lawyers and members of the judiciary whose vision is to restore the balance of power that once existed between citizens and the state.²⁴

The organization cites the Public Health (Control of Disease) Act of 1984 (section 45E), which states that Regulations made under that Act “may NOT include provision requiring a person to undergo medical treatment... ‘Medical treatment’ includes vaccinations and other prophylactic treatment” as support for the idea that vaccination should never be mandated for employment or services.

In Europe, governments are well underway with mandates for healthcare workers and vaccine passports, despite the fact that on January 27, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe passed Resolution 2361 (2021), in which it stated governments should: “Ensure that citizens are informed that the vaccination is NOT mandatory and that no one is politically, socially, or otherwise pressured to get themselves vaccinated if they do not wish to do so” (Paragraph 7.3.1).

The Resolution also states that governments should “ensure that no one is discriminated against for not having been vaccinated due to possible health risks or not wanting to be vaccinated” (Paragraph 7.3.2).

The General Data Protection Regulation 2016/679 is an EU law on data protection and privacy in the European Union that includes the UK. It also prohibits the transfer of personal data outside the EU and its economic partner areas. Therefore, it should be illegal for information about an individual’s vaccine status to be shared without their consent.

However, the British government is currently in consultation to decide whether or not to mandate Covid vaccines for frontline workers and those in care homes.²⁵ It has flip-flopped on the idea of introducing vaccine passports and has now adopted the EU Digital Covid Certificate that “should make traveling in Europe easier” and would “also enable the Government to quickly launch a domestic vaccine passport system” if it wanted to in the next few months.

For now, the system leaves open the option of individuals taking Covid tests or having evidence of natural immunity in lieu of passports.²⁶ Liberty Human Rights (www.libertyhumanrights.org.uk) has a good summary of your legal rights about vaccine passports and offers free advice.

For those who may see “no jab/no job” regulations as a likely eventuality, Lawyers for Liberty, a volunteer group of lawyers and members of the judiciary who defend human rights, provides template letters for employers and schools (www.lawyersforliberty.uk).

Another British group with a wealth of information and resources for resisting the push for mandates is the United Kingdom Medical Freedom Alliance (www.ukmedfreedom.org). They have template letters for people who have been denied medical treatment for lack of vaccination in the public health system and for vaccine mandates at schools.²⁷

Parisians protesting against the French Covid-19 Health Pass in September, 2021





Demonstrators outside of Vancouver City Hall in British Columbia protesting the BC Vaccine Card

Where to go for help in Canada

A number of Canadian organizations are tackling egregious rights violations and assisting people with fighting vaccine mandates at jobs and schools. These include:

The Canadian Constitutional Rights Centre, under constitutional lawyer Rocco Galati, is challenging several Canadian Covid restrictions in court. www.constitutionalrightscentre.ca

Action4Canada, which is also participating in the court action, offers numerous template letters and notices of liability to send to employers, schools and governments enforcing unconstitutional mask and vaccine mandates. www.action4canada.com

Vaccine Choice Canada is taking part in the legal challenge as well, and their website has a wealth of information on vaccines, injuries and Canadian citizens' rights. It also provides a downloadable PDF written by Canadian doctors with detailed useful information. www.vaccinechoicecanada.com

The Calgary-based **Justice Centre for Constitutional Freedom** also provides information and template letters for employees and students in Canada. www.jccf.ca

Children's Health Defense, Canadian chapter, provides a trove of information for college and university students regarding mandated vaccinations. CHD Canada also provides a Liability Notice form that can be used for educational and professional settings. www.childrenshealthdefense.ca

Liberty Coalition Canada provides information and a letter from its chief litigator, James Kitchen, to download and deliver to a school with mandates. www.libertycoalitioncanada.com/religious-freedom-from-vaccination-coercion

The Canadian Covid Care Alliance is a group of independent doctors, scientists and healthcare practitioners who have produced a short video and detailed document to educate employers and others about the ethical problems with health mandates. www.canadiancovidcarealliance.org

For Canadians

Each province in Canada is implementing its own regulations for vaccine passports and encouraging businesses and schools to do the same. All these mandates are ultimatums that violate Canada's constitution and international human rights law.

Enshrined in the Canadian Constitution is the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, which guarantees Canadians' "fundamental freedoms" including freedom of conscience, religion, belief expression and association, among others. All provincial and employee vaccine mandates are unconstitutional and violate the Charter.

It is also prohibited under the Genetic Non-Discrimination Act of Canada to require someone to take a genetic test as a condition of their employment or of providing goods or services to that individual, and some have argued that the PCR test for Covid-19 is such a test.

It is also prohibited for any person to collect, use or disclose the results of a genetic test without an individual's written consent. Anyone involved in contravening this law is liable to up to five years in jail and a \$1,000,000 fine.

"In Canada, people have a right to decide what medical treatment they receive or do not receive," states the Justice Centre for Constitutional Freedom (JCCF).

The JCCF calls vaccine passports "unthinkable" and a "profound violation of peoples' constitutional rights."

It's also the view of many lawyers that vaccine mandates against Canadian employees are illegal and constitute wrongful dismissal. Detailed legal correspondence with your employer will help prove an unjust dismissal case.

Acceptance of exemptions, both medical and religious, varies widely across schools and businesses. Some places offer a simple process to provide a religious exemption to vaccination; others offer the alternative of testing every few days or weekly.

Some require a signature from a cleric or doctor, and some simply require a statement of your personal convictions. Many indigenous colleges such as those in Alberta fall completely outside of the vaccine mandate laws.

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The mind pill

The latest evidence shows that the strongest drug we have is our own mind and its expectations, says scientist David Hamilton

“They’re *not* getting better. They just *think* they’re getting better.”



This was a typical sentiment expressed by my pharmaceutical company colleagues when I asked for their opinion of the placebo effect, a phenomenon that was particularly relevant to our work given that the drugs we were developing would be tested in clinical trials.

This view was always offered amicably, but it underlined the assumption, held for decades, that the placebo effect was ‘all in the mind.’ If a patient who had been given a placebo in a drug trial got better, it was written off as part of the natural course of their illness—it would have happened anyway.

A placebo is an inactive (or dummy) treatment, in the form of a pill, injection or device, that’s administered in clinical trials to test the real drug or treatment against a control (comparison). A placebo isn’t designed to have any therapeutic effects on the patients who take it. However, in reality, it often does—and when this happens, it’s because the patients believe the placebo is the real drug or treatment: it’s their *belief* that does the work.

Belief alters biology

The placebo effect might appear to be an illusion, but science has shown that belief itself has real biological effects. In fact, there’s no question that belief causes chemical changes in the brain, and these changes are dependent on what a person believes.

For example, patients can believe opposite things about the same placebo and get opposite effects from it. If a patient believes that a pill (if it’s a placebo) will *reduce* pain, it *will* usually reduce pain. Yet if they had believed it would *cause* pain, it would have done that instead.

In the former case, the belief causes the production of the brain’s natural versions of morphine. In the US, scientists at the University of California at San Francisco

showed that endogenous opioids, the brain’s own morphine, were responsible for the painkilling effects of placebos used during dental surgery.¹ But crucially, the endogenous opioids are produced in response to a person’s belief or expectation that the pain will go away. If a patient believes that a pill (if it’s a placebo) will cause pain, the belief *blocks* these natural opioids in the brain, essentially elevating pain.²

A belief that a pill (if it’s a placebo) will help us relax will bring about a calming effect, yet if we believe it’s a stimulant, we’ll feel agitated and our heart rate and blood pressure will rise—even though, in both cases, the pill is a dummy. When a group of athletes was given substances that they believed would increase their strength and endurance, they did indeed gain strength and endurance. But the substances were placebos. Luckily, these ‘performance-enhancing placebos’ couldn’t get them banned from competition because they were, well, dummies.³

In other research, 40 patients with either asthma, emphysema or restrictive lung disease were given an inhaler containing a nebulized saline placebo but were told it contained allergens that would restrict their airways.⁴ Before long, 19 of the patients reacted with considerable constriction of their airways. Twelve had a full asthma attack.

When the same participants were given a different inhaler and told it would relieve their symptoms, even though it was also a saline placebo, it did relieve their symptoms.

Therefore, that one placebo inhaler either reduced or created bronchospasm in asthma sufferers, depending on what the patients *believed* it would do.

Perception matters

It’s also possible to use color as a placebo because of what it represents to us. University of Cincinnati medical professors gave a class of students pink and blue placebo pills and told them that they were stimulants and sedatives.⁵ It was found that the blue pills were 66 percent effective as sedatives, compared with 26 percent for the pink pills.

In other words, blue placebos were around two and a half times better than pink ones for helping people

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to relax. This is because for most people, blue is a calming color, and this informs some of what we believe it will do.

The way a placebo is packaged also affects its power. In a study at Keele University in the UK, 835 women were given one of four different pills for headache.¹³ One group received a well-known branded aspirin tablet, a second group received an aspirin tablet simply labeled “analgesic,” a third group received a placebo packaged like the name-brand aspirin, while a fourth group took a basic unbranded placebo labeled “analgesic.”

The branded aspirin worked better than the unbranded one, and, amazingly, the branded placebo worked better than the unbranded placebo—even though they were both made of sugar.

This explains why so many people swear that branded painkillers such as Nurofen or Advil work better for them than generic ibuprofen, even though they contain the same drug. There’s a significant price difference, and Nurofen has more expensive-looking packaging, so people expect more from it. Drugs are designed to carry out a biological function, but as well as the impact of a drug on the body, the mind also has an impact.

The power of positive consultation

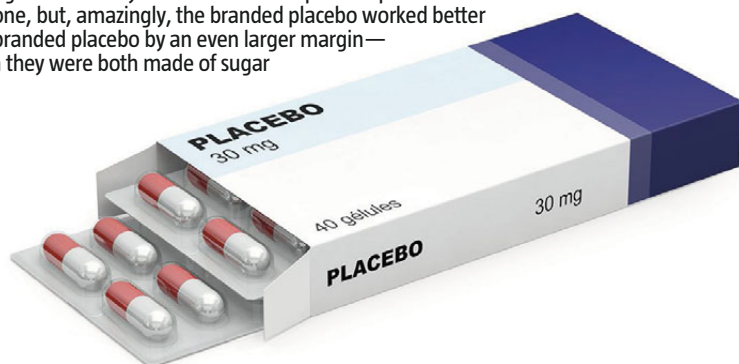
In some cases, the mind can *enhance* the effects of a drug—depending on what the patient believes it’s supposed to do, or on their perception of the doctor who prescribed it—and in other cases it can *suppress* the effects, in accordance with what they believe. We know this because some of the variation in the placebo effect simply comes down to communication between medical staff and patients.

For relatively common ailments, a doctor who shows confidence or optimism about the patient’s recovery is much more likely to see them get better than one who is unsure or pessimistic. For example, based on research showing that no firm diagnosis is made for about 40–60 percent of patients visiting general practitioners, a University of Southampton study investigated the consequences of different styles of consultation among patients in this category.

The researchers compared the outcomes of 200 patients, half of whom received a consultation conducted

Dressed for success

In a study of how packaging influences a treatment’s effectiveness, 835 women were given one of four pills for a headache: an aspirin tablet from a well-known brand, an aspirin tablet simply labeled ‘analgesic,’ a placebo packaged to look like the branded aspirin, or a basic unbranded placebo labeled ‘analgesic.’ Not only did the branded aspirin outperform the unbranded one, but, amazingly, the branded placebo worked better than the unbranded placebo by an even larger margin—even though they were both made of sugar



Healing with kindness

The real versus imaginary phenomenon is much more widespread than is generally understood. The brain produces stress hormones regardless of whether we’re in a stressful situation or *imagining* one. It’s the feelings of stress that trigger the release of stress hormones such as adrenaline and cortisol, independently of the situation itself.

For example, two friends are sitting in a car stuck in traffic. One feels stressed at the thought of being late for her appointment, while the other knows that she can’t do much about it, so she relaxes. The first woman will have elevated cortisol and adrenaline levels. The second won’t. These levels have little to do with the situation itself, and much more to do with how each individual *feels* about the situation.

The same kind of thing happens with kindness. Most of us assume that the opposite of stress is peace, calm or a feeling of relaxation, but these states represent the absence of stress, not its opposite. The opposite of the feeling of stress is the feeling induced by kindness.¹⁴

In research that recorded people’s daily stress score and the approximate number of kind things said or done, stress and kindness sat opposite each other: as if on a seesaw, as kindness went up, stress came down, and vice versa. This doesn’t mean that kindness causes an absence of stressful events, only that both feelings can’t coexist, and so as we increase feelings induced by kindness, these take some of the sting out of normally stressful events.

Therefore, if you want to reduce stress, try kindness.

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in a ‘positive’ manner while the other half received a consultation conducted in a ‘non-positive’ manner.¹⁵

In the ‘positive’ consultations, the patients were given a firm diagnosis and confidently told they would recover in a few days’ time. Sometimes a prescription was given, and the doctor assured the patient that it would make them better. If no prescription was given, the doctor assured the patient that none was needed.

In the ‘non-positive’ consultations, the doctor displayed uncertainty, saying, “I cannot be certain what is the matter with you.” If the doctor offered a treatment, they would add, “I’m not sure that the treatment I’m going to give you will have an effect.” If no treatment was given, the doctor would instead add, “and therefore I will give you no treatment.”

The prescription given was 3 mg of vitamin B1, marked “thiamine hydrochloride,” a very low dose that was essentially a placebo. After two weeks, 64 percent of the

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patients who had received the positive consultation were better, compared with only 39 percent of the patients who had recovered after receiving a non-positive consultation.

And it didn't matter whether they were treated or not. The difference in how many patients recovered, almost double, was down to the way the doctor communicated with the patient.

Why does belief cause these effects? Painkilling placebos work because the person *expects* to feel a reduction in pain. This expectation causes their brain to produce its own natural painkillers, which then reduce the pain.

Studies at the Neurodegenerative Disorders Center at the University of British Columbia have shown believing a placebo is an anti-Parkinson's drug causes the brain to produce the neurotransmitter dopamine.^[3] Here, as with painkilling effects, belief mobilizes the brain's natural resources to meet the person's expectations. That is, a belief about what's supposed to happen instructs the brain to produce what it needs to produce to deliver that result.

Of course, this applies only within reason. Belief that a placebo is a chemotherapy drug doesn't make the brain produce its own chemotherapy drug, and there could never be an ethical case to experiment with this. However, some documented spontaneous remissions in patients may have occurred because belief, or faith, mobilized the immune system.

Can we harness the placebo effect?

At the Heart Center of the University of Marburg in Germany, 124 patients scheduled for coronary artery bypass graft surgery were randomly distributed into three groups: the 'Expect' group, where the focus was on optimizing patients' positive expectations of life after surgery, such as engaging in activities; the 'Support' group, where patients received emotional support; and the 'Standard medical care' group, where patients received the usual treatment.^[4]

Optimism improves outcomes

Two hundred patients were treated with either a placebo or nothing at all, but half had "positive" consultations, where the doctor was confident they would soon recover, while half were "non-positive"—the doctor expressed uncertainty in the treatment. After two weeks, 64 percent of patients in the positive group were better, compared with only 39 percent in the non-positive group.

64%

of the patients who had received a "positive" consultation recovered

39%

of the patients who had received a "non-positive" consultation recovered



The love hormone

Just as feelings of stress produce stress hormones, kindness has its own biological products. I call these kindness hormones, the main one being oxytocin. Well-known for its importance in reproduction, breastfeeding and even social bonding, oxytocin also plays many other key roles in the body.

Just as stress hormones increase blood pressure, oxytocin lowers it. Oxytocin also has antioxidant and anti-inflammatory properties, helps with digestion and wound healing, and is even involved in the construction of heart muscle and many other cell types from stem cells.

What this means is that all these functions are impacted by how kindness *feels*, just as many functions in the brain and body are impacted by how stress feels.

Most prior work in this area of research has charted the course of stress through the brain and body. We're only now beginning to examine the side-effects of positive feelings, and they're plentiful. Psychologically, positive feelings increase happiness, build resilience and protect against depression. They impact brain function and even cause neurological changes if they're experienced over a period of time; they also reduce inflammation and even help us live longer.

Just as your brain doesn't distinguish between a real stressful event and an imagined one, it's the same with kindness. Your brain will produce kindness hormones when you're being kind, witnessing an act of kindness, imagining one or even recalling one. In each case, you feel how kindness feels, and your feelings trigger the physiological effects as a consequence. Thinking of things that annoy us fuels feelings of stress, and subsequently the physiology of stress. Thinking kind things about people, which *generates* kind feelings, can be a simple way to reduce stress.

Six months after their surgery, patients in the 'Expect' group had a much greater quality of life and subjective working ability than those in the other two groups. Support was helpful too, but expecting that things would go well had by far the greatest effect. When doctors give hope to patients, helping them to *expect* to get better, they *do* get better faster.

Placebo-controlled dose reduction

An exciting line of research into harnessing the placebo effect is placebo-controlled dose reduction (PCDR), where scientists give a drug for a few days and then, without the patients' knowledge, swap it for a placebo. The more times the patients receive the drug, the more strongly they associate their relief of symptoms with receiving the drug, and so the stronger the effect of the placebo when the swap is made. In this way, the drug's



dosage can be reduced and eventually replaced by a placebo.

Professor Fabrizio Benedetti of the University of Turin Medical School in Italy powerfully demonstrated this effect with a study involving Parkinson's disease patients.¹⁰

The patients were split into several groups. All but one group received a full dose of the anti-Parkinson's drug apomorphine on day 1 of the study, and Benedetti measured their clinical response as a reduction in tremors and muscle stiffness as well as in the degree of activation of individual neurons in the brain region known to be affected by the condition. He gave the other group a placebo injection (saline) instead, and there was no clinical effect whatsoever.

Over the next few days, Benedetti swapped the drug for the placebo. One group who got the drug on day 1 received the placebo on day 2. Another group received the drug for two days, and it was swapped for the placebo on the third day. Yet another group received the drug for three days before it was swapped for the placebo on day 4.

Each time a patient received a dose of apomorphine, they had the experience of "when I receive this injection, my tremors reduce, and my muscle stiffness lessens," and each day, the effect of the placebo became stronger.

On day 5, Benedetti did the drug-placebo swap for the final group, who had received apomorphine on the previous four days and built up the most experience with the drug. Amazingly, the strength of the saline placebo matched that of the drug, reducing tremors and muscle stiffness and activating neurons to the same degree.

Benedetti reported, "It should be noted that placebo administration following four apomorphine preconditioning trials induced clinical responses that were as large as those to apomorphine."

These results weren't just 'all in the mind' because there were measurable changes in the brain in the region that's usually deficient in dopamine in Parkinson's patients.

Tickling the ivories . . . and the imagination

In a pioneering study on the power of visualization, one group of volunteers was asked to play a sequence of five notes on a piano every day for five days, while a separate group did the same thing for the same amount of time, only without a piano. Instead, they closed their eyes and imagined they were playing the five notes in this sequence. All the participants had a brain scan every day, and at the end of the five days, the brain region that corresponded to the muscles of the fingers had changed substantially in both groups. In fact, the brains of the people who had practiced on a real piano were indistinguishable from those who had simply imagined playing the notes



Positive affirmations

The key to making visualization work is repetition, which has been shown to impact brain networks, shaping them toward producing what it is we're imagining. My first experience of this kind of repetition was positive affirmations, which do something similar. The Psychology Dictionary defines an affirmation as "a brief phrase which is spoken again and again in an effort to plant seeds of happy and positive notions, conceptions and attitudes into one's psyche."¹¹

In the late nineteenth century, the French psychologist Emile Coue noted that his patients often recovered faster if he helped them to expect to get better. So he developed what he called autosuggestions, the best known of which is "Every day, in every way, I'm getting better and better."

Nowadays we refer to autosuggestions as positive affirmations, or as positive self-affirmations when they affirm our core values. They help us to think and feel more positively and, as a consequence, take positive affirmative action.

Serious research into affirmations began in the 1980s, when the American social psychologist Claude Steele published a paper on his self-affirmation theory.¹² This posits that humans are fundamentally motivated to maintain a positive self-view—that is, a general perception of ourselves as good, virtuous, competent, stable, capable of free choice and having a sense of control over important outcomes in our lives. Self-affirmations, then, are statements that affirm our core values; for example, if one has a core value of kindness, the affirmation would be something like, "I am a good person." Research has shown that when we state something that affirms our values in this way, it makes us think and feel more positive; we're also much more likely to indulge in healthy behaviors and to take positive steps to improve our lives. This is especially the case when affirmations are repeated.

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The same kind of effect has also been demonstrated with the immune system, where a phased swapping of an immunosuppressant drug (cyclosporin A) for a placebo suppressed the immune system.¹³ PCDR works because expectation and belief cause physical changes in biochemistry.

The aim of this line of research on the immune system is to help patients receiving organ transplants and those with autoimmune conditions such as multiple sclerosis (MS), rheumatoid arthritis and lupus. Ultimately, if PCDR could be applied to a larger range of medical conditions, it could result in a huge cost savings, allowing funds to be funneled into other areas of healthcare.

PCDR may also reduce the side-effects of medication. In one PCDR study, children with ADHD who had 50 percent of their drug dose swapped with placebo experienced fewer stimulant-related side-effects.¹²

The power of our imagination

To a large extent, the brain doesn't distinguish real from imaginary, and this underpins some aspects of the placebo effect (see box, page 39). When you imagine that something is happening, it really is happening as far as your brain is concerned, and it releases the chemical substances necessary to confirm that what you're imagining is indeed real.

One of my favorite scientific studies is affectionately known as the piano study.¹³ In 1995, Alvaro Pascual-Leone, a professor of neurology at Harvard Medical School, asked a group of volunteers to play a sequence of five notes on a piano every day for five days. Each session involved playing notes for two hours, one note with each finger of the hand, moving up and down a scale of five notes.

While the volunteers did this, a separate group did the same thing, only without a piano. They closed their eyes and imagined that they were playing the five notes in this way. This is called kinesthetic imagery, and it's where we recreate movement by vividly imagining how it feels to move.

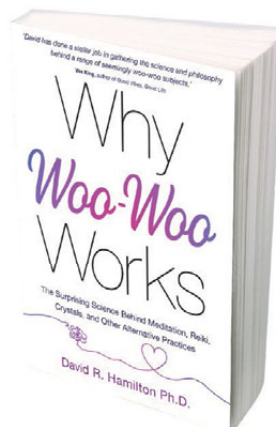
Each volunteer had a daily brain scan, and at the end of the five days, those who had played the notes on the piano had considerable changes in the brain region connected to their finger muscles; however, the same was true of the volunteers who had imagined playing the notes. In fact, on comparing the scans, it wasn't possible to tell whether a scan came from a person who had played the notes with their fingers or with their mind.

It was already known at the time of the piano study that athletes could enhance their performance by practicing visualization, but this was the first brain-imaging confirmation of what's actually happening when a person visualizes something. The prevailing belief among sports coaches was that visualization worked by enhancing an athlete's focus and their motivation to train and practice. Any notion that the brain was actually changing was dismissed as pseudoscience.

Following copious amounts of research, it's now well understood that the optimum way to enhance performance in any sport or movement is to combine physical practice with visualization. Studies show that physical practice plus visualization is more effective than physical practice alone, which is better than visualization alone.

Visualization to assist recovery

This kind of practice has also helped hundreds of people to recover faster after a stroke. In multiple studies, stroke patients received either standard physiotherapy or physiotherapy plus visualization, and those who



Adapted from *Why Woo-Woo Works: The Surprising Science Behind Meditation, Reiki, Crystals, and Other Alternative Practices*, by David R. Hamilton, PhD (HayHouse, 2021).

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Visualization against cancer

Research is revealing that the division between real and imaginary, as far as the brain is concerned, is becoming increasingly blurred. Following evidence that volunteers were able to raise immune system antibody levels by visualizing their increase, researchers at the United Lincolnshire Hospitals NHS Trust in the UK conducted a randomized controlled trial of women receiving treatment for breast cancer.¹⁴

All the women received their scheduled treatment (chemotherapy, surgery, radiotherapy and hormone therapy), but half also did daily visualization sessions that involved visualizing the immune system destroying cancer cells. Many imagined their immune cells as piranha fish or even as a Pac-Man character. Some visualized macrophages gobbling cancer cells.

The women in the visualization group were found to have much higher levels of key immune cells, such as natural killer cells, T cells and T helper cells, than those who didn't visualize, even after four cycles of chemotherapy. The researchers reported that the immune system was still showing high cytotoxicity against cancer cells after the four cycles, but only in the women who were visualizing their immune cells destroying cancer cells.

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added visualization to their physiotherapy improved to a greater degree and much faster than those who did physiotherapy alone.

For example, in a University of Cincinnati study, after each physiotherapy session, chronic stroke patients listened to a tape that guided them through visualizations of moving the hand, arm and shoulder of their impaired side.¹⁵ When tested after six weeks, the patients' arm function was significantly better than that of patients in a control group who did relaxation after physiotherapy.

A large meta-analysis has since referred to visualization as a "viable intervention" for people recovering from a stroke.¹⁶ Further analyses suggest that in some stroke patients, visualization even helps repair some damaged brain regions. In others, the area responsible for movement switches to a new brain location that isn't damaged, permitting neuroplasticity there and a return to more able movements.

In one study, researchers reported that the brains of stroke patients who used visualization had undergone some degree of cortical reorganization as a consequence of their mental practice.¹⁷

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Preventing preeclampsia naturally

I'm pregnant with my first child and worried about preeclampsia, as my mother and sister both developed it during late pregnancy. Is there anything I can do to help prevent it? I'm not overweight and don't have high blood pressure.

P.C., via email

Preeclampsia is one of the most common medical complications of pregnancy, affecting some 2–8 percent of pregnancies.¹ It's typically identified by the onset of high blood pressure, excess protein in the urine and edema (swelling due to water retention), usually after the twentieth week of pregnancy.² Other symptoms include headaches, excessive weight gain, vision problems and pain below the ribs.

Preeclampsia can have serious consequences for both mother and child, but there's plenty you can do to reduce your risk. Ideally, work with an experienced naturopathic practitioner who can advise you on a personal level, and definitely check in regularly with your midwife or obstetrician.

Here are some science-backed tips for prevention.

CHECK YOUR DIET

Below are some dietary dos and don'ts based on the published studies on nutrition and preeclampsia. In general, aim to eat a balanced, whole-food diet with minimal processed foods.

DO eat plenty of vegetables. Women who munch on lots of vegetables, as well as other plant foods, have a lower risk of preeclampsia.³

If you can, buy organic vegetables—eating these was independently associated with a reduced risk of preeclampsia in one study.⁴

DON'T eat added sugar. Eating foods and drinks with a high content



of added sugar, such as cakes and carbonated drinks, is linked to an increased risk of preeclampsia.

Eating foods high in natural sugars, such as fresh and dried fruits, on the other hand, appears to cut the risk.⁵

DO fill up on fiber. Women who eat the most fiber (around 21 g/day or more) vs the least (less than 12 g/day) are significantly less likely to get preeclampsia.⁶ Make sure to include both the soluble form (such as from oats, beans, peas, carrots, apples and citrus fruits) and insoluble fiber (such as in nuts, green beans, tomatoes, cauliflower and brown rice) in your diet. And if you need to increase your fiber intake, do so gradually to avoid side-effects like gas and bloating.



DON'T eat trans fats. Diets rich in trans-fatty acids, found in foods like margarine, cakes, cookies and fried foods, can increase the chances of preeclampsia.⁷

DO eat probiotic foods. A disturbed microbiome is thought to play a role in preeclampsia,⁸ and one study suggests that consuming milk-based probiotics can lower the risk of the condition.⁹ The fermented drink kefir is a good option, and it can be made with nondairy alternatives such as coconut milk if you don't drink cow's or goat's milk.

DON'T sidestep salt.

Restricting salt intake is generally not advised to prevent preeclampsia or high blood pressure in pregnancy.¹⁰ However, eating lots of salty snacks (along with processed meat and sweet drinks) has been tied to an increased risk of preeclampsia.¹¹



EXERCISE

Don't be frightened to exercise during pregnancy. Studies show that regular physical activity can help to reduce the risk of preeclampsia,¹² plus it can get you in shape for labor. Just make sure to check with your midwife or obstetrician about the right type of exercise for you. Walking is a great option,¹³ although one study of sedentary pregnant women found that a stretching program was easier to stick to than a walking program and that heart rate and blood pressure were lower among stretchers than walkers.¹⁴ Yoga is another good choice (see opposite page).



LET THE SUNSHINE IN

Pregnant women with the lowest vitamin D levels are around four times more likely to have severe preeclampsia than pregnant women with higher D levels.²⁵ A daily dose of sunshine is the best way to get vitamin D, but this might not be easy or adequate for many, especially during winter months, so supplements are a good idea. One study reported a 27 percent reduction in preeclampsia risk among women taking vitamin D supplements during pregnancy.²⁶

Suggested dosage: Home testing kits for vitamin D are available via the Vitamin D Society (www.vitaminsociety.org) and Better You (www.betteryou.com), along with personalized recommendations on your ideal level and what supplement dosage to take to achieve it



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WATCH OUT FOR HEAVY METALS

Exposure to heavy metals such as lead (found in old paint, cosmetics, food, drinking water and household dust) and cadmium (found in tobacco, food and drinking water) in pregnancy has been linked to preeclampsia.¹⁴ Even low-level lead exposure is associated with raised blood pressure during pregnancy.¹⁵

You can reduce your exposure to these heavy metals by avoiding cigarette smoke as well as paint stripping and other home renovations, choosing natural cosmetics from companies with strict ingredients policies, vacuuming regularly, installing an air purifier and getting a water filter, such as the Zero Water Filter.



TRY YOGA

Yoga is a great way to stay active during pregnancy, and one controlled study in women with high-risk pregnancies found that the mind-body technique significantly reduced the chances of preeclampsia as well as pregnancy-induced hypertension, gestational diabetes and intrauterine growth restriction. The women practiced for one hour three times a week from their twelfth to twenty-eighth week of pregnancy.¹⁶

Another study reported that yoga can reduce maternal stress, which is a risk factor for preeclampsia.¹⁷

Try to find a prenatal yoga class near you, or join an online program.

SUPPLEMENT

Before taking new supplements, it's best to consult with an experienced natural health practitioner, who can review any you're already taking and advise on the best dosages and formulations for you. But here are the supplements that have proved useful for preeclampsia in scientific studies.

Calcium. A review of 27 trials involving more than 18,000 women found that taking calcium supplements reduced the risk of preeclampsia by more than half. The effects were greatest in women with calcium-poor diets and in those at high risk of preeclampsia.¹⁸

Suggested dosage: 1,000–1,500 mg/day (depending on the amount of dietary calcium)

L-Arginine. Supplementing with this amino acid appears to reduce the likelihood of preeclampsia in high-risk women. It can also cut the chances of preterm birth.¹⁹

Suggested dosage: 3–4 g/day

Coenzyme Q10. Taking this vitamin-like antioxidant from 20 weeks of pregnancy until delivery reduced the incidence of preeclampsia by nearly half in women at high risk of developing the condition.²⁰

Suggested dosage: 200 mg/day

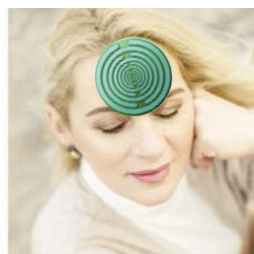
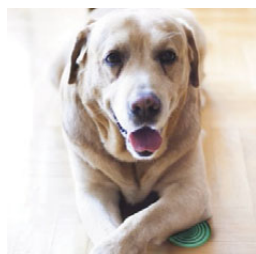
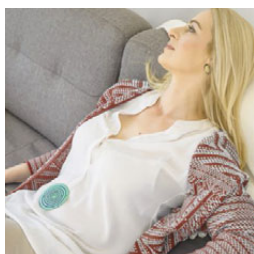
B vitamins. High levels of homocysteine in the blood are thought to be involved in preeclampsia, and supplementing with folic acid (vitamin B9) and vitamin B6 in pregnancy has been found to normalize levels.²¹ These vitamins are usually found in prenatal supplements, but not many will contain the naturally occurring and more bioavailable form of folate, 5-methyltetrahydrofolate (5-MTHF), which has several advantages over synthetic folic acid.²² For one, it's the better form for those unable to properly metabolize folate due to variations in the MTHFR gene—a significant proportion of the population.²³

Suggested dosage: Consider a high-quality prenatal supplement containing 5-MTHF and B6, such as Thorne Basic Prenatal

Omega-3s. These essential fatty acids were found to play a protective role against preeclampsia in a pooled analysis of 14 studies.²⁴

Suggested dosage: Try Wiley's Finest Peak Omega-3 Liquid, which supplies over 2,000 mg of EPA and DHA (from fish oil) per teaspoon





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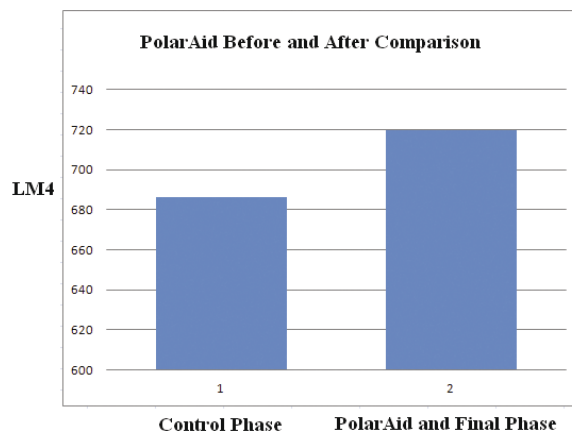
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Taking the average of the control phase of the experiment and comparing it to the PolarAid and final phase, it is found that the PolarAid increased the average energy from 687 to 720 mV on the digital display meter. A bar graph illustrating the energy improvement using the PolarAid is shown below.



The PolarAid disc increased the Life energy readings of a rose plant when placed below the plant for a day. The improvement in Life energy continued on after the PolarAid disc was removed. This is the same phenomena that Dr Lakhovsky was observing in his laboratory on the plants before he made humans benefit from the same technology.

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A drug-free approach to depression

I've been feeling quite low over the past six months or so. I don't really feel like meeting people or going out much, and I feel tired and unmotivated a lot of the time. My doctor said I have a mild case of depression and wants to keep an eye on me. I don't want to end up on antidepressants. Are there any effective drug-free ways to help with depression?

C.C., via email

You're not alone. Depression is the leading mental health problem worldwide, and rates have soared since the start of the pandemic. One recent study reported that the global prevalence of depression is seven times higher now than in 2017.¹

The usual prescription is a selective serotonin reuptake inhibitor (SSRI), but these drugs come with serious side-effects, from insomnia and low libido² to aggressive and suicidal behaviors.³

The good news is that there are lots of effective drug-free options. The most well-studied is talking therapy, also called cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT), which works well. Alternatively, check out our roundup of the best natural strategies for depression, or consult with a naturopathic practitioner.

TRY TAPPING

Emotional Freedom Technique (EFT) or 'tapping' is known to boost mental wellbeing. The self-help technique involves tapping on specific points of the body in sequence, while focusing on a negative emotion. In a pooled analysis of 20 studies, EFT was found to be "highly effective" for reducing depressive symptoms.¹²

To find out more about EFT and how to access free tapping meditations, visit www.thetappingsolution.com.

INVESTIGATE

In some cases, depression may have an identifiable underlying cause that you can do something about. Here are some possibilities to investigate and address if needed with the help of your doctor or natural health practitioner.

• Nutritional deficiencies.

A lack of certain vitamins or minerals may be causing or contributing to your depression.⁴

• **Food allergies.** Celiac disease and other food allergies are linked to depression.⁵

• Thyroid problems.

Having an overactive or underactive thyroid can cause depression.⁶

• **Drug side-effects.** Scores of common medications, including drugs for high blood pressure, analgesics, proton pump inhibitors and hormonal contraceptives, have depression as a potential side-effect.⁷

EXERCISE

Exercise is one of the best remedies for depression. Aerobic exercise has been put to the test against the antidepressant sertraline (sold as Zoloft in the US and Lustral in the UK) in several studies. Consistently, both were equally effective at reducing depressive symptoms, but only exercise had long-lasting effects.⁸

Aim for three to five 45–60-minute sessions of aerobic exercise (such as walking, cycling or swimming) a week, with a heart rate of 50 to 85 percent of your maximum heart rate. And exercise outdoors in nature whenever you can. So-called 'green exercise' is associated with better mental wellbeing compared to exercising indoors, with immediate positive effects.⁹

EAT A MEDITERRANEAN DIET

Rich in fruits, vegetables, fish, nuts and olive oil, a Mediterranean diet appears to be protective against depression.

Several large studies have found that those who most closely follow a Mediterranean-style diet have a lower chance of developing depressive symptoms compared to those following it the least—including a massive risk reduction of nearly 99 percent in one study of older adults.¹⁰

Another study found that switching to a Mediterranean diet, alongside taking fish oil supplements, can reduce symptoms of depression after just three months.¹¹

AVOID INFLAMMATORY FOODS

A proinflammatory diet—eating lots of foods known to have an inflammatory effect on the body—is associated with a higher risk of depression.¹² These foods include sweets and cakes, refined grains, red and processed meat, and processed foods in general. In one study, the more processed foods a person ate, the higher their likelihood of depressive symptoms.¹³



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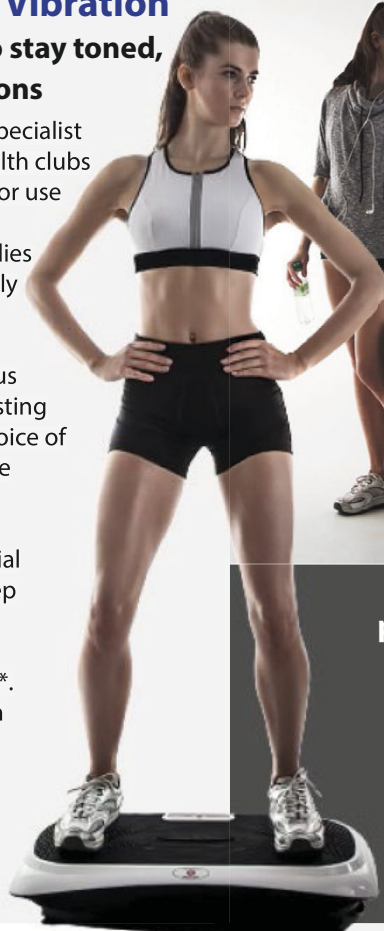
The FlexxiCore Challenger combines the technology of the specialist Whole Body Vibration (WBV) training equipment used in health clubs and gyms, with a convenient and versatile format designed for use at home. The Challenger's platform combines vibration with see-saw style oscillation, simulating the human gait. Our bodies are designed to withstand the forces of gravity, and constantly adjust to maintain our balance.

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Clinical studies have reported WBV-induced increases in strength, power and performance in young healthy adults*. Yet the benefits for older individuals and those with less than optimal health may be even more valuable.

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Excerpt from an Article on Back Care by an Osteopath (Daily Mail: 6 November 2010)

Osteopath Garry Trainer reported on six gadgets that can help with back care - but only after pointing out his reservations:

"I am a skeptic when it comes to back gadgets. At best many don't work, and at worst they could do damage. But I understand that back pain sufferers are often in such agony they are willing to try just about anything, and pay anything, to find relief. If you have even a moderate back problem for more than six weeks, get it checked out by a physician. If they don't have anything helpful to say, see an osteopath or other back expert. In the meantime, it is worth experimenting with some tried and tested gadgets – and, yes, there are some I recommend, despite my reservations. Here are six that I believe really work."

Of the 6 products Garry reported on, this was his comment on the FlexxiCore Passive Exerciser: "BEST LUXURY OPTION: Great for back maintenance, but this won't provide pain relief if you already have a problem. Lie down with your feet on the ankle rests, and the whole body starts to oscillate – it's a very nice sensation. The effect stimulates the circulation, and keeps the soft tissues loose and supple."

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LAY OFF SOCIAL MEDIA

Using social media may worsen depression. When students were randomly assigned to either limit Facebook, Instagram and Snapchat use to 10 minutes per platform per day or to use social media as usual in a three-week study, those in the limited social media group showed significant reductions in loneliness and depression.¹⁵

BE MINDFUL

Mindfulness practices, which involve focusing on the present moment without interpretation or judgment, can be effective for depression.

Mindfulness-based stress reduction (MBST), which combines meditation and yoga, and mindfulness-based cognitive therapy (MBCT), which blends MBST with elements of cognitive-behavioral therapy, can reduce current depressive symptoms as well as lower the risk of relapse in patients who have recovered from depression.¹⁷

For more on MBCT and to find an MBCT teacher, visit www.mbct.com (US) or www.mbct.co.uk (UK). And for MBSR exercises and courses, visit www.positivepsychology.com/mindfulness-based-stress-reduction.



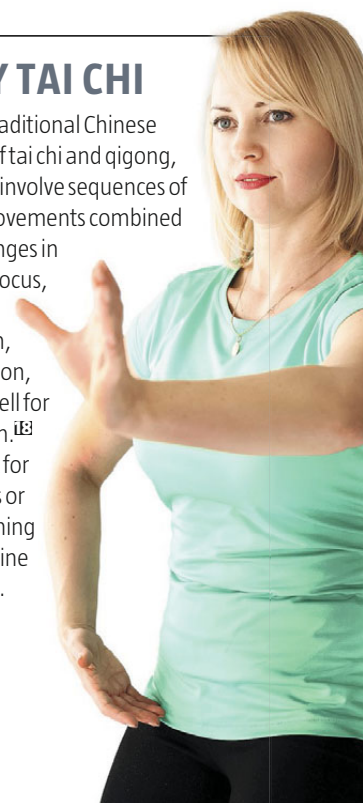
WATCH YOUR WEIGHT

Have you put on weight recently? Being overweight can cause depression, according to a new study, with both social and physical factors playing a role.¹⁶ Drastic diets aren't the answer, though. If you need to lose weight, do so gradually with a healthy, balanced diet and regular exercise. Check out the Alliance for Natural Health's Food4Health guidelines (www.anhinternational.org/campaigns/food4health-campaign) for details on what constitutes a healthy diet, or follow a Mediterranean diet (see page 47).

TRY TAI CHI

The traditional Chinese practices of tai chi and qigong, which both involve sequences of flowing movements combined with changes in mental focus, breathing, coordination, and relaxation, can work well for depression.¹⁸

Look out for a local class or consider signing up to an online program.



SUPPLEMENT

Omega-3s. Omega-3 fatty acids, found in fish oil, can be effective for symptoms of depression. But look for formulations made with pure eicosapentaenoic acid (EPA) or a high percentage of EPA (60 percent or more). Those mostly consisting of the omega-3 docosahexaenoic acid (DHA) don't appear to have the same beneficial effects.¹⁹

Suggested dosage: Try Pharmepa Restore by Igennus, an EPA-only formula supplying 1,000 mg EPA per two-capsule dose



5-HTP. 5-Hydroxytryptophan (5-HTP) is an amino acid used by the human body to make serotonin, the neurotransmitter known as the 'happy hormone.' In supplements, it's produced from the seeds of the West African medicinal plant *Griffonia simplicifolia*. In one study, 5-HTP was effective for depression and worked just as well as the antidepressant drug fluoxetine.²⁰

Suggested dosage: 150-300 mg/day in divided doses (but consult a qualified practitioner first)

B vitamins. Low levels of B vitamins, including folate (B9), B12 and B6, have been linked to depression.²¹

Suggested dosage: Choose a high-quality B complex supplement such as Thorne Basic B Complex

5-HTP

CONSIDER HOMEOPATHY

According to homeopath, naturopath and WDDTY panel member Harald Gaier, the French homeopathic combination remedy L.72 by Lehning Laboratories is safe and effective for depression. It's available from various online stores, or you may be able to get hold of it via a homeopath.

Suggested dosage: Follow the label instructions

TRY HERBS

It's best to see an herbalist for a personal prescription, but here are some of the top herbs for depression.

St John's wort. Extracts of this herb have proved to be better than a placebo for depression²² and just as effective as antidepressant drugs, but with far fewer side-effects.²³

Suggested dosage: Doses of 600 to 1,200 mg/day of a standardized herbal extract are generally used, but St John's wort can interact with certain drugs, so make sure you consult with a qualified practitioner before taking it



Curcumin and saffron. Both curcumin, the main active component of the Indian spice turmeric, and saffron, the famously expensive spice from the *Crocus sativus* flower, have been found in clinical trials to be just as effective as antidepressant drugs like Prozac (fluoxetine), but without the side-effects.²⁴

Suggested dosages: 500 mg twice a day curcumin (the BCM-95 form); 15 mg twice a day saffron (from *C. sativus* petals or stigmas)

Rhodiola rosea. Extracts of this adaptogenic herb can ease mild to moderate depression.²⁵

Suggested dosage: 200 mg twice daily of a standardized herbal extract

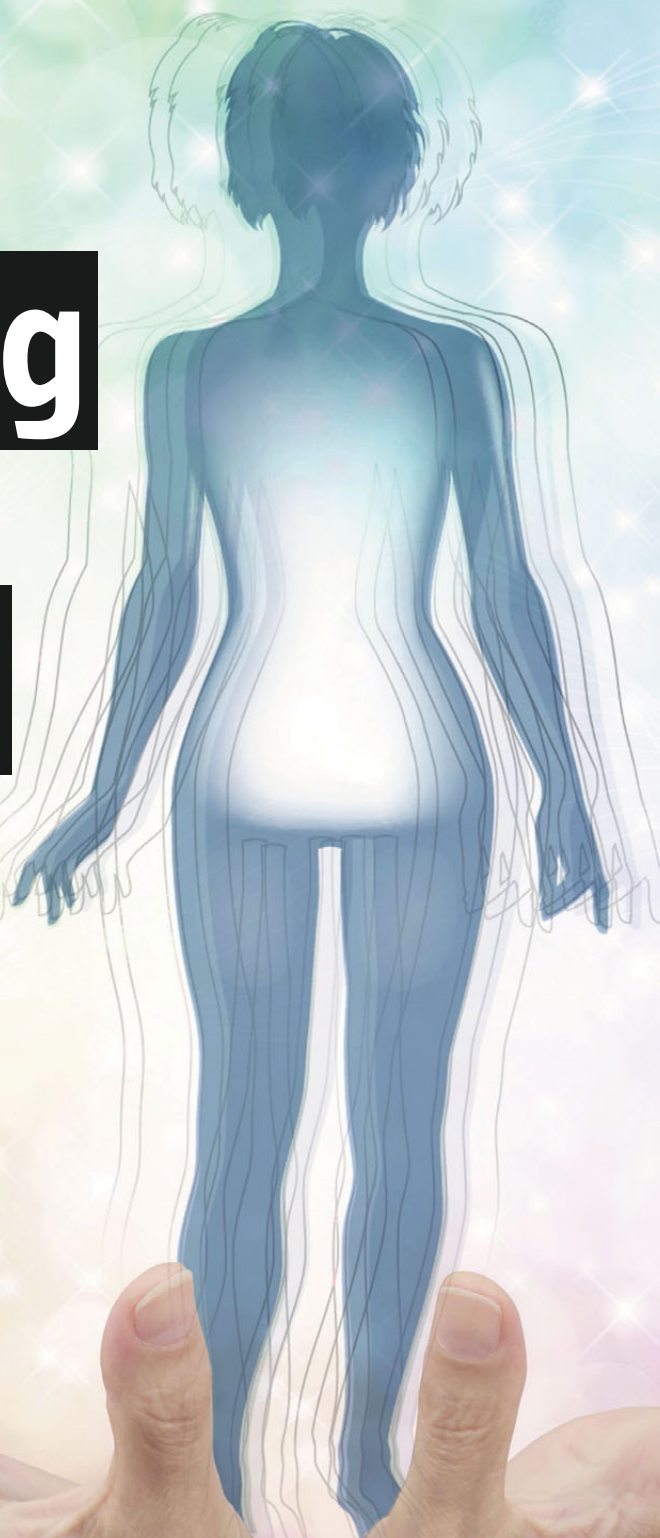


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Vibrating in unison

Quantum Touch, developed by Richard Gorden, claims to cure by tuning patients to healing frequencies. Cate Montana investigates



When Richard Gordon was 24, he was not in good health. He had irritating skin rashes, lung problems and intestinal issues that resisted treatment by regular doctors. “They basically said, ‘Nothing’s bad enough yet to treat. Why don’t you come back when you get worse, and we’ll see what we can do for you?’”

Feeling lost and rather insulted, he decided to attend a holistic health school in New Mexico, where he learned a technique called Polarity Therapy. Then he met the man who would change his life, an energy healer named Bob Rasmusson, who had created a healing modality called Regenesis.

“When I first met him, I thought he was full of it, talking about healing a grapefruit-sized tumor and having a child’s fractured leg heal to the point he could walk that same day without a cast,” says Gordon. “But then he demonstrated on my girlfriend, who had scoliosis, to a group of about 30 people. We’re all sitting there looking at the big S-curve in her spine. Then he touched her hips, and the hips just rolled right back into alignment. My jaw hit the floor. After I picked it up, I apprenticed with him.”

Gordon worked for years with Rasmusson, and after Rasmusson retired, Gordon took over his practice, continuing to evolve and refine the process. Eventually, he got to the point where he didn’t even have to touch a client during a healing session. In 1996, he renamed the new technique Quantum Touch. Today there are thousands of practitioners in over 50 countries around the globe and several books on Quantum Touch printed in numerous languages.

“Most of the work is hands-on,” says Gordon. “You simply sandwich the part of the body that is suffering—the knee, the shoulder, the neck, whatever—between your hands, and use a breathing technique and body awareness to send healing energy to the damaged spot. In level-two Quantum Touch, we can work hands-off at any distance using the same breathing and body

awareness exercise, but focusing the energy in the heart chakra and then projecting it from the heart chakra to where it is needed along with healing intention.”

Anecdotal healing stories abound. For example, London-based Quantum Touch practitioner Karina Grant learned the practice in 2005 after her father was diagnosed with multiple system atrophy (MSA), an aggressive neurodegenerative disease related to Parkinson’s disease. She googled energy healing, and Quantum Touch came up. She took a workshop and immediately started working on her dad.

“One of the symptoms of this disease is that the person can be really hunched over,” says Grant. “After the workshop, he agreed to let me work on him. His spine started to straighten out after a while. Color came back into his face, going from gray back to rosy cheeks. Finally, one day he stood up tall and walked across the room with a bounce in his step. My mother turned to me and asked, ‘What are you learning to do?’ And I said, ‘I have no idea. I just went to this workshop.’ And she said, ‘Well, carry on!’”

After a few months of working on her father, he returned to his physician, who said they must have made a mistake with the earlier diagnosis. He did have Parkinson’s, but a mild form. “All of us were completely blown away,” she says. “It wasn’t until I went into practice and began working with other Parkinson’s clients that I realized just how miraculous his turnaround was and how much he escaped.”

Despite its apparent effectiveness, only one clinical study has been conducted on Quantum Touch so far. In 2017, the Energy Medicine Research Institute studied the effects of the practice on 41 adults suffering from chronic pain. At the end of the study, there was an average 67.4 percent reduction in both acute and chronic pain in patients experiencing various diseases, from arthritis to cancer.¹¹

The easiest and quickest healings tend to be on injuries. “I did my own study at the University of California, Santa Cruz on the men’s basketball team,” says Gordon. “I had the players fill out forms describing their conditions, how long they’d had the

Because it’s a subtle energy, it’s not measurable with today’s equipment. That doesn’t keep the human body from utilizing it and making very dramatic changes that can be seen easily



A typical Quantum Touch session

Although much can be accomplished in an impromptu five- to ten-minute session, a proper in-depth Quantum Touch session averages from 45 minutes up to 75 minutes after there's been a thorough intake conversation covering both physical and emotional components of a client's presenting condition. Sessions are conducted with the client fully clothed and usually lying on a massage table.

Both Gordon and Grant say that at the beginning, the healer might feel nothing in their hands. "Usually, it takes about five minutes before your hands start to really vibrate," says Gordon. "After maybe 20 minutes, they're vibrating like crazy because the client's body is entraining to your vibrations and the energy is moving. At the end of the session, you might notice that the sensation in your hands has gone down to almost nothing because by the end, the client's body is holding the energy, and there is not much difference between your vibration and theirs. That's when you know you're pretty much done. It's not an intellectual thing. The body will tell you when to stop."

condition, how much pain they were in, the symptoms and so forth. I recorded the moment we started and finished every session and gave every form to the coach afterward so he could validate everything. What we saw was that in 100 sessions, the average session length was only 10 minutes because the guys wanted to get back on the court. And the average pain relief was 50 percent in both mean and median numbers."

But how does it work?

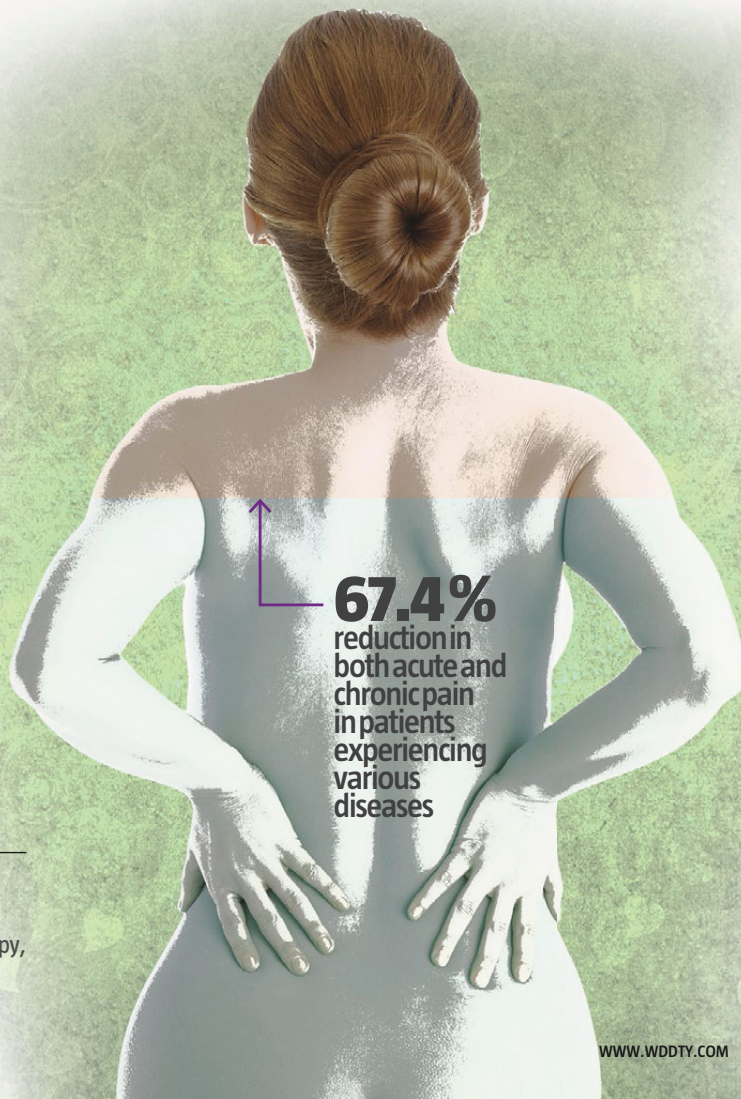
Gordon points out that our body system is animated by the life force, an energy the Chinese have called chi,

In 2017, the Energy Medicine Research Institute studied the effects of Quantum Touch on 41 adults suffering from acute and chronic pain related to a variety of conditions including arthritis, cancer, fibromyalgia and Parkinson's disease. After Quantum Touch therapy, the participants reported a 67.4 percent reduction in pain scores

the Japanese, qi, and Indian yogis, prana. "Dr Beverly Rubik, a medical scientist, has found 70-odd words from different cultures to describe this animating current of life that flows through us," Gordon says. "But because we're not dealing with an electrical, chemical or mechanical kind of energy, because it's a subtle energy, it's not measurable with today's equipment. That doesn't keep the human body from utilizing it and making very dramatic changes that can be seen easily. But the energy and how it accesses those changes? That's a great mystery."

Gordon admits that he does not know how to heal a single cell—that he doesn't know how to heal anything, even a cut finger. "It's the body's innate spiritual and physical intelligence that does the healing," he says. "Yes, the processes of resonance and entrainment are involved. As a healer, you learn to create and hold a high vibration of energy, and then the person receiving the energy has to match your energy. You're not coming down to match them; they're coming up to match you. And it's their body that is using the higher energy, using it to heal."

Mindfulness meditation training has been shown to induce and sustain alpha wave patterns in the brain associated with calmness and reduced stress.² Reduced stress, in turn, means lower production of the stress hormone cortisol, which is known to trigger weight



Joanna

LONDON

When Joanna Gregory, a resident of London, was 25, she visited her father in Spain. Although there had never been any physical or sexual abuse, she'd grown up feeling unsafe around him. "His life experience is rooted in the Holocaust era, so I know that there are genetic and emotional things he's dealing with," she says.

"But when I visited him, he was in a very angry space and feeling suicidal. He had bought a couple of kittens, and they happened to be infested with fleas. I stayed in the room where those kittens had been and was bitten from head to toe every night. It was terrible, but I was too afraid to tell my dad. When I got back to London, I had a huge panic attack. And then he called to tell me he had developed cancer. So, there was just this massive emotionally traumatic situation that occurred in my life."

A couple of months later, she started to manifest strange symptoms. It started with clicking in one knee and then the other. Within a week, her entire body was burning. "It developed very, very quickly," she says. "I had inflammation and severe pain all over. I couldn't be touched anywhere because of the pain. I started to develop stiffness in my knees and in my hands, fingers, elbows and wrists. I couldn't bend them anymore. My walking became limited, and I couldn't use my hands properly."

"Soon it was so bad that I couldn't turn the pages of a book without pain. I couldn't be a passenger in a car. Frankly, I was terrified. I had no idea what was happening, and I honestly thought that this was the end of my life, that I was going to be in a wheelchair."

She saw seven doctors and specialists who sent her for numerous tests. She had a brain scan, a neck scan and a spinal scan. They put her on pain medications, but these made her feel so bad she

stopped taking them. They gave her nine injections in the back of her neck, but these didn't help either—nothing did. Eventually she was given the diagnosis of fibromyalgia.

Around this time, her mother received an email containing an ad from Karina Grant for Quantum Touch. "Every day was like torture, and I was in a really desperate place with my health, so my mom mentioned the ad to me," she says.

"At the time, I was very skeptical. I didn't know anything about energy healing, and I laughed it off. But the doctors could do nothing, and I was so desperate that I eventually agreed to go and try it."

Her mother drove her to her appointment with Karina, and she could barely walk up the steps because of the pain and immobility. But she made it and was immediately reassured by Karina's calm presence.

"I lay down on her massage table, and she briefly explained the process. I didn't understand any of it, but I lay there as she put her hands on my right knee. Immediately I started to experience all these physical sensations, an immense amount of heat was being generated, and I felt tingling."

"I had no idea what was happening, and then suddenly—and this happened in both knees simultaneously—it felt like a bone or a bolt rotated and unlocked in each knee. It was such a strong force that even Karina kind of jumped back. 'Wow!' she said. 'That was a strong motion!' She was caught by surprise as well."

By the end of the session, an hour had gone by. When Joanna sat up, she noticed that the pain in her knees was gone. "I started to move my knees, and I could move them like before any of this happened. I couldn't really believe what was happening. It felt surreal. And then



I went to leave the appointment, and I ran down the stairs. My mom was waiting for me in the car, and she drove me home. As soon as I got there, I put some music on and started dancing like a child. I couldn't believe it!"

As she continued to see Karina, the symptoms kept dropping away. "On one occasion, I think it was the second or third appointment, my mom couldn't take me to the session, so I decided to try a Skype appointment with her. I didn't understand how healing can work long distance. But when she started working on my hands during that appointment, I immediately felt which hand she was working on. Within two or three days after that, my hands were back to normal."

After about 10 sessions, Joanna says she was 100 percent back to her old self. "The only thing I had to continue to do was work on the underlying trauma," she says. "But from a physical point of view, I had no symptoms ever again. Overall I was never the same person again."

Since her remarkable healing, Joanna has been taking Quantum Touch classes to be able to continue to work on herself and help others. "I'm now a practitioner, but I haven't set up my practice yet," she says. "I just really wanted to learn it to be able to help myself and my family and work with some animals on a casual basis."



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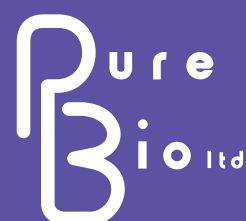


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Lauren

PHILADELPHIA, PA

Lauren, now age 39, from Philadelphia, PA, had severe scoliosis and had been going to doctors and chiropractors since she was 19. It was hard for her to sit for very long because of the pain. Clothes didn't fit right because of the spinal curvature and the fact that the right side of her body and ribcage were torqued upward at an angle. "The doctors and chiropractors told me I was going to have to get treatments for the rest of my life and that I would always be like this," she says. "I couldn't expect any change, and there was never an option of getting better."

Stumbling across a TV broadcast that featured an energy healer, she was intrigued. Her mother was sick with fibromyalgia, had back issues and was in constant pain as well. Perhaps there was a way they both could find relief from their debilitating conditions? After some time spent googling "energy healing," she ran across a YouTube video of Richard Gordon. "He was in a park in some city, moving random people's hip bones, and I was just amazed," she says. "So I went to his website and signed up for the closest course, which was with Henri in Virginia."

She took the first level, hands-on Quantum Touch workshop, trading healing practice with the other students. Nothing happened at the workshop. But afterward, when she was driving and stopped at a light, she felt a powerful pain in her back. And then it lifted, and she felt great relief. At that point, she decided to take the next class, which was about healing without touch and healing at a distance. "Henri said, 'This is where we get into moving bones,' and I knew that's what I was looking for. Since I hadn't experienced any improvement with my scoliosis in the first workshop, she also promised to work on me herself."

During the second workshop, Henri did, indeed, work on her. "I'd been on the table for maybe three or four minutes as she worked on my scoliosis, and all of a sudden, the craziest thing happened. People talk about being able to see things with the 'third eye.' Well, suddenly I could 'see' my spine. And as I watched it unravel, straighten and lengthen, I felt my spine unravel, untwist and grow taller. I could see it and feel it. And from that time on, I could do things I couldn't do before. I could wear a sports bra and other clothes I couldn't before. I could sit for long hours without pain."

To date, Lauren says she is fully 80 percent better. She sometimes experiences different pains, but nothing near what she had experienced for most of her life. "Richard and Henri talk about us being our own healer," she says. "I figure maybe there's something else I need to figure out or learn about myself to heal the rest of the way. One of my ribs is a little bit out of place still. But if you could see the 'before' pictures, where my whole right side is much bigger than my left side, the change is just amazing."

She has also been working on her mother with some success. "Sometimes she wakes up in the morning, and she can hardly move. She has horrible brain fog and is really depressed, and I'll work on her for like three minutes. Then she gets up and has an okay regular day. She has layers and layers of issues."

"Basically, I just keep asking her, 'Where does it hurt?' and work on that place until the pain migrates someplace else. I go there until that gets relief, and then I move to the next place. She has so many pains all over her body. But people see her today and say that compared to last year she is a totally different person."

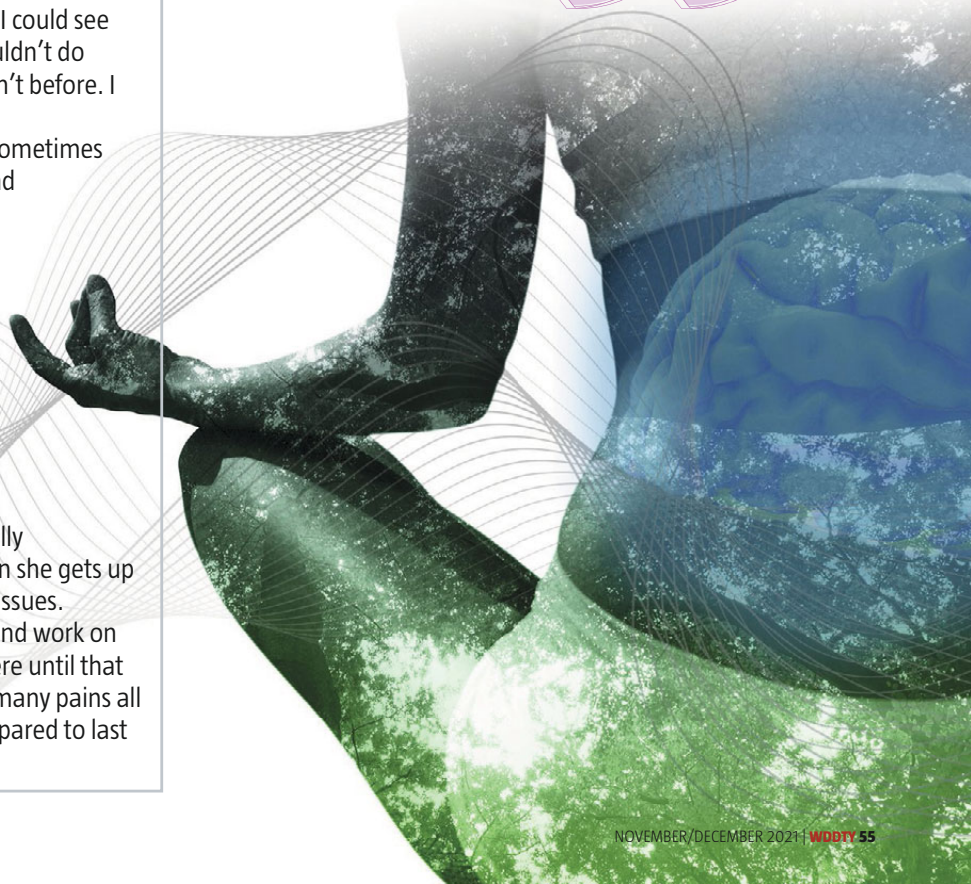
gain, elevated blood pressure, mood swings, indigestion and fatigue.

Investigations in the field of social neuroscience using EEG mapping have revealed something called brain-to-brain synchrony between students and their teacher in a classroom.⁵ Researchers have also discovered that the brain activity of a person listening to a story gradually syncs up to mirror the brain patterns of the person telling the story.⁶

Studies at the HeartMath Institute in California have shown that the human heart's "nervous system" affects the brain and that when two people are touching or standing close together, the electromagnetic energy/information being produced by one person's heart transfers to the other person's heart, causing changes in rhythm—even synchronizing heartbeats—and affecting their brainwave patterns.⁷

"There are places in our consciousness where we are very fixed and linear, and I think there's a deeper space

Reduced stress means lower production of the stress hormone cortisol, which is known to trigger weight gain, elevated blood pressure, mood swings, indigestion and fatigue





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where things are not so fixed, where objects, including human bodies, exist not just as particles but as waves,” says Henri Rand Furguele, MA, a Quantum Touch practitioner in Honolulu, Hawaii.

“I believe Quantum Touch works at that place where there is wave/particle duality.” Wave/particle duality is a concept in quantum physics whereby every subatomic particle can be thought of as both a wave and a particle.

“Because very often when I’m offering the energy, people will say, ‘Oh, it made my bones feel like they turned to jelly for a second’ and then whatever we’ve been working on shifts. Or someone will say there is heat, even though there’s no physical increase in temperature from what I’m doing. I know people have trouble imagining someone giving them energy, but every time you think about someone, in essence, you’re sending them energy. Any time you have an emotion about someone, there’s an energetic link that has an effect.”

As for distance healing and how it works, questions abound, but there are theories. The primary explanation lies, again, in the arena of quantum physics with something called entanglement. Studies have demonstrated that when two particles, such as two electrons, bump into one another, they remain mysteriously linked forever after.

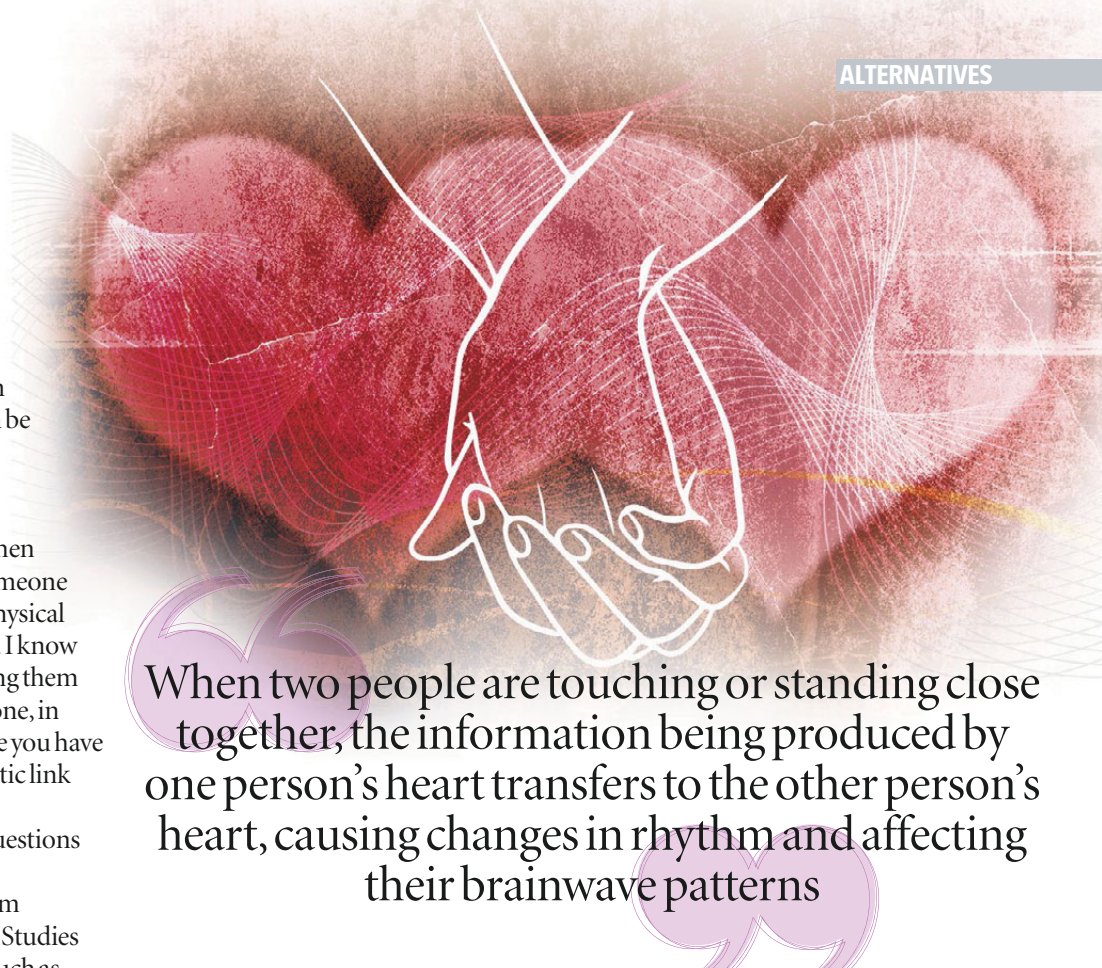
Sophisticated measurements have shown that when the spin state of one particle is changed, that particle’s “friend”—no matter how far away it is, even millions of light-years away—changes its spin state instantaneously in response.

This “spooky action at a distance,” as Albert Einstein described it, is thought to reveal what mystics have been saying for thousands of years—that everything in the universe is connected somehow, and information can travel between two points instantaneously.

Dawson Church, an energy healer and teacher of a modality called the Emotional Freedom Technique (EFT), has two more possible explanations for distance healing. “The early studies by Dr Robert Becker in the ’70s showed that regardless of the healing tradition, the primary brain waves induced in the brain of the healer and the person being healed during the healing encounter was 7.8 Hertz, which is the Schumann resonance of planet Earth.” (Schumann resonance is a low-frequency electromagnetic field generated in Earth’s upper atmosphere by lightning.)

“If our brains are sensitive to that frequency and the healer entrains the healee at 7.8 Hertz, even though one is in California and the other is in Hawaii, why shouldn’t they interact with each other? They’re both entrained to the most predominant frequency of the planet, which could function as a carrier wave to transmit healing and intention between two people in different places.”

Another theory Church proposes is based on field lines. Fast-moving solar winds blast past Earth at five million miles per hour, creating very complex geomagnetic field effects that fluctuate day to day.



When two people are touching or standing close together, the information being produced by one person’s heart transfers to the other person’s heart, causing changes in rhythm and affecting their brainwave patterns

“The HeartMath Institute has been doing studies on this,” Church says. “In one study, they graphed the field line variations for 30 days. They also graphed the heart rate variability of one of their expert meditation practitioners over the same period. When they laid the person’s heart rate variability changes over a graph of Earth’s field line resonance changes for that same 30-day period, the two matched up perfectly.”

“If I’m in California, synchronized with the field line resonances, that means I’m synchronized with everyone else who’s also synchronized with the field line resonances wherever they are on Earth’s surface. So now I have an intention, and it enters this web of synchrony. I’m proposing that this could be a mechanism for distance healing.”

Whatever mechanisms are involved, Quantum Touch seems to work. Clients can also learn self-created healing techniques that enable them to process emotional blocks and issues that are contributing to their physical conditions.

“The wonderful thing about learning Quantum Touch is, whether you set up a practice or just use it for yourself, your family and your pets, people discover that they don’t need to outsource their health,” says Grant. “We can learn techniques to bring back that sense of autonomy and empowerment. I think it’s really important for people to know that there are things they can learn and do for themselves.”

RESOURCES

Richard Gordon:
www.quantumtouch.com

Karina Grant:
www.karinagrants.co.uk

Henri Rand Furguele, MA:
www.quantumhealinghenri.com

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On your toes

If your dog has painful lumps between the toes, check out holistic vet Dr Rohini Sathish's tried-and-tested natural remedies

Q My nine-year-old Bulldog, Scully, has developed a large painful lump between her first two toes. Can you suggest any natural remedies?
R.L., via email

A Large lumps that form between the toes, typically in the webbing of the front paws, are common in dogs and known as interdigital furuncles or interdigital cysts.

Most are caused by a bacterial infection, but others may be due to allergies, mites, ingrown hairs, foreign bodies like thorns or grass seeds, or even from excessive licking between the toes as a result of stress or irritation. In some cases, these lumps can also be benign or cancerous tumors.

Overweight dogs, hairy breeds and those prone to hypothyroidism (an underactive thyroid) may also be at increased risk of developing these furuncles.

Signs and symptoms

Besides lumps between the toes, which can be red or purplish, excessive licking of a particular foot, limping and intermittent lameness can be signs of furuncles. If your dog has lots of hair between the toes, it may be hard to see these lesions, so it's a good idea to check your pet's feet regularly, especially if they seem to be grooming them excessively.

Diagnosis

It is always best to get a lump between your dog's feet checked by your vet, especially if it doesn't respond to some simple home remedies (see page 61).

Toptip

In many cases, interdigital furuncles can be prevented by cleaning your dog's feet after walks (use a saltwater foot bath or some aloe vera wipes) and by checking them daily for splinters, thorns, grass seeds, insects or any other foreign body. This is especially important for long-haired breeds.

If the lump is growing rapidly and feels hard, your vet may perform a fine needle aspirate or a needle biopsy to rule out cancer. If your vet is convinced that there may be a grass seed, thorn or any other foreign body lodged between the toes, she may want to explore the lump to extract it.

X-rays may also be warranted if the lump is hard and seems to be well attached

to the bones of the toe, as bone cancer can start off as a small lump, although this is quite rare.

If your vet suspects mites, it may be necessary to take skin scrapings to look for the mites microscopically.

Conventional treatment

Antibiotics, likely a combination of topical and oral antibiotics, are the usual treatment if the cause is an infection. Nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs like carprofen or meloxicam may also be given if your pet is in pain and the infection is deep.

If the lesions are complicated by yeast like *Malassezia*, then an oral course of antifungal meds may be prescribed. Injections of Cytopoint (a monoclonal antibody therapy) may be necessary if the underlying cause is atopic dermatitis.

Surgery may be needed if a tumor or a foreign body is suspected or if the lump does not respond to antibiotics or steroids.

Your pet may be required to wear an E-collar or Buster collar to prevent her from biting or licking her feet, as the lumps can be very itchy and painful, and self-trauma will make it worse and prevent healing.

“Herbal tea rinses can work well as a treatment or preventative”



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Natural remedies

If your dog has already been checked out by your vet and it's a mild, uncomplicated case, here are some natural remedies you could try for interdigital furuncles.

Epsom salt

Also known as magnesium sulfate, Epsom salt is a simple but effective treatment for these lesions, helping to draw out impurities from the area. Add some to a foot bath for your dog two to three times a day.

Apple cider vinegar

Well-known for its antibacterial and antifungal properties, apple cider vinegar can also be used in a foot bath. Add one cup to warm water and stand your pet in it for 30 to 60 seconds once a day.

Herbal tea

Chamomile, echinacea, goldenseal or green herbal tea rinses can work well as a treatment or preventative. The astringent, antioxidant and anti-inflammatory properties of these teas help to reduce inflammation. Add four tea bags to a gallon of water and soak your dog's foot in it for 30 seconds.

Natural shampoos

Natural and organic dog shampoos containing soothing ingredients like aloe vera and chamomile and antibacterial essential oils like oregano and tea tree oil can help. Try 4Legger Dog Shampoos (available from www.4-legger.com in the US and www.healthfulpets.co.uk in the UK) such as the Moisturize shampoo, which contains aloe vera juice and hemp oil to calm the skin as well as lemongrass essential oil for its antibacterial and antifungal properties.

Bentonite clay powder

This can be applied between the toes after cleansing to keep the area dry. Plus, the sodium and calcium in the powder help draw out impurities.

Aloe vera gel

Dogs with skin problems such as eczema and dermatitis respond well to aloe vera. Since aloe vera contains natural antihistamines and has antiseptic properties, mainly thanks to saponins (a soapy substance that acts as a cleansing agent), itchiness can be reduced, which in

Aloe vera basic gel

Here's a simple healing aloe vera gel recipe for dogs.

Ingredients

A large handful of aloe vera leaves

½ tsp xanthan gum

½ tsp vitamin C powder

Directions

- 1 Break open the aloe vera leaves and scrape out the inner sap—this can be quite fiddly as the sap is slippery.
- 2 Place the sap in a blender, add 2 Tbsp water, the xanthan gum and the vitamin C powder. Blend together until a thicker, gel-like consistency is achieved.
- 3 Store in a labeled, airtight glass jar in the fridge for up to one month.
- 4 Apply topically to the affected area between the toes twice daily after cleaning and drying the area.

turn helps to soothe and calm the skin. See the box above for how to make your own gel.

Noni lotion

Pets Noni Lotion by Hawaiian Organic Noni (www.realnoni.com) is derived from the noni fruit and has soothing, antibacterial, antifungal and analgesic properties. Apply it directly to the cyst or sore areas.

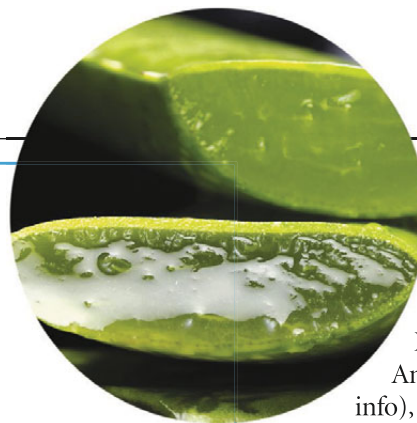
CBD salve

Remedy by CBD Dog Health (www.cbddoghealth.com), only available in the US, is a "300 mg Full Spectrum Hemp CBD Salve" made with 100 percent natural ingredients designed to provide relief for tumors, cysts and infections in dogs. It's even been known to shrink cysts and tumors.

Toptip

For any topical spray, ointment or salve, apply it just before feeding your pet or taking them on a walk, as they will be distracted and more likely to refrain from licking off the product.

If you can leave a collar on and prevent licking even for 15 minutes post-application, this will accelerate the healing process.



Apply liberally to the affected area two to three times daily.

Essential oils

Dump-a-Lump by AnimalEO (www.animaleo.info), available in the US, is a blend of essential oils including frankincense, myrrh and sandalwood that may help to shrink cysts, warts and other lumps. As this is a neat preparation, it needs to be diluted with fractionated coconut oil. Apply it to the cyst or lump several times daily for one week.

Colloidal silver

Colloidal silver, known for its antibacterial and antifungal properties, can be sprayed between the toes to help prevent and treat furuncles. Try Colloidal Silver for Pets by Glacier Peak Holistics in the US (www.glacierpeakholistics.com) or Nature's Greatest Secret Colloidal Silver for Pets in the UK (www.naturesgreatestsecret.co.uk).

Chinese herbs

Four Marvels by Kan herbs, available via some holistic vets, is a Chinese herbal formula that helps with interdigital dermatitis. I recommend consulting with a vet trained in traditional Chinese veterinary medicine to determine the right formula for your dog.

Laser therapy

CO2 laser therapy, available via some vets, has been demonstrated to successfully treat some types of interdigital cysts.



Rohini Sathish, DVM, MSC, MRCVS, MHAO, MCIVT

Dr Sathish is an award-winning holistic vet with 22 years of experience. After training in

acupuncture, acupressure, energy healing, Emotional Freedom Technique (EFT), animal communication and herbal medicine, she now actively integrates conventional veterinary treatments with complementary therapies and is co-author of *You Can Heal Your Pet* (Hay House UK, 2015). You can contact Dr Sathish at her website: www.rohinisholisticvetcare.com

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US: us.colorfulstandard.com
UK: www.colorfulstandard.co.uk

Eco-conscious Danish brand Colorful Standard makes high-quality everyday clothing in a rainbow of colors using 100 percent organic cotton certified by the Global Organic Textile Standard (GOTS). And the dyes used to develop the stunning shades are all Oeko-Tex Certified, meaning they have been thoroughly tested for harmful chemicals. We love this classic crewneck sweatshirt—available in 48 colors and perfect for lounging or layering.

SWEET DREAMS

SOAP FOLK

Lavender Eye Pillow, \$21.99/£16

US: www.knowtheorigin.com UK: www.soapfolk.com

Handmade in the UK from organic cotton, this beautiful eye pillow is filled with soothing organic lavender flowers to help you relax and enjoy a more restful night's sleep. It's also lightly weighted with flaxseeds, allowing the pillow to comfortably mold to the shape of your face and block out light. Enjoy it just as it is, or heat it on the radiator or chill it in the freezer for some hot/cold therapy.



FLOWER POWER

JOSH ROSEBROOK

Enfleuria Fragrance Oil, \$125/£125 (0.5fl oz/15 mL)

US: www.joshrosebrook.com
UK: www.contentbeautywellbeing.com

A totally natural blend of organic and wild-crafted essential oils, extracts and absolutes in a base of certified organic jojoba oil, Enfleuria is a delicate floral fragrance with gardenia at its heart and hints of sweet jasmine, heady bergamot and fresh citrus blossom. The gardenia is hand-crafted through the process of enfleurage, an 18th-century French technique used to extract the aromatic compounds from flowers using plant oils. It comes in a silk-screened glass bottle with a rollerball applicator and an elegant, gift-worthy box.



HOLIDAY GIFT GUIDE

FOR HIM

GOOD SCENTS

ABEL

Cyan Nori Eau de Parfum, \$150/£118 (1.7 fl oz/50 mL)

US: us.abelodor.com UK: www.contentbeautywellbeing.com

Forgo fake fragrances and treat him to this new scent from 100 percent natural perfume brand Abel. Cyan Nori is a sweet and salty fragrance with top notes of tangerine and white peach, heart notes of plant-derived musk and base notes of nori (seaweed) that will transport you to summer days by the sea. And 1 percent of sales of the fragrance goes to supporting the New Zealand charity Sustainable Coastlines.



KEEP IT COZY

HOUSE BABYLON

Bathrobe, £65 (about \$89)

www.housebabylon.com

Available in three colors and sizes, this luxurious unisex bathrobe is made from 100 percent organic Turkish cotton and Oeko-Tex certified to be free of harmful chemicals. Featuring a lapel, generous pockets and branded embroidery on the chest area, the robe is super soft and fluffy and comes in a House Babylon laundry bag. We love the jewel-toned blue and green colors.



GO GREEN

PURECHIMP

Matcha Gift Box, \$42/£29.95

www.purechimp.com

Ideal for green tea enthusiasts, this gift set includes 50 g (1.8 oz) antioxidant-rich matcha green tea powder, plus a matcha measuring spoon, bamboo whisk and whisk holder. The matcha is 100 percent natural, vegan and pesticide-free, has a delicate flavor and comes in a recyclable glass jar. And you may be pleased to know that 5 percent of Purechimp's profits go to charity.



RELAX AND REVIVE

WELEDA

Arnica Soak and Shower Gift Set, £22.50 (2x6.8 fl oz/200 mL)

www.weleda.co.uk

Great for anyone who suffers with tired, aching muscles, this gift set contains Weleda's soothing Arnica Muscle Soak and reviving Arnica Sports Shower Gel, both of which contain *Arnica montana* extract, famous for its anti-inflammatory properties. The products are 100 percent natural, vegan and packaged in a gorgeous plastic-free, recyclable box. Plus, with each gift set purchased, you'll be planting a tree with UK charity TreeSisters. The gift set is only available in the UK, but the products can be purchased separately from Weleda's US site (www.weleda.com). Alternatively, try the Arnica Rest and Revive Regimen (\$48.47), which includes the shower gel along with an Arnica massage oil and cream.



FOR CHILDREN



WELL WRAPPED

MORI

Panda Hooded Kids Towel,
\$44/£33.50

US: us.babymori.com
UK: www.babymori.com

This beautifully soft towel is crafted from 100 percent organic micro cotton and said to dry twice as fast as regular cotton. Ideal for toddlers ages 1–3 years, the robe is guaranteed to keep little ones warm and cozy, and the panda hood and tail will bring a bit of fun to bath time. Personalization and gift wrapping is available to make the present extra special.



TOTALLY BALMY

CRAZY RUMORS

Natural Lip Balm,
\$4/£3.99 (0.15oz/4.4mL)

US: www.crazyrumors.com
UK: www.lovelula.com

Perfect as stocking fillers for teens and tweens, Crazy Rumors lip balms come in a range of fun flavors, from Bubble Gum to Pumpkin Spice, and are all 100 percent natural, vegan and cruelty-free. Featuring moisturizing ingredients, like organic shea butter and jojoba oil, and flavors sourced from fruits, vegetable and spices, the lip balms are handcrafted in small batches and sure to go down a treat.



COTTON ON

TEKLA

Kids' sleepwear
set, \$195/£149

www.teklafabrics.com

Available for children ages one through to eight, Tekla's poplin pajamas are made from 100 percent organic cotton and lightly stonewashed for extra softness. They're quite an investment for children's sleepwear, but they have a roomy fit and have been created to withstand years of use. Choose from plain purple or navy, or striped blue or brown designs. And if you want to twin with your child, you can get a matching adult set.

PUT A RING ON IT

PLAN TOYS

Natural Stacking Ring,
\$25/£24.95

US: usa.plantoys.com
UK: www.babipur.co.uk

These smooth wooden rings from sustainable toy manufacturer Plan Toys are designed to encourage sorting, stacking and counting while boosting fine motor skills and hand-eye coordination. The rings as well as the central rod and ball are made of solid, sustainable rubberwood, and the toy is recommended for ages 12 months and up.



PETS AND HOME

UNDER COVER

HELEN ROUND

Reusable Bowl Covers, \$27.99/£20

US: www.knowtheorigin.com

UK: www.helenround.com

Designed by British textile designer and print maker Helen Round, these reusable linen bowl covers can be used to cover food and keep it fresh in your fridge or on your kitchen countertop. There are three different sizes included, and each bowl cover is handcrafted from 100 percent Oeko-Tex-certified linen and hand-printed using water-based inks. They have an elasticated hem for easy fitting and are machine washable at 85°F/30°C. An eco-friendly and beautiful alternative to plastic wrap.



JUST PAWS FROM THE FIELD

Deluxe Purrfect Gift Kit Cat Toy and Catnip, \$16.99

www.ecodogsandcats.com (US only)

All-natural pet toy maker From the Field has combined some of its best toys and treats for cats in this cute gift set. It includes two hemp mouse cat toys, a bag of organic catnip (leaf and flower), a catnip spray (a mix of catnip essential oil and distilled water) and a cork ball. Your cat will be entertained for hours.



BREATHE EASY

BLUEAIR

Blue3410 (UK)/Blue Pure311Auto (US) Air Purifier, \$249.99/£279

www.blueair.com

Designed for medium-sized rooms, this air purifier is stylish, compact and can be placed anywhere in the room to effectively remove more than 99 percent of particles like dust, pollen, mold and pet dander that can cause and exacerbate allergies.

Simple to use, it has a one-touch enabled 'auto mode' that automatically adjusts fan speed based on real-time conditions and an LED display to indicate good, moderate or polluted air quality. But one of the best features is that you can change the color of the purifier to match your space. The 'Arctic Trail' (light gray) color fabric 'pre-filter' is included, but blue, pink, green and dark gray pre-filters are available to buy separately.



CHRISTMAS COUNTDOWN

GOODCHAP'S

12 Days of Christmas, £20.50

www.goodchaps.co.uk (UK only)

Canine gifting experts Goodchaps' specialize in natural and healthy dog treats and gifts, all of which come in plastic-free packaging. There's a brilliant selection of festive gifts, such as this box of 12 numbered gifts, one for each of the 12 days of Christmas. It includes a selection of natural, additive-free fish treats and a handmade cotton rope toy.

Chronic disease is the end point of a diet of Big Food's processed glob

Let's get ill, let's make money

Bryan Hubbard

We saw a meme the other day that tickled the collective *WDDTY* funny bone. A doctor is saying to his patient: "After years of an unhealthy lifestyle, I'm afraid you've developed this chronic condition."

"Oh dear," responds the patient, "should I change my lifestyle?"

"Don't be silly," the doctor replies, "we have a pill for you."

And that, in short, is how most of us live. Big Food dishes up processed glob that makes us malnourished and, eventually, sick, at which point Big Pharma steps in to maintain our sickness. And the largesse of both industries ensures that politicians are supportive, barely raising a finger to protect the citizenry.

We've come to a pretty pass, or if you're in a Wordsworthian mood today (and why not?) it's a sordid boon. One of our greatest inventions is money, along with the concept of debt, so that things can get built even when there's no money to pay for it. (See: every government in the history of mankind, and especially today's crowd.)

With money and debt, we were able to invent, develop, build and trade. It was the rocket fuel that launched modern civilization, for good or ill.

But along the way, we forgot something. We forgot that money and debt are our inventions, and because we forgot this, we made them preeminent over people and our environment. We came a poor second to our own invention, and so people were sometimes killed for it, or for their land and resources that would generate even more money. Our environment has been despoiled for it.

Today, Big Food is one of the world's greatest proponents of the money-before-people approach. Their high-sugar processed foods and drinks are the single greatest cause of our chronic disease epidemic, and the more

we research, the more we discover that most everything eventually leads back to a bad diet.

The latest to join the roll call is Alzheimer's disease. Scientists in Australia have discovered that the beta-amyloid plaques that form in the brain—and which are characteristic of the disease—play a critical role in our cognitive decline. For years, scientists had assumed the plaques were merely byproducts of a deeper process, but it seems they are the major culprits after all.¹

The plaques are made up of toxic proteins that make their way through the blood-brain barrier by harnessing fat molecules known as lipoproteins. That's the first revelation. Many doctors still hold to the belief that the barrier can't be breached, but Dr Jeffrey Bland—a pioneer of functional medicine—discovered that it could be, and often is, in research he carried out in the 1980s.

'Alternative' doctors since then have also seen toxins enter the brain, and they have

postulated that the phenomenon could be the cause of many neurological problems, even including chronic fatigue/myalgic encephalomyelitis.

The Australians' discovery is breakthrough stuff. If we now understand the origin and development of Alzheimer's, we can finally do something about it. And these wonderful discoveries happen because pharmaceutical companies are collaborating with researchers to fund the work, the study authors gasped.

The next step (of course) will be the creation of a pill that somehow stops the buildup of the toxins or blocks the next phase of the process when they enter the brain.

But there was another discovery they made, and it didn't get mentioned in the triumphant messaging that followed. The researchers discovered it was a buildup of the toxins in the liver—as would result from a diet of high-sugar, processed food—that eventually led to dementia symptoms. This confirms a large but far less publicized body of research showing that a bad diet is a major factor in the development of Alzheimer's.

With this revelation, you might have expected the researchers to have urged people to adopt healthy eating and asked governments and health agencies to shout it from the rooftops. But no, instead they revealed that the work with their benefactors goes on, and the next stage will be a pharmaceutical drug.

It's an absurdity. If you pump diesel into a gasoline-powered car, you'll wreck the engine, and that's what is happening to us. The vast majority of people living in the West are malnourished; in other words, they aren't feeding their body with the essential nutrients it needs to function healthily. When it doesn't, it's called chronic disease.

But the answer isn't a pill, not even for profit.



Big Food dishes up processed glob that makes us malnourished and, eventually, sick, at which point Big Pharma steps in to maintain our sickness

REFERENCES

1 PLoS Biol, 2021; 19: e3001358

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