

DR. MICHAEL MURRAY'S

# NATURAL LIVING NEWS

EXPERT ADVICE FOR EVERYDAY LIVING

May/June 2014

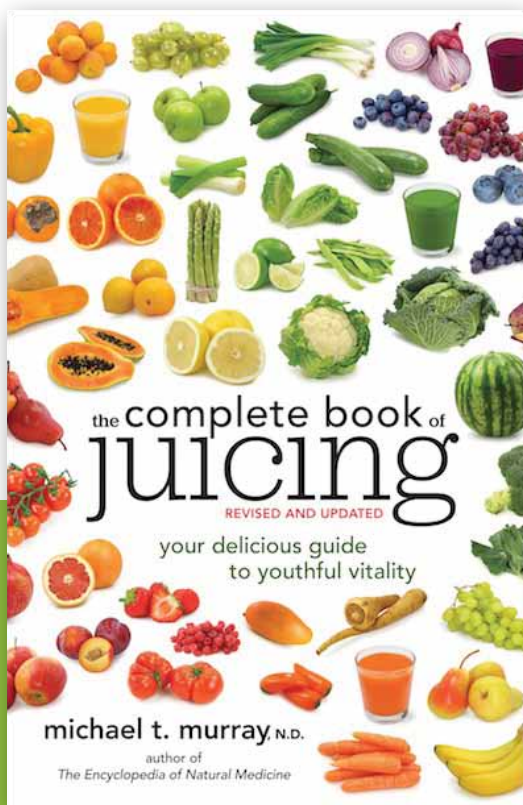
THE TRUTH  
ABOUT  
**COCONUT  
OIL**

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### PUBLISHER

Karolyn A. Gazella

### EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Deirdre Shevlin Bell

### PUBLISHING ASSISTANT

Adam Skogen

### DESIGN

Karen Sperry

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The next frontier in the science of nutrients and herbs is a better understanding of absorption and utilization. Specifically, modern pharmaceutical sciences are being employed to increase the bioavailability of beneficial compounds from nature—whether as dietary supplements or herbal products.

Bioavailability is typically defined as the absorption of an administered dose of unchanged drug that reaches the systemic circulations. When a substance is administered directly into the bloodstream, its bioavailability is 100 percent. When given orally its bioavailability generally decreases due to incomplete absorption and/or being broken down by the liver.

This month's issue features a discussion of the Phytosome® process. One of the fundamental principles of modern pharmacology is that the effectiveness of any product—whether a drug, dietary supplement, or herbal preparation—is based on its ability to deliver an effective dosage. It seems elementary now, but in the 1980s there was resistance to standardizing botanical preparations. Improvements in analytical techniques eventually led to evaluating the chemical composition of herbal medicines in a much more detailed manner. That led to improvements in plant cultivation techniques as well as extraction processes. It seemed that science and medicine finally advanced to a level where nature could be appreciated rather than discounted.

In any great movement it is difficult to calculate the importance of any individual or organization to creating the wave. But as a leading voice during this “green revolution,” the contributions of one company—Indena—were enormously important to the explosion of herbs in the United States. Their research into the bioavailability of botanical extracts led to the development of their Phytosome® line, as well as spawning increased focus on the bioavailability of the active constituents of herbal preparations.

If you want results, you need to absorb what you are taking in. That is the whole premise of the Phytosome® line. You can read more about it in a Q&A on page 30.

—Dr. Michael T. Murray  
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# NATURAL LIVING NEWS

MAY/JUNE 2014

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# HEALING FOODS

## SEEDS OF HEART HEALTH

One of the most commonly prescribed drugs today is for hypertension, or high blood pressure. High blood pressure, which increases heart attack and stroke risk, affects more than 60 million Americans.

The first line of defense against hypertension is diet and exercise. When that isn't enough, new research suggests that a readily available food can have a great influence in lowering high blood pressure.

Flaxseed is rich in omega-3 fatty acids and in lignans. In a 6-month study published in the December 2013 issue of *Hypertension*, subjects with high blood pressure who were given 30 grams of ground flaxseed daily showed significant improvement in their blood pressure. Interestingly, subjects who didn't have hypertension didn't see a change in their blood pressure after eating flaxseed. The ground flaxseed seems to help the body reach a sort of blood pressure equilibrium.

In previous studies, ground flaxseed has also been shown to help improve blood lipid profiles, or cholesterol levels. It seems flaxseed is capable of helping some major biomarkers.



### EAT MORE FLAX

It may seem to be a daunting task to eat an ounce of dry powder every day—the amount shown to reduce blood pressure—so it may take some ingenuity to eat your daily quota. Here are some ideas to add this nutty-flavored ingredient to your regular foods.

- Mix with yogurt
- Stir into applesauce
- Add to soups or stews
- Mix into smoothies or protein shakes
- Add to your oatmeal or any other cereal
- Mix with potato, egg, or tuna salads
- Sprinkle on a salad or sandwich



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## NUTRIENTS

## FEEL FULL, LOSE WEIGHT

Think willpower is the key to weight loss? Think again. People who struggle with weight may be wired to experience fullness differently, according to research. Instead of feeling sufficiently full after a meal, overweight people tend to continue to feel unsatisfied even after eating adequate amounts of food. Not only that, but they also have more frequent food cravings.

The ability to feel full and satisfied (also known as *satiety*) is essential to weight loss, and a soon-to-be-published study adds to the evidence that a revolutionary dietary supplement can help people

achieve that feeling. The supplement, a dietary fiber matrix called PGX<sup>®</sup>, was shown to promote satiety in a study that will appear in the June issue of the journal *Appetite*. PGX<sup>®</sup> mixed with water at the start of breakfast increased satiety compared to the control. The most effective dose (7.5 grams) corresponded to a 34 percent increase in fullness and also reduced blood sugar levels by 50 percent.

In other words, PGX<sup>®</sup> has a unique ability to address the core underlying reasons that weight loss and blood sugar control are often so difficult to achieve.







## TUMMY TROUBLES

“**M**y tummy hurts!” is a refrain familiar to most parents. But some hear it more frequently than others and find themselves searching for answers as to why. Is it a food allergy? A persistent virus? Nerves?

Two common causes of ongoing belly troubles in children are chronic abdominal pain (CAP) and irritable bowel syndrome (IBS). CAP is abdominal discomfort that continues for weeks or months. IBS also involves ongoing abdominal pain, as well as cramping, bloating, gas, diarrhea, and constipation.

Kids (and their parents) suffering from these conditions don’t find much help in conventional medicine. But a study published last January in the *World Journal of Gastroenterology* offers hope: a fiber product called Sunfiber was found to relieve the symptoms of chronic abdominal pain (CAP) and irritable bowel syndrome (IBS) in children. Plus, it’s tasteless and odorless and dissolves easily in food or beverages, so kids don’t even know they’re taking it.

Finally, some relief for kids, their tummies, and the parents who want nothing more than to help them feel better.

# CONDITION

## AGELESS VISION

**Y**ou may think vision changes are just a normal part of aging, but research shows that a lot of them can be prevented. In fact, a pair of new studies points to a very simple way to cut your risk of developing the most common cause of vision loss in the United States: cataracts.

Cataracts are white, opaque blemishes that develop on the eye's lens. Over time,

### DR. MURRAY'S CLEAR VISION TIPS

For healthy vision as you age, provide your eyes with the nutrients they need.

- **MultiStart** multiple vitamin and mineral formula.
- **Enriching Greens** with chlorella, spirulina, wheat grass juice, and barley grass juice, along with herbal extracts.
- **RxOmega-3 Factors** pharmaceutical-grade fish-oil supplement.
- **Vitamin C**, which has been shown in several clinical studies to stop cataracts from worsening.
- **Bilberry, grapeseed, or pine bark extracts**, whose flavonoids protect the eyes.
- **Ultimate Antioxidant Formula**, which protects against the cellular damage at the root of cataracts.



they lead to clouding and vision loss. They are caused by oxidative damage, which means the best way to prevent them is to give the lens the nutrients it needs to fight free-radicals. So it's not surprising, then, that these new studies found that taking a multivitamin supplement reduces cataract risk.

The first study, published in the February issue of the journal *Ophthalmology* looked at data from middle-aged and older male doctors in the United States. The men who reported long-term daily multivitamin use had a significant decrease in the risk of cataract. The second study, published in March in the journal *Nutrition* compiled the data from 12 prospective cohort studies and two randomized controlled trials and found similar results: multivitamin/mineral supplements have a significant beneficial effect in decreasing the risk of cataracts.

If you're not taking a multivitamin already, these studies offer a clear reason to start.



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\* Based on clinical testing on the forearm and forehead.

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# MOVEMENT

## GENTLE FIX FOR INCONTINENCE

It's a problem many women face, but few are willing to talk about. "Whenever I sneeze, cough, jump..." Urinary incontinence affects some 25 million American adults—almost 80 percent of whom are women.

If you ask most women, they believe it is just a part of growing older or having children, and there is nothing that can be done. Thankfully, new research suggests otherwise.

In a study conducted among women with an average age of 53, researchers delivered eight 1-hour physical therapy sessions over the course of a month. The sessions were designed to train the pelvic floor muscles as well as provide advice on reducing leakage. A substantial number of the participants reported improve-



ment in their incontinence symptoms, and 20 percent reported being fully continent after treatment.

The short duration of the study, which was published recently in the journal *Urologia Internationalis*, shows that it isn't so much a lack of muscle tone but a lack of muscle control that has led many of these women to their incontinence issues. With focused muscle training, women can regain the confidence and independence they feel they may have lost to this condition. While more intensive treatments may still be necessary in extreme cases, a majority of women suffering from incontinence could benefit from this simple and gentle approach.



## SITTING IS THE NEW SMOKING

A 10-year study published in the January 2014 issue of *Circulation: Heart Failure* shows that sitting too much is associated with heart failure. The most interesting part of the study is that the risk of heart failure was the same whether the person had coronary heart disease or not.

The researchers didn't look at the amount of exercise subjects participated in. Instead, they looked at nonsedentary time. The bottom line: Exercising for 30 minutes a day won't make up for sitting the rest of the day. Whenever you can, try to get up and move around instead of sitting still.

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# GOUT

## OUT WITH GOUT

**G**out, an inflammatory arthritis triggered by crystallization of uric acid within the joints, has reached epidemic proportions in the United States. The painful condition affects about 10 million people—or about 5 percent of the adult population.

Gout is strongly associated with metabolic syndrome, a group of health conditions characterized by obesity around the middle, insulin resistance, high blood pressure, and blood lipid issues. Metabolic syndrome may lead to heart attack, diabetes, and premature death.

### WHAT CAUSES GOUT?

Gout is the result of increased synthesis of uric acid, reduced ability to excrete uric acid, or both overproduction and underexcretion of uric acid. Several dietary factors are known to trigger gout:

- **Alcohol intake.** Alcohol increases uric acid production by accelerating breakdown of organic compounds known as purines. It also reduces uric acid excretion by increasing lactate production, which impairs kidney function. Elimination of alcohol is all that is needed to reduce uric acid levels and prevent gouty arthritis in many individuals.
- **High-purine diet.** Foods with high purine levels should be entirely

omitted. These include most meats (including organ meats), shellfish, yeast (brewer's and baker's), herring, sardines, mackerel, and anchovies. Intake of foods with moderate levels of protein should be reduced as well. These include some legumes, spinach, asparagus, fish, poultry, and mushrooms.

- **High levels of refined carbohydrates, fructose, and saturated fat.**

Simple sugars like refined sugar, honey, maple syrup, corn syrup, and fructose increase uric acid production, while saturated fats decrease uric acid excretion. The anti-gout diet should focus on complex carbohydrates such as legumes (in moderation), whole grains, and vegetables.

- **Not enough water.** Liberal fluid intake keeps the urine diluted and promotes the excretion of uric acid. Furthermore, dilution of the urine reduces the risk of kidney stones. Drink at least 48 ounces of water each day.

### CONVENTIONAL GOUT TREATMENT

The medical treatment of acute gout is colchicine, the anti-inflammatory drug originally isolated from the plant *Colchicum autumnale* (autumn crocus, meadow saffron). Colchicine has no effect on uric acid levels; rather, it stops the inflammatory process by poison-



ing white blood cells and preventing their movement into areas of inflammation. More than 75 percent of patients with gout show major improvement in symptoms within the first 12 hours after receiving colchicine. However, up to 80 percent are unable to tolerate an optimal dose because of gastrointestinal side effects. Colchicine may also cause bone marrow depression, hair loss, liver damage, depression, seizures, respiratory depression, and even death.

Other anti-inflammatory agents used in acute gout include nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) such as indomethacin, phenylbutazone, naproxen, and fenoprofen.

Once the acute episode has resolved, drugs like allopurinol or febuxostat (Uloric) to keep uric acid levels within

a normal range. These drugs are also associated with side effects and do not address the underlying cause.

## NATURAL GOUT REMEDIES

In the acute attack, colchicine may be necessary to prevent excessive joint destruction. Taking a natural anti-inflammatory at the first instance of a flare-up may eliminate the need for colchicine. Here are a couple of options:

**Curcumin**, the yellow pigment of turmeric (*Curcuma longa*) exerts significant anti-inflammatory effects. However, regular curcumin powder is poorly absorbed. Studies with an advanced form of curcumin known as Theracurmin® show the greatest absorption of any curcumin product on the market. Take 600 mg twice daily during increased times of need.

# GOUT

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## FOODS FOR GOUT

**Cherries and berries.** Cherries, hawthorn berries, blueberries, and other dark red-blue berries contain pigments known as anthocyanidins and proanthocyanidins. Consuming one-half pound of fresh or canned cherries per day has

been shown to be very effective in lowering uric acid levels, preventing attacks of gout, and reducing blood markers of inflammation. In a study published in the December 2012 issue of *Arthritis and Rheumatism*, researchers found that cherry intake (defined as one-half cup or 10 to 12 cherries or the equivalent in extract form) over a two-day period was associated with a 35 percent lower risk of gout attacks and that cherry extract intake was associated with a 45 percent lower risk.

In addition to consuming anthocyanidin- and proanthocyanidin-rich berries, extracts of bilberry, grape seed, or pine bark can be used. The typical dosage recommendation is 150 to 300 mg daily.

*(continued on page 18)*



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# GOUT



**Celery seed.** The compound 3-n-butylphthalide (3nB) is unique to celery and is responsible for its characteristic flavor and odor. A celery seed extract standardized to contain 85 percent 3nB and other celery phthalides has shown benefit in the treatment of rheumatism—the general term used for arthritic and muscular aches and pain. In these studies that included gout sufferers, the pain had been present for approximately 10 years and led to a lack of joint mobility and pain that prevented the carrying out of household duties, hobbies, and activities involved in employment.

Subjects experienced significant pain relief after 3 weeks of use—with average reduction in pain scores of 68 percent and some subjects experiencing 100 percent relief from pain. Most subjects achieved maximum benefit after six weeks of use, although some did notice improvements the longer the extract was used.

These benefits persisted even after taking into account factors that can affect gout risk, such as gender, obesity, purine intake (in foods that can increase gout risk), plus use of alcohol, diuretics and anti-gout medications. The recommended dosage for celery seed extract (85 percent 3nB and related phthalides) is 75 to 150 mg twice daily.

## FINAL COMMENTS

Obesity and insulin resistance are associated with a significant increased risk for gout, as well as an earlier age of onset. Weight loss in overweight individuals can significantly improve blood uric acid levels and gout symptoms. Safe and effective weight loss is a primary treatment goal in overweight individuals.

Achieving ideal body weight is not about dieting or food deprivation, it is all about eliminating excessive hunger, stabilizing blood sugar levels, and increasing the feelings of pleasure and satisfaction from food. The key tool in helping people achieve these goals is the use of a matrix of soluble fibers known as PolyGlycoPlex (PGX®)—the most viscous and soluble fiber ever discovered. PGX® has been shown to

- Reduce appetite and promote effective weight loss
- Reduce the glycemic index of any food by 35 to 70 percent
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To gain the benefits of PGX® it is important to ingest 1.5 to 5 grams of PGX® at major meals, and perhaps at least twice more per day if your appetite is difficult to tame. For more information see [www.PGX.com](http://www.PGX.com).



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# COCONUT OIL

## THE TRUTH ABOUT COCONUT OIL

**T**he information on coconut oil that circulates on the Internet makes it seem like a cure-all. If you believe everything you read, this “miracle” substance is the answer to infections, diabetes, Alzheimer’s disease, and weight loss. But as is the case with much of what you find on the Internet, many of these claims are overblown.

There is no question that coconut oil is a healthy type of fat, but many of the prevailing health claims are based on misinterpreted science. Let’s take a look at what the science *really* tells us about the health benefits of coconut oil.

### THE HISTORY OF THE COCONUT

Recorded in Sanskrit in the Vedas, the oldest (circa 1500 BC) scriptures of Hinduism, the coconut is said to nourish the body, increase strength, and promote beautiful hair and skin. In Ayurvedic medicine, coconut oil infused with herbs has been used medicinally for almost 4,000 years as an effective treatment for skin diseases caused by infestation with parasites such as scabies and head lice.

Today, about 20 billion coconuts are grown each year, and although the major producers are the Philippines, India,

and Indonesia, virtually everywhere the coconut palm grows—in the tropical regions of Latin America and East Africa as well as Asia, the Pacific Islands, and the Philippines—coconut products serve as a dietary staple.

The importance of the coconut throughout the tropics is exemplified by its many uses in the Philippines, where the coconut palm is called the “tree of life.” In these islands, virtually all parts of the tree are used medicinally, including its roots, bark, leaves, and flowers, as well as the husk, shell, water, and oil provided by its fruit, the coconut.

### HEALTH BENEFITS OF COCONUT OIL

Approximately 50 percent of the fatty acid in coconut oil is in the form of a medium chain (12-carbon) saturated fat called lauric acid, a health-promoting fat whose only other abundant source in nature is human breast milk. In the body, lauric acid is converted into a highly beneficial compound called monolaurin, an antiviral, antibacterial, and antiprotazoal agent that destroys a wide variety of disease-causing organisms. Studies have demonstrated that monolaurin eliminates lipid-coated viruses such as *Herpes simplex virus-1*, *Haemophilus influenzae*,



and measles virus. Pathogenic bacteria inactivated by monolaurin include *Staphylococcus aureus*, Group B gram positive *Streptococcus*, and *Helicobacter pylori*. Not only does monolaurin fight *H. pylori*—a bacteria linked to peptic ulcers—but the bacteria, which has become resistant to a number of antibiotic drugs, appears to be unable to develop resistance to coconut's natural antimicrobials.

Lauric acid and its derivative monolaurin also kill or inactivate a number of fungi, yeast, and protozoa, including several species of ringworm, *Candida albicans*, and *Giardia lamblia*.

## COCONUT OIL IS HEART HEALTHY

Until the 1950s, coconut oil was commonly used in the U.S. food industry until it was mistakenly accused of contribut-

ing to the development of cardiovascular disease. The reason? Its abundant saturated fats—even though they were in a shorter chain compared to the saturated fats found in meat and dairy. Coconut oil was implicated in raising cholesterol levels when a researcher in Minnesota fed mice fully hydrogenated coconut oil and saw a dramatic rise in the rodents' cholesterol levels. Although Harvard scientists later reviewed this study and concluded that the cholesterol-raising factor was not coconut oil *per se*, but the fact that it had been fully hydrogenated and was purposely altered to make it completely devoid of any essential fatty acids, coconut oil was labeled as an artery-clogging fat. We now know that coconut oil not only doesn't cause an increase in bad cholesterol, it actually increases the levels of beneficial HDL cholesterol.

# COCONUT OIL

## COCONUT OIL AND WEIGHT LOSS

The weight loss-promoting effects of coconut oil are particularly misinterpreted. Coconut's medium-chain fats are easily absorbed and preferentially used as an energy source, and their burning actually increases the body's metabolic rate. They basically act as kindling to stoke the metabolic fire to burn longer-chain fats. The result is that as long as calories in excess of the body's needs are not consumed, the coconut oil helps burn more calories.

In one study, the fat-burning effect of a high-calorie diet containing 40 percent fat as medium-chain fatty acids was compared to one containing 40 percent fat as long-chain fatty acids from butter. The fat-burning effect of the medium-chain fat diet was almost twice that of the long-chain fat diet—120 calories versus 66 calories—leading the researchers to conclude that the excess energy

provided by medium chain fats was not stored as fat, but burned. In a follow-up study, medium-chain fats given over a six-day period increased diet-induced fat-burning by 50 percent.

So it's true that coconut oil has fat-burning effects. But here's an important part of the message that often gets lost: Coconut oil will only help you lose weight if you substitute it for an equal amount of fat from other sources in order to keep the calorie intake the same. Ideally as part of a weight loss plan, the coconut oil use will coincide with a reduction in calorie intake. If that occurs, coconut oil can definitely help burn more calories.

## IS COCONUT OIL A CURE FOR ALZHEIMER'S?

Though some Internet rumors claim that coconut oil is a cure for Alzheimer's disease, this is an unfortunate case of misinterpreted science. I wish it were true. It

*(continued on page 24)*



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# COCONUT OIL

is kind of like having a cure for baldness. If something were this simple, you could not keep it a secret. Though coconut oil has many health benefits, it is definitely not capable of curing Alzheimer's—though as part of a ketogenic diet (more on that below) it may be temporarily helpful in boosting brain energy.

The ketogenic diet is a high-fat, adequate-protein, low-carbohydrate diet that is used primarily to treat difficult-to-control epilepsy in children. The diet is very helpful in boosting brain energy. In the absence of adequate carbohydrates, the brain switches from burning glucose (blood sugar) as an energy source to burning what are known as ketones produced from the breakdown of fat. In epilepsy, the ketogenic diet can lead to a dramatic reduction in the frequency of seizures. In Alzheimer's disease as well as mild cognitive impairment (MCI), a ketogenic diet can lead to major improvement in brain function. Unfortunately, this improvement is usually short-lived in Alzheimer's disease (AD).

Medium-chain triglycerides from coconut oil produce more ketones per unit of energy than other dietary fats, so they are often a key part of the ketogenic diet. The takeaway message here is that supplementing the diet with coconut oil alone is not likely to be of benefit in AD or MCI, but as part of a ketogenic diet it may be quite helpful—at least temporarily.



*Coconut oil should not be used for high-heat sautéing. Make sure you only cook below any oil's smoke point.*

## HOW TO USE COCONUT OIL

Coconut oil can replace butter on a 1:1 basis in any baking recipe. Coconut oil also makes a delicious spread or dip. There is a common misconception that coconut oil is a good oil for sautéing, stir-frying, and frying, but the truth is that it actually has a low smoke point and is really not the best choice for these uses. Monounsaturated fat sources such as olive, macadamia nut, avocado, and canola oil are better oils for these purposes. The smoke point is the temperature at which, when heated, an oil will begin to produce smoke. The smoke point of coconut oil is actually quite low compared to the other oils recommended. For example, unrefined coconut oil smokes in the range of 350°F while virgin olive oil is generally well above 400°F. The bottom line here with the use of coconut oil in cooking is to avoid heating it to its smoke point, because that's when it starts breaking down.



## Superior Immune Protection for Every Body... Every Day

When it comes to protecting our good health, everybody knows that a strong immune system is essential every day of our lives. Yet, daily factors of modern living such as stress, winter challenges, and travel can significantly weaken the immune system.

MaitakeGold 404® is an industry leading nutraceutical ingredient consisting of a patented Maitake mushroom extract. When incorporated into dietary supplement products, MaitakeGold 404® provides advanced immune support when you and your family need it most. Its immune enhancing benefits have been confirmed in human clinical trials conducted at the world's leading research institutions. MaitakeGold 404®, which is rich in beta-glucan bioactives known for their immune-enhancing benefits, helps promote daily and seasonal wellness for Every Body...Every Day.

### **MaitakeGold 404®**

Visit [www.maitakegold.com](http://www.maitakegold.com) to learn more!

*MaitakeGold 404® is featured in Natural Factors products and other fine supplement brands.*



\*These statements have not been evaluated by the Food and Drug Administration. This product is not intended to diagnose, treat, cure or prevent any disease.

# RELATIONSHIPS

## HOW TO CURE THE “HANGRIES”

**H**ave you heard of the popular buzz word “hangry”? It refers to the unreasonable anger many people feel when they’re hungry. New research is showing that it is a reality, and it’s a result of blood sugar drops. In fact, a new study published in the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences (PNAS)* in April 2014 shows that married couples are more aggressive when they have low blood sugar levels and poor blood sugar control.

### BLOOD SUGAR LEVELS AND RELATIONSHIPS

Previous research conducted by Brad Bushman, PhD, a psychologist at Ohio State University, showed that people with blood sugar disorders exert more aggressive behaviors, have less self-control, and are less inclined to forgive others.

Bushman’s latest study in *PNAS* recruited 107 married couples. The husbands and wives measured their glucose (blood sugar) levels every morning and night for 21 days. The study had an interesting design to indicate aggressiveness. Each night the participants were asked to stick up to 51 pins in a voodoo doll, depending on how angry they were at their spouse.

At the end of the 21 days, researchers created another test. They asked each husband and wife to compete against their significant other in a virtual game. The couples were told the winner got to

blast the loser with a loud, obnoxious noise (though that never happened). Researchers measured how long and how intense the winner chose to make the noise.

The results showed that the study participants with lower nightly blood sugar levels were more aggressive—reflected both in how many pins they used in their voodoo dolls and in the intensity and length of noise blasting they selected. These findings remained true even after researchers controlled the data for relationship satisfaction.

### THEN AND NOW HYPOGLYCEMIA

Hypoglycemia refers to low blood sugar (glucose). Normally, the body tries to maintain blood sugar levels within a narrow range through the coordinated effort of several glands and their hormones. Hypoglycemia is often the result of an after effect of a high-carbohydrate meal or snack. Blood sugar levels rise and then drop below 70 mg/dl three to five hours after a meal.

Because glucose is the primary fuel for the brain, low levels affect the brain first. Symptoms of hypoglycemia can range from mild to severe and include headache; depression, anxiety, irritability, and other psychological disturbances; blurred vision; excessive sweating; mental confusion; incoherent speech; bizarre behavior; and convulsions.



Some experts have recommended that instead of focusing on the blood sugar level dropping below 70 mg/dl in defining reactive hypoglycemia, we should instead look at glycemic volatility or the “blood sugar rollercoaster.” Many people with symptoms of hypoglycemia have normal or even elevated glucose levels. Symptoms appear to correlate better with rapid drops in blood glucose rather than drops below 70 mg/dl.

Using continuous blood sugar monitoring, Michael R. Lyon, MD, of the Canadian Center for Functional Medicine has discovered that most people with weight problems and insulin resistance go through their days with remarkably fluctuating blood sugar or increased glycemic volatility. Lyon has found symptoms of hypoglycemia occur when blood sugar drops rapidly—even if it stays in the normal range.

## CONTROLLING BLOOD SUGAR

Proper blood sugar regulation is a critical goal for good health and also appears to be important in maintaining positive relationships. The primary

approach is the use of dietary therapy to stabilize blood sugar levels. Blood sugar volatility is not a disease; it is simply a complex set of symptoms caused by faulty carbohydrate metabolism induced by an inappropriate diet.

All simple, processed, and concentrated carbohydrates must be avoided. Foods rich in soluble fiber such as legumes and low-glycemic vegetables (especially green leafy and non-starchy vegetables) should be consumed regularly. Frequent, small meals may be more effective in stabilizing blood sugar levels than the standard three big meals a day.

Take a high-potency multiple vitamin and mineral formula providing a daily intake of 200 to 400 mcg of chromium. In addition, PGX®—the most viscous and soluble fiber ever discovered—at a dosage of 1 to 5 grams should be taken before meals (the higher dosage is recommended for those also wanting to lose weight). PGX® substantially lowers the glycemic index of any food or meal and stabilizes blood sugar levels.

And remember: Keeping blood sugar levels in check not only benefits your body. It may help your relationships, too.

# MAITAKE MUSHROOM

## NATURE'S IMMUNE BOOSTER

For thousands of years mushrooms have been highly respected in Asia for their health-promoting properties. One mushroom was regarded as the “King of the Mushrooms” because of its superior medicinal effects over all other mushrooms. Modern research has shown that this mushroom—Maitake (*Grifola frondosa*)—is a source of powerful immune-enhancing compounds with significant anticancer effects.

### MODERN RESEARCH ON MAITAKE

Modern research on maitake began in the 1970s in Japan under the direction of Dr. Hiroaki Nanba, who was researching the immune-enhancing properties of mushrooms. He came to the conclusion that maitake extracts demonstrated more pronounced antitumor activity in animal tests than other mushroom extracts. Nanba also found that maitake extracts were quite effective when given orally. In contrast, the other mushrooms he was studying, such as shiitake, were only effective when their components were injected into the bloodstream.

In 1984 Nanba identified a fraction of maitake that possessed a significant ability to stimulate white blood cells known as macrophages (literal translation “big eaters”). Macrophages are formed when there’s an infection or an accumulation of

damaged or dead cells in the body. Their job is to target and destroy microbes and other invading particles. Throughout the late 1980s and into the 1990s, Dr. Nanba and other Japanese researchers continued to study maitake, improving upon the antitumor and immune-potentiating activity of maitake.

### MAITAKE AND THE IMMUNE SYSTEM

Maitake exerts profound effects on immune function. In a nutshell, it appears that the beta-glucan components actually bind to receptors on the outer membranes of macrophages and other white blood cells including natural killer (NK) cells and cytotoxic T-cells. These immune cells are very important in protecting against and fighting cancer because they can attack tumor cells directly.

Just like a key in a lock, the binding of the maitake components flips white blood cells on and triggers a chain reaction leading to increased immune activity. In addition to increasing the macrophages’ ability to engulf and destroy cancer cells, microbes, and other foreign cells, the binding stimulates the production of important signaling proteins of the immune system such as interleukin-1, interleukin-2, and lymphokines. These immune activators ramp up defenses by activating immune cells.



Maitake also stimulates the production of white blood cells within the bone marrow—the major area for white blood cell production. Reduced bone marrow production means lowered white cell counts and an increased risk of infection and cancer. This beneficial effect of the beta-glucan is put to good use in cancer patients undergoing radiation therapy or chemotherapy. Maitake researchers have identified four primary mechanisms by which maitake may protect against cancer:

- It protects healthy cells from becoming cancerous.
- It enhances the immune system's ability to seek out and destroy cancer cells.
- It helps cancer cells regain control of cell division and programmed cell death (apoptosis).
- It helps prevent the spreading (metastasis) of cancer.

Maitake is perfectly suited as an addition to conventional cancer therapies. In addition to exerting some direct benefits of its own, it also helps reduce the side effects of conventional chemotherapy (and radiation) such as nausea, weight loss, fatigue, and immune suppression while at the same time enhancing their effectiveness.

Preliminary studies in animal models have shown maitake preparations can inhibit the growth of tumors in the colon, lungs, stomach, liver, prostate, cervix, bladder, and brain, as well as leukemia. The significance of this inhi-



## HOW TO TAKE MAITAKE

The dosage range is based upon body weight—0.5 to 1.0 mg for every 2.2 pounds (1 kg) of body weight per day. That translates to a dosage of approximately 35 to 70 mg of the beta-glucan fraction. For best results, take 20 minutes before meals or on an empty stomach.

bition in animal models to the human condition is not clear at this time, but it does give us an idea of the potential of maitake beta-glucan fractions.

In the 1980s, Japanese researchers also demonstrated that maitake beta-glucans enhanced helper T-cells, the target cells of the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV). Since then, based upon clinical results researchers concluded that maitake beta-glucans appear to work on several levels: by direct inhibition of HIV, stimulation of the body's own natural defense system against HIV, and making the body less vulnerable to opportunistic disease.



## EXPERT ANSWERS TO YOUR HEALTH QUESTIONS

### FROM THE EDITOR

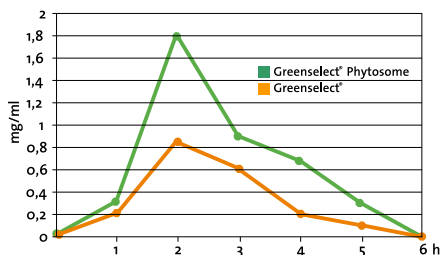
Do you have a question for Dr. Murray? Submit it online at [www.DoctorMurray.com/contact-us](http://www.DoctorMurray.com/contact-us). Please note that answers to health questions are not medical advice. If you have an issue that requires medical attention, please see your doctor.

### Q How do Phytosomes enhance the effectiveness of herbs?

**A** Phytosomes are advanced forms of herbal products that are better absorbed and produce better results than conventional herbal extracts. Phytosomes are produced via a patented process whereby the individual components of an herbal extract are bound to phosphatidylcholine—a compound derived from plant sources and one of the chief components of the membranes in our cells.

The Phytosome® process has been applied to many popular herbal extracts, including Ginkgo biloba, grape seed, milk thistle, green tea, and curcumin. What the process produces is a little cell with the valuable components of the herbal extract protected from destruction by digestive secretions and gut bacteria.

### GREENSELECT® PHYTOSOME VS GREEN TEA EXTRACT



### Q What's the science behind Phytosomes?

**A** There is a growing body of scientific studies showing improved absorption with the Phytosome® process. Silybin Phytosome® is perhaps the most well studied. Silybin is the chief component of silymarin, the flavonoid complex from milk thistle. Silybin Phytosome® contains one part silybin, one part phosphatidylcholine.

In one study, the excretion of silybin in the bile was evaluated in patients undergoing gallbladder removal for gallstones. Patients were given either a single oral dose of the Silybin Phytosome® or milk thistle extract (80 percent silymarin). The amount of silybin recovered in the bile within 48 hours was 11 percent for the Silybin Phytosome® group and 3 percent for silymarin group. That represents nearly four times greater absorption for the Phytosome® form.

In another study, plasma silybin levels were determined after a single oral dose of Silybin Phytosome® and a similar amount of silybin from milk thistle extract in healthy volunteers. The results indicate that the absorption of Silybin

Phytosome® is approximately seven times greater compared to the absorption from regular milk thistle extract (70 to 80 percent silymarin content). Similar results have been found in studies comparing Green Tea Phytosome® with green tea extract looking at the blood levels of the key polyphenol. Regular curcumin powder is poorly absorbed, but Meriva (curcumin Phytosome®) is much more bioavailable.

## **Q** How does better absorption relate to better results?

**A** The effectiveness of any herbal product is dependent upon delivering an effective level of the active compounds. It only makes sense that if you can increase the absorption and utilization of these components, you will see better results. That is exactly what has been shown in several studies with various Phytosomes.

For example, several clinical studies have also shown Silybin Phytosome® is more effective and produces better results compared to regular milk thistle extracts. In one study of patients with chronic hepatitis treated with Silybin Phytosome® for up to 120 days, liver function returned to normal more quickly in the patients taking Silybin Phytosome® compared to a group of controls.

The superiority of Green Tea Phytosome® was shown in a study involving 100 overweight subjects. Half received the Green Tea Phytosome® and the other half received a placebo. Both groups were

placed on reduced-calorie diets. After 90 days on the reduced-calorie diet, the average weight loss in the control group was 9.9 pounds. The group taking the Green Tea Phytosome® lost on average a whopping 30.1 pounds—more than triple the weight loss of those in the control group!

Studies have also shown Meriva®, Ginkgo Phytosome®, and Grape Seed Phytosome® to produce better results compared to the conventional extract forms of these plants.

## **Q** Are dosages different for Phytosomes?

**A** The best recommendation is to follow label instructions. In general, based upon absorption only, the dosage level of most Phytosomes® is pretty close to the dosage recommendations typically given for the corresponding standardized herbal extracts. Keep in mind that the total weight of the Phytosome® also includes the phosphatidylcholine component. For example, let's take a look at grape seed extract and Grape Seed Phytosome®. One 50 mg capsule of Grape Seed Phytosome®, in terms of absorption only, is equivalent to about 50 mg of regular grape seed extract. However, in terms of biological activity, based on preliminary studies it is estimated that one 50 mg capsule of Grape Seed Phytosome® may be as effective as 150 mg of unbound grape seed extract. That example highlights why it's important to follow label instructions.



# Have that heavy feeling?

## **LOSE IT with Greenselect® PHYTOSOME**

Green tea extracts are widely used in products for weight management. But, not all green tea extracts are alike. Absorption of the active constituents varies and low absorption reduces efficacy. Only Indena offers proven Greenselect® PHYTOSOME.

Greenselect® PHYTOSOME is a **caffeine-free** extract that is double standardized in polyphenol and ECGC content and combined with phospholipids to maximize bioavailability and effectiveness.

A recent clinical study in overweight individuals with Greenselect® PHYTOSOME combined with a reduced calorie diet resulted in weight loss averaging over 30 lbs in 90 days along with a 12% reduction in body mass index (BMI).<sup>1</sup>

Available through Natural Factors  
and other fine manufacturers.



**indena**  
science is our nature®

These statements have not been evaluated by the Food and Drug Administration. This product is not intended to diagnose, treat, cure, or prevent any disease.

<sup>1</sup> Di Piero F., Menghi A.B., Barreca A., Lucarelli M., Calandrelli A., "Greenselect® Phytosome as an Adjunct to a Low-Calorie Diet for Treatment of Obesity: A Clinical Trial", *Alternative Medicine Review*. Volume 14, Number 2 (2009).