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WHAT DOCTORS DON'T TELL YOU

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Bubble, bubble...

Why you need to cook your greens

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Editors
Lynne McTaggart and Bryan Hubbard

COMMENT

COOK YOUR GREENS

For more than 30 years, *WDDTY* has been advocating a diet rich in fruits and vegetables—the best approach for most people most of the time. But a small minority of us suffer from a chronic health problem even when we are eating a healthy diet. When this happens, the very healthiest of foods could be doing us harm.

Some vegetables, fruits and nuts contain oxalates, compounds that can cause kidney stones plus other issues, and this could be the unsuspected cause of a chronic health problem. But there's an easy solution that doesn't require giving up plant foods.

For at least 70 years, the West has been consumed by the notion of healthy eating, but what exactly constitutes "health food" has been a highly moveable feast, with a new theory emerging with each new decade.

The centerpiece of all modern healthy diets—from low-glycemic diets to vegan diets—is plant foods: dark greens like spinach, sweet potatoes instead of the white variety, plus nuts, especially almonds, and for treats, dark chocolate with cocoa content of 70 percent or more.

Every last book on diet and nutrition now emphasizes drinking regular green smoothies packed with almonds, chia seeds and protein powder in the morning; baking with almond flour instead of wheat flour; consuming lots of legumes; and filling your plate with dark leafy greens. But as our Special Report (page 26) points out, in some susceptible individuals, this can be a recipe for ill health.

"Superfoods" often contain high levels of compounds called oxalates (the common name for oxalic acid and its salts), naturally occurring substances in many plant foods like leafy greens, nuts, and soybeans and other legumes—a plant's natural defense against herbivores and other pests and its mechanism to manage minerals.

Humans also make oxalates as a metabolic waste product, particularly from the breakdown of vitamin C.

When consumed in high amounts, these antinutrients can bind to calcium and other minerals during digestion, preventing absorption of vital nutrients and causing a raft of problems, from joint pain and irritable bowel to skin issues, sinusitis and, most problematically, kidney stones.

The toxicity of oxalates is nothing new. Oxalic acid was used in the 1700s as an industrial substance and cleaning powder, and medical reports discussed cases of accidental poisoning with it—some even causing kidney failure. In the mid-1800s, doctors connected oxalates with everything from fatigue to bladder pain and arthritis.

Nevertheless, in modern times, it is mostly only doctors specializing in kidney disease who have made the connection between kidney function and high-oxalate foods because most kidney stones contain calcium oxalate.

It's been left to arcane organizations like the Vulvar Pain Foundation to make the link between high-oxalate foods and disparate problems such as genital pain and itching, irritable bowel, fibromyalgia, interstitial cystitis and various skin conditions.

Our dear friend Arielle Ford, a best-selling author and relationship expert, first put us onto this silent and little-known poison. Arielle was careful with her diet, downing green protein drinks every morning; substituting sweet potatoes for white potatoes, which have a higher sugar content; and eating plenty of almonds, dark leafy greens and dark chocolate—all the things that are supposedly good for you.

And yet she was mystified: With such clean eating, why did she have such a bad gut and constant insomnia?

In her search for a cause, she came across the book *Toxic Superfoods* (Rodale Books) by Sally Norton. Even as a nutrition student at Cornell University, Norton, a committed vegetarian, was plagued by joint and muscle pain, an irritable bowel, exhaustion, genital burning, insomnia and excruciating gout.

After researching the effects of oxalates on the cellular level of the body, Norton slowly weaned herself off the high-oxalate foods, and her health transformed in two weeks.

After reading her book, Arielle also ditched raw high-oxalate superfoods, and all her symptoms disappeared.

If you're eating healthily and suspect high-oxalate foods may be at the root of one or more of your health problems, the key piece here may be whether foods are raw or cooked; soaking and then boiling them can lower oxalates in many vegetables. It's also important to wean yourself off high-oxalate foods slowly so you don't cause oxalate "dumping," which can make your symptoms worse.

And be sure to take a magnesium citrate supplement with meals, which will bind to any excess oxalic acid. Unlike calcium supplements, magnesium chelates oxalates in your intestines, forming soluble magnesium oxalate compounds, which reduces absorption in the blood and lowers the risk of forming hard stones.

Food fashions come and go—but so, apparently, does knowledge in medical science. The fact that the long-known dangers of raw high-oxalate foods are only coming into the public consciousness now is nothing short of scandalous.

This isn't an argument against eating fresh organic food or for returning to processed, high-sugar foods.

But if you're struggling with health issues and you suspect oxalates are to blame, go ahead and eat your greens. Just soak and boil them first, be careful which you choose and watch your total oxalate load.



"Food fashions come and go—but so, apparently, does knowledge in medical science"

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Lynne McTaggart and Bryan Hubbard

Dear *WDDTY* subscriber,

We went through an evolutionary shift in November 2022. Having been a print publisher for more than 30 years, with our website puffing far behind, we became a "web first" publisher. Not that the magazine was forgotten—if you're a print subscriber, the fact you're holding a copy in your hands is testament to that—but articles destined for a particular issue are now published first on the revamped website (wddty.com).

With the relaunch, we have also reduced the subscription types to just two: print and digital or digital-only. Print-only has disappeared, and to receive the actual magazine each month, you now opt for print and digital.

Choosing this option opens up the whole website and its many benefits to you. Yes, you'll still get the magazine delivered to your door each month, but you'll also enjoy:

• Subscriber discounts: we've negotiated great discounts on a range of health products and supplements. Biocare, one of the world's leading suppliers of high-quality supplements, is the latest to offer discounts across its entire product range (see the latest offers on pages 48 – 49).

• Monthly *WDDTY* Talks: you have free access to our monthly webinars. Each month we talk with a health pioneer, and you can ask a question about a specific health concern if you join the live session. Each talk is recorded, so you can watch at any time.

• Search our database: *WDDTY* has assembled one of the largest databases of alternative health information, and you can search every word of it.

• Download e-books: you can access 20 e-books, 15 reports and two fact sheets as part of your subscription, which you can download and store on your own PC.

The way you log in has changed. With the previous site, you needed your email and password, but now you need to enter your subscriber number, which is on the address label on the envelope in which your issue was delivered. We've produced a series of videos that help you log in and navigate the site, which you can see at wddty.com/faqs.

Once you've logged in, you can also access your own account, where you can change your address and see your subscriber status.

We hope that you like the changes and that you make good use of all the extra benefits your subscription now offers.



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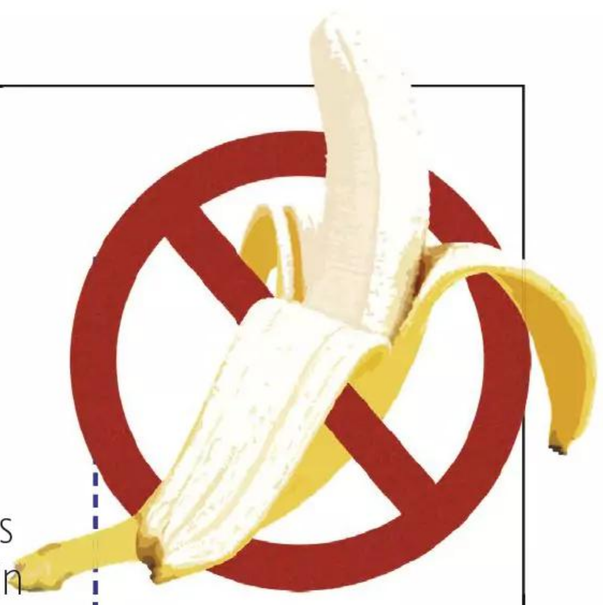
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Conventional medicine is a trap that methodically ensnares you, Bryan Hubbard observes—unless, like rural Brazilians, you avoid it entirely





"If you're adding a banana to your morning smoothie, stop. It blocks most of the heart-healthy flavanols in the other produce in your drink, such as berries, beets, cocoa and leafy greens"
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WHAT DOCTORS DON'T TELL YOU

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EDITORIAL PANEL

What Doctors Don't Tell You is supported by some of the world's leading pioneers in nutritional, environmental and alternative medicine. Each is an authority in his or her field; many have broken new ground and inspired new practices in medicine.



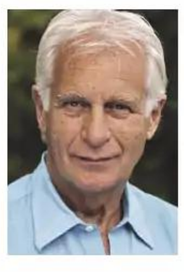
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Craig Sams is the co-founder of Whole Earth Foods and founder and president of Green & Blacks Organic Chocolate as well as director of Soil Association Certification, executive chairman of Carbon Gold Ltd., a carbon sequestration business, and a trustee of the Slow Food Trust UK. He has authored four books, including *The Little Food Book*.



Dr Harald Gaier is a UK-registered osteopath, homeopath, acupuncturist, naturopath and medical herbalist. Former director of medical research at The Hale Clinic and a committee member of the Prince of Wales' Foundation for Integrated Health, Dr Gaier has authored numerous scientific papers and *The Encyclopedia of Homeopathy*.



Dr Jonathan Wright, medical director of the Tahoma Clinic in Washington, pioneered nutritional medicine in the US. A board member of the American Preventive Medical Association and the International College of Advanced Longevity Medicine, he has published 11 books.



Dr Gary Smyth is a GP, homeopathic physician and academic tutor with a passion for integrative medicine. He is the immediate past president and fellow of the Faculty of Homeopathy. He is also a popular speaker at international conferences and a leading voice within the homeopathic profession.



Dr Nyjon Eccles, one of the leading integrative medicine physicians in the UK, has a reputation for his practice of evidence-based integrative medicine. Over the years he has developed specific and natural solutions for restoration of health, and these therapies are offered at The Natural Doctor, his clinic in central London.



Questioning the narrative

I have been a dedicated reader and subscriber of your magazine for many years. For the first time, perhaps, in all those years, I was very disappointed to read your item in the January/February 2026 issue about AstraZeneca "funding Russia's war chest" (page 10).

This is a title and an item that parrots mainstream media's false information about the real causes of the Russia-Ukraine conflict, the actual history underlying the conflict and the West's involvement in this conflict.

The way you have presented the information suggests *WDDTY* aligns itself with the view that Russia is the unprovoked aggressor that has to be stopped and not funded, without any mention of the human rights abuses and systematic extermination of the Russian-speaking populations of Ukraine, committed by successive Ukrainian governments, or the nefarious biolab experiments and child trafficking carried out by the West on Ukrainian soil. If anything, Russia may need its "war technology" to counter such threats to humanity.

The real moral question of the article is not that AstraZeneca is funding Russia's "war chest" but why Russia allows companies like AstraZeneca to poison its citizens.

V.S., via email

WDDTY *replies: The article is based on Ukrainian research on Western companies that continue their activities in Russia and so are paying corporation tax to the Russian government. The article doesn't touch on the genesis of the conflict or any human rights violations by either side.*

WHAT DOCTORS DON'T TELL YOU

COMMUNITY The latest from the *WDDTY* Community

WDDTY's **online community hub is now live. You can post questions or start discussions on any health topic as well as help out other *WDDTY* subscribers with your own experiences and suggestions. Simply go to community.wddty.com and sign in with your subscription ID.**

Here are some of the latest posts and discussions. If you want to reply to any of the posts below, head to the Community.

Help for restless leg syndrome

I have been diagnosed with restless leg syndrome and have had extensive blood tests, which have come back normal. I have tried restricting caffeine and alcohol but nothing is working. Any ideas?

Christine

WDDTY **replies: Check out our September 2019 issue for some natural remedies for restless leg syndrome, which include massage, light therapy and antioxidants.**

Replies from the *WDDTY* Community: Emily and Bruce both recommend magnesium, either topically or orally as magnesium glycinate.

Heart attack after vax

I had a heart attack the same week as my Covid vaccination. I am 85 years old and have never been to a doctor in my life apart from for little accidents caused by carelessness.

I spent 11 days in the intensive care unit at King's College Hospital, London, and left there with six different tablets to be taken for the rest of my life.

My doctor will not listen to me. I have now dumped all medications as well as my doctor and, most important, I feel better for it.

John O'Brien

WHAT DOCTORS DON'T TELL YOU

COMMUNITY

GET IN TOUCH: Share your views, questions and comments via the *WDDTY* Community. Visit community.wddty.com or scan the QR code below and sign in with your subscription ID.

Book review

Tony Edwards reviews *Vaccinated—Dead: Histopathological Findings Following Covid-19 Vaccination* by Ute Krüger and Walter Lang (Corage Media, 2025)

With very little fanfare, another important book on the Covid-19 vaccination controversy appeared last year. The authors are experienced pathologists who have systematically investigated deaths occurring shortly after the Covid-19 injections. The book features detailed tissue studies from dozens of autopsies with times to death ranging from a few hours to several weeks post-injection.

Krüger and Lang have seen clusters of T cells infiltrating the walls of small blood vessels and vital organs. They ask, Was this caused by the virus (as authorities claim) or by the jab?

Their tests clearly identified the coronavirus spike protein in the cells, but it was not the specific protein associated with the virus. Their conclusion was clear: The offending spike was generated in the body by the "vaccine," not by the virus.

By mapping T cell lesions across multiple organs, the authors link specific injury patterns to serious adverse reactions. In the heart, they document how T cells destroyed heart muscle, leading to fatal arrhythmias. In the brain, they show inflammation of delicate microvessels and surrounding tissue—possibly causing seizures, strokes or sudden collapse. In the lungs and liver, widespread micro-clots and swelling mirror the breathlessness, fatigue and organ failure some patients reported after injection.

Krüger and Lang's book carefully documents each case study without sensationalism. The authors' restraint makes their conclusions more compelling: Repeated detection of vaccine-derived spike protein and identical immune responses in disparate organs cannot be coincidence.

The book also exposes a systemic blind spot. The very few official Covid autopsies have relied on visual examination and drug testing, omitting tests that could reveal microscopic injury. Consequently, these effects were written off as "natural causes." In this sense, the book doubles as a critique of institutional unwillingness to investigate anything that might show vaccines in a bad light.

Krüger and Lang's book is an evidence-driven call for honesty, valuable evidence that the deliberate manufacture of the Covid virus and consequent jabbing of millions with a toxic substance is the greatest health crime in human history.

Forget fiber—eating nuts and veg stops constipation

Doctors tell us to eat more fiber if we want to stay regular, but chronic constipation is much more to do with not eating enough vegetables and nuts.

Chronic constipation, characterized as little or no bowel movement for at least 12 weeks out of the previous 12 months, affects millions of people. But adding vegetables to your plate daily may be enough to prevent the problem.

Researchers from Mass General Brigham assessed the diets and bowel movements of around 96,000 middle-aged and older people who were following one of five diets: the Mediterranean diet, a plant-based diet, a low-carbohydrate diet, a standard Western diet and an inflammatory diet, which included processed and sugary foods and drinks.

No matter their fiber intake, those who consistently consumed a Western or inflammatory diet were more likely to develop chronic constipation, while those who ate higher amounts of veggies, nuts and healthy fats had a lower risk.

Gastroenterology, 2025; 169(7): 1475–1488



Walk for 15 minutes to improve your heart

It's not just about the number of steps you take each day—it's about how you take them. Walking continuously for 15 minutes is far better for your heart than shorter bursts of five minutes or less.

People who walk without a break for 15 minutes reduce their risk of heart disease by nearly 70 percent compared to those who walk for a shorter time.

And people who go on longer walks still enjoy the health benefits even if they don't reach the optimum 8,000 steps a day. They're far less likely to suffer a heart attack or stroke than someone who hits the daily steps target via more and shorter walks.

A research team from the University of Sydney tracked the walking habits of 33,560 people aged 40–79 who typically walked less than 8,000 steps a day over an eight-year span. About 4 percent of people who walked for 15 or more minutes at a time had a heart attack or stroke, while 13 percent of those who walked for just a few minutes at a time did.

Those who had been sedentary but started walking for 15+ minutes at a time saw the biggest benefits. They were less than half as likely to have heart disease as those who walked for five minutes or fewer each time.

Ann Intern Med, 2025; 178(12): 1718–1727





Why you need to eat more fish

Most of us don't eat enough fish—and as a result, we're low in vital omega-3 fatty acids, which help us to maintain a healthy cardiovascular system.

Fatty fish such as mackerel and salmon are excellent sources of the fatty acids. But if you're vegetarian or if these fish aren't a regular part of your diet, you need to start taking omega-3 supplements, say researchers from the University of East Anglia in the UK.

They reckon 76 percent of the world's population has levels of fatty acids that are far too low to maintain health and certainly fall well short of even the recommended daily intake, the bare minimum to prevent disease. Not getting enough omega-3 long-chain polyunsaturated fatty acids, specifically eicosapentaenoic and docosahexaenoic acids (EPA and DHA), could affect your health, and especially your heart. It's even more critical if you're pregnant.

But it's not only the cardiovascular system that benefits from fatty acids. Omega-3 fats support a healthy lifestyle throughout all stages of life—starting with reducing the chance of preterm birth and supporting visual and cognitive development in infants. They support healthy immune function and reduce the risk of depression and cognitive decline, including Alzheimer's.

Recommended daily amounts vary from country to country, but the most common recommendation is 250 mg per day of combined EPA and DHA and an additional 100–200 mg of DHA for pregnant women. Supplements made from the algae that fatty fish eat are available for those who prefer not to consume fish or fish oil.

Nutr Res Rev, 2025; 39: e6

Keto diet could help children overcome prenatal trauma

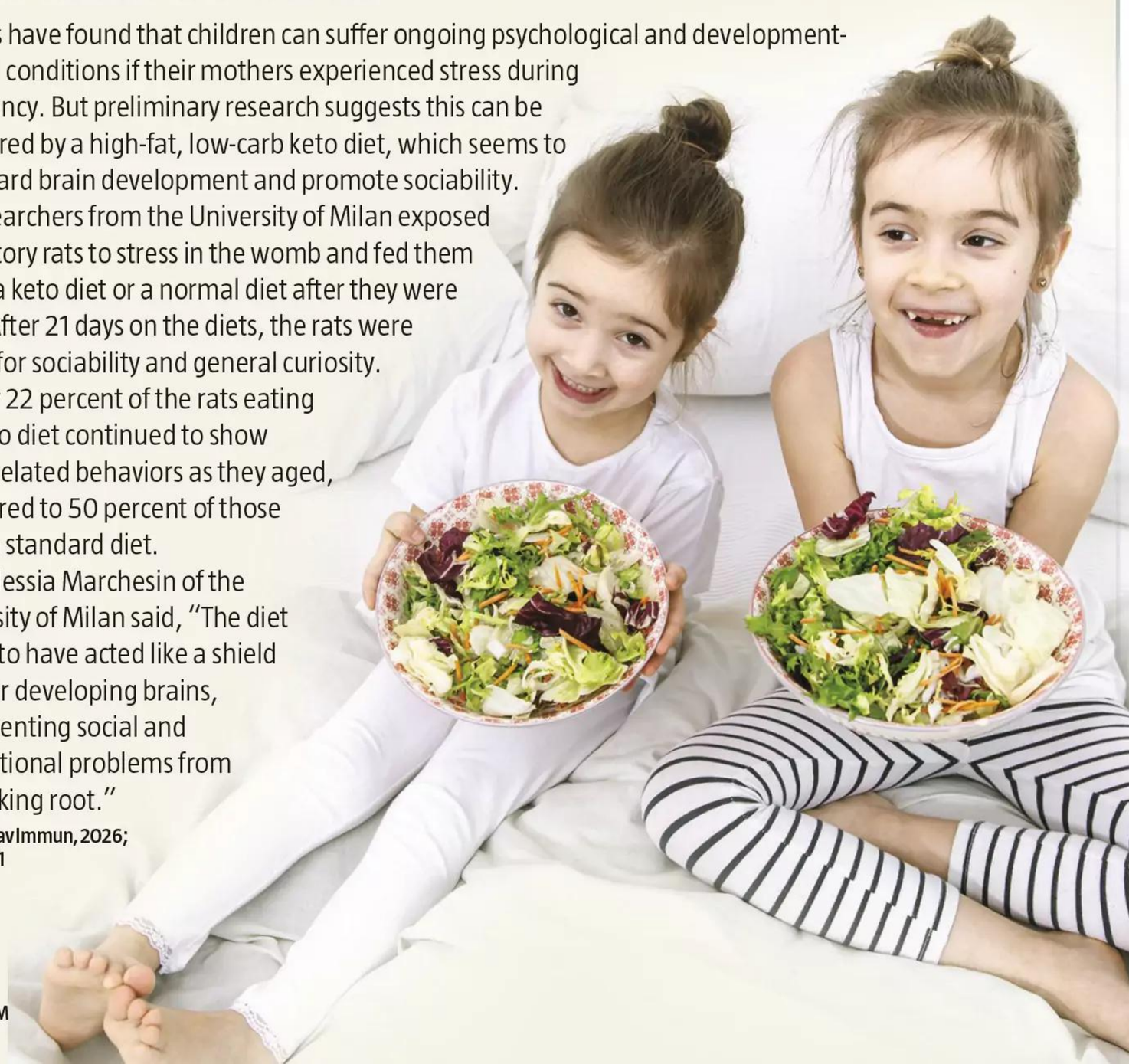
Studies have found that children can suffer ongoing psychological and development-related conditions if their mothers experienced stress during pregnancy. But preliminary research suggests this can be countered by a high-fat, low-carb keto diet, which seems to safeguard brain development and promote sociability.

Researchers from the University of Milan exposed laboratory rats to stress in the womb and fed them either a keto diet or a normal diet after they were born. After 21 days on the diets, the rats were tested for sociability and general curiosity.

Only 22 percent of the rats eating the keto diet continued to show stress-related behaviors as they aged, compared to 50 percent of those given a standard diet.

Dr Alessia Marchesin of the University of Milan said, "The diet seems to have acted like a shield for their developing brains, so preventing social and motivational problems from ever taking root."

Brain Behav Immun, 2026; 19: 106301





Is it safe to cook on a gas stove?

If you suffer from persistent fatigue or aching muscles, the culprit could be your gas stove, researchers say. The stoves release nitrogen dioxide (NO_2), which, as well as causing aches and fatigue, can be responsible for asthma, obstructive pulmonary disease, preterm birth, diabetes and lung cancer.

Cooking on a gas stove pushes NO_2 levels in the home way above safe thresholds, say researchers at Stanford University. And they stay high for several hours after the stove has been switched off.

The researchers monitored gas levels in 133 million residences. Although fumes from cars and trucks were the most common source of NO_2 gas, they identified 22 million Americans who were exposed to levels above safety thresholds just by cooking with a gas stove. Switching to an electric stove would halve a person's annual exposure to NO_2, they say.

However, critics note that the researchers are using data collected before higher efficiency standards were implemented, and NO_2 emissions are much lower now. They also point out that an extensive 2024 review published in *The Lancet* found no significant link between health issues and the use of gas stoves.

PNAS Nexus, 2025; 4(12); pgaf341
Lancet Respir Med, 2024; 12: 281–93



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The P-word for a healthy heart

Remember the P-word to keep your heart healthy. Polyphenols, plant compounds that are abundant in tea, coffee, berries, nuts, olive oil and whole grains, are essential for good cardiovascular system function, a major review has concluded.

People who eat a polyphenol-rich diet have a much lower risk of heart problems, and they have healthier blood pressure and cholesterol markers as well, say researchers from King's College London.

After tracking the health and diets of more than 3,100 people for an average of 11 years, they found that heart disease risk fell as polyphenol intake rose.

BMC Med, 2025; 23(1): 645

The powerful trio that can improve autism symptoms

Three nutrients can improve some of the symptoms of autism. They combine to boost signaling in the brain's synapses, which can result in better social behavior, say scientists at Academia Sinica in Taiwan.

In low doses, the three—zinc, serine and branched-chain amino acids (leucine, isoleucine and valine)—not only improve synaptic signaling but also reduce hyperactivity in the amygdala, which is common in autism.

But the nutrients didn't have such a big effect when they were taken individually. Only the synergistic interplay of all three made a difference, the researchers found when they tested the nutrients individually and in combination on groups of mice.

Meat, seafood, dairy and eggs are top sources of all three nutrients.

PLOS Biol, 2025; 23(12): e3003231



Wash your mouth out with garlic

If you use a mouthwash, you might want to switch to a garlic extract version. It's safer, has no chemicals and is just as effective as the market leader, chlorhexidine, which is branded as Corsodyl, Covonia, Dermol, Germolene and Savlon.

Chlorhexidine is a broad-spectrum antimicrobial and is one of the most common skin and mucous membrane antiseptic agents in use today. But it can have side effects and sometimes loses its effectiveness as microbes become resistant, say researchers from the University of Sharjah in the UAE.

There's the added advantage that garlic extract is available in health stores, while chlorhexidine usually requires a prescription.

J Herbal Med, 2025; 54: 101053

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Yes, TikTok is right—rosemary really can heal wounds

The use of rosemary to heal wounds has been trending on social media platforms for a while, and now scientists have demonstrated all those posts are not just promoting an urban myth. Rosemary serum really can speed wound healing, and best of all, it does so without leaving a scar.

Researchers at the University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine were intrigued by thousands of posts on TikTok and Instagram promoting the use of rosemary and its extract for skincare and wound healing. They decided to find out whether the claims could be verified by science.

They tested a cream made with carnosic acid, an antioxidant in rosemary, on laboratory mice and found it accelerated wound closure and helped regenerate structures such as hair follicles, oil glands and cartilage. The scientists also found the compound activated a skin nerve sensor known as TRPA1, which had previously been linked to the ability to heal without scars.

JCI Insight, 2025;10(23):e196267



Should you go vegan to lose weight?



The Mediterranean diet may be good for us—but going vegan is better if we want to lose weight, a new study claims.

The vegan focus on plant-based foods, such as whole grains, fruits, vegetables, nuts, seeds and legumes, helps shed the pounds more effectively than the Med diet, which includes animal proteins and fats. Even "unhealthy" plant foods, such as fruit juices, refined grains and potatoes, didn't slow weight loss in vegans, say researchers from the Physicians Committee for Responsible Medicine. In two studies, they found the vegan diet was a more effective way to lose weight, and they suspect meat is one of the main culprits that puts on the pounds.

However, they instructed the Med diet group to consume 50 g of olive oil daily and instructed the vegan group to lower fat as much as possible although olive oil is not animal-based. And while the researchers state that they adjusted the results to account for differences in energy intake, they don't show how they did so. This may mean those on the Med diet simply ate more calories, which could be why they lost fewer pounds than those on the vegan diet.

Front Nutr, 2025;12;1666807

Try hydrogen sulfide to clear nail infection

Suffering from a stubborn nail infection? As you've probably discovered, most remedies don't seem to work very well—but hydrogen sulfide just might.

Hydrogen sulfide remedies traditionally target gut problems, but researchers at the University of Bath reckon they could reverse persistent fungal or bacterial nail infections.

Most topical creams can't penetrate the nail, but hydrogen sulfide does so easily, and its powerful antimicrobial abilities kill a broad spectrum of pathogens, including fungal species that do not respond well to common antifungal medications.

Sci Rep, 2025;15(1):38241



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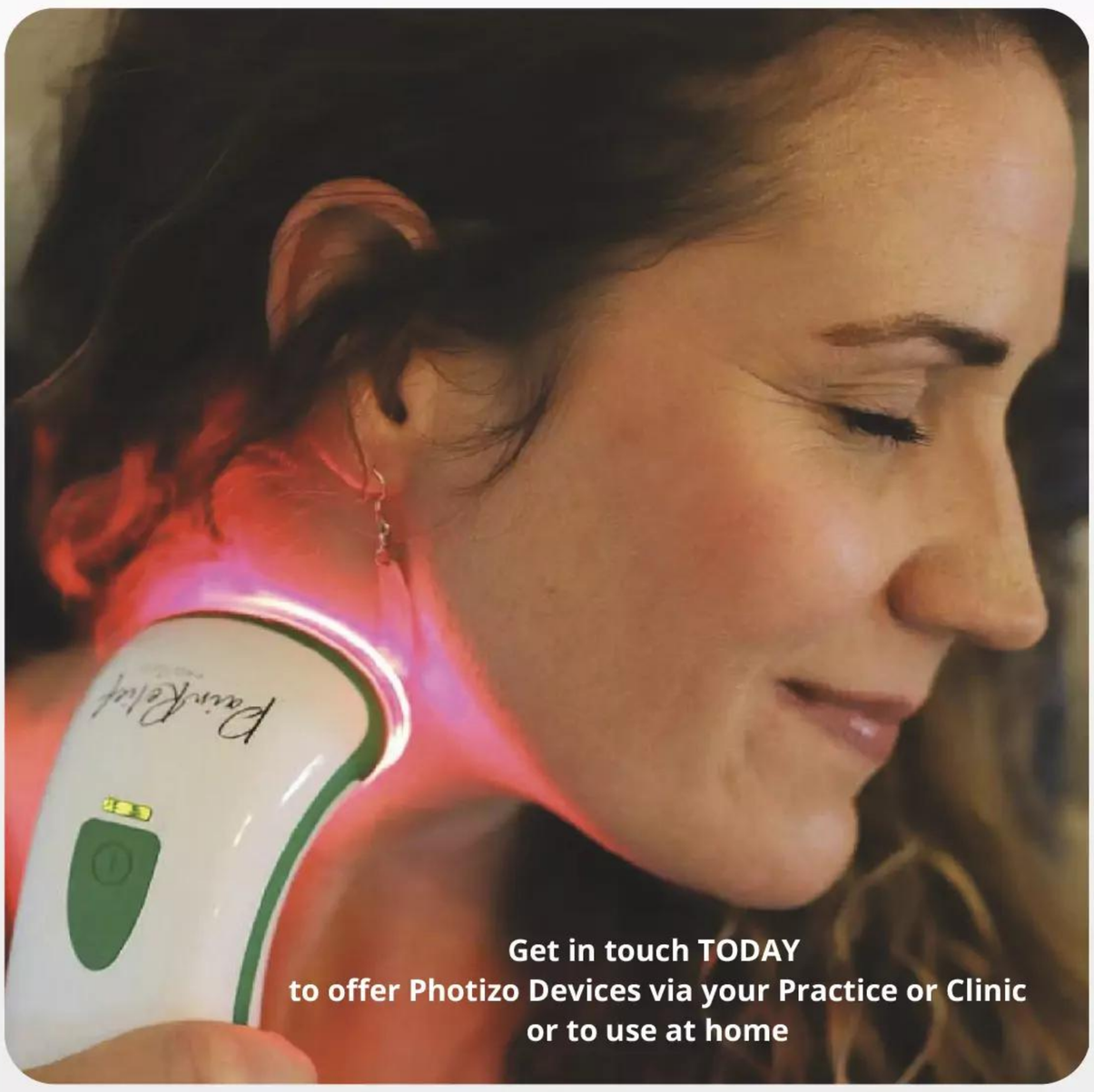
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Cocoa and fruits keep the heart healthy

We all sit around too much, and this sedentary lifestyle can affect our heart health—but there are things we can start eating and drinking to offset any damage. The key is upping consumption of flavanols, polyphenols that are good for the cardiovascular system—such as by drinking more cocoa and tea and eating more berries and nuts.

Researchers at the University of Birmingham tested the benefits of flavanols on 40 healthy young men; half were given a flavanol-rich cocoa drink, and the rest a low-flavanol one, and their hearts and blood flow levels were assessed after they had been sitting for two hours.

The fitness levels of the participants didn't matter; those who drank the low-flavanol drink showed a decline in artery health and blood flow along with an increase in blood pressure levels. This change didn't occur in those given the flavanol-rich drink.

If cocoa isn't your thing, high flavanol levels are also in fruits like apples, plums and berries as well as in nuts and black and green tea (but don't mix them with bananas; see page 19).

J Physiol, 2025; 604(1): 145–171



Exercise and omega-3s counter gum disease

Exercising and taking omega-3 supplements lands a one-two punch on periodontitis, the disease of the gums that can be the genesis of inflammation in the body, leading to diabetes, heart disease and even some cancers.

The combination controls bacterial growth, minimizes bone loss, balances the production of inflammatory molecules called cytokines and stimulates fibroblasts, the cells that repair and maintain tissues, say researchers from the State University of São Paulo in Brazil. They tested the protocol on rats and found exercise alone was helpful but adding omega-3s increased the effect.

Sci Rep, 2025; 15(1): 8760

How to supercharge your kale

Kale is one of the supreme health foods—but we can't absorb its nutrients until we add oil to the mix.

Oil or an oil-based dressing, such as mayonnaise, unlocks the vegetable's carotenoids, antioxidants that fight oxidative stress and protect our DNA. Their absorption in the body results in stronger immunity, improved vision, better cognitive function and a lower risk of illnesses such as diabetes, heart disease and some cancers.

It doesn't matter if we eat raw or cooked kale, but it's vital to sprinkle something with oil on top, say researchers from the University of Missouri-Columbia.

Food Nutr, 2025; 1(2): 100049

COVID-19 NEWS



The Covid vaccines likely killed more children than they saved

The Covid vaccines probably killed more children than they saved—and the deaths were unnecessary because the young were never at risk from the virus, one of America's leading health officials has admitted.

In a memo leaked to the press, the official said at least 10 children died as a direct response to the Covid vaccine after they developed myocarditis, allergic reactions and other acute cardiac conditions related to mRNA vaccines.

"This is a profound revelation. For the first time, the US FDA will acknowledge that Covid-19 vaccines have killed American children. Healthy young children who faced tremendously low risk of death were coerced, at the behest of the Biden administration, via school and work mandates, to receive a vaccine that could result in death," wrote Vinay Prasad, chief medical and scientific officer and director of the Center for Biologics Evaluation and Research at the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA), in a memo to staff.

The deaths happened because of failures in drug vigilance processes, and there was no data monitoring the effectiveness of Covid vaccination in young children, although health administrators knew the threat of the virus was "extremely low" in the age group.

"The team has performed an initial analysis of 96 deaths between 2021 and 2024, and concludes that no fewer than 10 are related. If anything, this represents conservative coding, where vaccines are exculpated rather than indicted in cases of ambiguity. The real number is higher," he said.

He calls for major changes to pharmacovigilance so that public confidence in vaccines can be restored.

Steve Usdin, "FDA's Vinay Prasad, in His Own Words," Dec 2, 2025, biocentury.com



Nattokinase dissolves blood clots from Covid vaccines

The enzyme nattokinase can dissolve the micro-clots in the blood of people who have had an mRNA vaccine—not only typical blood clots but also those resistant to the usual dissolving methods. At high doses, nattokinase makes a noticeable difference within two hours, a new study has found.

The clots have been seen in the blood of people suffering from long Covid and in almost everyone who has had an mRNA Covid vaccine. These tiny clots form into sticky webs, known as neutrophil extracellular traps (NETs), which can cause serious inflammatory and clotting problems, including severe infections, autoimmune diseases, cancer, diabetes and arthritis.

But researchers from the University of Liverpool have discovered that nattokinase, an enzyme produced by fermenting soybeans, dissolves the micro-clots in laboratory samples. It appeared to be most effective at high doses of 28 mcg/mL.

The results aren't so surprising. Nattokinase is known to improve heart health by dissolving blood clots, lowering blood pressure and preventing atherosclerosis, or hardening of the arteries.

Nattokinase is in natto, a traditional Japanese fermented soybean food, and is also available as a dietary supplement.

J Experimental Clin Appl Chinese Med, 2024; doi: 10.62767/jecacm504.6557

Fructose-sweetened drinks drive inflammation

Inflammation is the driver of many chronic health problems—and sugary drinks such as colas kick-start the process. The fructose in the drinks triggers inflammation by putting the immune system into overdrive and primes immune cells to overreact to bacterial toxins.

Paradoxically, this heightened vigilance makes us more susceptible to infection. This problem is more severe in people who already have metabolic disorders, which increase the risk of diabetes, heart disease and stroke.

A team of researchers from the University of Vienna tracked the behavior of monocytes, immune system cells, when they are exposed to fructose. This sugar is a component of both table sugar and corn syrup used in sugary drinks.

They discovered that the cells react more intensely to bacterial toxins after people consume fructose-sweetened drinks. Levels of receptors that recognize bacterial toxins rose, making the body more prone to inflammation.

These drinks aren't good for any of us, but people who have diabetes or fatty liver disease should especially avoid them, the researchers say.

Redox Biol, 2025; 85: 103729



Why you *shouldn't* add a banana to your smoothie



If you're adding a banana to your morning smoothie, stop. It blocks most of the heart-healthy flavanols in the other produce in your drink, such as berries, beets, cocoa and leafy greens.

When you pop a banana into the mix, up to 84 percent of flavanols don't get absorbed by the body, say researchers at the University of California, Davis.

Bananas contain large amounts of an enzyme called polyphenol oxidase (PPO) that breaks down flavanols. Flavanols are a type of polyphenol, bioactive compounds that improve heart and brain health, boost blood flow, support memory, and reduce inflammation.

PPO is present at varying levels in most fruit. It causes the browning that happens to apples after they've been cut open and bananas after they've been peeled.

The researchers made two different smoothies: one with fruits including banana and another that contained only mixed berries. They measured blood levels of flavanol metabolites in volunteers after giving them each of the two smoothies as well as after giving them a flavanol supplement.

The results were striking: The volunteers' flavanol metabolite levels were 84 percent lower after consuming the banana smoothie than after taking the supplement. But drinking the banana-free smoothie led to about the same flavanol metabolite levels as taking the supplement.

Food Funct, 2023; 14(18): 8217–8228

Does arginine prevent Alzheimer's?

Taking an arginine supplement every day could be a key to preventing Alzheimer's disease. The amino acid blocks the buildup of amyloid plaques in the brain, which appear to be linked to the disease in some way.

Arginine lowers plaque levels, reduces inflammation and improves behavior, say researchers at Kindai University in Japan. Exciting though the discovery is, the researchers have tested the supplement only on mice, and they can't be sure they would see the same positive effects in humans.

Arginine showed positive effects in test tube and animal studies, and it could be an inexpensive and safe antidote to a debilitating disease that affects millions of people, the researchers say.

Although the next phase will be studies of people, it makes sense to add an arginine supplement to your daily health regime, especially as drugs are failing to reverse, or even slow, the condition.

Although it's safe, arginine can cause diarrhea and digestion problems at high doses. As well as in supplements, arginine is also in meats such as turkey and chicken and in pumpkin seeds, peanuts, chickpeas and lentils.

Neurochem Int, 2025; 191: 106082



The brain needs fats

The human brain doesn't only need sugars to function—it also thrives on fats. Neurons can revive and energize quickly on a diet of saturated fats, and they aren't dependent solely on sugars, breakthrough research at the University of Helsinki has discovered.

Even more remarkably, when the brain's energy demand increases, neurons can produce their own fats by recycling components of their cells, a process that depends on a protein known as Ddhd2.

The researchers fed damaged neurons with fatty acid supplements and found the cells had regained their energy production and normal activity within 48 hours.

The discovery offers hope to sufferers of a rare brain disorder called hereditary spastic paraplegia 54. In these cases, the Ddhd2 protein fails to function properly, and neurons lose their ability to generate fats needed for energy and normal operation, leading to early and progressively worsening communication problems between nerve cells.

The discovery also throws into question the routine practice of offering all over-50s a cholesterol-lowering statin drug that reduces the fats reaching the brain.

Nat Metab, 2025; 7(10): 2117–2141

mRNA: There will be prizes, and fraud aplenty

The drug industry is set to earn trillions of dollars in new revenues from mRNA technology—and safety, and the truth, won't get in the way

Big Pharma has seen the future, and it's called mRNA. The technology—which was first rolled out on a global scale to counter the Covid-19 virus—will be used to develop new vaccines and to combat a range of diseases, including cancer.

It's been recognized by drug regulators as a new class of drug, and the rewards will be staggering, generating revenues that no other industry has ever achieved. Not that the drugs industry is struggling; globally it generates around $1.7 trillion every year, a phenomenal sum that has accelerated upward with the launch of weight-loss drugs.

But these figures will be dwarfed by the revenues that mRNA technology will attract. Oliver Watson, an infectious disease researcher at Imperial College London, has estimated that mRNA cancer vaccines alone could generate anything from $5 trillion upward, and with 11 versions producing promising results in early-stage trials, they could top $38 trillion over a few years.

To put that into perspective, the tax revenues collected by governments in the developed world total around $20 trillion a year.

Last summer's decision by the US Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to end around $500 billion of funding for 22 trials of mRNA technology will be merely a small bump in the road as other countries ramp up research programs. But HHS's reasons are salutary: In a statement it announced that, according to the data, "these vaccines fail to protect effectively against upper respiratory infections like Covid and flu."

The observation has been made by others, too. Critics have pointed out that mRNA vaccines aren't vaccines in the usual sense because they provide the instructions to produce parts of a virus within our own cells, whereas conventional vaccines expose the immune system to the whole virus. These "vaccines" also don't prevent infection or spread, which became apparent during the Covid pandemic.

mRNA cancer vaccines alone could top $38 trillion over a few years. To put that into perspective, tax revenues in the developed world total around $20 trillion a year

Safety last

But it's been the safety of mRNA that has raised the most concerns. The Health Service Executive, Ireland's health agency, has estimated one in every 10,000 people who get a Covid shot suffer a serious adverse reaction, including myocarditis and pericarditis. These two types of heart tissue inflammation have been reported mostly in young men.[1]

There have also been cases of thrombosis, heart attack and stroke, and arrythmia (irregular heartbeat), which could be the results of strange microclots that have been detected in the blood after vaccination.[2] The clots form into sticky webs known as neutrophil extracellular traps (NETs; see page 18) and have also been noted by pathologists during autopsies of people who died following a Covid infection.

Excess NET formation can cause serious—and even fatal—inflammatory and clotting problems, including severe infections, autoimmune diseases, cancer, diabetes and arthritis. A cluster of microclots can also block tiny blood vessels and reduce oxygen flow, researchers from Stellenbosch University in South Africa have noted.[3]

Overall, it appears the mRNA technology used in drugs can cause "a myriad of cellular and molecular problems," and the full consequences of that manipulation are being underestimated, said Karina Whitehouse at the Autonomous University of Querétaro in Mexico.[4]

Hide the facts

But with such glittering prizes within reach, drug companies have been committing obfuscation and even fraud in their research to get their mRNA offerings over the line. Inconvenient data has gone missing, deaths have gone unreported and whole cohorts

What's mRNA?

Messenger ribonucleic acid (mRNA) is a molecule that carries genetic instructions from DNA in a cell's nucleus to the ribosomes, cellular factories that are made up of RNA (a molecule that copies DNA) and proteins. Lab-created mRNA is clever stuff that's been developed since the 1960s.

"Vaccines" based on mRNA provide the transcripts for our cells to make viral proteins that trigger the immune system to fight anything from viruses to flu and cancer. For example, the Covid mRNA vaccines instructed our cells to make the Covid spike protein.

But it's been a rocky road. Delivering the instructions to the cells has been a hurdle, and preserving the message long enough for the ribosomes to respond has been another problem. The first mRNA vaccines were rolled out in 2015 to counter an Ebola outbreak in Africa. However, mRNA vaccines to counter cancer have been in development for much longer—since the 1990s.

Although the Covid-19 pandemic was the first opportunity to roll out the technology en masse, the vaccines only ever had restricted authorization. Nonetheless, the pioneers, biochemist Katalin Kariko and physician Drew Weissman, were awarded the 2023 Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine for their efforts.



Not in front of the children

The Covid vaccines probably killed more children than they saved—and the deaths were unnecessary because the young were never at risk from the virus, one of America's leading health officials has admitted (see page 18).

In a memo leaked to the press, the official said that at least 10 children are known to have died as a direct response to the Covid vaccine after they developed myocarditis, anaphylaxis and other acute cardiac conditions related to mRNA vaccines.

"This is a profound revelation. For the first time, the US FDA will acknowledge that Covid-19 vaccines have killed American children. Healthy young children who faced tremendously low risk of death were coerced, at the behest of the Biden administration, via school and work mandates, to receive a vaccine that could result in death," said Vinay Prasad, chief medical and scientific officer and director of the Center for Biologics Evaluation and Research at the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), in a memo to staff.

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Steve Usdin, "FDA's Vinay Prasad, in His Own Words," Dec 2, 2025, biocentury.com

who didn't respond to the vaccine or unfortunately died have disappeared.

The most egregious example happened last autumn when Pfizer published data from mRNA flu jab trials in phase 3—the stage before full approval—and gave itself a gold star. In the study, published in the *New England Journal of Medicine*, the Pfizer researchers tested their mRNA offering on around 18,000 healthy adults aged 18–64, half of whom were given the conventional flu shot.

They reported that the mRNA jab delivered "statistically superior efficacy" compared to the seasonal flu shot and demonstrated an "acceptable safety profile." Yes, 16 participants in the published study died during the trial, but their deaths were nothing to do with either vaccine, the researchers said.[5]

The whole study—its analysis, conclusions and structure—was dismantled by scientists and other research analysts within days after its publication.

The first red flag was the age groups selected for the study: The over-65s, the group most affected by flu, had been omitted. But they were in the official data that Pfizer delivered to the US National Library of Medicine's Clinical Trials database, and they represented more than 60 percent of the group given Pfizer's mRNA flu jab, as would be expected for any flu shot.[6]

Here come the old

With the over-65s back in the frame, the results changed, and the supposed safety of the jab, seen in younger people, disappeared. Healthy older participants—free of any acute or chronic disease—who had the mRNA jab were at greater risk of serious adverse reactions, including kidney failure and acute respiratory problems.

Compared to those who had the seasonal jab, those given the mRNA version had a 7 percent greater risk of death, and almost twice as many suffered non-serious adverse reactions. The mRNA group also had a 185 percent greater risk of acute respiratory failure that could be fatal. Overall, 49 of the older people given the mRNA shot died, compared to 46 who had the seasonal jab.

The mRNA jab not only had a higher risk profile but was also less effective: Those who received it were around 6 percent more likely to get the flu.

The manufacturers aren't the only ones keeping deaths from mRNA jabs under wraps. They are aided by our health guardians. The UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) has refused to publish the number of deaths and has released the data privately only to the vaccine manufacturers.

In a letter responding to the pressure group UsForThem, the UKHSA said that publishing the data "could lead to misinformation" that would "have an adverse impact on vaccine uptake" by the public. It also said that publishing the data risked damaging the well-being and mental health of the families and friends of people who died. The Information Commissioner, which oversees freedom-of-information requests, has also ruled in the UKHSA's favor, backing its refusal to publish the data.[7]

But when there's the chance to make astonishing sums that have never been seen before, the truth—and the safety of the public—take a back seat.

Bryan Hubbard

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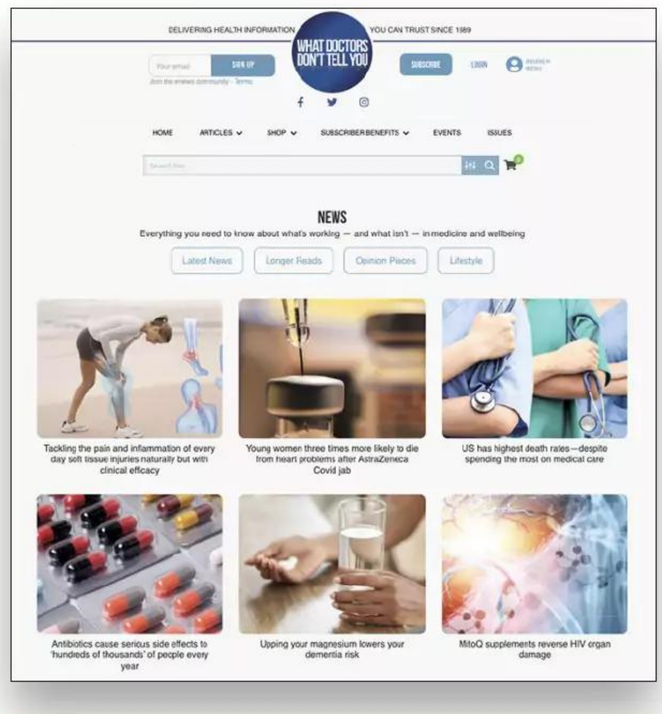
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Let real food be your medicine

Who knew? Saturated fats don't cause heart disease; in fact, they're front and center in the US government's new food pyramid, which also emphasizes fresh fruits and vegetables over processed food

Here's a novel thought: Eat real food. Yup, not processed, sugary plastic foods, but the real thing. It's the founding philosophy of the new food pyramid in the US, which is designed to guide Americans toward a healthier diet.

Its latest iteration—under the auspices of US Health Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr and the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA)—is a big departure from the previous version, which was published nearly 15 years ago. For one, it's now an inverted pyramid with the point at the bottom; for another, grains are no longer the staple of the healthy diet but are now a food group to eat in strict moderation.

The emphasis is on fresh vegetables and fruits and saturated fats, which have come in out of the dietary cold. It's a big change and a tacit acceptance that fats don't cause cardiovascular disease, which is a blow to the low-fat foods industry. Full-fat dairy is back in the frame.

Protein, dairy, healthy fats and produce are the largest categories, and the recommended protein intake has increased to 1.2–1.6 grams per kilogram (0.54–0.73 g/lb) of body weight per day, up from the previous minimum of 0.8 g/kg (0.36 g/lb).

Although saturated fats are now a feature of the healthy diet, they should still represent no more than 10 percent of your daily calories, and the guidelines suggest these healthy fats should come from naturally occurring whole-food sources, such as avocado and butter.

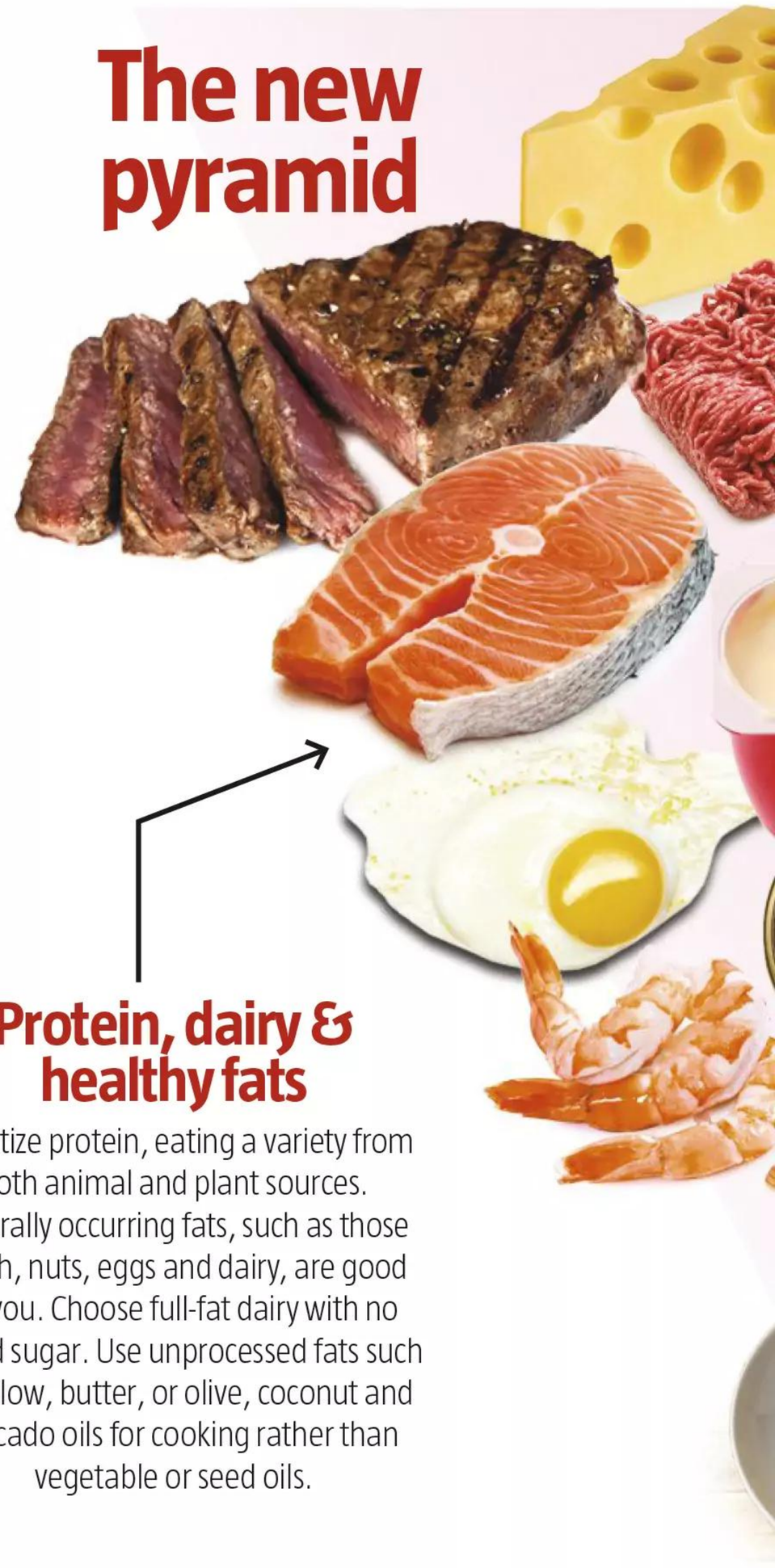
Kennedy described the guidelines as the most significant reset of nutrition policy in history, calling for an end to long-held policies promoting highly refined foods that are harmful to health.

But not everyone is so impressed. Unsurprisingly, organizations like the American Heart Association and the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics oppose the new recommendations and maintain that saturated fats are linked to heart disease.

Christopher Gardner, a nutritionist at Stanford University, commented, "I'm very disappointed in the new pyramid that features red meat and saturated fat sources at the very top, as if that's something to prioritize. It does go against decades and decades of evidence and research."

The data doesn't support their views. As Kennedy pointed out when introducing the new pyramid (available at realfood.gov), nearly 90 percent of healthcare spending goes toward treating chronic disease, much of it linked to diet and lifestyle. More than 70 percent of American adults are overweight or obese, and nearly one in three adolescents has prediabetes.

The new policy shifts the healthcare emphasis from pharmaceuticals to healthy foods, says Kennedy. Let food be your medicine—now, that's a new thought.





Vegetables & fruits

Eat a colorful variety every day—for most people, three servings of veggies and two of fruit is good. Eat them whole, either raw or cooked. They can be frozen, dried or canned, but avoid any with more than a little sugar or with additives. And go easy on juices, which leave out beneficial fiber and pack a powerful sugar punch.

Whole grains

If you eat grains, choose whole grains and avoid refined, processed grain products such as white bread and flour tortillas. Aim for no more than four servings a day (in stark contrast to the previous USDA recommendation of six to 11 servings a day).

Hydrate

Keep alcohol consumption low and avoid sugary drinks. Still or sparkling water is your body's best friend, and unsweetened drinks like green tea are good, too.



Doing all the right things but still have aches and pains? Certain compounds in some vegetables and other plant foods could be the culprit. Celeste McGovern reports

Too much of a good thing?

As far back as she can remember, Sally Norton was health-conscious. She adopted a vegetarian lifestyle as she entered college, and eight years later, she turned to a full-on vegan diet, which lasted another eight years. In seventh grade, she decided to pursue the field of nutrition, and in the '80s she studied at Cornell University, where plant-based nutrition was becoming accepted by some professors and many fellow students.

Norton was all-in. "We were proudly avoiding salt, fat and meat, gorging on bagels, salads and dishes scored by others as 'veggie glop,'" she says.

But for someone shopping only the fresh food aisles, Norton wasn't feeling like the model of plant-based health. She had joint and muscle pain, fatigue, and eventually bloat, irritable bowel and a debilitating sleep disorder.

When she was just 20 years old, a doctor told her that the pain in her big toe was the result of gout—an excruciating condition commonly tied to red meat and alcohol consumption in which urate crystals accumulate in the joints. Very strange for a young vegetarian.

After a bout of inexplicable genital pain and burning, she stumbled on the Vulvar Pain Foundation (thevpfoundation.org). The group links connective tissue syndrome including genital (vulvar) pain, interstitial cystitis, fibromyalgia, irritable bowel and sensitive skin to high oxalate consumption. It has helped thousands of women as well as men with scrotal pain to recover using a low-oxalate diet.

Oxalates are organic compounds in various plants that help to ward off pests and manage minerals. When these foods are eaten raw and in



too high amounts, they can cause problems in susceptible individuals.

However, without understanding the global effects of oxalate, it took Norton over three years to get serious about sticking to a low-oxalate diet. Finally, just before she turned 50, her health transformation really began. She removed the last vestiges of high-oxalate foods from her diet—a daily kiwi and modest portions of sweet potato several times a week.

Within days, her sleep and joint pain improved dramatically. Before making the change, she says, "I could barely stand barefoot at the kitchen sink." But afterward she found herself at a nephew's wedding, running across parking lots and down stairs in heels, standing about for hours and posing for pictures—all pain-free. This scenario would have been unimaginable before.

Norton threw herself into researching oxalates after her own experiment. The information her search revealed led to her book *Toxic Superfoods* (Rodale Books, 2023).

A troubling history

Norton's deep dive into oxalates at the university medical library uncovered a forgotten history. Long before green smoothies and almond flour baking, foods rich in oxalates were recognized as a chemical hazard, not as health foods.

In the late 1700s and early 1800s, oxalic acid was widely used in industry under names like "salts of sorrel," "liquid blue" and "essential salts of lemon." Textile workers used it for bleaching, engravers used it for etching and households kept it as a cleaning powder. Its usefulness stemmed from its strong ability to bind minerals—the same property that makes it dangerous.

Medical case reports from the early 19th century documented accidental and intentional poisonings, describing symptoms ranging from burning pain to kidney failure. By 1846, physicians were already writing about oxalates' neurotoxic effects.

They linked the antinutrients (see box, page 33) to fatigue, skin disorders, bladder pain, arthritis and personality changes. One early author noted that high oxalate exposure resulted in a constellation of problems "in the nerves, bones and viscera."

Where did this understanding of oxalates as potentially fatal poisons go? It certainly wasn't integrated into nutritional science; Norton had only learned of them in terms of kidney stone risk while studying for her nutrition degree and her master's degree in public health.

Healthy eating "blasphemy"

In our world of health gurus and public health dictates that offer conflicting advice on everything from coffee and dairy to fat and meat consumption, the only common denominator seems to be "Eat your greens." And lots of them.

"Blaming produce and nuts for health problems sounds like blasphemy," says Norton.

But considering how many people are suffering today with chronic maladies that they just can't figure out, maybe it's time to question a dogma that says all plants are good for all people at all times. Obesity, diabetes, arthritis, fatigue disorders, neuropathies, thyroid issues, digestive syndromes, urinary problems, mood disorders and autoimmune conditions have all soared in the decades since low-fat, plant-heavy guidelines took center stage.

The potential for harm from oxalate is absent in the messaging from public health and the wellness industry, which both stress minimizing animal proteins in favor of plant-heavy, low-fat eating. They often give tips like these:

- Swap dairy butter for almond butter.
- Replace dairy milk with almond milk.
- Load up on dark, leafy greens like spinach.
- Snack on dark chocolate.

For people taking this health advice to heart, oxalates can stack up fast:

- A cup and a half of raw spinach carries 450 mg of oxalates.
- A single handful of almonds can contain nearly 130 mg of oxalates.
- A green smoothie can easily exceed 1,000 mg in one sitting—giving you quadruple the daily upper limit from breakfast alone.

That's not to say oxalates are responsible for all modern illness. But the possibility that they're contributing quietly hasn't been part of the public conversation, and maybe it should.

No matter how celebrated their superfood status, high-oxalate plants may be quietly wreaking havoc on some people's health at the cellular level.

The potential harm from oxalate is absent in the messaging from public health and the wellness industry, which both stress minimizing animal proteins in favor of plant-heavy, low-fat eating

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Kidney troubles

Modern medicine hasn't entirely forgotten oxalates. They're recognized almost exclusively within nephrology, the branch of medicine that deals with kidney health.

Here, the relationship is unmistakable: Roughly 80 percent of kidney stones are composed of calcium oxalate. Studies clearly link high urinary oxalate excretion to chronic kidney disease progression and end-stage kidney disease.[1]

Kidney stones are on the rise, too. Affecting around one in every 11 Americans and about one in 10 people in the UK, they've achieved notoriety as a significant public health issue.[2]

Patients like Australian actor Liam Hemsworth are too often not warned that high-oxalate foods (see box, page 30) can trigger stones because exceeding 150–200 mg of daily oxalate intake can overburden the kidneys. Hemsworth famously had to undergo surgery to remove kidney stones after consuming a spinach-and-almond smoothie every morning during his four-year stint as a vegan.

Case reports in the medical literature also describe oxalates causing serious kidney damage. One 65-year-old woman who completed a 10-day green-smoothie cleanse using oxalate-rich vegetables and fruit became dialysis-dependent after her kidneys failed due to oxalate damage.[3]

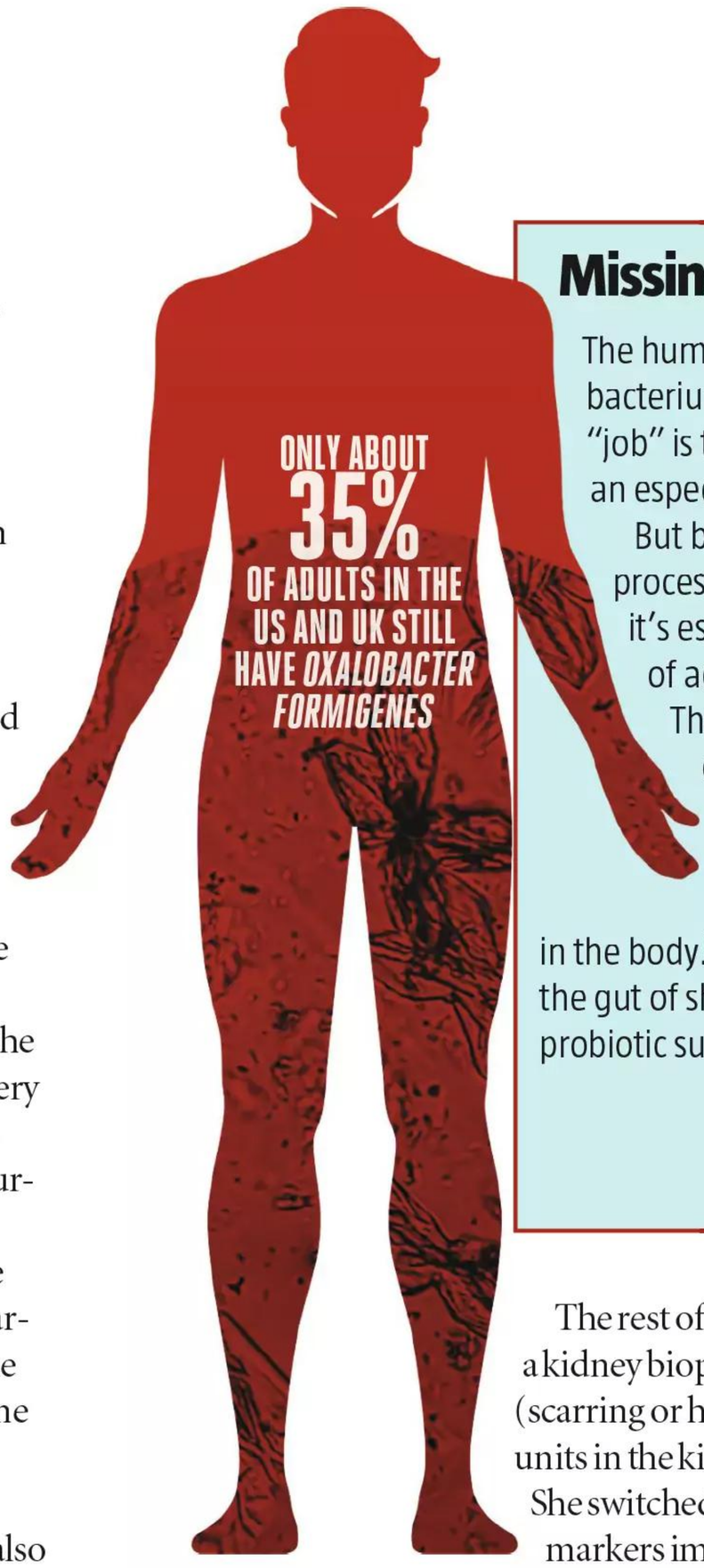
In another case, the Mayo Clinic reported a man, also attempting to lose weight, whose daily juicing of celery, carrots, parsley, beets with their greens, and spinach led to serious kidney damage. He stopped juicing and started dialysis plus a low-oxalate diet, and about four months later his kidney function began improving.[4]

Another paper describes three children who presented with pain on urination and cramps in their lower back, while two of them occasionally had blood in their urine. One girl, just 10 years old, had already had surgery to remove kidney stones a year earlier. All three children had been switched onto dairy-free diets and were drinking about four glasses of almond milk each day and consuming almond yogurt and butter.

Almonds are naturally extremely high in oxalates, and almond milk is low in phosphorous compared to dairy milk, so there's little to buffer the excess oxalates. The researchers speculated that homemade almond milk might cause even more problems than dairy because it has much higher oxalate and lower calcium.[5]

One 59-year-old woman with no history of urinary stones or use of nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) to explain it had an elevated creatinine blood test, indicating kidney damage. Her diet included 6 tablespoons of chia seeds and five handfuls of almonds daily, following the "Virgin diet" to manage irritable bowel symptoms.

Roughly 80 percent of kidney stones are composed of calcium oxalate . . . kidney stones are on the rise, affecting around one in every 11 Americans and about one in 10 people in the UK



Missing microbes

The human gut is equipped with a special bacterium called *Oxalobacter formigenes* whose "job" is to break down oxalates in the colon—an especially useful function for a microbe.

But because of rampant antibiotic use, processed diets and high-oxalate eating itself, it's estimated that only about 35 percent of adults in the US and UK still have it.[1]

That means more than half of us can't efficiently break down oxalates the way we're meant to.

Studies show that supplementing with *O. formigenes* reduces oxalates in the body.[2] The bacterium has been isolated from the gut of sheep, but it's not yet widely available in probiotic supplements.

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The rest of her blood tests were normal. It was only a kidney biopsy that showed glomerulosclerosis (scarring or hardening of the microscopic filtering units in the kidneys) and calcium oxalate deposits.

She switched to a low-oxalate diet, and soon her lab markers improved.

"An earlier dietary history could have raised concern for oxalosis prior to renal biopsy," doctors at the Cleveland Clinic and George Washington University School of Medicine concluded. "Providers should be trained to identify at-risk patients and provide appropriate dietary counseling."[6]

The trouble with testing

How do we know if we have high oxalates? The most common way clinicians look for oxalate problems is by measuring how much oxalate is excreted in the urine, usually with a 24-hour urine collection. Sometimes this standard medical test doesn't reveal elevated oxalates because it can be taken at the wrong time, says Norton. Studies have shown a 24-hour collection can miss transient spikes in urinary oxalate that may be crucial for crystal formation and stone growth. So a "normal" result doesn't always rule out heavy oxalate turnover at other times of the day.

In other words, oxalate excretion isn't constant. It fluctuates based on what you eat, when you eat it, how well your gut is absorbing nutrients and individual metabolic factors, so one snapshot can miss important surges.

As well, oxalates stored in tissues sometimes get released in bursts—a phenomenon known as "oxalate dumping"—that aren't captured by the timing of routine testing. When stored oxalates

Where to begin

A simple experiment often tells you more than any test: Reduce your consumption of high-oxalate foods and observe what happens in your body.

Sally Norton insists, "You're not trying to cut oxalates to zero. That's impossible." The goal is to limit the huge or repeated loads that overwhelm the system.

Keeping in mind kidney specialists' suggested range of 150–200 mg of oxalate per day, below is a list of the top 10 high-oxalate "health" foods to keep an eye on.



Spinach

Number one because 1½ cups (raw) contain 450 mg



Beet greens or red-stemmed chard

1½ cups (raw) contain 380 mg



Chia seeds

¼ cup in your morning chia pudding contains 260 mg



Sweet potatoes

½ cup baked sweet potato without the skin contains 120 mg



Soy

3 oz of tofu contain 235 mg, and 1 cup of soymilk will give you 336 mg



Rhubarb

½ cup (cooked) contains 370 mg



Buckwheat

1 cup (cooked) contains 230 mg



Raisin Bran or Bran Flakes cereal

1 cup contains 60 mg



Cocoa

The darker and more concentrated, the higher the oxalate—just 1.75 oz of 70 percent dark chocolate contains 110 mg, and the same amount of 85 percent dark chocolate contains 140 mg

Almonds

Just 24 nuts (28 g) or the same amount of almond butter or almond flour contains 120 mg



Simple swaps

Rather than aiming to cut all oxalate-rich foods from your diet, start by removing the biggest daily sources (for many people, spinach and almonds). Swap rather than subtract. Here are a few common replacements:

Spinach → arugula, romaine, iceberg, bok choy, kale, collards, mustard greens

Almond milk → dairy, coconut milk

Almond flour → coconut flour, rice flour, potato starch

Sweet potatoes → squash, pumpkin

Chia → flaxseed (moderate), gelatin, psyllium

Quinoa → millet

When you do eat oxalate-containing foods, pair them with calcium-rich foods, which can bind the oxalate in the gut for a swift exit. This also lowers your calcium absorption, so be sure to eat more calcium-rich foods, too.

You can also supplement with magnesium citrate, which binds with oxalates.

Another tip is to soak and cook high-oxalate foods rather than eating them raw. Soaking allows some of the soluble oxalates to leach into the water, and boiling further reduces their content, research shows. For best results, discard the soaking or cooking water and rinse the food before eating.

mobilize outside the collection window, the urine test can come back reassuringly normal.

This can happen even when the body is under significant oxalate stress. A normal result makes it easy for doctors to miss the problem unless they take a detailed dietary history and consider symptoms alongside lab results.[7]

This is a blind spot with consequences, says Norton. People with oxalate overload are often told that nothing is wrong, that their pain or fatigue is "normal" or that their labs are reassuring, while their underlying oxalate pileup compounds. Non-kidney doctors, including general practitioners, endocrinologists, gastroenterologists and rheumatologists, see oxalate-related symptoms in their patients without knowing it.

Not just a kidney problem

The historical focus on the kidneys in oxalate-related medical testing and research is part of the reason oxalate problems are so often missed. Imaging is relatively good at catching stones when they form or kidney dysfunction once it's advanced, which has reinforced the assumption that oxalates are just a kidney problem.

Experimental studies show oxalate can trigger oxidative stress, mitochondrial dysfunction and inflammatory signaling in cells beyond the kidneys—mechanisms that could affect the nerves, connective tissue, bladder lining and gut lining. Yet because these effects tend to be scattered, slower to develop and harder to image than kidney stones, they fall outside mainstream medicine's diagnostic framework.

Nephrology "owns" oxalate because stones are visible and acute. Everything else—fatigue, tendon pain, bladder irritation, neurological symptoms—gets routed into other specialties, where oxalates are rarely considered as a cause. The result is the potentially widespread problem of silent, slowly accruing damage.

"You can have absolutely no symptoms and be filling your body with oxalates," says Norton.

Medicine already knows oxalates can deposit far beyond the kidneys—it just tends to acknowledge this only rarely. In primary hyperoxaluria, a genetic condition in which the body massively overproduces oxalate, researchers have long documented systemic oxalosis: the accumulation of calcium oxalate crystals not only in the kidneys but in the bones, joints, skin, blood vessels, heart tissue, retina, nerves and endocrine glands. In this condition, oxalates become embedded in bone marrow, connective tissue, heart muscle and blood vessels, sometimes years before kidney failure becomes obvious.[8]

This research establishes a critical biological fact: When oxalate levels rise high enough, the body doesn't confine damage to the urinary tract. The kidneys are simply the most obvious place to see it.

There's also compelling evidence that oxalates affect other tissues. Case reports in the medical literature have found calcium oxalate crystals in joint fluid associated with inflammatory arthritis, suggesting its role in unexplained musculoskeletal pain.[9]

Crystal-clear results

More compelling than the studies are the hundreds of testimonials of people who experience relief—not just from kidney stones but from a wide range of chronic conditions—when they try reducing oxalate-heavy foods in their diet.

Arielle Ford, 73, a writer and spiritual teacher known for her best-selling books on relationships and personal growth, struggled for years with inexplicable on-and-off bowel issues. For months she had growing concerns about frequent bouts of diarrhea even though she ate mindfully—lots of almonds and sweet potatoes were on the menu, along with leafy greens in smoothies and a popular protein powder.

She happened on Sally Norton's book and was surprised to learn about oxalates. But "it all made sense," she says. "Everything I believed was good for me was actually hurting me." She started cutting her daily doses of oxalates, particularly from protein powder, sweet potatoes and the one that surprised her: dark chocolate.

"Within two days I started to notice a difference," says Ford. The diarrhea stopped almost immediately. Overall, she says, reducing her oxalate consumption has been "life-changing."

Hanna, a lifelong vegetarian in her 20s, had suffered kidney stones since childhood along with tendon pain, sleep troubles, urinary tract infections and grinding fatigue. Doctors found no clear cause.

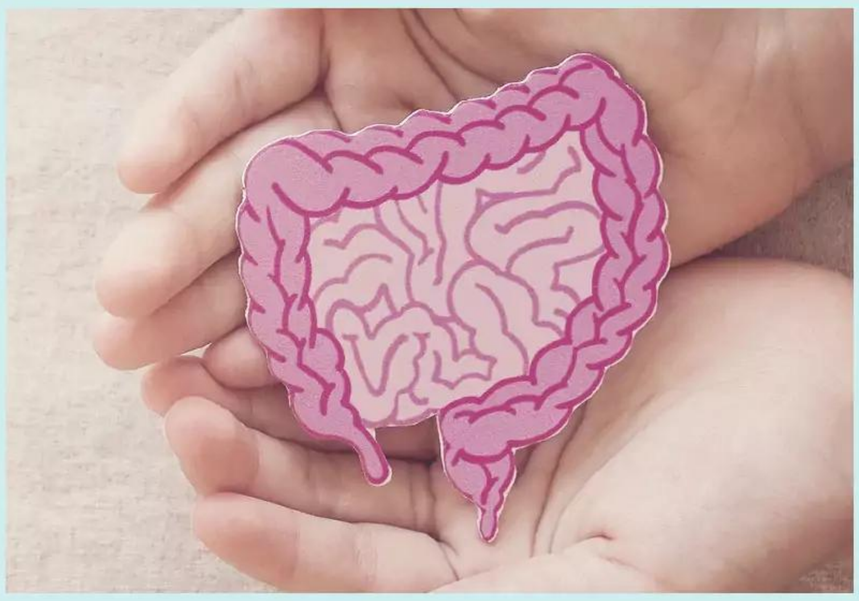
After attending a free workshop by Sally Norton, she reduced high-oxalate foods, and her nighttime "brain twitching" stopped. Her bladder calmed. Her energy returned. She slept through the night for the first time in years.

Leaky gut

Anything that irritates the gut lining increases absorption of oxalates into the circulatory system, where they can distribute anywhere, settle in and cause inflammation. These are some examples:

- Nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs, such as ibuprofen and aspirin)
- Irritable bowel syndrome, Crohn's disease, small-intestinal bacterial overgrowth (SIBO) or ongoing bloating
- Post-antibiotic imbalance
- High-fiber diets rich in bran or seeds
- Food sensitivities

NSAIDs alone can set up a perfect storm, says Norton. "Over a third of NSAID users have intestinal ulcerations, risking hyperabsorption of oxalate." Research shows they can cause gut permeability in as little as 12 hours.



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Debra, in her 50s, endured 13 years of debilitating fecal incontinence (as many as 10 episodes a day) plus nausea, back pain and exhaustion. She had tried every elimination diet. Nothing worked. Her bowel function normalized after just three days on a low-oxalate diet.

Do you have high oxalate levels?

Oxalate issues don't announce themselves with a single telltale sign. They reveal themselves through patterns—in symptoms, in your diet and in how your body responds when you identify the offending foods and remove them.

Many people who benefit from lowering oxalates never have kidney stones or suggestive lab results. The first step is simply paying attention.

Do you eat a diet heavy in spinach, almond products, sweet potatoes, beets, Swiss chard, quinoa, chia seeds, cacao, turmeric, or green smoothies or juices? Do you also struggle with unexplained fatigue, joint or tendon pain, digestive problems, bladder irritation, sleep disturbances or brain fog? Then oxalates deserve a closer look, especially if those symptoms began or worsened after you started eating a "healthier" diet.

Lowering oxalate intake isn't about rejecting green food, eliminating vegetables or chasing another dietary trend. It's about listening to your body and allowing for differences: What seems to be tolerated by one person may eventually overwhelm another.

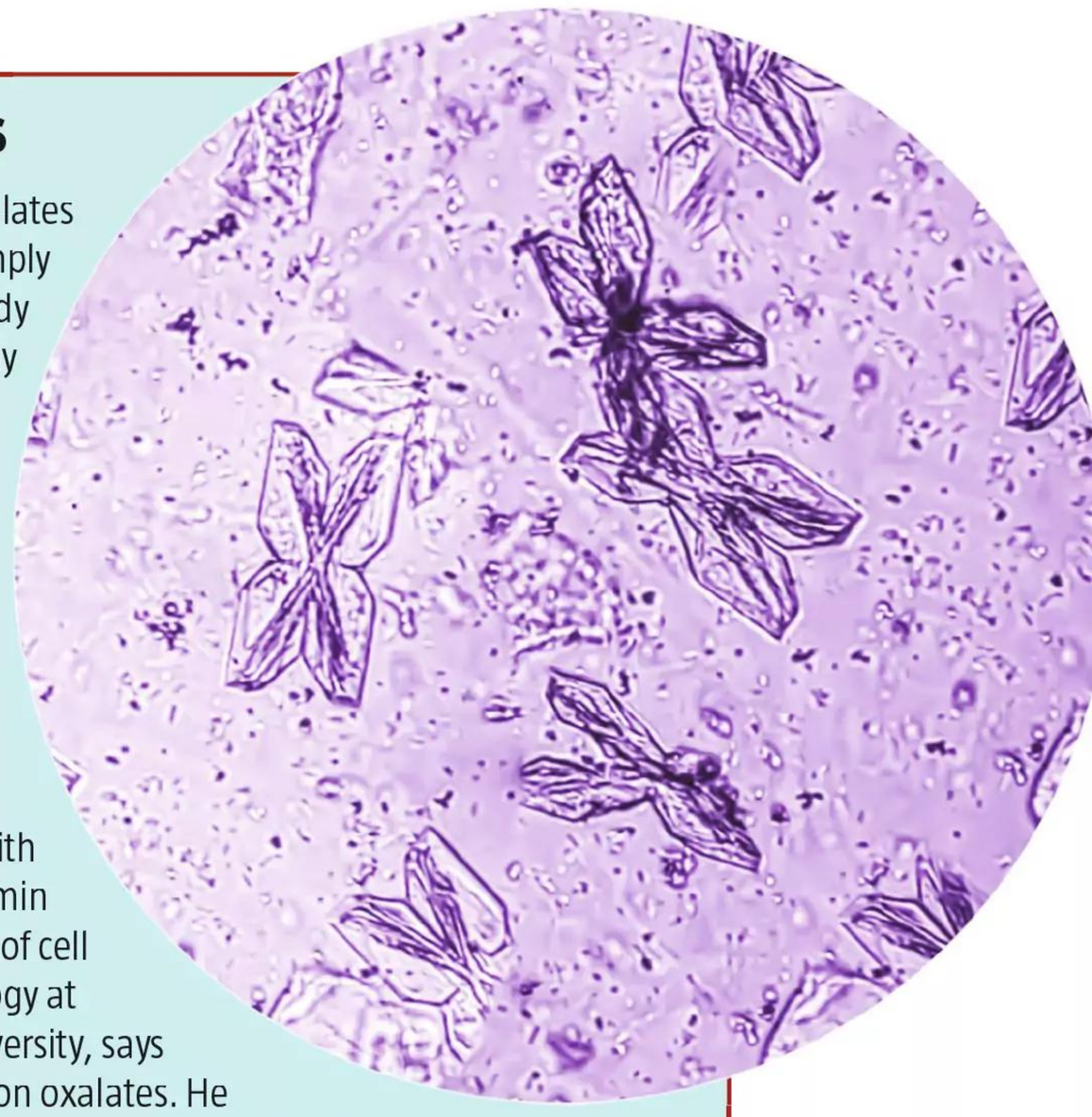
"If something you're eating every day is making you feel worse," Norton points out, "then that's important information."

A low-oxalate diet is not a prescription or a promise. It's an invitation to experiment and to give your body the chance to show you how it feels when the load has been lightened. Sometimes feeling better doesn't require adding the next superfood. Sometimes it begins with taking one quietly irritating ingredient off the plate.

"All hell broke out when I started juicing almost two years ago," Val.Kyrie, a commenter on YouTube, noticed. "Have been trying to heal my gut and now joint pain ever since."

"For several years I saw countless urologists for this horrible burning bladder I had," remarked talk2deb. "No infections ever. They had no answers. It turns out the green smoothies (spinach) and drinking almond milk was the cause. I stopped all that and began living again."

As with everything, the poison is in the dose. Oxalate-rich vegetables are best cooked rather than eaten raw, and it's wise to moderate your intake of high-oxalate nuts and fruits. Taking a magnesium citrate supplement with your food can also help, as it binds to oxalates, making them more soluble and reducing the risk of forming hard kidney stones.



Antinutrients

The trouble with oxalates is that they don't simply pass through the body like fiber. They readily bind to minerals—including calcium (most common), magnesium and iron—to form jagged and insoluble oxalate crystals.

"Calcium oxalate does not play nice with the body," Dr Benjamin Bikman, a professor of cell biology and physiology at Brigham Young University, says in his online lecture on oxalates. He compares the crystals to "tumbleweeds with thorns rolling through the intestines" on their way to be excreted, potentially scratching the intestinal walls.

When forming in the kidneys, these crystals lump into excruciatingly painful stones. Oxalic acid makes its way into the blood and binds with calcium and other minerals, becoming very troublesome and causing inflammatory reactions wherever it goes—even in circulating immune cells.[1]

Oxalates are known as "antinutrients" because when they bind to critical nutrients in the body, like magnesium, which regulates hundreds of biochemical reactions, they block these minerals' actions, causing deficiency effects.

"Oxalate ions are mineral snatchers robbing us of the minerals in foods. As a result, a high-oxalate diet is inherently mineral deficient, especially in calcium and magnesium," says Norton.

Prof. Bikman says they also particularly bind to non-heme iron (the kind of iron in plants), which is why vegetarians are at especially high risk of developing anemia.

Beyond these issues, Norton emphasizes that once oxalate crystals get into circulation, they can irritate tissues, stress the liver, accumulate in bones and glands, and, in susceptible individuals, crystallize into sharp microscopic shards that can settle anywhere, not just in the kidneys. They can trigger inflammation, disrupt cellular energy production and interfere with the very metabolic pathways we rely on to feel alert, resilient and stable.

"Oxalates are messing with a lot of us in a lot of ways," she says.

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Oxydise: Hyperbaric Oxygen and Red Light Therapy

Why this is usually tried too late

Most people only explore tools like hyperbaric oxygen when they feel they've "run out of options".
That's understandable - but backwards.

Neither hyperbaric oxygen nor red light therapy works best as a last roll of the dice. They are most useful when recovery has stalled, slowed, or become fragile — when the body is still trying to heal, but doing so inefficiently.

The irony is that the people who benefit most are often those who delay the longest: individuals managing chronic illness, persistent inflammation, neurological fatigue, or post-viral symptoms who have learned, through experience, to be cautious of bold promises.

Oxydise exists largely because of that gap.

Not to persuade people to believe in something new — but to give them controlled, reversible access to simple, physiological supports long before desperation sets in.



Why Renting Changes the Decision Entirely

Renting changes the psychology from belief to experience — and experience is a much better decision-maker.

Oxydise specialises in providing medical-grade soft-shell hyperbaric oxygen chambers, as well as red light therapy panels and full-body beds, on a minimum two-month rental basis, because meaningful biological change does not reveal itself in a weekend.

This model does three important things:
- It removes the pressure to commit upfront
- It allows outcomes to be observed over time
- It replaces hope and hype with lived experience

At the end of the rental period, clients can:
- Return the equipment
- Continue renting
- Or purchase outright, with rental payments contributing towards ownership (rent-to-buy)

In behavioural terms, this is simply better design. It shifts decisions away from persuasion and toward evidence — personal, observable evidence.

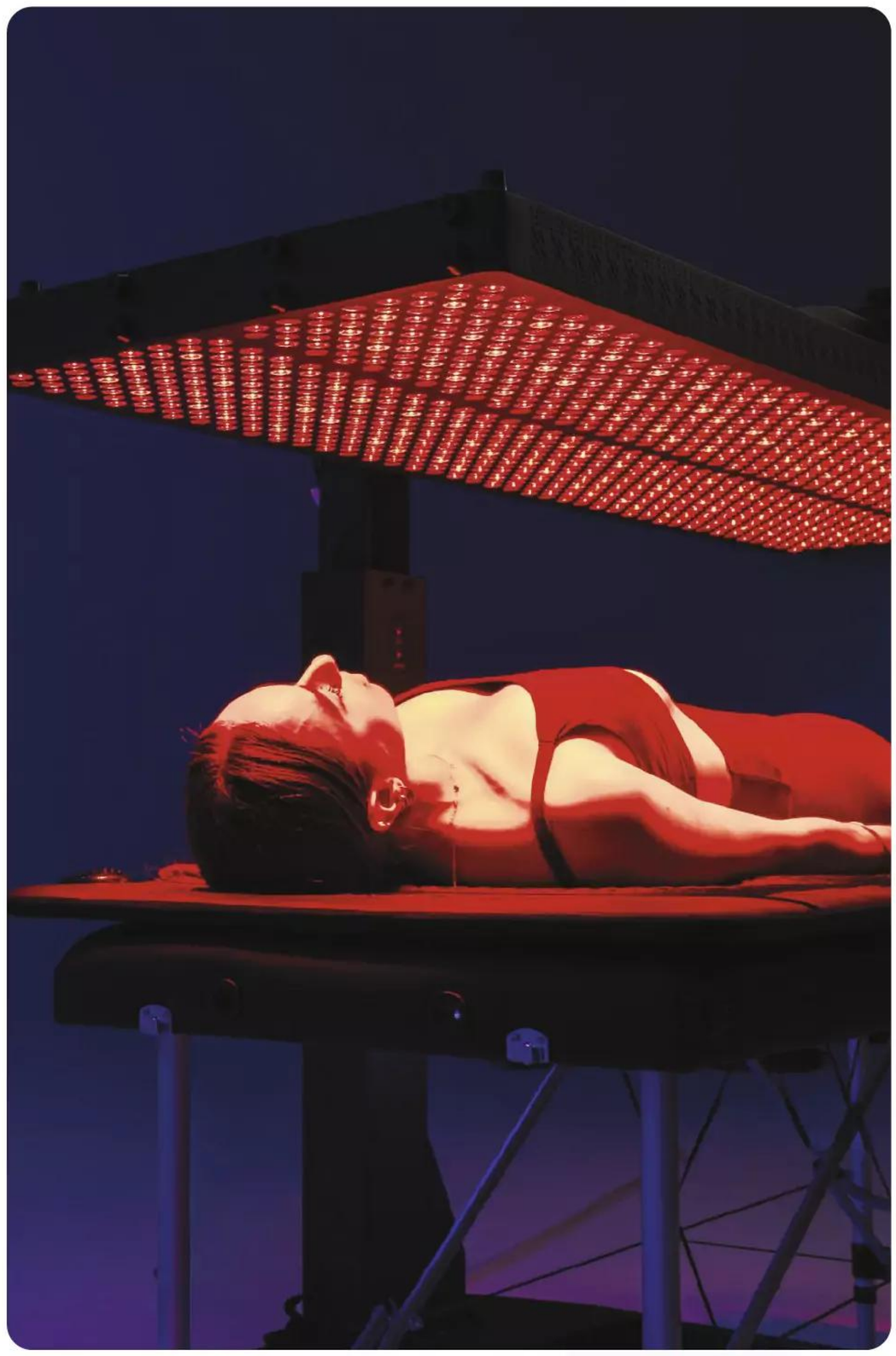
Who Typically Explores Oxydise — and Why

Oxydise is not designed for everyone, and that's deliberate.

The people who tend to explore it fall into three broad groups:

- **People living with chronic illness** - Thoughtful, sceptical, and well informed. They are seeking to regain capacity, not optimise performance.
- **Health practitioners and clinicians** - Interested in non pharmacological tools that support healing without adding physiological load.
- **High performance** - individuals under sustained load. Those who understand that recovery, not effort, is the limiting factor.

What unites these groups is not belief, but pragmatism.



The Practical Reality

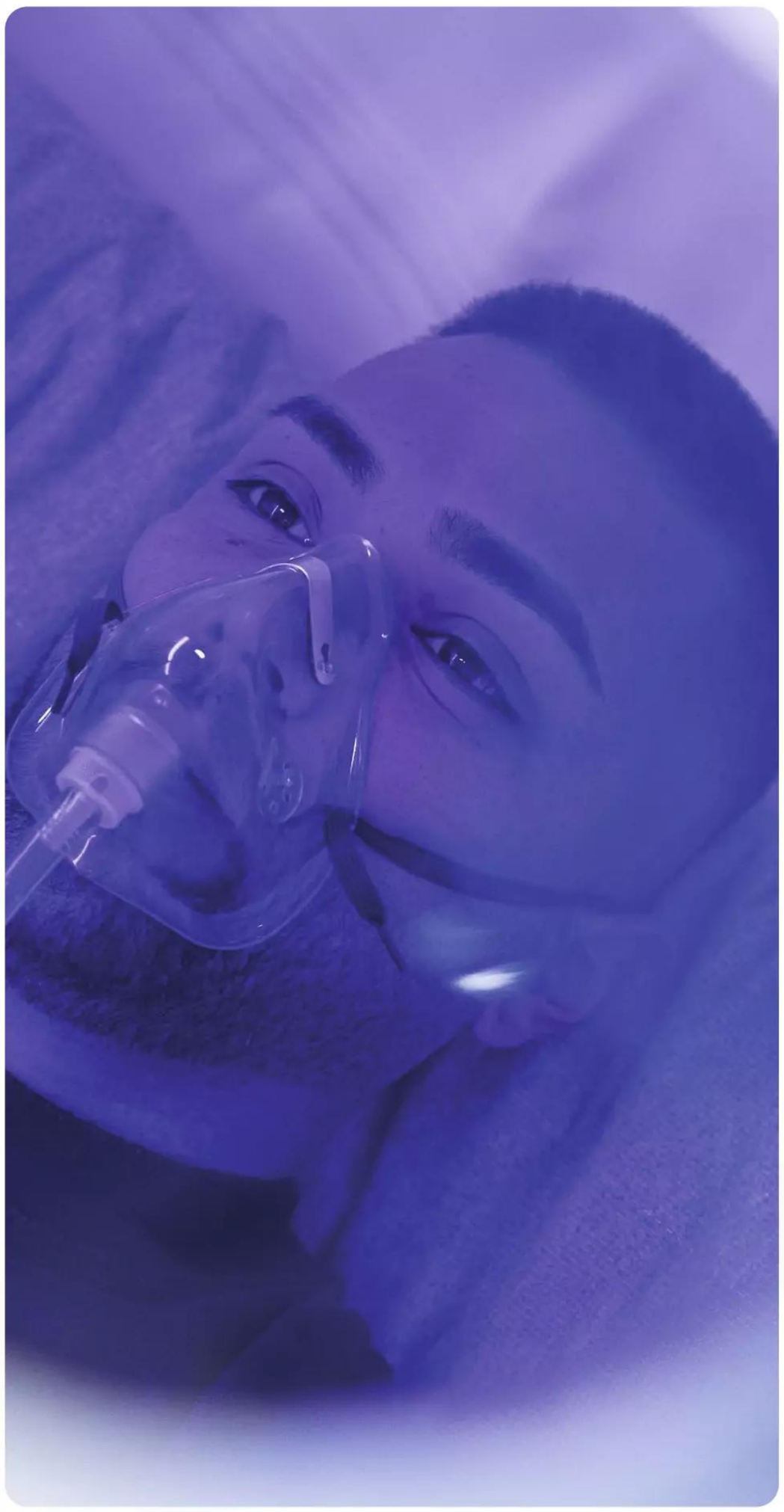
Most breakthroughs are old ideas, taken seriously.

Oxygen, light, pressure — none of these are new. What is new is applying them consistently, without exaggeration, and without forcing the body into states it cannot tolerate.

Neither hyperbaric oxygen nor red light therapy promises transformation. They quietly improve conditions.

And when conditions improve, the body often surprises us.

That is why Oxydise focuses on access rather than spectacle, on time rather than intensity, and on consistency rather than claims.



If Curiosity Is Warranted

If recovery feels slow, fragile, or incomplete — and the question is no longer "What else can I add?" but "What might be limiting healing?" — then exploring supportive tools such as hyperbaric oxygen or red light therapy may be a rational next step.

Oxydise provides medical-grade soft-shell hyperbaric oxygen chambers, red light therapy panels, and full-body red light beds on a minimum two-month rental basis, starting from £500 per month, with the option to purchase at the end of the rental period.

Each modality works independently. Some people choose to combine them. Many don't.

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If you'd like to talk things through:

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No pressure. Just a conversation, if it's useful.

7 herbs to heal your thyroid

Women's health expert Marcelle Pick reveals her go-to healing herbs for supporting healthy thyroid function

More women than ever before are coming into my office with symptoms that make their lives impossible to enjoy, and with some awareness that thyroid hormone imbalances might be causing them. However, they often have no idea what to do about it.

Conventional practitioners are often quick to reach for a prescription pad to deal with thyroid problems without even trying more gentle, natural approaches. But the women who come to see me know that prescriptions aren't always the answer—and they certainly shouldn't be the first course of action.

Once you begin taking a prescription, it can be exceedingly difficult to stop. And it *is* possible to support your thyroid and begin healing naturally if you have the right information.

Of course, everybody responds to treatment differently. I'm not suggesting that women with thyroid diseases shouldn't consider taking prescription drugs that can protect their health and bring relief.

What I'm saying is that there are natural remedies and lifestyle changes that can help facilitate your thyroid's healthy recovery before you reach that point of no return.

I've written about the best foods for a healthy thyroid before (see the November 2024 issue), but herbs can also provide powerful thyroid support. While these herbs won't cure thyroid disease, they can certainly help your body heal. First, though, let's look at how the thyroid works and how to tell whether yours needs help.

Thyroid hormones

Before you can properly support your thyroid, you should know where it is and what it does. The thyroid is a small butterfly-shaped gland in the front of your neck. Its most basic function is to convert iodine from food into two thyroid hormones: thyroxine (T3) and triiodothyronine (T4). Your thyroid is responsible for regulating metabolism in your body.

Your pituitary gland, located just below the brain, determines levels of T3 and T4, then makes thyroid-stimulating hormone (TSH) to either increase or decrease production of each to reach an optimal balance. And how does the body know how much TSH to make? It's regulated by another master gland—your hypothalamus.

None of these systems work in isolation. Each one affects all the others, so you need them all functioning to their best ability. That's why supporting your thyroid is so critical.

Symptoms to look out for

Sudden weight fluctuations, extreme fatigue, and unexplained pain in joints and muscles are among the most well-known symptoms of thyroid issues. Others may not be as obvious.

Changes to hair and skin (like extreme hair loss or dry, scaly skin), drastic mood swings, decreased sex drive and digestive issues can also indicate a thyroid hormone imbalance (see the box on page 37 for the symptoms of underactive and overactive thyroid).

Because common thyroid symptoms mirror many other conditions, thyroid testing is extremely important if you find yourself facing these issues on a regular basis. Realizing that your thyroid needs natural support early on can help you avoid the extremes of thyroid disease.

If dismissed too long, these symptoms can become more severe, and you risk permanent damage to your thyroid gland. But that can almost always be avoided by taking the right steps toward healing—including knowing the best herbs for thyroid support.

7 healing herbs

Herbs are an amazing way to boost health. They contain essential vitamins and minerals that are often lacking in our modern diet. And they're all natural, so you don't have to worry about the numerous side effects that often accompany lab-created chemicals.

Of course, you may have sensitivities to particular herbs, so it's important to pay attention to how you feel and your body's reactions to anything new you add to your health regimen. I suggest working closely with a qualified health practitioner to determine which herbs and dosages will have the best effects in your unique circumstances.

Some of these herbs work well for hypothyroidism (underactive thyroid), while others for hyperthyroidism (overactive thyroid), and you don't want to inadvertently make your situation worse. Even natural over- or under-stimulation of the thyroid gland can be a real problem.

Is your thyroid overactive or underactive?

Overactive thyroid (hyperthyroidism)

When your thyroid gland produces too much T3 and T4, it's known as hyperthyroidism. These are some signs that you might be dealing with an overactive thyroid:

- Restlessness
- Irritability
- Poor sleep
- Hand tremors
- Weight loss even if you're eating more
- Heart palpitations
- Sweating
- Increased thirst
- Diarrhea
- Shortness of breath
- Menstrual changes
- Skin and hair changes
- Fatigue
- Muscle weakness
- Swollen thyroid gland
- Eye problems

Underactive thyroid (hypothyroidism)

Hypothyroidism—far more common—is when your thyroid gland is underactive, leaving levels of T3 and T4 too low. These symptoms are some of the most common:

- Fatigue
- Weight gain
- Constipation
- Dry skin
- Facial puffiness
- Increased sensitivity to cold
- Hoarseness
- High cholesterol
- Achy or weak muscles
- Joint pain and swelling
- Thinning hair
- Irregular or heavy periods
- Memory issues
- Depression
- A slowed heart rate

1. Ashwagandha

This adaptogenic herb has been used for thousands of years and is especially popular in Ayurvedic medicine. Extensive research has been conducted on the benefits of ashwagandha, and in addition to supporting thyroid health, it's been shown to possess many other beneficial properties.

Along with a long history of research indicating a connection between ashwagandha and a positive impact on thyroid functioning, a study published in 2018 concluded that treatment with ashwagandha may improve thyroid hormone levels in patients with subclinical hypothyroidism (when the thyroid is mildly underactive, but not enough to cause clear symptoms yet).[1]

2. *Bacopa monnieri*

Another commonly used herb in Ayurvedic medicine, *Bacopa monnieri* has been found to have positive effects on both hypothyroidism and hyperthyroidism. It seems most effective when taken in conjunction with ashwagandha, green tea, dietary fatty acids and milk.

Research on mice (which may not apply to humans) showed the herb increased levels of T4,[2] which may in turn reduce the production of TSH, indicating it might be an effective treatment for hypothyroidism. It could also treat goiter (enlarged thyroid gland), which occurs when too much TSH collects in the gland.

3. Black walnut

Black walnut is used by many herbalists to treat both goiter and hypothyroidism. Black walnuts contain essential minerals like iodine and manganese, which play a key role in enhancing thyroid function.

4. Ginger

Although technically a spice, not an herb, ginger has been used in herbal medicine for centuries. It has well-documented anti-inflammatory properties, and chronic inflammation can cause thyroid disorders. Ginger contains both magnesium and potassium as well as manganese and the antioxidant compound gingerol.

Ginger-Poached Chicken

Serves 2

Ingredients

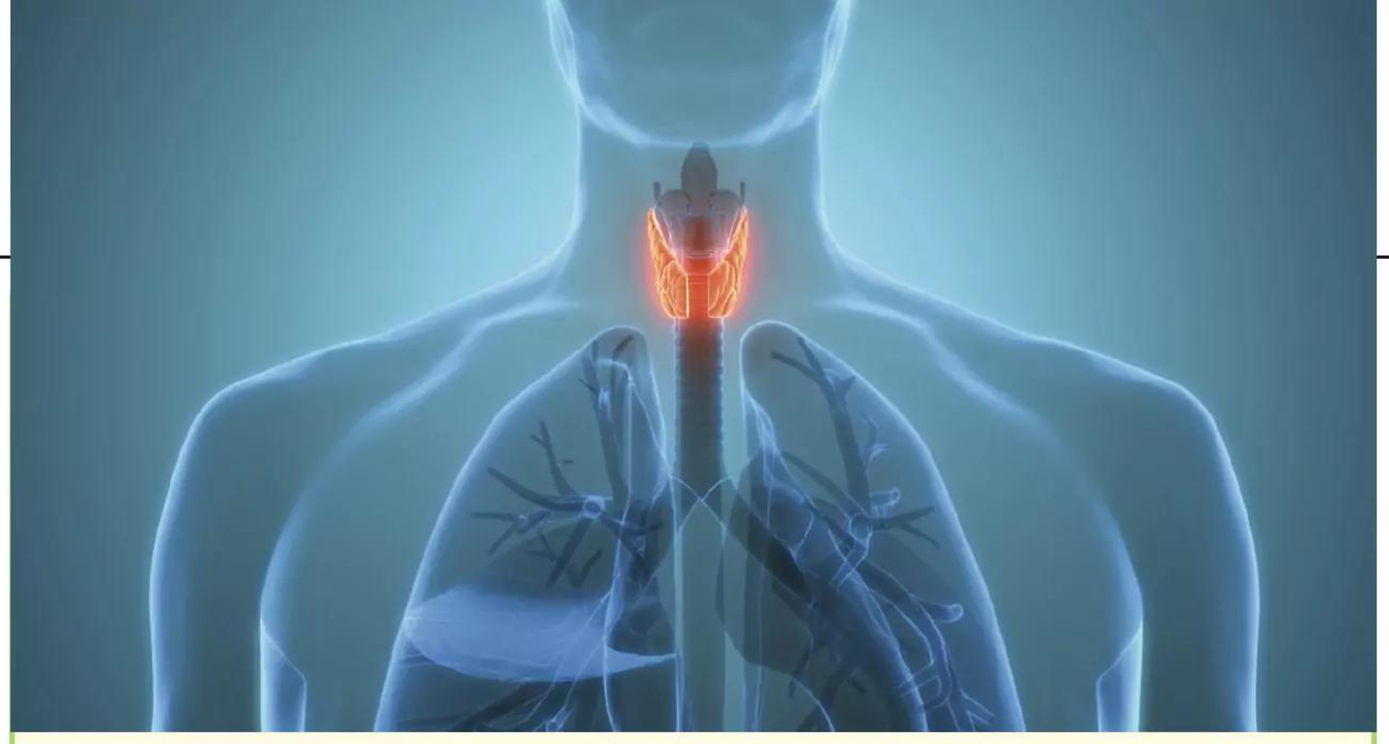
- 4 cups organic chicken stock
- 1-inch piece fresh gingerroot, peeled and cut into strips
- 1 bay leaf
- 1 small shallot, thinly sliced
- 2 boneless, skinless chicken breast halves
- 6 scallions, chopped
- 1 head endive, cut into quarters
- Salt and pepper, to taste

Method

1. Heat the chicken stock in a medium-sized saucepan over medium heat.
2. Bring to a boil, then add the ginger.
3. Reduce heat and simmer for 5 minutes.
4. Add the bay leaf and sliced shallot. Simmer for another 5 minutes.
5. Add the chicken, scallions and endive.
6. Cook until the chicken is tender, 10–14 minutes.
7. Season with salt and pepper to taste.

Is It Me or My Hormones? (Hay House, 2013) by Marcelle Pick





Thyroid imbalance causes

An imbalance of thyroid hormones can cause thyroid symptoms in women, but really the imbalance is a symptom itself. Something caused your thyroid hormone levels to become skewed, and to heal your body in the long term, it's important to examine what that might be.

By the time your symptoms become severe enough to prompt you to seek help, whatever caused the imbalance has probably been in play for a long time. And if you don't discover the cause, those unpleasant thyroid symptoms are likely to return again and again.

Common causes of hyperthyroidism

- Graves' disease, which causes the thyroid gland to enlarge and increases hormone secretion
- Growth of nodules in the thyroid gland
- Medications, especially anything containing high levels of iodine
- Inflammation of the thyroid gland causing the release of stored hormones
- Problems with the pituitary gland increasing secretion of TSH

Common causes of hypothyroidism

- Iodine and/or selenium deficiency
- Hashimoto's disease, a hereditary autoimmune disorder that attacks the thyroid gland
- Surgical removal of the thyroid
- Some prescription drugs, such as lithium
- Food intolerances to gluten and A1 milk protein
- Hormonal imbalances caused by stress or poor diet
- Adrenal dysfunction

5. Holy basil

Also known as tulsi, this herb was considered sacred by Indian royalty and showed up often in Hindu mythology. Nowadays, it's been shown to be effective in balancing mind, body and spirit.

Part of the mint family, holy basil is well known as an adaptogenic herb in natural medicine. Chronically high cortisol, caused by ongoing stress, can create a host of problems, including thyroid dysfunction. Holy basil helps your body adapt better to stress.

6. Lemon balm

This herb has many traditional uses, including encouraging restful sleep, calming stress and anxiety, and relieving indigestion. Research has also demonstrated that it can benefit people with hyperthyroidism.

One study found lemon balm extract prevents the components that overactivate the thyroid from binding with thyroid receptors in patients who have Graves' disease.[3]

Lemon balm is also frequently used as an antiviral treatment,[4] reducing the load on the liver. Viral infections often go hand in hand with thyroid disorders.

7. Nettle

Nettle, also called stinging nettle, is often considered the holy grail of thyroid herbs because it's effective for both underactive and overactive thyroid issues. It can help turn around iodine deficiency, making it particularly beneficial to those who have an underactive thyroid.

This herb contains other important vitamins and minerals as well. It's a source of vitamins A and B6, plus calcium, iron and magnesium. And it's a good source of selenium, a trace mineral also found in sardines and Brazil nuts that is vital to proper thyroid functioning.

Simple ways to take herbs

While it's important to see a professional for an individual herbal prescription, here are some simple ways to incorporate herbs into your daily routine.

Make an herbal tea Drinking tea is a great way to relax and decompress when you need a quiet moment. Why not add a little extra oomph to the ritual by choosing thyroid-supporting herbs to make your soothing brew? Dried herbs can be found online (see *WDDTY* March 2025) or in your local health food store.

Take a high-quality supplement One of the easiest ways to get a daily dose of herbs and other ingredients to support your thyroid is by taking a combination supplement, like my Thyroid Support formula (see shop.marcellepick.com). It contains 250 mg ashwagandha per two-capsule serving along with other healing herbs and nutrients.

Add herbs to smoothies If you're used to drinking your breakfast, just add a bit of flavor and texture to it with some of the herbs mentioned. Lemon balm is a particularly nice addition, adding just a hint of lemon flavor.

Add herbs to food Sprinkle some healing herbs into your standard meal rotation for a new twist. Food can be amazingly flavorful when you add the right blend of herbs, spices and extracts.

While some of these herbs may not taste great (and adding them to food can help hide that), others can perk up an old recipe or help you find a new favorite. Try my Ginger-Poached Chicken recipe on page 38.

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Marcelle Pick (marcellepick.com), ob-gyn nurse practitioner, is passionate about transforming the way women experience healthcare through an integrative approach. She cofounded the world-renowned Women to Women Clinic in 1983 with the vision not only to treat illness but also to support her patients in proactively making healthier choices to prevent disease. She has successfully treated thousands of individuals through her unique approach to wellness.

Under the weather

Does your health dip when the weather changes or seasons shift? Homeopath David Needleman offers a sprinkling of homeopathic remedies to help you feel bright, whatever the weather

Many of my patients report that changes in the weather influence how they feel physically and mentally. From sluggishness on cold, damp days to headaches in windy conditions, health symptoms can often appear, worsen or ease as the weather shifts.

Some people find they're affected by seasonal changes. Hay fever is a classic example of this (see my column in the April 2025 issue of *WDDTY* for the best homeopathic remedies for hay fever).

There's also seasonal affective disorder (SAD), a type of depression usually linked to reduced sunlight exposure during the shorter days in autumn and winter. Symptoms like low mood, lethargy, despair, reduced libido and difficulty concentrating occur with a seasonal pattern.

Remedies for all weather types

Homeopathy can be a useful resource for anyone with symptoms brought on or exacerbated by the weather or changes in the seasons. Here's a list of the remedies I've found to be most effective for the various types of weather conditions and seasonal changes.

Bear in mind that the lists below are not exhaustive but are merely the remedies that are most likely to be of value; they represent only a snapshot of what might prove useful to you.

Wind

Aurum Metallicum, Chamomilla, Hepar Sulph, Lycopodium, Nux Vomica, Phosphorus, Pulsatilla, Rhododendron, Spongia

Rain

Dulcamara, Naja, Natrum Sulphuricum

Storms

Natrum Carbonica, Phosphorus

Approaching storms

Rhododendron

Change of weather

Begonia, Dulcamara, Nux Moschata, Phosphorus, Ranunculus Bulb, Rhododendron, Rhus Toxicodendron, Silicea

Spring

Ambra Grisea, Belladonna, Calcarea Carbonica, Gelsemium, Lachesis, Lycopodium

Summer

Belladonna, Lachesis

Autumn (Fall)

Colchicum, Dulcamara, Kalium Bichromicum, Lachesis, Rhus Toxicodendron

Winter

Aconite, Ammonium Carbonic, Arsenicum Album, Aurum Metallicum, Bryonia, Camphor, Dulcamara, Fluoric Acid, Helleborus, Hepar Sulph, Kalium Carbonicum, Lycopodium, Manganum, Moschus, Nux Moschata, Nux Vomica, Petroleum, Pulsatilla, Rhus Toxicodendron, Strontium Carbonica, Veratrum Album

Seasonal affective disorder (SAD)

Phosphorus

Symptom snapshot

Here's a small selection of the symptoms many of my patients have reported as related to the weather or seasons.

- Generally not feeling well
- Lack of energy
- Lack of motivation
- Sluggishness
- Slow recovery from illnesses
- Persistent headaches
- Blocked sinuses
- Feeling depressed
- Rheumatic symptoms like joint pain, swelling and stiffness

Wet weather

There are over 100 possible remedies for symptoms brought on by wet weather. Here's a small selection:
Arsenicum Album, Badiaga, Calc Carb, Dulcamara, Natrum Sulph, Nux Moschata, Pulsatilla, Rhododendron, Rhus Toxicodendron, Thuja, Veratrum Album

Warm temperature

Again, many remedies can be used, but these are some of the most important:
Apis Mel, Argentum Nitricum, Arsenicum Iodatum, Fluoric Acid, Gelsemium, Iodum, Kali Iod, Kali Sulph, Lachesis, Ledum, Natrum Mur, Natrum Sulph, Platina, Pulsatilla, Secale, Sulphur

Windy and stormy

Badiaga, Kalmia, Nux Moschata, Rhododendron

Which remedy?

A few remedies appear more than once in the lists above as they are suitable for a variety of different conditions. To determine which one is best for you, based on your individual symptoms, constitution and medical history, it's a good idea to consult with a qualified homeopathic practitioner.

You can of course choose a remedy that you feel will help, but it may take a few tries to get the right one. Here are some of the top versatile remedies for weather and seasonal issues and who they are best suited to.



Dulcamara

Choose this remedy if you're sensitive to cold and damp but also to air conditioning. You may also struggle with hot days and cold nights. You may have rheumatic symptoms like joint pain and stiffness, which are always worse for damp and cold.

Nux Moschata

This remedy is suitable for those who suffer from cold extremities as well as dry skin and mucous membranes.

Rhododendron

This remedy is ideal for those who suffer with rheumatic symptoms, especially in the hotter seasons. It's commonly prescribed to those who feel bad or worse before a storm and those who dread storms and thunder.

Rhus Toxicodendron

This is a major remedy for those suffering with arthritis or rheumatic symptoms. Other symptoms that point to Rhus Tox include pain when you first get up in the morning (which is eased by gentle motion); hot, painful, swollen joints; and marked restlessness.

Phosphorus

This is a top remedy for those who are sensitive to many influences, such as light, sound, odors, touch and storms. The energy of someone needing Phosphorus is like an old Vesta match—it flares up with lots of energy and then fades rapidly into exhaustion.

Suggested dosages

For all the remedies mentioned, I recommend a 30C potency. Take at the first onset of symptoms, three times a day, until symptoms have improved.

If you want to take Phosphorus for SAD, take it from late September to early April—have a good supply on hand.

Homeopathy for electrosensitivity

Another environmental factor that can affect health and well-being is electromagnetic fields (EMFs) from devices like phones, Wi-Fi and mobile phone service masts. Some people find they are highly sensitive to EMFs and experience symptoms like headaches, fatigue and skin issues.

Reducing exposure is a vital part of any treatment plan, but homeopathy can also help. A combination remedy called EMF Co, available from Ainsworths (ainsworths.com), is specifically designed for this issue. Try it in a 30C potency with a loading dose of three times a day for a few days, then switch to taking one maintenance dose every day.



David Needleman is one of the founding directors of the Alliance of Registered Homeopaths. Qualified as both a pharmacist and a homeopath, he has worked in community pharmacies for most of his professional life and lectured on homeopathy in the US, the UK and Japan as well as treating clients in 24 countries.

In 1996, David set up the Homeopathic Helpline, a 15-hour-a-day, 365-day-a-year acute advice service manned by him and other qualified, experienced homeopaths. They have successfully helped 350,000 callers to date. You can reach the Homeopathic Helpline at +44 (0)9065 343404.

To have David answer a question in *WDDTY*, write to info@wddty.co.uk.

Hidden riches



Iron is always considered the mineral we don't get enough of, but some experts are realizing copper should be the focus. Cate Montana investigates

Long gone are the days when vast numbers of people around the world suffered from dietary deficiency diseases like scurvy (caused by lack of vitamin C) and pellagra (caused by a lack of vitamin B3, or niacin). At least in first- and second-world nations, nutritional deficiency is considered a rarity.

And yet some studies are beginning to show that a chronic deficiency in bioavailable copper is leading to growing diagnoses of oxidative stress, immune dysregulation and inflammation.[1] It's also behind a whole host of autoimmune diseases, from Alzheimer's and ischemic heart disease to osteoporosis.[2]

A small handful of studies are calling copper deficiency an "epidemic" driving symptoms of impaired vision, anemia, neuropathy and even bone cancer.[3] And yet, simultaneously, the vast majority of studies cite copper deficiency as "rare," saying its most common symptoms, such as fatigue and oxidative stress, are instead driven by a lack of iron in the diet.

Iron takes the blame

Fatigue is defined as exhaustion and a lack of energy that makes the performance of daily tasks difficult. And chronic fatigue is frequently linked to iron metabolism disorders.[4] Iron is a major part of hemoglobin, a protein in red blood cells that transports oxygen throughout the body, and myoglobin, a protein that stores oxygen in the muscle tissues, including in heart muscle.

Ferritin is another protein that stores iron throughout the rest of the body, especially in the liver and bone marrow. Without enough iron, there are insufficient red blood cells to deliver oxygen to the cells and to cellular mitochondria, the organelles that generate energy for the body by making adenosine triphosphate (ATP). This lack of oxygen-bearing iron results in chronic fatigue.

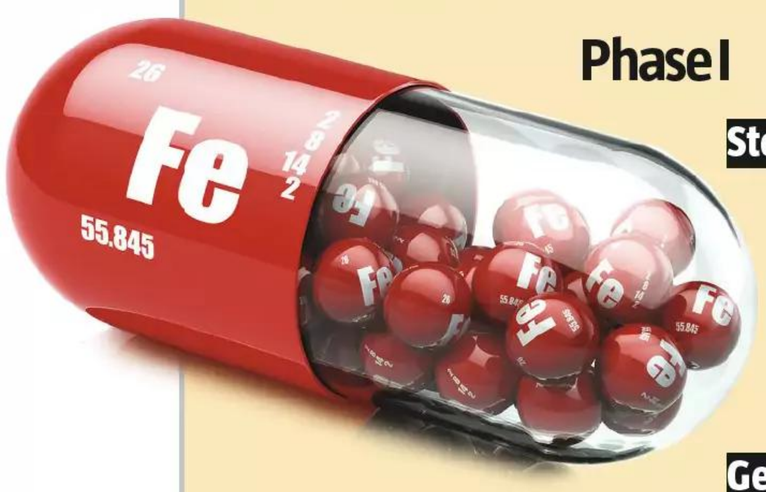
And yet . . . ever since 1941, when the US Food and Drug Administration first determined Recommended Daily Allowances (RDAs) of vitamins and minerals, people in developed nations have been ingesting more iron than ever.

The RDA for iron is currently set at 15–18 mg per day. But when we add up a typical day's food intake, which often includes processed foods "enriched" with ferrous iron, such as white bread, cereal, pasta and rice, it becomes obvious that the average iron intake vastly exceeds daily requirements.

For example, start with iron-enriched Wheaties cereal for breakfast (1 cup contains 10.8 mg iron) or enriched white toast (1 mg iron per slice). Then for lunch you have a standard 6 oz beef burger patty made from lean ground beef (46 mg iron) with cheese (1.9 mg iron) on an enriched bun (2 mg iron). For dinner you have enriched spaghetti

The Root Cause Protocol

Here are some of the highlights of Morley Robbins's protocol, the entirety of which is downloadable for free at therootcauseprotocol.com/resources.



Phase I

Stop taking iron This includes supplements and iron-fortified foods.

Revise your supplement regime Stop taking vitamin D, calcium, zinc and all synthetic forms of vitamin C.

Clean up your diet Stop eating high-fructose corn syrup, artificial sweeteners and omega-6 oils (soybean oil, canola oil, etc.).

Get enough fats Eat healthy fats instead of following a low-fat diet.

Avoid fluoride Stop using all products containing fluoride.



Phase II

Drink OJ plus electrolytes Start nourishing the adrenal glands and liver by drinking 4 oz fresh-squeezed orange juice, cream of tartar (¼ tsp) and sea salt (¼ tsp) daily.

Take magnesium Start remineralizing the body with mineral drops or transdermal magnesium. "Clinically, absorption is the key," says Edwards. "Ionic magnesium is 100 percent absorbed. Or Sustained Release Technology (SRT) magnesium over eight hours works well. Or take magnesium bisglycinate." The optimal dose of elemental magnesium is 5 mg per pound of body weight per day.

Take real vitamin C Start taking an organic whole-food vitamin C complex. Begin with no more than 400 mg per day.

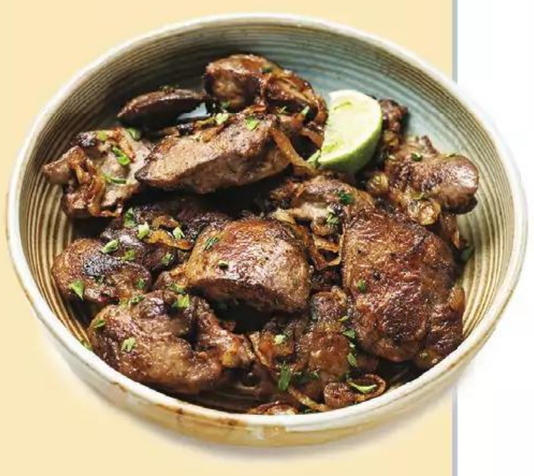
Take bioavailable copper Start with 4–6 mg daily. Robbins helped formulate the Recuperate IQ brand copper supplement, which contains grass-fed beef liver. It's available online at therootcauseprotocol.com (see page 65 for this and some other good copper supplements).



Phase III

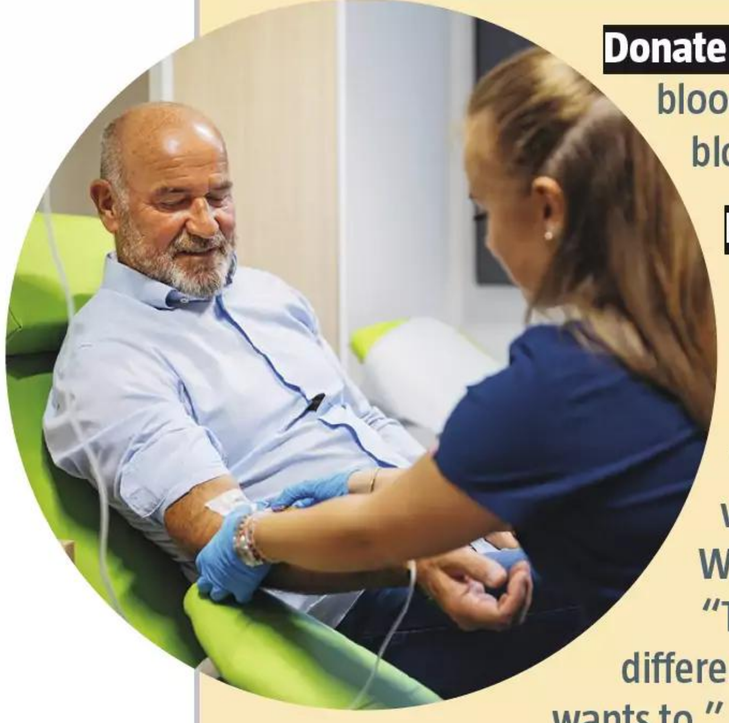
Take cod liver oil It's a source of naturally occurring vitamin A as retinol, which activates bioavailable copper to manage iron in the body.

Eat copper-rich foods The best form of copper is what's obtained in food, so eat organic whole foods and ancestral grains. The best food source of copper is organ meats, especially beef liver. New Zealand grass-fed products are best.



Choose water carefully Drink mineralized, filtered water.

Take advanced minerals You need taurine, boron and iodine, among others.

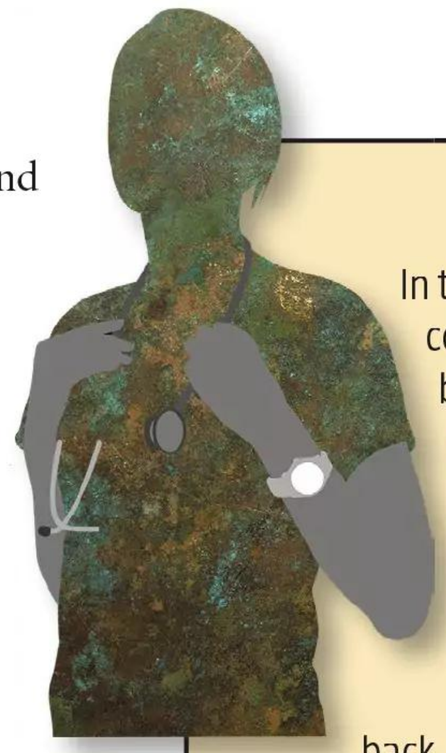


Donate blood Robbins, as well as other medical practitioners using the protocol, recommends blood donation or phlebotomy if hemoglobin iron levels get much above 14 g/dL. One or two blood donations a year will usually keep a premenopausal woman in a healthy iron range.

Pace yourself Both Robbins and Edwards advise taking the protocol slowly and not making it too complicated. Don't feel like you have to do every single thing in the protocol. Choose the starts and stops that are most doable.

Trust the body Above all, trust the body to figure out what to do with all the changes and what you're giving it. "Don't stress—especially over the labs," says Edwards. "There's value to lab work, but so many things influence the results, especially if you're in a standard Western environment.

"They'll shift over time because you're starting from a place that's so far off kilter on so many different pathways internally. Take it slow and realize your body will heal in the way it needs and wants to."



(3 mg iron per cup) with tomato sauce (2 mg) and meatballs (23 mg iron per 3 oz).

That's 89.7 mg of iron in one day. Then top it off with a multivitamin/mineral supplement containing 12 mg, and the average Westerner is ingesting a minimum of 100 mg daily.

And yet, according to most studies, iron deficiency remains "the leading cause of anemia affecting vast numbers of people globally," contributing to a significant global health burden.[5] Health practitioners around the world faced with blood test results regularly showing low serum iron and low ferritin automatically prescribe over-the-counter supplements that may contain as much as 65 mg per dose.

This significantly adds to the already burdensome iron load. Indeed, because of this supposedly ever-growing need, the annual global iron supplementation market is projected to grow from $2.79 billion (£2.02 billion) in 2025 to $3.89 billion (£2.82 billion) by 2034.

Karen Gadol, 65, physician's assistant

In the late 1990s, Karen completed classes and became a licensed physician's assistant. She had a hectic new job, had gone through a divorce and was heavily stressed.

"Honestly, looking back, I think it was my nervous system simply on overload," she says. "And it was creating all sorts of crazy neurological symptoms."

Experiencing fatigue, pain in the body, numbness, tingling and other weird symptoms that rotated from one place to another, she went to an internist and then a neurologist and then another internist. She had MRIs and every blood test imaginable, and no one could find anything wrong.

"Thankfully I ran across Morley's work, and I started the Root Cause Protocol and recovered from everything I was suffering from," she says. "This meant changing a lot of things. I stopped taking high doses of vitamin D and zinc. I made sure I was getting adequate mineralization, and obviously I added copper."

Today Karen is 65 years old and symptom-free on no medication. She's very active, happily working and "just living life."

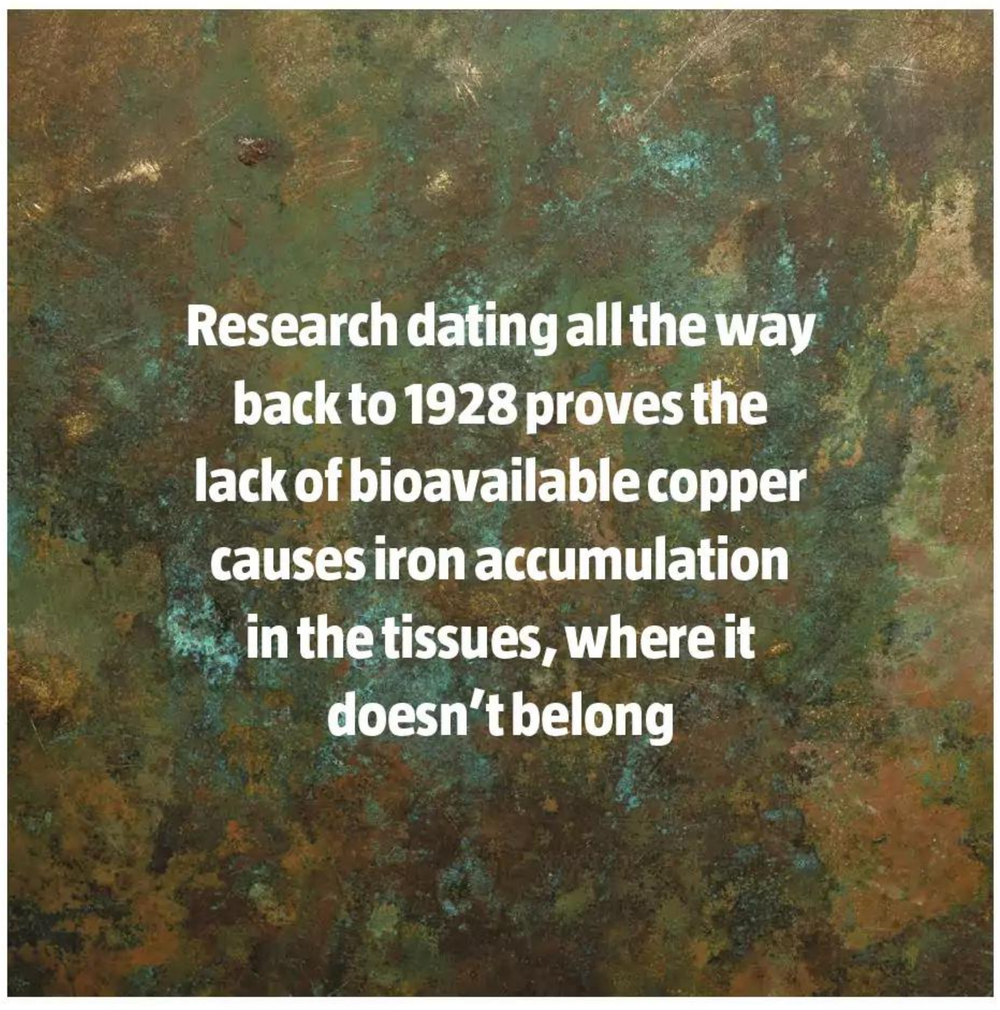
A different understanding

Much of the scientific literature from around the world insists most, if not all, disease, including persistent fatigue, is caused by oxidative stress. Unfortunately, most physicians don't realize much of that literature stresses that the root cause of oxidative stress is "cellular dysfunction." In turn, this dysfunction is the result of an imbalance among three key minerals: copper, iron and magnesium.[6]

Morley Robbins, founder of the Root Cause Protocol (therootcauseprotocol.com) and an expert in functional diagnostic nutrition, agrees: "When oxygen can't be activated by copper in our mitochondria to make water and to release energy molecules, it results in oxidative stress, aka free radicals, reactive oxygen species and oxidants.

"Research dating all the way back to 1928 proves the lack of bioavailable copper causes iron accumulation in the tissues, where it doesn't belong, especially in the liver.[7] This causes the cascade of cellular and mitochondrial oxidative stress events keeping people fatigued and setting the stage for chronic conditions such as fatty liver disease. Lack of copper and rising iron also dramatically increase the burn rate of magnesium, driving its depletion."

Robbins says it took seven years to formulate the thesis regarding how the interaction of copper, iron and magnesium affects oxidative stress and health. The thesis was based on firsthand work with clients and hundreds of studies pointing in that direction. In particular, he drew on Sir Douglas Kell's study "Iron Behaving Badly: Inappropriate Iron Chelation as a Major Contributor to the Aetiology of Vascular and Other Progressive Inflammatory and Degenerative Diseases."[8]



Iron–copper interaction

Copper has antimicrobial properties. It is anti-inflammatory,[9] supports the digestive tract,[10] enhances brain function and is known for its immune-boosting properties. Studies show that the presence of copper slows cognitive decline.[11]

Copper supplementation significantly reduces the levels of inflammatory cytokines in the body.[12] And copper consumption is associated with a lower risk of all-cause mortality.[13]

But copper and iron work together. Iron carries oxygen, and copper is the mineral that not only regulates the transport of iron in the blood but activates the oxygen it carries.

Because of this dynamic interplay, without enough bioavailable copper, the body can't produce all the energy it needs, and health declines. In addition to the crucial roles of copper discussed above, it's required for optimal enzyme activity and the transfer of electrons in the cell.

Another serious issue stemming from this fundamental imbalance among copper, magnesium and iron is the growing lack of ceruloplasmin.[14] "It's the master antioxidant protein for our metabolism," Robbins says. This pivotal, copper-containing protein

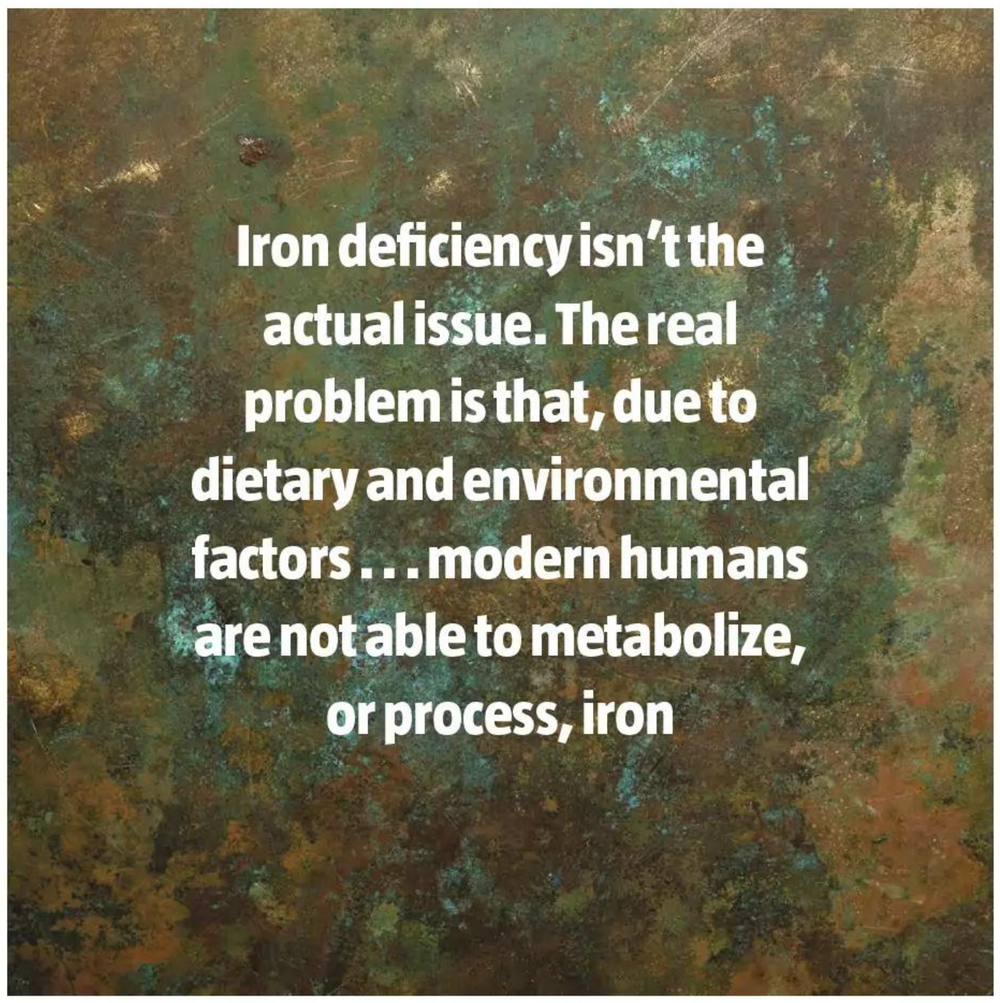
regulates iron, copper and oxygen status in the body.

"Ceruloplasmin is the 'sun' of our bodily universe of metabolic activity," says Robbins. "The diversity of this protein is mind-blowing.

"It has the capacity to read any situation in the body and produce what the body needs. It expresses 20 or more enzyme functions in the liver, eyes, brain, kidneys, gonads, uterus and placenta, to name but a few of the key sites of synthesis. And it requires copper to work."

One of the most vital functions of this copper-dependent protein is its ability to change the electron state of iron from the potentially toxic form Fe^{2+} into Fe^{3+}. Food-reduced iron (Fe^{2+}), also known as ferrous iron, is one of the "enriching" ingredients found in many processed foods.

Fe^{2+} is supposed to be absorbed in the small intestine, where it is oxidized into its ferric oxidized state (Fe^{3+}) before being released into the bloodstream. But



anytime you've got to move iron through a membrane, you've got to change its electron valence. And copper is the mineral that enables this transformation to happen.

Without this transformation, iron is not transportable in the bloodstream. The more toxic ferrous iron gets hung up in the tissues, where it disrupts normal cell function, damaging organs such as the liver, stomach, heart and blood vessels.

This is iron dysregulation—a condition that doctors are constantly confusing with iron deficiency. According to Robbins, quite often there is over 10 times more iron stuck in the tissues than is found in the blood.

"Iron deficiency isn't the actual issue," he explains. "The real problem is that, due to dietary and environmental factors that have depleted our bodies of copper, magnesium and ceruloplasmin over the past century, we modern humans are not able to metabolize, or process, iron the way nature intended."

Testing failure

Besides failing to recognize the true root cause, we're failing to test accurately to detect the problem. There are three types of iron blood tests:

1. Serum iron, the amount of iron in the blood
2. Ferritin, the iron stores or reserves in the body
3. Transferrin saturation, the percentage of the iron-carrying protein transferrin in the blood

In the 1970s, iron tests in medical practice switched from focusing mainly on serum iron levels to looking at the amount of ferritin in the bloodstream—a figure that usually runs lower than serum iron. Ferritin is an intracellular iron storage compound in tissues and organs. Its role is storage, not transport.

According to Sir Douglas Kell, British biochemist, commander of the Order of the British Empire and the world's foremost authority on ferritin, instead of an indicator of iron availability, serum ferritin is actually an inflammatory marker appearing in the blood as a result of apoptosis, or cell death, throughout the body.[15]

"You cannot judge iron status in somebody just by looking at their overall iron tests," affirms Dr Ben Edwards, an integrative medical doctor in Lubbock, Texas, and founder of Veritas Wellness (veritasmedical.com). "Especially suspect are ferritin tests.

"Sir Douglas Kell himself told Morley that the amount of ferritin in the blood should be zero because it shouldn't be in the blood in the first place. It should be inside our cells.

"Ferritin leaks out into the blood when the liver in particular and other organs are highly inflamed



Dr Michael Grossweiler, DDS, 64

As well as being a dentist, Michael has a background in microbial genetics and microbiology. After a jaw surgery, he found himself struggling with neurological symptoms and increasing overall fatigue. He began conducting research into mitochondrial function and ATP production and ran across Robbins's work. Impressed, he met with Robbins and decided to try his Root Cause Protocol.

"I'm always patient number one when it comes to doing something new," Michael says. "And so I tried this out."

The neurological symptoms declined and then disappeared, but it took about three months before he really started noticing more energy. At that point he also realized that 2–4 mg of copper a day wasn't a high enough dose for him.

"I have to take anywhere from 6 to 8 mg a day to keep my energy levels up, in part, probably, because of all my mercury exposure over the years. Plus, I'm older. My kids (ages 18 and 20) started doing it, and within a week they felt great."

Robbins also began helping Michael with certain patient problems, in particular implant failures caused by an overall decrease in general bone health. Over time, Michael found his patients responded well to the protocol. Their bone strength increased, their implants were more successful and they reported a general increase in energy.

"If I had to summarize it with one word, I would say 'resiliency,'" says Robbins. "The RCP makes them better able to withstand the stress and trauma of surgery. It helps provide adequate energy for healing. But beyond that, it provides the trace minerals necessary for rebuilding the bone and getting healthy."

Julie Rembold, 45, mom, marathon runner

Julie started running in January 2018 at age 37. As the mother of five kids, she thought it seemed rather late in life to start running marathons, but she did it anyway.

Only 14 months later, she took 77th overall out of about 15,000 women in the Boston Marathon. But later that year she started to feel "off."

"I was very in tune with my body and still felt fine in daily life," she says. "But when I was running, I knew something wasn't quite right." Working with a top doctor for marathon runners in the US, she got bloodwork done.

It showed her hemoglobin, ferritin and iron saturation levels were all low. But a year after being placed on substantial iron supplements, she was feeling worse.

"My ferritin was like 280 with greater than 98 percent saturation, which was extreme," she says. "But my hemoglobin was low, and I felt anemic and low-energy."

Her legs felt heavy, like iron weights, and as she was warming up to run, her chest felt like it was on fire. She developed runner's dystonia (abnormal involuntary muscle contractions), was dizzy, had kidney issues and found it hard to concentrate. And yet both her doctor and coach kept saying she needed more iron.

"I remember in 2021 I told my running friends, 'I feel like I'm slowly being poisoned to death.' And that was such a profound comment as I look back now, because I was still taking iron supplements and being poisoned every day," she says.

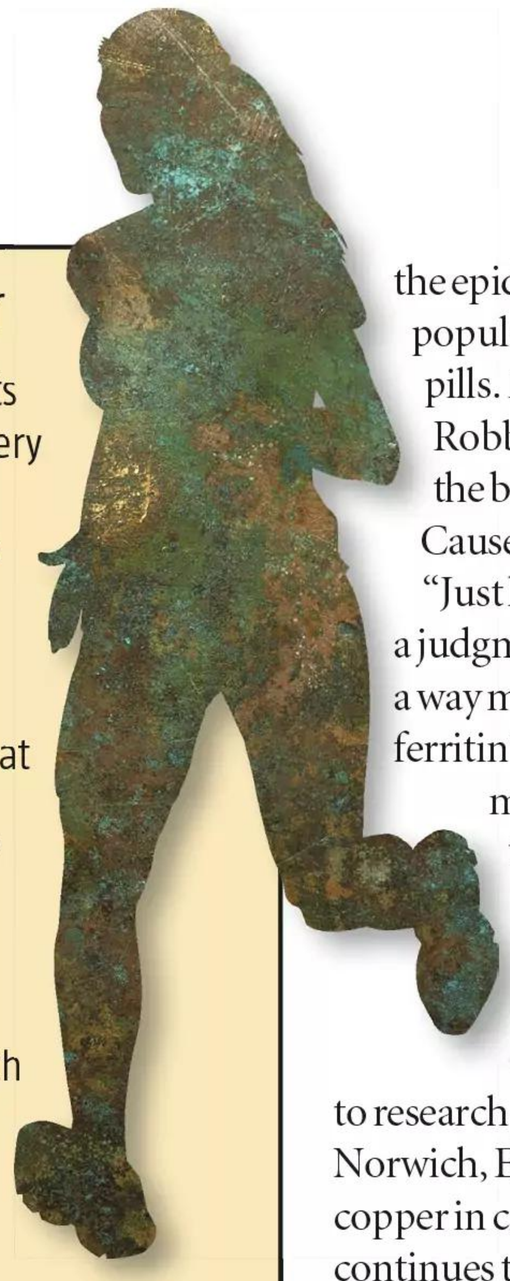
By spring 2022, Julie had to stop running. And then, doing her own research, she discovered copper: "That was the missing piece I'd been trying to find."

The day after she started taking it, she says, she felt "sparklers"—like Fourth of July sparklers—all over her brain and head and then slowly moving down the rest of her body. "It was almost like neurons were turning back on that had gone dark," she says. "And I started feeling better and better until I plateaued after about four months."

At this point she ran across a podcast by Morley Robbins, and the rest of the puzzle pieces fell into place. She jumped on the Root Cause Protocol, following it rigorously.

She also took Morley's advice and started donating blood. "That first time, I walked out of the clinic feeling like I had this weight off my chest," she recalls, "and I felt my energy come back almost immediately."

Today, following the protocol, Julie is back and better than ever. "I'm 45 now. I'm running in the Boston Marathon again this April, and I think I have a shot at running my fastest marathon ever."



and dumping all their ferritin into the blood. If you're chronically fatigued, you're not anemic. You suffer from iron dysfunction, not iron deficiency."

Instead of rushing to prescribe iron supplementation when iron tests come back indicating low ferritin, serum iron and transferrin saturation, the first thing Edwards asks patients is, "Where are you bleeding?"

He checks for bleeding ulcers and ulcerative colitis. He asks whether there is ever blood in the stool. He asks women about their menstrual cycles and whether they bleed heavily.

If a patient has a bleeding history, he knows the iron testing numbers are true. But, understanding the epidemic of iron dysregulation in the Western population, he doesn't rush to prescribe iron pills. Instead he initiates a protocol developed by Robbins to get iron stuck in the tissues back into the body's recycling system. It's called the Root Cause Protocol (see box, page 44).

"Just looking at one blood marker, you can't make a judgment call on anything," says Edwards. "It's a way more complex picture than just, 'Oh, your ferritin's low, take some iron.' That's malpractice, in my opinion. But the vast majority of doctors know nothing about any of this."

Perfect storm

The number one deficient mineral in agricultural soils today is copper. According to research published by the Quadrum Institute in Norwich, England, there has been an 80 percent loss of copper in crop soil over the past 80 years—a trend that continues today.

The heavy use of NPK (nitrogen, phosphorus and potassium) fertilizers blocks the uptake of copper by food crops. The pesticide Roundup, known chemically as glyphosate, removes (chelates) all minerals from the soil, especially copper.

Fluoride, which is added to water supplies, mouthwashes and toothpastes, also chelates copper in the body, especially the copper found in enzymes in connective tissue. Antibiotics like penicillamine are powerful copper chelators. Zinc supplementation depletes copper uptake in the gut. Synthetic ascorbic acid, aka the citric acid found on myriad food labels, unbinds iron, blocks copper absorption and alters the structure of ceruloplasmin.

Retinol, the only usable form of vitamin A, is found only in fatty foods such as liver, cheese, grass-fed butter, cream, oily fish and egg yolks. It plays an essential role in copper homeostasis and the health of copper-transporting enzymes, known as ATPases, that regulate and run our metabolism. And yet most medical professionals warn against eating just these kinds of foods because they fear cholesterol buildup.

"Unfortunately, you can't absorb copper in your diet if you don't have fat in your diet," says Robbins. "And you can't metabolize the fat in your diet if you don't have copper in your tissue. And then there are all these other interacting issues. See how all this weaves together in the perfect storm?"

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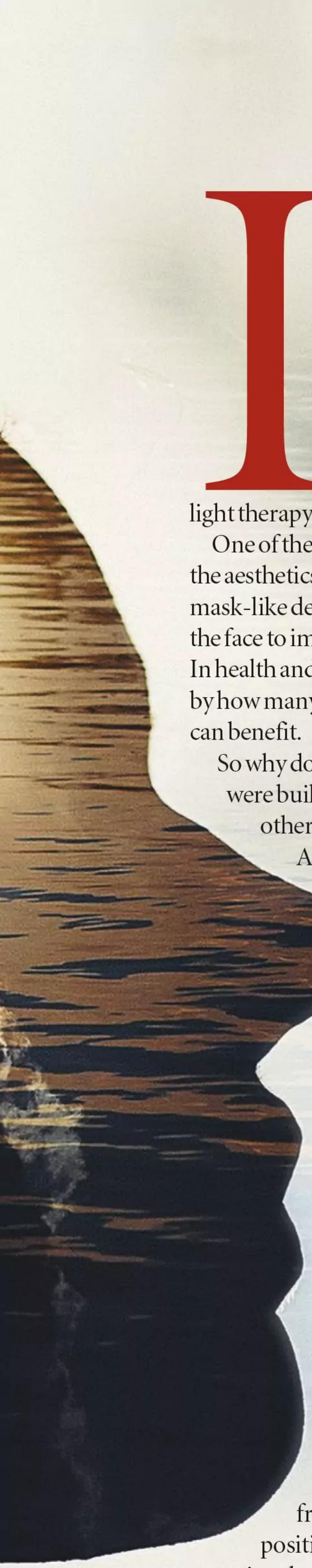
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Light lessons

Light is essential for health, but most of us aren't getting enough of it, says functional medicine practitioner Dr Damien Downing. Here's what you need to know about light and how to put the right light back into your life



In this century, there has been an explosion in research into light therapy, or what we now call "photobiomodulation" (PBM)—the use of light (*photo*) to modulate life processes (*bio*). In 2001, there were 52 scientific papers published on the topic, while in 2021 there were 667. That's 12 times as many, and the research is still growing. The reason is that we keep discovering more and more benefits of light therapy.

One of the first sectors to start using PBM has been the aesthetics industry. There are now any number of mask-like devices that shine red and/or infrared light on the face to improve the skin and fight the signs of aging. In health and medicine in general, we keep being amazed by how many diseases, symptoms and dysfunctions light can benefit.

So why does it work? The simple answer is because we were built that way, from the bottom up. Like every other living thing, we need the energy from the sun. And not just some of it; we need all of it.

Here's a look at different types of light, why they're vital for health and how to get your daily dose.

HEV light

Throughout evolution, the bright bluish light in the morning has helped us to wake up. The high-energy visible (HEV) blue component of daylight at around 480 nanometers (nm) is most important for this.[1] It's just to the blue side of turquoise.

That wavelength is picked up by nonvisual photoreceptors in the eye, cells that respond to light but have nothing to do with seeing. They signal a part of the brain called the suprachiasmatic nucleus (SCN), which is the chief pacemaker or clock in the brain.[2]

Suprachiasmatic means it sits atop the optic chiasm, where the optic nerves from the two eyes meet and cross, in a perfect position to collect light information. That sends a signal to the pineal gland to switch off production of the neurotransmitter and hormone melatonin, which starts the day in your brain. Without that signal, we may experience a breakdown of our normal circadian rhythm, known as chronodisruption.

As well as the obvious consequences—insomnia, fatigue—this can have a lasting impact on health, aging and diseases such as diabetes and even some cancers.

How to get more HEV light

Get outside For a healthy body clock, get outside as soon as you can after waking, with no glasses on or contact lenses in, and look up at the sky. The best time to get out is early in the morning, when you have the best chance of catching both HEV and UVA light (see below).

Obviously, don't look directly at the sun—you don't need to. Just look up at the sky to get daylight hitting the nonvisual photoreceptors in your eyes and sending the wake-up message to the brain. Do it for a few minutes if it's sunny, and longer if it's darker.

Look out of a window If you can't get outside, at least stick your head out of a window and look up for five minutes on a bright, clear day, or longer if the weather is bad. Architects will tell you that most natural light shines downward, from the sky, so you get more light through a high window than through one on your eye level.

But avoid HEV at night The other side of the coin is that this is the same blue light that is bad for you at night and that you get from all your screens. It's bad because it still activates the SCN and suppresses or impairs sleep. But it's only bad because it's detached from the other two elements of daylight—ultraviolet (UV) and infrared (NIR).

UV light

Most of us are aware that exposure to UV light activates the production of vitamin D—vital for immunity, healing and much more. But it also sparks the production of an important hormone precursor called POMC (pro-opiomelanocortin). And while vitamin D is activated only by UVB rays of wavelength about 297 nm, POMC is triggered by all UV light.

When UV light hits the eyes, it triggers the release of POMC from the pituitary gland, the super-regulator of hormones in the body. This quickly leads to increases in all its molecular products in the bloodstream, making POMC a major part of that whole-body regulation process.

POMC is also produced in the skin in response to UV light.[3] This happens in the epithelial cells lining the microvessels of the skin.[4] Released locally, POMC is split up by enzymes into three categories of hormone-type molecules, and these "offspring" have a local effect on the skin, most obviously in things like tanning (protection against overdose of the same UV light) but also in damping down inflammation and promoting repair.

All wavelengths of UV light have this effect. The strongest effect comes from the highest-energy UVC, to which we are never exposed unless we go into space. The next strongest effect comes from UVB, which also produces vitamin D in the skin.

Full-spectrum health

We need the whole of sunlight:

- **Bright, high-energy visible (HEV) light in the eyes in the morning to activate daytime mode**
- **Ultraviolet (UVA and UVB) light on the skin to trigger the release of multifunctional alpha-MSH**
- **UVB light on the skin to trigger the production of vitamin D**
- **Infrared light (NIR) just about anywhere to boost both energy and melatonin**
- **Dark night to enable sleep and complete the circadian cycle**

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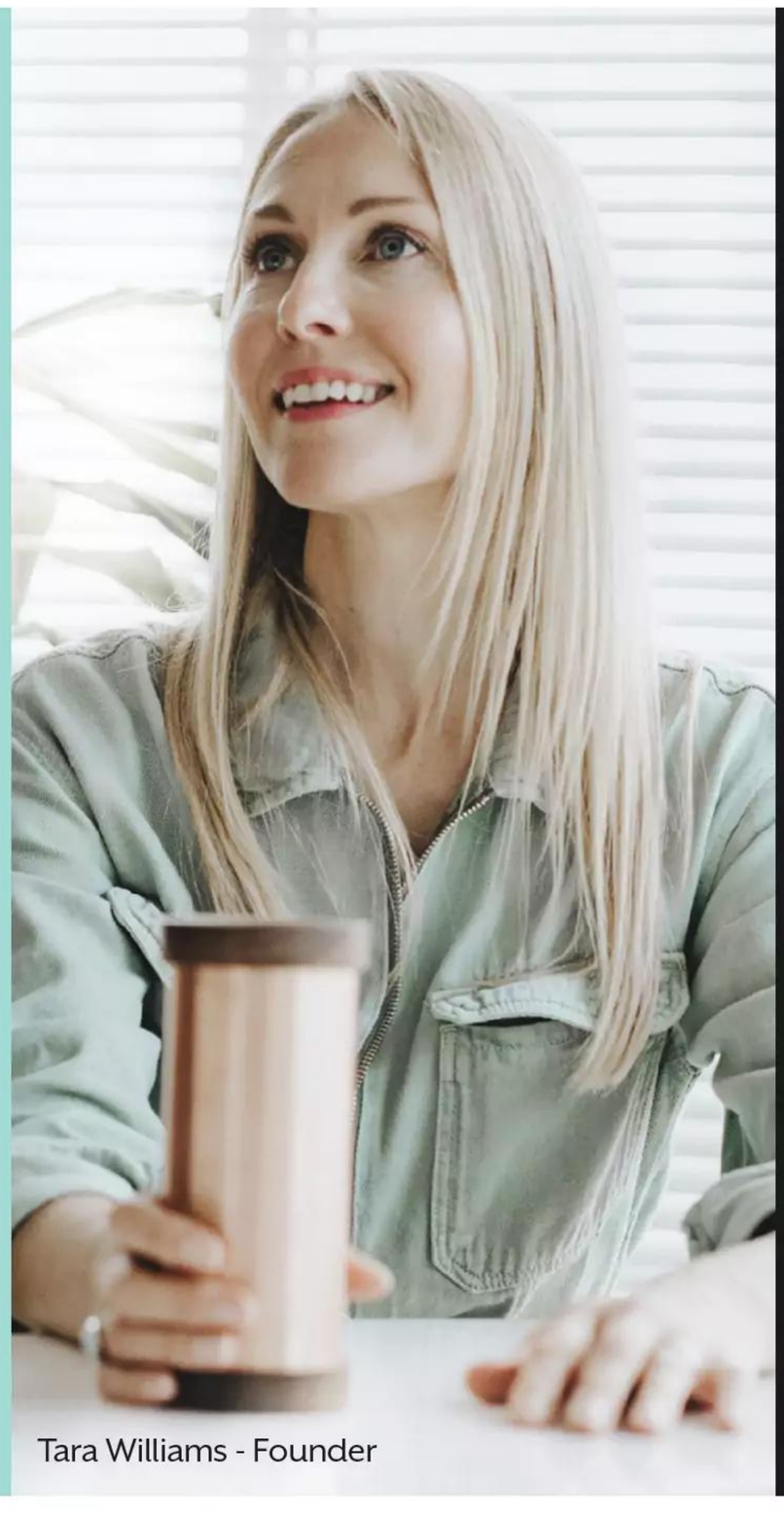
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The weakest one is UVA, which is 95 percent of the UV light that does reach us on the earth's surface. It is orders of magnitude weaker in effect than UVB, but there is more of it around, certainly in the middle of a sunny day.

POMC and its offspring molecules are then carried in the bloodstream to the central system of hormonal regulation, the hypothalamic–pituitary–adrenal axis, where they contribute to the effect on the whole body. And because there is a lot of skin surface, there can be a lot of hormones released and a lot of impact on general functioning.

This has led us to reframe skin as an important neuroendocrine organ in its own right. And the most important component derived from POMC is alpha-melanocyte-stimulating hormone, or alpha-MSH.

Alpha-MSH has the following impressive properties, but bear in mind that we need a reasonable dose of UV light to produce it:

- Suppresses appetite by making us feel full, but also increases energy production[5]
- Damps down allergic and infective inflammatory reactions, but also has direct antimicrobial effects[5]
- Reduces damage to nerves and blood vessels from trauma, ischemia or infection
- Boosts tanning (melanin production), protecting tissues from damage by excessive UV (this is where its name comes from)
- Enhances sexual arousal and function (at least in laboratory animals)

So what happens when we systematically deprive ourselves of sunlight and therefore of alpha-MSH? Probably these effects in the general population:

- Increases in overweight, metabolic syndrome and type 2 diabetes, leading to prescriptions for weight loss drugs such as Ozempic
- Increases in chronic inflammatory disorders, leading to prescriptions for anti-inflammatories and analgesics
- Exaggerated but ineffective inflammatory responses to infections, leading to prescriptions for antibiotics
- Increases in erectile and other types of sexual dysfunction, leading to prescriptions for medications such as Viagra

How to get more UV light

Get some midday sun UVB light is generally available only around the middle of a sunny day, although this depends on the season and where you live. Eat your lunch outdoors or take a walk in the park if you can.

Half an hour outdoors in the middle of the day will get you enough light energy to boost your alertness, energy and mood. If you expose some skin, too, there may be enough to boost your vitamin D and alpha-MSH a bit.



> UVA kicks in about an hour after sunrise and gets gradually stronger as the sun gets higher in the sky

Take a vacation If you have a bolt-hole in the Caribbean or a superyacht moored off the Costa Smeralda, make the most of it. Failing that, you might want to act like the hoteliers do and take a beach holiday in January or February, when you need the sun the most.

Years ago, I used to see a lot of couples in my practice who were struggling to conceive. If the woman had a problem of menstrual irregularity, I would recommend a beach holiday with daily sun exposure as the first treatment. Often, they would return with a better menstrual cycle and succeed in getting pregnant soon after.

Get out early for UVA UVA kicks in about an hour after sunrise and gets gradually stronger as the sun gets higher in the sky (and so is reaching you through less and less atmosphere) until solar noon, when the sun is at its highest. It triggers the release of alpha-MSH from the brain and skin.

If you're on vacation, go to the beach or pool early in the day to get a dose of UVA before the UVB kicks in. You might even get a better sun lounger.

Be sun-sensible We've been programmed into thinking sunlight is dangerous, but it only is if you're not sensible about handling it. Little and often is the rule—stay out in the sun too long and you'll get burnt, which serves no purpose at all.

How long is enough and too much depends on your skin tone, and you can get a personal UV meter to tell you when you should get out of the sun. Good nutrition is also important to help your body to respond well to the sun, as are supplements like omega-3s and antioxidants like vitamins C and E.

NIR light

My apartment in London has a balcony facing west. On a sunny day, even in winter, it gets direct sunlight from about 11 a.m. onward. Step outside then and, though the air may be chilly, you can feel the heat of the sun.

That's due to the infrared photons, which make up about half the energy we get from the sun. It's outside the visible range of light—you can't see it, but you can certainly feel it as warmth. It penetrates farther into the body than visible light, so it can reach important organs and benefit them.

NIR just seems to make all cells work better, but most of us are deficient in it. Before electric lights, there was a natural rhythm to our lives; you couldn't do much indoors by night, or even by day, because you couldn't see what you were doing.

Most work happened outside in the daytime and stopped at dusk. Then there might well be a log fire or a campfire to enjoy for a while, then sleep. Then bright blue light in the morning and we'd start again.

That's the 24-hour cycle that we evolved in for millions of years, and that we're adapted to, designed for. We needed and still need both the light and the dark.

From sunlight, you get a big dose of infrared energy along with the visible light. You would also get infrared from sitting round a campfire at night. You can get a certain amount of infrared from traditional incandescent light bulbs, which have largely been phased out in favor of more energy-efficient LED bulbs.

The big drawback of incandescent bulbs is that only about 5 percent of the power they use becomes visible light—the rest becomes heat. That's why you can now get an LED bulb that says it uses 5 W (watts) of electricity but produces the equivalent of an old 60 W incandescent bulb. This is great for energy saving but has removed another source of infrared, especially NIR, light from our lives.

Indoors, we're screened from sunlight, and most of our lighting comes from electric lights or even from screens. Our eyes adapt so well that we don't notice that bright sunlight is about 100 times brighter than the light above our desks. So we are all deficient in sunlight. Even worse, there's none of that crucial part of sunlight that you can't see, the NIR.

The best way of getting NIR is from the sun. The same real sunlight that gives you UVA and UVB also contains NIR, and even light clothing doesn't screen it out. Getting two weeks of good exposure to sunlight, on a beach holiday for example, is a good way to get everything working distinctly better in your body and mind.

But there are other ways, including the red/NIR light boxes, masks and other devices that are now on the market (see Healthy Shopping, page 64). They shine light onto your skin, where it's picked up by blood in the capillaries and carried around the body.

NIR in the body

Initially, it was thought that no light could penetrate farther than a few millimeters into the body. But this was wrong for two reasons.

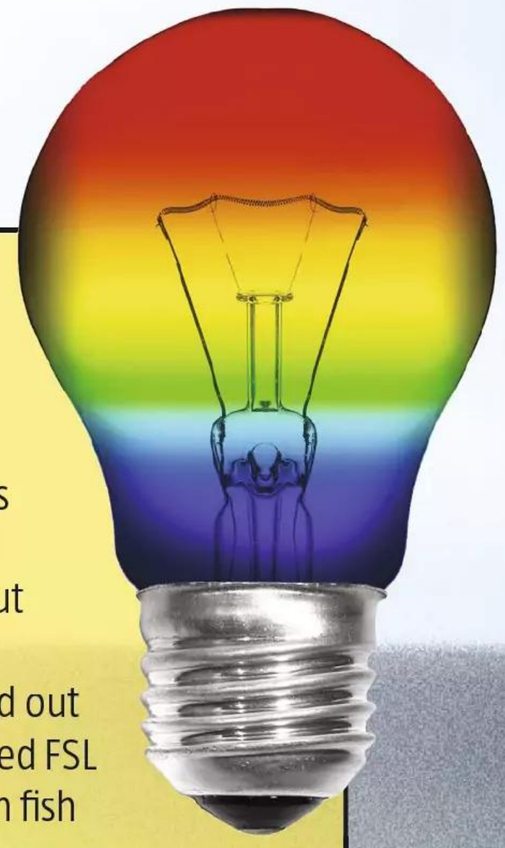
First, think about the tissues that the light is going into; they are a mix of skin, fat, collagen and fluid. The light detectors we use to measure penetration tend to operate in straight lines; you shine a beam of light onto a slice of tissue, and at the other side is a tubular detector pointing straight at the light source.

This works fine if the tissue is transparent because the light goes straight through without being deflected. But it fails if the tissues are translucent (meaning you can see light through them, but you can't see objects) because the light is scattered, so much less reaches the detector even though it may reach the tissues in all directions.

The human eye is a good illustration of this; most light reaching the inside of the eye is infrared, coming in through the translucent eyelids and everywhere else. The visible light directed through the transparent lens onto the retina is just a small fraction.

The second reason we got it wrong about light penetration relates to fluid, and that's important in two places: the brain and the womb. The brain is surrounded by clear amber-colored cerebrospinal fluid, which

The benefits of full-spectrum light



Full-spectrum light (FSL) is light that contains all the wavelengths you get from natural sunlight. It's reasonable to assume this is our natural daytime environment, or as close to it as we can get without living in a tent.

Electrical FSL was invented by John Ott. He found out that pumpkins, apples and all sorts of plants needed FSL to develop properly. And so do most animals, from fish to mammals.

Years ago I owned a share of a business making full-spectrum lighting. I installed it in my clinic and office and tried using it for sick people. It never became a successful business, but one thing we found was a very low sickness rate among the staff—nobody seemed to go off with colds and coughs.

We had a treatment unit with a couch completely surrounded by full-spectrum lights, about 25 fluorescent tubes with high-frequency "ballasts" to drive them. We treated one man with bad intermittent claudication. This condition involves furring up of the arteries that supply blood to the muscles, particularly in the legs, and causes pain through lack of oxygen sufficient to force the person to stop after a short distance. After 30 minutes under the FSL, he got up and walked briskly round the block.

There's still a company called OttLite after John Ott, producing full-spectrum lights for wellness and to reduce eyestrain and improve clarity of vision. A quick search will show lots more businesses in the market, and lots of disputes about who has the best lights. I'm not in a position to judge that, but as someone with 30 years of experience using FSL, I can tell you that choosing a good one is worth the effort.

An organization called Science of Light (SOL; scienceoflight.org) recently started producing lights with both UV and NIR added in, designed for use whenever you're looking at a device with a screen. It addresses all three known components of the mal-illumination problem: the lack of UV, the lack of NIR and the unhealthy radiation from the screen.

So FSL products nowadays are a much better proposition because infrared has been added in as well as ultraviolet. I'm sitting under one as I write this.

Six people who work from home regularly installed and used one of these, and they all reported benefits. These are some examples of what they told me:

"I don't feel drained, and my eyes don't feel as tired as they did."

"I feel more energetic and physically active."

"I believe it helped improve my sleep cycle."

"My mood was better, especially before my monthly cycle."

See Healthy Shopping, page 64, for some of the full-spectrum lights on the market.

Benefits without burning

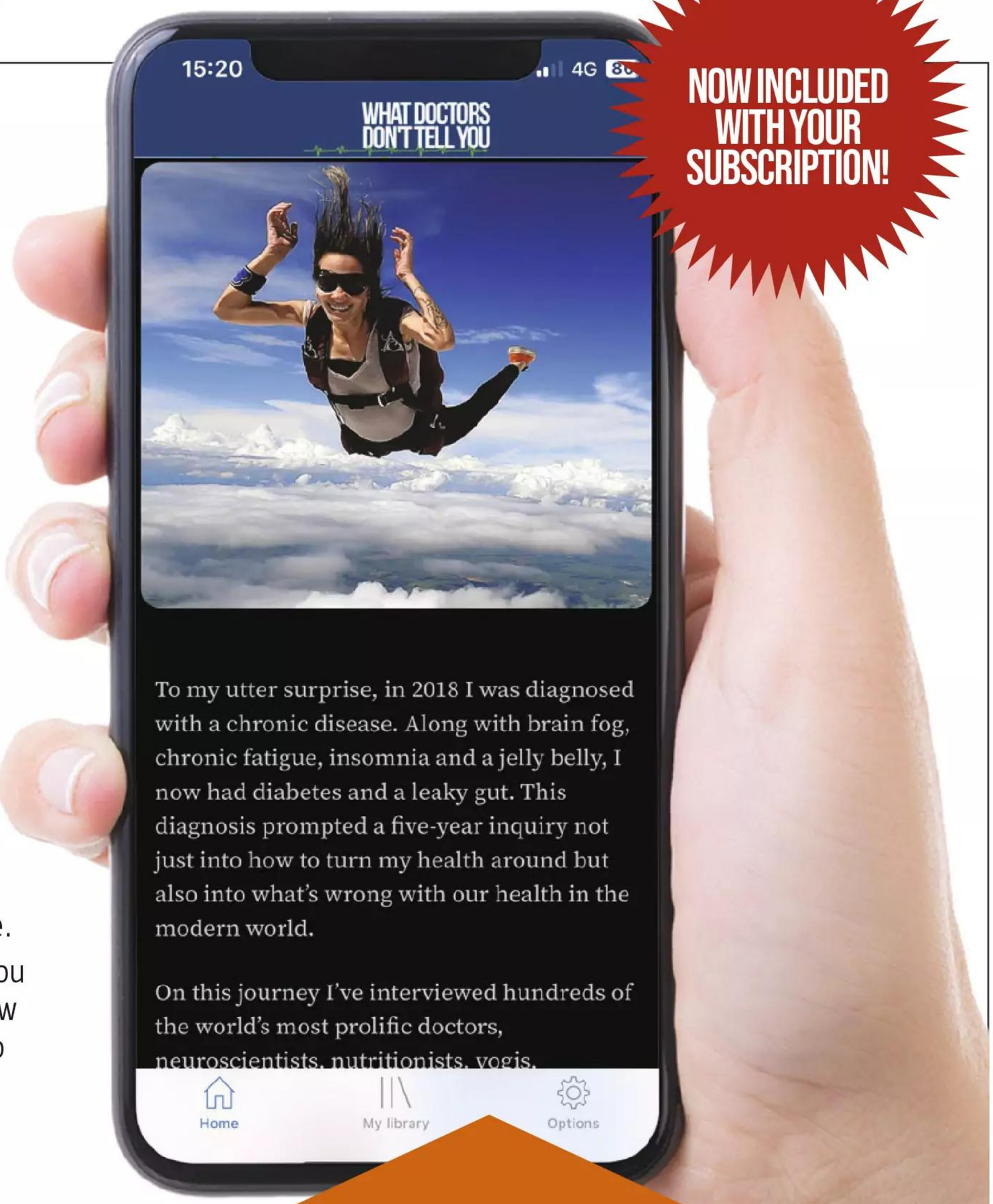
You can and should avoid sunburn by practicing frequent brief exposure to UV light and longer exposure to near infrared (NIR). That's what is in the daily outdoor environment, after all.

NIR is present from sunrise to sunset, even on cloudy days, and will stimulate you to make the antioxidant melatonin. Moderate exercise will also assist with that.

Regular NIR exposure will also help you to build up a solar callus—the slightly thickened top layer of skin that protects you and usually gives a smoother, healthier skin appearance.

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Light and melatonin

Light is crucial for the production of the hormone melatonin, which is not just produced by the pineal gland when it's dark to help you sleep. Melatonin is also produced by every cell in the body, mostly in the mitochondria, during the day when you're active—and it's one of the most potent antioxidants there is.

Near infrared (NIR) light from sunlight boosts mitochondrial function in general and melatonin production in particular. So when you step outside in the morning, you switch on the adrenaline- or activity-driven local production of melatonin, and you switch off the nighttime or sleep production.

Vigorous exercise also rapidly triggers production of large quantities of mitochondrial melatonin, and if you do it in sunlight, the NIR will boost it even further.

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Biology (Basel), 2023;12(1):89

transmits NIR rather well, including down the folds of the brain surface to deeper parts.

Researchers took a 1-inch-thick slice of fresh human brain, shone NIR on one side of it and put an infrared camera on the other side. They could see the light clearly coming through the brain tissue, particularly in the folds, where there would be cerebrospinal fluid to conduct it even better.[7]

You can do a similar experiment for yourself; shine a light through the tissue of your hand, and you'll see red light coming out the other side. Red penetrates well, but you won't see the green and blue elements, which are absorbed more. This is what red light treatments use.

"Red light" is not a precise description because it's mostly a combination of visible red LEDs at around 650 nm wavelength and invisible infrared LEDs at about 810 nm. The visible ones do penetrate the skin, but infrared penetrates much deeper.

The amniotic fluid surrounding babies in the womb has the same transmission quality as cerebrospinal fluid, meaning they can benefit from sunlight. In later pregnancy, the skin and tissues covering the "baby bump" stretch thin so they transmit more light, which the amniotic fluid conducts and scatters everywhere in the womb.

The flipside of this is that the more solid tissue the light has to get through, such as fat, the less effectively it will reach its real target, such as the muscles or the gut microbiome.

There's a lot of discussion about whether light can influence the microbiome,[8] and the answer is probably. So far the research has only really shown this in mice, and it took about two weeks to have an effect. But I wouldn't bet on it being irrelevant for humans, and if there is a direct effect, then a big layer of fat will block it.

How to get more NIR

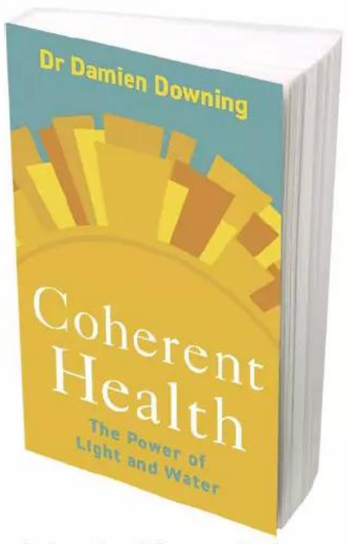
Get outdoors Spend as much time in sunlight as you can without burning.

Go for green spaces NIR is highly reflected by the environment, especially by green things. This means exposure to green spaces, such as forest bathing, doesn't just make us feel good. It really is physically good for us.

In a green environment, close your eyes There's about five times as much NIR getting into your eyes as there is visible light. You can't see it and you don't feel it, certainly not as heat, but it does make you feel good. You want it on your skin as well as your eyes if possible.

Try artificial red/infrared light Use light boxes, mats and other light therapy devices (see page 64). They work, although the real thing is even better.[7]

Watch your weight The more weight you put on, the more fat cells the NIR has to get through to reach your other cells.



Adapted from *Coherent Health* by Damien Downing (Hammersmith Health Books, 2026)

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Choose health

Your everyday health choices can have a big impact on your chances of getting cancer, says Dr Leigh Erin Connealy. Here's her expert advice for taking control of your health and living a long and healthy life

Despite what most people have heard, cancer is only about 5–10 percent genetic, which means the hereditary potential is relatively low.[i] If that's the case, what determines who develops the disease? Over the years, research has shown that lifestyle choices, environmental exposures and other external factors play a much greater part in cancer risk than previously believed.

I often tell patients, "Each decision you make is a healthcare decision." Every single day, every waking hour, you're presented with choices that can either make or break your health. From what foods you ingest to how much you exercise to the length of sunlight exposure and sleep you get each night, it all matters.

Making the right choices can lead to either vitality or ill health. The good news is you have the power to choose.

It's all about the terrain

To protect the body from cancer and other chronic diseases, it's essential to heal the terrain—the bodily environment. Let's say you've been diagnosed with cancer. Even if you kill off the actual cancer cells, if you don't change the environment these malignant cells were growing and thriving in, recurrence is almost inevitable.

The reality is that cancer cells *can* revert to normal cells, and tumor growth *can* be restrained. Your body wants to heal and be healthy. You just need to give it the support it needs to work its magic.

How to take control

It should empower you to know that your daily choices can significantly contribute to your cancer risk. Outlined below are key areas to focus on—starting now—that can have a measurable and positive impact on your vitality and longevity.

Even if you kill off cancer cells, if you don't change the environment they were growing and thriving in, recurrence is almost inevitable

Nutrition

I don't typically give blanket nutritional recommendations since every person is unique and is dealing with different circumstances. However, in over 30 years of practicing medicine, I've found many patients do well on a ketogenic or modified ketogenic diet, and it resolves a variety of health issues. The reasons for this are several-fold.

For those not familiar with the ketogenic or keto diet, these are the basics: You significantly reduce carbohydrate intake and increase consumption of healthy fats, forcing the body into a metabolic state called ketosis. In this state, the body burns fat that the liver has broken down into ketones for fuel instead of glucose.

Burning fat instead of glucose for energy leads to a variety of positive outcomes, from weight loss and better blood sugar management to improved cardiovascular health and reduced systemic inflammation.

The relationship between sugar and cancer is a tricky one. My patients often ask whether sugar consumption factors into cancer risk. While eating sugar doesn't directly cause cancer, some of the underlying factors at work can disrupt the body's terrain, making you more susceptible to it:

- Excess sugar intake can lead to blood sugar control issues such as diabetes and obesity, two independent risk factors for cancer.
- Eating too much sugar fuels *Candida*, a fungus that can cause infection. Again, this throws the body out of equilibrium as it works to remedy the overgrowth.
- Consuming high levels of sugar can systemically increase inflammation and affect hormone levels, two additional risk factors that may contribute to cancer.

It's complicated because cancer cells require glucose as an energy source—but healthy cells use it, too. The bottom line is that eliminating sugar from your diet will have positive effects on your overall health and can help ward off cancer and other chronic diseases.

Need to curb that sweet tooth? Safe, natural sweetener options include stevia, allulose and monkfruit.



Several resources are available online and at your local library regarding the specifics of following a keto or modified keto diet. One excellent resource is *Liliana's Keto Cookbook* (Liliana Partida, 2020), which is available from Amazon and other retailers.

That said, it's always advisable to work with a qualified healthcare practitioner who can help you determine which nutritional plan would work best for you.

Exercise

Depending on which statistics you read, regular exercise can decrease your risk of cancer by anywhere from 10 to 60 percent. Moving the more than 800 muscles in your body regularly and stimulating the circulatory and lymphatic systems isn't just a suggestion if you want to prevent disease and stay healthy—it's a must.

In a recent study published in the journal *Molecular Oncology*, researchers noted there's "strong and consistent evidence" that getting more physical activity lowers the risk of bladder, breast, colon, endometrial, esophageal and stomach cancers. On the other hand, being sedentary increases the risk of colon, endometrial and lung cancers. They also found obesity is an established risk factor for 13 types of cancer.[2]

Find a form of exercise you enjoy doing and engage in it for at least 30 minutes each day, most days of the week. Think outside the box if you're bored with the standard walking, jogging, biking or gym routine. Try a dance class, join a recreational sports league, play ultimate frisbee, rent a kayak or stand-up paddleboard, pick up a hula hoop, or test out a martial arts class like kickboxing to change things up. The important thing is to get—and stay—moving.

Adding a few sessions of resistance training per week is also imperative, especially as you get older. Higher muscle mass has been associated with a lower cancer risk and better outcomes for those diagnosed with the disease.

Cachexia (muscle-wasting) is a common and detrimental side effect that many cancer patients experience. Traditional weightlifting is an excellent option; however, you can also exercise without equipment using your own body

weight for resistance. Squats, lunges, push-ups, burpees and planks can all be done in the comfort of your home.

Mental health

I mention the connection between stress, mental health and cancer a lot. It's because nearly every patient I've seen with a cancer diagnosis has had some form of trauma, unresolved conflict, or extreme stress in their life. You must process these feelings and relieve yourself of emotional turmoil because if they're left untreated, mental burdens can be highly detrimental to your well-being.

Try de-stressing and working through anxiety and other mental struggles with daily practices such as yoga, meditation, tai chi, journaling, talking to a trusted friend or counselor, or watching a funny movie or show.

One method I recommend to all my patients is EVOX therapy. It's an emotional-healing treatment that relies on a technique called "perception reframing."

When someone speaks, the intonation and energy in their voice reflect how they feel about specific topics. EVOX records this information, plots it on a Perception Index graph and shares data that reveals which frequency signatures would work best to heal that person's unique stressors.

These frequency signatures are transmitted back to the person using a specialized hand cradle while they relax, listen to music and focus on their specific area of healing. EVOX is an excellent biofeedback tool to combat stress and anxiety and help resolve past emotional trauma.

Environmental toxins

Unfortunately, we live in a world where known carcinogens are abundant. According to the World Health Organization, some of the most dangerous are ionizing radiation, asbestos, excess alcohol, tobacco smoke and arsenic.[8]

Other chemicals and heavy metals, such as mercury, cadmium, chromium,

Eight items you won't find in my home

So many carcinogenic chemicals try to sneak into our four walls by way of toxic household cleaners, personal care products and even the water we drink. Here are eight items I'll never buy or keep in my home, along with safer, healthier alternatives.



Beauty products with chemicals

The lotions, sunscreens, makeup and other self-care products we use daily can contain dangerous chemicals and endocrine disruptors that are absorbed into our bodies through direct contact. To find safe, clean products, use the Skin Deep database from the Environmental Working Group (ewg.org/skindeep) and read *WDDTY*'s Healthy Shopping guides (see wddty.com).



Toxic cleaners

Commercial cleaning products are loaded with known carcinogens and other harmful ingredients. Using natural cleaning agents such as vinegar and essential oils is a much safer choice. You can check the toxicity levels of common household cleaners at the Environmental Working Group's website, ewg.org/cleaners.



Teflon cookware

Instead of conventional nonstick cookware, use nontoxic ceramic or stainless steel pots and pans.



Plastic coffeemakers

Opt for carafes, pitchers and brewing devices made entirely of stainless steel, ceramic or glass.



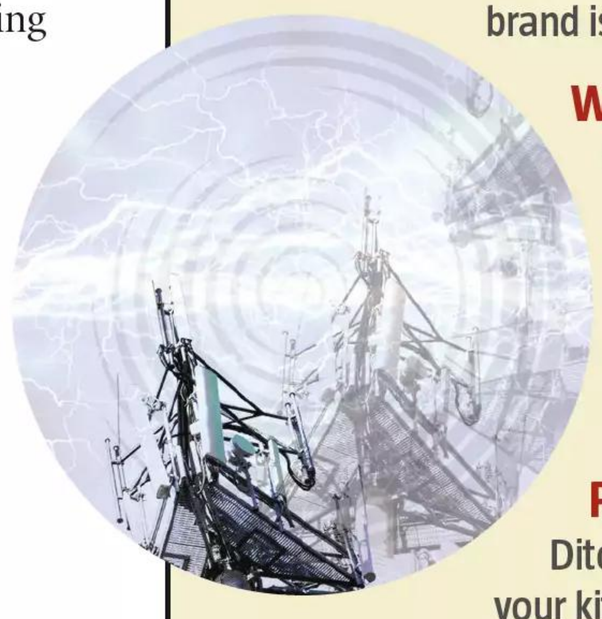
Chemical air sprays

Instead of using chemical air fresheners or fragrance sprays, try diffusing essential oils from a clean, reputable source. Better still, look for a propolis diffuser that not only cleans the air of toxins but also enhances health in multiple ways.



Unfiltered tap water

Several options for clean, filtered water exist, from whole-house filtration systems to pitchers and even personal water bottles. One good brand is Echo Water (echowater.com).



Wi-Fi at night

Eliminating electromagnetic field (EMF) pollution in your home at night is crucial for achieving peaceful sleep and better overall health. You can install a Wi-Fi kill switch that turns off Wi-Fi at the touch of a button. For further protection, purchase an EMF canopy for your bed.



Plastic food containers

Ditch all the hormone-disrupting plastic containers in your kitchen and switch to glass or stainless steel.

I understand if this seems overwhelming, but these changes don't all have to be made at once. Implement them one at a time, little by little, and note how much better you feel.

That said, if I had to choose one item to address first, it would be the water in your home. Clean, filtered, plastic- and chemical-free water is a must.



lead and aluminum, pollute our soil, water supply and air. While some exposure is inevitable, you should do what you can to limit or remove as many of these toxins as possible from your daily life (see the box on page 60 for several simple solutions to eliminate toxins from your home).

It goes without saying that smoking is terrible for your health. Do whatever it takes to quit. Since secondhand smoke is also toxic, don't let others smoke in or around your home.

Excessive alcohol intake is another factor within your control. Be mindful of your drinking habits, and seek professional help if needed.

Buy organic, pesticide-free produce and protein sources whenever possible. Drink filtered water—and steer clear of plastic bottles.

Throw open your windows and let the fresh air into your home. Consider buying air-purifying houseplants such as snake plants, peace lilies, spider plants or English ivy to help scrub indoor air.

Small steps will take you a long way toward reducing your exposure to environmental carcinogens, and every little change lowers your toxic burden.

Healthful practices to live by

There are several therapies and practices you can incorporate into your weekly—or daily—routine to enhance health and help prevent disease. In addition to making changes in the lifestyle areas I've already addressed, add a handful of the following treatments into your regular regimen and note any improvements.

Infrared sauna

Raising your body temperature through sauna therapy induces sweating, which eliminates toxins and increases circulation. Regular use of a sauna confers several benefits, including lower blood pressure, inflammation and pain.

Grounding

Connecting directly to the earth by walking barefoot on grass, soil or sand helps rejuvenate and restore the body by absorbing electrons from the planet's surface. Grounding acts as a natural antioxidant, neutralizing free radicals and improving overall health.

Connecting directly to the earth by walking barefoot on grass, soil or sand helps rejuvenate and restore the body by absorbing electrons from the planet's surface

Besides this benefit, being outside barefoot fosters your connection with nature, helps you be mindful and allows you to enjoy a little light physical activity.

Nightly detox baths

Fewer activities relax the body and calm the mind more than a nightly hot bath. Adding Epsom salts and detoxifying minerals, such as magnesium, can help the body release toxins, soothe sore muscles and support peaceful sleep. These mineral baths are a safe and easy way to detox daily.

Lymphatic drainage

The primary role of the lymphatic system is to "take out the trash" in our bodies. Stimulating this system automatically removes cellular waste and helps the immune system function optimally.

Dry brushing, rebounding and lymphatic-draining massages all help facilitate this crucial detox process. You can find lots of videos online detailing proper dry brushing techniques.

Daily sunlight

The benefits of sun exposure at the right time and in the proper dosage are undeniable. Letting those morning rays soak in while you enjoy your tea or coffee helps wake up your internal clock and keeps your circadian rhythm regular.

Once the UV index starts to rise, take advantage of UVA and UVB rays. Your skin requires both to produce adequate vitamin D, so getting out in the sunshine for 15–20 minutes day without sunscreen or protective clothing is ideal. If you live in an area with limited sunshine, you may need to supplement with vitamin D3. Ask your doctor to order a 25-hydroxyvitamin D blood test to assess your baseline level, and supplement as necessary to maintain an optimal range of 50–70 ng/mL.

Tying it all together

No one is perfect, and we won't make ideal choices 100 percent of the time. But much of our health lies in our hands, and we have quite a bit of say in whether cancer affects us personally. Remember that each day presents a new opportunity to make decisions that support, rather than hinder, your long-term well-being.

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Leigh Erin Connealy, MD, is the medical director of the Cancer Center for Healing and the Center for New Medicine in Irvine, California. Dr Connealy's multidisciplinary treatment protocols, team of healthcare professionals, and holistic approach to health and healing have made the Centers the largest integrative/functional medicine clinic in North America, visited by more than 90,000 patients worldwide. Author of *The Cancer Revolution* and *Be Perfectly Healthy* and a sought-after speaker who has appeared on numerous TV and radio shows, webinars and podcasts, Dr Connealy has been named one of the Top Functional & Integrative Doctors in the US.



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HEALTHY SHOPPING

Joanna Evans scouts out full-spectrum lighting, red light therapy devices and bioavailable copper supplements



Light up your life

In "Light Lessons" (see page 50), Dr Damien Downing discusses the problem of mal-illumination—how most of us are getting too little full-spectrum daylight and too much artificial limited-spectrum indoor light. Getting outside as much as possible is the best way to counter this, he says, but there are also two types of specialized lighting products that can help:

- **Full-spectrum lighting** is artificial lighting designed to closely mimic the spectrum of natural daylight. It can improve your indoor environment and reduce the negative effects of blue light from screens, standard LED lights and other sources, says Downing, especially if it incorporates near-infrared (NIR) and ultraviolet (UV) light.
- **Red/infrared light therapy devices** will give you a dose of NIR light, which supports the body's natural repair and energy systems. NIR light penetrates farther into the body than visible light, so it can reach important organs and have a beneficial effect on them, Downing explains. These devices are often used to treat pain and inflammation, to improve skin health and even to aid recovery from traumatic brain injuries.

Here are some good options for both and where to buy them.

Full-spectrum lighting

Many companies claim to offer "full-spectrum" lighting, but only a handful of manufacturers include an NIR component. And we could find only one that also incorporates UV light.

The products below all offer worldwide shipping, and all score high on the color rendering index (CRI), a scale from 0 to 100 that tells you how accurately a light source shows colors compared to natural daylight.

SOLshine Photo Nutrition™ bioBulbs and PhotoVites

solshine.org

Developed by research and development nonprofit Science of Light (SOL), an organization dedicated to raising awareness of mal-illumination, SOLshine Photo Nutrition™ products include the bioBulb for general all-day lighting anywhere (from $147/£109) and the best-selling PhotoVites light therapy lamp ($447/£330), which is designed for use in shorter therapy sessions.

All the lights are "universal voltage" (although UK customers will need a plug adapter), have a CRI score of 98 and emit "a balanced spectral diet" that includes a trace of UVA and a broad band of NIR light—unlike any other indoor light.

YUJILEDS®

SunWave+™ LED Lights

store.yujiintl.com

SunWave+™ is the fourth generation of full-spectrum technology developed by Yuji Lighting. For the first time, the company has integrated NIR light into the visible light spectrum, "creating a more even, comfortable, and biologically beneficial light."

Prices range from $102 (£74.79) for two A19/A60 bulbs to $439 (£321.91) for a desk lamp that automatically adjusts brightness based on your surroundings. The lights are all flicker-free with a CRI score of 98+ and come in two voltage options (US: 120V and EU: 230V).

BioSpectral

BioLux 1.0 Full-Spectrum Bulb and Full-Spectrum + Infrared Light Panel

biospectralsystems.com

As well as melanin-infused glasses designed to block harmful blue light, BioSpectral offers the BioLux Full-Spectrum Bulb ($28/£23), which has a spectrum that's 50 percent red and near-infrared (NIR) light, mirroring the healing wavelengths found in natural sunlight.

The company also sells the Full-Spectrum + Infrared Light Panel ($419.95/£334) for more targeted therapeutic use. It has a CRI score of 99 and, like the bulb, combines full-spectrum visible light with broad-range NIR wavelengths. At the time of writing, both products are out of stock and suitable for US voltage only, but more stock is in production, along with versions for the UK, the EU and Australia.

Red/NIR light devices

When searching for a red/NIR light therapy device, choose one that includes invisible NIR light, not just visible red, and clearly lists therapeutic wavelengths—630–660 nm for red and 810–850 nm for NIR. Check the irradiance (light energy reaching your body, in mW/cm^2), as higher irradiance usually works faster.

Safety is key, so pick a reputable company that provides clear usage guidance. Finally, select a device that suits the area you want to treat and aligns with your goals.

Here's a small selection of some of the many red/NIR light therapy devices currently on the market. All are available in the US and UK.

Bon Charge
Red Light Therapy Blanket, $1,999/£1,595
US: boncharge.com UK: uk.boncharge.com

Supplied as two separate mats that you can zip together to form a sleeping bag-like blanket, this device is designed to deliver high-powered red light therapy to your whole body. It uses 660 nm red light and 850 nm NIR light—a widely studied and clinically used combination—and has an irradiance level of over 170 mW/cm^2. A red light face mask, cap and toothbrush and various-sized therapy panels are also available from Bon Charge.

Solis
Spectrum Solo Panel 2.0, $424.15/£359
US: us.solistherapy.com UK: solistherapy.com

Intended for therapy targeting specific body areas, like the face, neck, shoulders or localized pain points, this compact panel (13.5" × 9" × 3.75" / 34.5 cm × 23 cm × 9.5 cm) features 60 high-powered 5 W LEDs and five different wavelengths: 630 nm and 660 nm red light and 810 nm, 830 nm and 850 nm NIR light. It has an irradiance level of 180 mW/cm^2 at 6 inches, is FDA/CE-approved and comes with a 90-day money-back guarantee. It's also available in larger sizes.

BlockBlueLight
Red Light Therapy PowerPanel, Tabletop, $599.95/£495.95
US: blockbluelight.com UK: blockbluelight.co.uk

This cutting-edge red light therapy panel is similar in size to the Solis Solo Panel 2.0. It blends amber (590 nm), red (630 nm and 660 nm) and NIR (810 nm, 830 nm, 850 nm and 1060 nm) wavelengths to support a wide variety of wellness applications.

You can adjust the intensity of each wavelength individually to customize your treatment, and there's also a pulsing mode said to offer additional benefits. With an irradiance level of up to 140 mW/cm^2 at 6 inches, it's a powerful tabletop model, although larger panels with higher irradiance are also available from the company.

Bioavailable copper supplements



Copper is an essential antioxidant mineral that's critical for health. But many of us aren't getting enough of it, Cate Montana reports in "Hidden Riches" (see page 42). Copper supplements could therefore be helpful, and they're a key part of the Root Cause Protocol, a structured approach to healing through mineral balance developed by functional diagnostic nutrition expert Morley Robbins.

Specifically, Robbins recommends bioavailable copper supplements. But what does this mean exactly?

Bioavailability is the ability to be absorbed and used by the body. Chelated forms of copper, like copper bisglycinate or glycinate, are generally considered the most bioavailable forms. These are copper molecules bound to amino acids, which helps your body absorb them more easily and gently.

Besides checking the form of copper when searching for a supplement, here are a few more things to consider:

Other ingredients Scan the ingredients list for unnecessary fillers, binders and artificial additives. You want as "clean" a formula as possible.

Dosage Check the dosage of copper you'll be getting per capsule and how many capsules you'll need to take.

Testing Is the product tested, ideally by a third party, for potency and purity?

High manufacturing standards Is the supplement manufactured according to stringent quality standards? Look for certifications from trusted bodies such as NSF (National Sanitation Foundation) International, the world's authority on current good manufacturing practices (cGMPs).

If you're unsure about anything, get in touch with the supplement company to check. But to save you the hard work, we've tracked down three high-quality, highly bioavailable copper supplements available to buy in the US and UK.

Formula IQ
Recuperate IQ, $35/£37.99 (60 capsules)
US: formulaiq.com
UK: yourhealthbasket.co.uk

Morley Robbins helped formulate this supplement, which combines copper bisglycinate (2 mg/capsule) with beef liver powder, spirulina, turmeric extract and boron to support how the body naturally uses copper. Like all Formula IQ supplements, it's made in the USA in NSF- and cGMP-certified labs and undergoes rigorous quality testing.

Pure Encapsulations
Copper (Glycinate), $13/£9.99 (60 capsules)
US: pureforyou.com
UK: healf.com

This vegan formula is free of gluten, soy, eggs, dairy and peanuts, so it's ideal if you have allergies or want to avoid animal products. It supplies 2 mg of copper per capsule, as copper glycinate, and includes only two other ingredients: microcrystalline cellulose (plant fiber) and hydroxypropyl methyl cellulose (the vegetarian capsule).

Thorne
Copper Bisglycinate, $19/£12.99 (60 capsules)
US: thorne.com
UK: healf.com

Containing 2 mg copper per capsule, this supplement uses TRAACS® Copper Bisglycinate Chelate, a specific branded form of copper developed by Albion Laboratories to be well absorbed and gentle on the stomach. It's NSF- and GMP-certified, plus third-party tested to verify the contents match the label and to confirm it's free of contaminants like heavy metals and pesticides.

Never seeing a doctor could be why some Brazilians live past 100

Why Brazilians live forever

Bryan Hubbard

A small group of Brazilians is baffling anthropologists—they seem to be living forever. There's Sister Inah, who was recognized as the world's oldest person until she was brought down in her prime at the age of 116, while one of the men is 113 and still going strong.

The gift of longevity is passed down the generations. A 110-year-old woman has nieces aged 100, 104, and 106, making theirs one of the longest-lived families ever documented in Brazil. The oldest niece, now 106, was still competing as a swimming champion at age 100.

What's their secret? Researchers from São Paulo University aren't sure, but they think genetics might be playing a part. Brazil has one of the most diverse genetic profiles in the world—but then that would also be true for the Brazilians who aren't living to such a ripe old age.[1]

There's something else. All the long-livers are in isolated areas of Brazil, far away from doctors and health services. They've likely never met a medic in their life, and they certainly didn't have the Covid jabs. All of this could be the key to living a long and healthy life, as Prof. Cosmic Onion, our resident naysayer, explains.[2]

He has outlined the eight steps of medicine that ensnare everyone and quicken their death, unless, of course, you're a Brazilian.

Step 1: The medical diagnosis

A doctor issues a set of words— "You have X" — and instantly a disease exists. A patient is created and a lifetime revenue stream ignites. Everything that follows is downstream from that naming moment.

Step 2: The test

The diagnosis often triggers a series of tests. Each has wide "normal" ranges that move over time, and patterns are matched to pre-written categories. No test produces a disease; they produce measurements. Once the label is applied, the map becomes the territory. The name becomes the reality.

3. The negative placebo (the nocebo)

Every diagnosis and test result becomes a type of spell. We know the power of the mind over matter from the placebo effect, which is healing via meaning. But its dark side is the nocebo, disease via meaning. Modern medicine is built on the latter because fear is more profitable than hope, Prof. Onion reminds us.

4. Perpetual disease

Define a condition as chronic, genetic, progressive, and you have a patient for life. Cure the patient, and you lose a revenue stream. The "gold standard" diseases include autoimmune disorders, metabolic syndromes, mood conditions and pre-diseases that blur into diseases. You don't cure these; you manage them forever.

5. The genetic trap

It used to be germs, then chemicals—now medicine is adopting the genetic model of disease. It tells people they were born broken, their DNA is a ticking time bomb and nothing they do can override it. Only medicine can save them. Once that's established, they're locked into psychological dependency and compliance with zero exit doors.



Define a condition as chronic, genetic, progressive, and you have a patient for life. Cure the patient, and you lose a revenue stream

6. The medical conveyor belt

After diagnosis, the patient is subject to repeat visits, follow-up scans, dosage adjustments, newer drugs, specialists, second opinions, invasive tests and procedural interventions. These aren't separate activities but reinforce one another like gears in an engine.

7. The language of disease

Language is the prison cell, and people pronounce, "I have arthritis" or whatever disease has been diagnosed. It's a linguistic twist that turns experience into identity, when actually the arthritis patient should say, "My body is inflamed," and the phrasing would keep agency intact. Labels steal that agency.

8. The terrain

If symptoms aren't invading monsters, what are they? They're messages from a body overwhelmed by toxic load, nutritional deficit, chronic mental stress, contamination and the like. But the terrain model is too cheap, too empowering and too effective to be allowed in medical thinking.

So, what to do? Prof. Onion suggests we stop treating labels as truth and instead observe symptoms without adopting them, clean up our environment and treat the body as intelligent rather than defective. Simply asking, "What happens if I wait?" breaks half of medicine's spells, and choosing curiosity over fear dissolves the other half.

That, or move to Brazil.

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