

DR. MICHAEL MURRAY'S

NATURAL LIVING NEWS

EXPERT ADVICE FOR EVERYDAY LIVING

October/November 2013

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BLOOD PRESSURE MEDICINES: MORE HARM THAN GOOD?

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More than 60 million Americans have high blood pressure, including more than half of all Americans age 65 to 74 years old and almost three quarters of all American blacks in the same age group. High blood pressure is a major risk factor for a heart attack or stroke. In fact, it is generally regarded as the most significant risk factor for stroke.

Drugs to lower blood pressure are among the most commonly prescribed medicines in the United States. More than 678 million blood pressure prescriptions were filled in 2010. All of the current classes of blood pressure lowering drugs possess significant side effects. A new study indicates that women taking blood pressure lowering drugs called calcium-channel blockers, like Norvasc (amlodipine) for 10 years or more had a 250 percent higher risk of developing breast cancer than those who never took the medicine or who used other blood pressure treatments (see page 9).

According to the National Cancer Institute, more than 232,000 women will be diagnosed with breast cancer in the United States this year, and more than 39,600 will die of the disease. It is a sad fact that the use of calcium channel blockers could be the cause of some of these cancers. Each year about 100 million prescriptions are filled for calcium-channel blockers. This new link to breast cancer provides a significant cause of concern and underlines the importance of using alternative therapies for blood pressure control in women—preferably non-drug therapies.

As always, we've filled this issue with information to help you live your best life. Many of these suggestions—such as improved diet, lifestyle modification, and the proper use of natural products, such as the extract of celery seed concentrated to contain the compound 3-n-butylphthalide (see page 12)—offer safe and effective ways to control blood pressure, without resorting to potentially harmful drugs.

—Dr. Michael T. Murray

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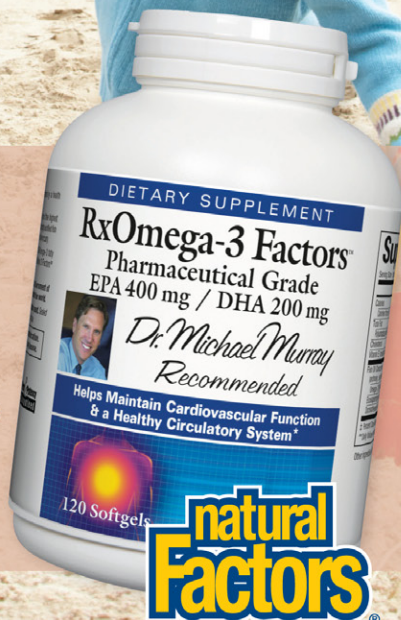
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DR. MICHAEL MURRAY'S

NATURAL LIVING NEWS

OCTOBER/NOVEMBER 2013

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HEALING FOODS

BRAIN-PROTECTING FOOD

There are many benefits of a low-fat, low-glycemic diet, but new research shows another plus: It can also protect your brain. In a study published in *JAMA Neurology*, people who ate a high-fat, high-glycemic diet had changes in the brain seen in people with a genetic predisposition to Alzheimer's disease. In other words, diet can actually nullify the protection a person's genetic code can provide.

This shouldn't be surprising; Alzheimer's disease is often referred to as diabetes of the brain, or even "type 3 diabetes." Lower insulin levels as created by the low-fat, low-glycemic diet are associated with fewer beta-amyloid deposits in the brain. Inflammatory reactions to

these amyloid proteins in the brain are believed to be a key factor in promoting Alzheimer's disease in susceptible people.

Hallmarks of the low-fat, low-glycemic diet are eating foods that are less than 55 on the glycemic index and consuming an overall diet that is less than 7 percent saturated fats and about 15 to 20 percent protein (think meals like fish, brown rice, and steamed veggies, for instance). It's interesting to note that in this study, both diets contained the same number of calories—so it's not the quantity, but the type of food that is key to health promotion and disease prevention.

LADIES: EAT MORE BERRIES TO REDUCE HEART ATTACK RISK

Berries not only taste great, they also help the heart. In a new study in the journal *Circulation*, women who ate more than three servings of blueberries and strawberries a week had a 34 percent lower risk of heart attack compared to the women who ate those berries only once a month.

Berries are a rich source of anthocyanins, which have been shown to have many health-promoting effects. Other sources of these disease-fighting compounds include cranberries, raspberries, blackberries, cherries, concord grapes, muscadine grapes, red cabbage, and peaches. Because berries, peaches, and some other fruits have a thin skin, they absorb pesticides more easily, so it's doubly important to choose organic.





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* Based on a double-blind, placebo-controlled study conducted at the University of Connecticut and published in the Journal of Rheumatology.

NUTRIENTS

TOP PICKS FOR FLU PREVENTION

Seasonal flu season typically peaks in January or February, but the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention often report increased activity as early as October. Here are my favorite dietary supplements to focus on this flu season:

- A high-quality multiple vitamin and mineral supplement that contains vitamins C and E, B vitamins, zinc, and selenium.
- Vitamin D. If you are tested and are deficient, I recommend at least 5,000 IU daily. If you want to supplement without having your levels checked, try 2,000 IU daily.
- Wellmune WGP, a highly purified, proprietary baker's yeast (*Saccharomyces cerevisiae*) that has been shown in clinical studies to enhance the immune system.



- Echinacea extract, which studies have shown to enhance immunity. I recommend Echinamide because it is organic and triple-standardized for peak potency.

And don't forget the diet and lifestyle steps you can take to help strengthen your immune system:

- Get enough sleep.
- Reduce or avoid refined sugars and saturated fats.
- Exercise.
- Eat high-quality protein and essential fatty acids.

This flu season, arm yourself with proactive prevention!

CAN B12 BOOST BRAIN HEALTH?

Research demonstrates that low levels of vitamin B12 or markers of B12 status can increase brain shrinkage—and that's linked to Alzheimer's disease and dementia. A new study published in the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* showed that B vitamin treatment reduced brain atrophy in regions specifically vulnerable to Alzheimer's disease progression sevenfold. While these results are very preliminary, they are promising.

The brain is extremely complex and there are no easy answers. That said, correcting vitamin B12 deficiency can provide many health benefits, and now we can add enhancing brain function to that list. Many researchers agree that even though blood levels of B12 are normal, there may not be enough of it in the tissues. The recommended dosage is 1,000 mcg per day, and methylcobalamin is the most active form of vitamin B12.

CONDITION

CALCIUM-CHANNEL BLOCKERS INCREASE RISK OF BREAST CANCER



Each year Americans fill about 100 million prescriptions for calcium-channel blocker drugs to lower blood pressure. Unfortunately, new research shows that long-term use of these drugs can dramatically increase risk of breast cancer. The study, which was published in a recent issue of *JAMA Internal Medicine*, showed that women ages 55 to 74 who took calcium-channel blockers for 10 or more years had a 2.5-times greater risk of developing both ductal and lobular breast cancer than those who didn't.

These results provide cause for concern and emphasize the importance of using alternative therapies for blood pressure

control in women. Before turning to potentially harmful drugs, every effort should be made to control blood pressure through diet, lifestyle, and dietary supplements. Key nutrients to control blood pressure include potassium, magnesium, and fish oils. Please note that people with kidney disease or severe heart disease such as high-grade atrio-ventricular block should not take magnesium or potassium unless under the direct advice of a physician. A special peptide from fish known as Pept-ACE has been shown to be beneficial for people diagnosed with high blood pressure. For more detailed information about natural ways to address high blood pressure, visit my website.





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MOVEMENT



MOVEMENT MATTERS!

Good news: Research shows that more than 40 percent of adults achieve the recommended 30 minutes per day of exercise by making movement a way of life. This means people are capitalizing on opportunities to move even for short periods of time throughout the day. Better news? That approach is just as effective as a long gym workout.

In fact, researchers from Oregon State University found that movement throughout the day provides even greater health benefits than a long trip to gym after sitting all day.

The best way to incorporate movement throughout the day is through short bouts of activity. At work, you can stand while talking on the phone, take the stairs instead of the elevator, or walk to your favorite lunch spot instead of driving.

At home, you can also add more movement to your daily routine. Use a rake instead of a leaf blower, stand instead of sitting at your kid's football game, or take a walk during halftime and intermissions.

Don't just sit there, make movement a part of your day!

CELERY

STALK FULL OF HEALING

Celery is a member of the *Umbelliferous* family along with carrots, parsley, and fennel. It is a biennial vegetable, meaning it has a normal life cycle of two years. Although most people prize celery for its stalks, its leaves, roots, and seeds also are useful as food and seasoning.

Celery grows to a height of 12 to 16 inches and is composed of leaf-topped ribs arranged in a conical shape and joined at a common base. The ribs have a crunchy texture and a delicate, but mildly salty, taste. The ribs in the center are called the heart and are the most tender.

HISTORY

The modern celery originated from wild celery native to the Mediterranean, where its seeds were once widely used as a medicine, particularly as a diuretic. The initial mention of the medicinal properties of celery leaves dates back to the 9th century BC, when celery made an appearance in the *Odyssey*, the famous epic by the Greek poet Homer. The Ancient Greeks used the leaves as laurels to decorate their renowned athletes, and the ancient Romans used it as a seasoning, a tradition that has carried through the centuries.



During the Middle Ages, celery's use expanded beyond medicine and seasoning into consideration as a food, but it did not really become popular until the 18th century in Europe. Celery was introduced to the United States early in the 19th century.

NUTRITIONAL HIGHLIGHTS

Celery is an excellent source of vitamin C and fiber. It is a very good source of potassium, folate, vitamin B6, and vitamin B1. Celery is a good source of calcium and vitamin B2. While it is true that celery contains higher amounts of sodium than most other vegetables, the sodium is offset by relatively very high levels of potassium. Furthermore, the amount is not significant even for the most salt-sensitive individuals. One celery rib contains approximately 35 milligrams of sodium.

HEALTH BENEFITS

Since celery is rich in potassium and sodium, juices containing it serve as a great electrolyte replacement drink post-workout. Celery contains phytochemicals known as coumarins, which are being proven useful in cancer prevention and are capable of enhancing the activity of certain white blood cells. Coumarin compounds also tone the vascular system, lower blood pressure, and may be useful in cases of migraines.

Two researchers at the University of Chicago Medical Center have performed studies on a coumarin compound found

in celery, 3-n-butyl (3nB) phthalide, and found that it can indeed lower blood pressure. In animal studies, a very small amount of 3nB phthalide lowered blood pressure by 12 to 14 percent and also lowered cholesterol by about 7 percent. The equivalent dose in humans can be supplied in about four ribs of celery. The research was prompted by one of the researcher's fathers, who after eating a quarter-pound of celery every day for one week observed his blood pressure dropped from 158 over 96 to a normal reading of 118 over 82.

In a pilot study of 30 mild to moderate hypertensive patients, a celery extract standardized for 85 percent 3nB given at a dosage of 150 mg daily produced a statistically significant decrease in both systolic blood pressure and diastolic blood pressure at weeks 3 and 6 compared to baseline. The change at week 6 for the systolic blood pressure was 8.2 mmHg and for diastolic blood pressure was 8.5 mmHG.

Clinical research indicates that celery may also be particularly helpful for sufferers of gout, as 3nB appears to significantly lower the production of uric acid. Celery may also help lower cholesterol, prevent cancer by improving detoxification, and extend lifespan. In the animal model of Alzheimer's disease, 3nB treatment significantly improved learning deficits, as well as long-term spatial memory. Treatment

CELERY



with 3nB also significantly reduced total cerebral beta-amyloid plaque deposition that is the hallmark brain lesion of Alzheimer's. The researchers concluded, "3nB shows promising pre-clinical potential as a multitarget drug for the prevention and/or treatment of Alzheimer's disease."

HOW TO SELECT AND STORE

The best celery is light-green, fresh looking, and crisp. The ribs should snap, not bend. Sometimes celery can have a condition called "blackheart," which is caused by insects. To check for damage, separate the stalks and look for brown or black discoloration. In addition, evaluate the celery to ensure that it does not have a seed stem—a round stem in the

place of the smaller tender stalks that should reside in the center of the celery. Celery with seed stems are often more bitter in flavor.

To store celery, place it in a sealed container or wrap it in a perforated plastic bag or damp cloth and store it in the refrigerator. If you are storing cut or peeled celery, ensure that it is dry and free from water residue, which can drain some of its nutrients. Freezing will make celery wilt and should be avoided unless you will be cooking it.

Since celery is among the 20 foods on which pesticide residues have been most frequently found, choose celery that has been organically grown.

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EGGSHELL MEMBRANE

EGGS' HIDDEN HEALTH SECRET

An eggshell isn't typically destined to a life of greatness; once the egg makes it to the omelet, the protective shell quickly meets the trash. But recent research shows that eggshells may have more to offer the world than simple egg conveyance.

Just inside the shell of the egg lies a film, called the membrane. And from this, an innovative nutritional supplement was born. Natural eggshell membrane (NEM) brings fast relief to people suffering from the pain, stiffness, and impaired mobility of osteoarthritis and other joint health problems.

Recent studies show that NEM begins to reduce joint pain and improve mobility within seven to 10 days. After 30 days it reduces pain by an average of 72 percent and improves flexibility by 44 percent—without side effects. NEM is a natural source of collagen, chondroitin, glucosamine, and hyaluronic acid, each of which is known to support joint health. Other studies show that long-term use of glucosamine can be more effective than analgesics and nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) for reducing pain, stiffness, and swelling of the joints.

HOW IT WORKS

NEM boosts the production of critical joint molecules. For example, NEM supports the body's production of type II collagen, which is the main component of the cartilage that covers bones, particularly weight-bearing joints such as the knees and hips, so they move smoothly without rubbing together. Osteoarthritis is a progressive disorder of the joints caused by gradual loss of cartilage.

NEM also boosts production of glycosaminoglycans (GAGs), including chondroitin sulfate. GAGs are an important component of cartilage, providing resistance to compression and contributing to the tensile strength of cartilage, tendons, and ligaments.

A LOOK AT THE RESEARCH

The clinical research on NEM began with a pilot study published in the June 2009 issue of medical journal *Clinical Interventions in Aging*. Patients with mild-to-moderate joint pain received 500 mg NEM daily. After just seven days, participants had an average 26 percent improvement in pain and 28 percent improvement in flexibility. After



30 days, they had an average 73 percent reduction in pain, with 45 percent of participants reporting they were completely pain-free. They also had a 44 percent improvement in flexibility and 76 percent less pain through their range of motion. No adverse side effects were reported.

Further support for the safety and efficacy of NEM in osteoarthritis came from a double-blind, placebo-controlled clinical trial involving 67 patients with osteoarthritis of the knee. They received either 500 mg of NEM daily or a placebo. After only 10 days, those receiving NEM supplements had a 12 percent reduction in pain and 17 percent less stiffness. At the end of the 60-day trial, those receiving NEM had an average pain reduction of 15 percent, and 31 percent less stiffness. One-third of the patients receiving NEM experienced a reduction in pain of 40 percent or greater, and more than half had at least 50 percent less stiffness.

No adverse side effects were reported. This study was published in the August 2009 issue of *Clinical Rheumatology*.

FINAL COMMENTS

Drugs for the aches and pains of osteoarthritis, including NSAIDs like ibuprofen and COX-2 inhibitors like Celebrex, have been shown to make the condition worse than if the patient took nothing at all. Both classes of drugs accelerate osteoarthritis and joint destruction by inhibiting cartilage repair.

Often NEM is combined with glucosamine sulfate, a natural compound that also stimulates cartilage repair, but generally takes a little longer to show benefit (often four to six weeks of use are required before there is a significant difference in joint function and reduction in pain). By combining NEM with glucosamine sulfate, you get the best of both worlds—the immediate relief offered by NEM and the additional long-term support provided by glucosamine sulphate.

HAIR LOSS

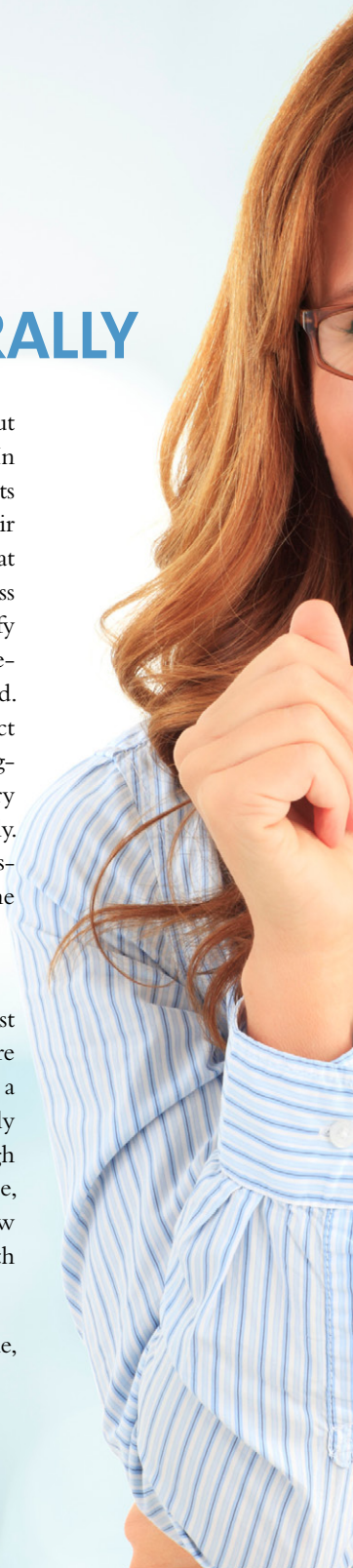
BEAUTIFUL FULL HAIR... NATURALLY

We may think of hair loss as men's domain, but the truth is that many women lose hair too. In fact, it is one of the most common complaints from female patients. In most cases it is not severe hair loss, but rather the perception that hair loss is occurring at an increasing rate. Unfortunately, many physicians dismiss these complaints. After all, hair loss is difficult to quantify and is certainly not a life-threatening disorder. Nonetheless, hair loss is a complaint that should be addressed. Clinical studies have investigated the psychologic impact of increasing hair loss in women and found that it's a significant source of anxiety, fear, and depression. So every effort should be made to deal with the situation effectively. Although some hair loss is a natural part of aging, excessive or accelerated hair loss in women is usually due to one of a few common causes, which we'll discuss here.

FEMALE PATTERN HAIR LOSS

Women can suffer from hormone-related hair loss just like men. Female pattern hair loss, however, is more diffuse than characteristic male pattern baldness. It is a relatively common condition affecting approximately 30 percent of women before the age of 50. Although genetic factors play a role, so do excess testosterone, insulin resistance, polycystic ovarian syndrome, and low antioxidant status. Luckily, there are ways to help with this type of hair loss:

- Improve blood sugar regulation through diet, lifestyle, and supplements.
- Increase antioxidant intake.
- Take saw palmetto extract (320 to 640 mg per day).





DRUGS THAT CAUSE HAIR LOSS

A long list of drugs can cause hair loss. Some are obvious (chemotherapy drugs, for example), but others are less extreme. When medically appropriate, you can consider natural alternatives to suspected culprits.

CLASS	EXAMPLES
Antibiotics	Gentamycin, chloramphenicol
Anticoagulants	Coumadin, heparin
Antidepressants	Prozac, desipramine, lithium
Antiepileptics	Valproic acid, Dilantin
Cardiovascular drugs	Angiotensin-converting enzyme inhibitors, beta-blockers
Chemotherapy drugs	Adriamycin, vincristine, etoposide
Endocrine drugs	Bromocriptine, Clomid, danazol
Gout medications	Colchicine, allopurinol
Lipid-lowering drugs	Gemfibrozil, fenofibrate
Nonsteroidal antiinflammatory drugs	Ibuprofen, indomethacin, naproxen
Ulcer medications	Tagamet, Zantac

HAIR LOSS



BIOSIL FOR STRONGER, HEALTHIER HAIR

One general recommendation for hair loss is to take a special form of silicon—an essential trace element required for the normal growth and development of hair. Studies show that choline-stabilized orthosilicic acid (BioSil®), a highly bioavailable and stabilized form of silicon, increases levels of hydroxyproline, the key amino acid required for the production of collagen and elastin. These compounds are essential to the strength, thickness, and elasticity of hair. In one double-blind study, 48 women with fine hair were given 10 mg silicon as BioSil daily for nine months. BioSil intake had a positive effect on tensile strength, including elasticity and break load, and resulted in thicker hair.

NUTRITIONAL DEFICIENCY

A shortage of any number of nutrients can lead to significant hair loss. Zinc, vitamin A, essential fatty acids, and iron are the most important. If your fingernails have horizontal white lines, you may have low zinc levels. If the back of your arms are bumpy and rough, it may represent hyperkeratosis, a common sign of vitamin A deficiency. If your elbows are very dry and cracked, it may be due to essential fatty acid deficiency.

To evaluate iron status, you can have a blood test to evaluate serum ferritin. If the serum ferritin is less than 50 mg/L, you'll need to increase iron intake

through diet and supplements. When serum ferritin levels fall below this level, hair growth and regeneration are impaired, as the body seeks to conserve iron. There is a very strong association between low body iron stores and diffuse hair loss in women. In fact, in my clinical experience, iron deficiency is the most common nutritional factor responsible for hair loss in women.

Typically, women with noticeable generalized hair loss suffer from apparent deficiencies of all of these nutrients. Luckily, the treatment is straightforward—you just need to increase dietary intake of these nutrients and supplement appropriately.

(continued on page 22)



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HAIR LOSS



(continued from page 20)

HYPOTHYROIDISM

Hair loss is one of the cardinal signs of hypothyroidism. The prevalence of hypothyroidism in American women is estimated to be as high as 20 percent, even among conventional medical circles.

GLUTEN SENSITIVITY

The protein gluten and its polypeptide derivative, gliadin, are found primarily in wheat, barley, and rye grains. It appears in some people, gliadin intake can lead to alopecia areata—an autoimmune disease characterized by areas of virtually complete hair loss.

FIRST STEP TO HEALTHY HAIR

In my experience, it is very important for women with diffuse hair loss to have their serum ferritin levels checked. If below 50 mg/L, iron supplementation is often required to raise iron levels. The best form of iron supplement appears to be a special form of ferrous pyrophosphate (available as Easy Iron from Natural Factors). This form is extremely stable, has no taste or flavor, is free from gastrointestinal side effects, has a high bioavailability, and provides a sustained release absorption of iron (up to 12 hours). For iron deficiency, the usual recommendation is up to 30 mg twice daily.

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POSITIVITY

THE POWER OF VISUALIZATION

Positive visualization or imagery is a powerful tool in creating health, happiness, or success. A strong case could be made that we have to be able to see our lives the way we want them to be before it happens.

According to Greek mythology, the king of Cyprus, Pygmalion, was a sculptor who fell in love with one of his creations. The ivory statue came to life after Pygmalion's repeated prayers to the goddess of love, Venus. Pygmalion's vision was so powerful and his faith so strong that his vision became his reality. The myth embodies the idea that if we create visualizations we believe, they can become self-fulfilling prophecies.

VISUALIZATION IN CANCER THERAPY

Visualizations are helpful in all areas of your life, but especially in your health. One of the real pioneers on the therapeutic effect of positive imagery was Carl Simonton, MD. After earning his medical degree from the University of Oregon Medical School in 1967, Simonton completed a three-year residency in radiation oncology.

It was during that time that he became convinced that a patient's state of mind could influence the ability to survive cancer.

To test his hypothesis, he conducted a pilot study from 1974 to 1981 to assess the impact of the visualization technique. First, he taught patients to visualize their cancer cells or tumors as accurately as possible. He explained that cancer cells are weak, mixed up, disorganized. He instilled in his patients the confidence that their bodies could naturally and normally defend against cancer. He also encouraged patients to visualize their treatment as powerful and effective, capable of producing the desired outcome. Most importantly, he asked patients to visualize their white blood cells as a numerous and powerful army, attacking and destroying the cancer. At the end of the study, Simonton discovered that the technique increased survival time and improved quality of life. He published his results in *Getting Well Again: A Step-by-Step Self-Help Guide to Overcoming Cancer for Patients and their Families* (Bantam, 1978).



It is not just cancer that can be aided by positive imagery. It can help improve overall health, reduce stress, and promote wellness.

Predictably, the medical community was slow to accept Simonton's findings. Gradually the situation changed, and now many oncologists, hospitals, and cancer treatment centers help patients incorporate visualization techniques. But it is not just cancer that can be aided by positive imagery. It can help improve overall health, reduce stress, and promote wellness in any health concern.

POSITIVITY

HOW TO PERFORM POSITIVE VISUALIZATIONS

- Find a quiet, comfortable place to sit or lie down.
- Place your feet slightly apart and find a comfortable position for your arms.
- Inhale through your nose and exhale through your mouth.
- Concentrate on your breathing.
- Inhale while slowly counting to four. Notice with each breath you take that you are breathing effortlessly by using your diaphragm. You should feel as if the air is expanding first into your abdomen and then up into your lungs, and then extending warmth to all parts of your body.
- Pause for one second, then slowly exhale to a count of four. As you exhale, your abdomen should move inward. As the air flows out, feel of the tension and stress leaving your body.
- As you begin to relax, clear your mind of any distractions by imagining a peaceful, healing environment.

- Now, create a picture or movie of what it is in your life that you want. If it is weight loss, see yourself thin. Whatever it is you want, see yourself achieving it. Imagine how you will feel and amplify those feelings. The more positive emotion you can produce, the more powerful the visualization becomes.
- Continue to pay attention to your breathing and keep playing the movie or focusing on the picture for five to 10 minutes.

Perform this visualization exercise daily. It is a great way to promote the relaxation response, as well as keep you focused on achieving your dreams.

Be creative and have fun with positive visualizations, and you will soon find yourself living your dreams. It is our dreams that propel us as we roll through this life. They are powerful and inspirational. The famous author Anatole France underlined the importance of dreams when he said, "Existence would be intolerable if we were never to dream."



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- Lowers the glycemic index*
- Promotes healthy blood sugar levels already within the normal range*
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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. 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 I've seen coenzyme Q10 as an ingredient in mouth rinses. Is it true that it can help treat gum disease?

A Coenzyme Q10 (CoQ10) is an effective antioxidant that is used widely in Japan for periodontal disease, as well as other conditions. This is for good reason. Many clinical studies have shown that CoQ10 can help treat periodontal disease. I recommend taking a high-quality CoQ10 supplement at a dosage of 100 to 200 mg daily.

Remember, although periodontal disease can cause bad breath and bleeding of the gums when flossing, it's more serious than that. Periodontal disease is a manifestation of a more systemic condition, and it needs to be addressed by a dentist as well as a nutritionally minded doctor.

Q I have horrible indigestion and I don't want to keep taking antacids. Is there anything I can do from a natural perspective?

A Absolutely. If you have chronic indigestion, rather than focusing on blocking the digestive process with antacids, you can focus on aiding digestion. In fact, most nutrition-oriented physicians believe that lack of acid—not excess—is the true culprit in many patients with chronic indigestion. Hydrochloric acid (HCL) supplementation can produce complete relief in many individuals with indigestion. Digestive enzymes such as bromelain, papain, and fungal enzymes are available as dietary supplements and provide an effective, all-natural alternative to antacids.



Enteric-coated peppermint oil has also been shown to provide relief for non-ulcer dyspepsia, as well as gastroesophageal reflux disorder. The typical dosage of enteric-coated capsules containing peppermint and caraway seed oil is one to two capsules up to three times daily between meals.

Q I have a family history of high blood pressure. Are there any dietary supplements that will help reduce my risk?

A Several scientifically valid approaches can help reduce your risk of developing high blood pressure. Here are my top four recommendations:

1. Beet juice
2. Fresh, raw garlic
3. Black tea
4. Magnesium

These four things will go a long way in helping you prevent high blood pressure. For more information about blood pressure medications, see page 9.

Q I love chocolate and I've been hearing lately that it's actually good for me. What do you think?

A It's true, there are many health benefits associated with chocolate. It's one of those rare guilt-free pleasures that will actually enhance your health. Eating chocolate has been shown to improve mood, enhance heart health, and even help with weight loss.

Since dark chocolate is higher in flavonoids, it offers the greatest health



benefits. Most experts agree that the recommended “dose” of dark chocolate is approximately 30 to 60 grams per day (roughly 1 to 2 ounces).

Here are some suggestions for choosing the most healthful chocolate products:

- For the biggest flavonoid bang for your caloric buck, choose high-quality dark chocolate. Limit daily intake to 1 to 2 ounces. The darker, the better.
- Unsweetened dark cocoa powder is great for you, because it has no fat or sugar, and it's high in antioxidants.
- Avoid chocolate candies and treats made with hydrogenated fats or refined flour, neither of which promotes health.
- Also pass on products labeled “artificial chocolate” or “chocolate flavored.” These imitations are not even close to the real thing in flavor, texture, or health benefits.

In the right form, chocolate is a true super food.



PUTTING CALCIUM IN ITS PLACE

By Kate Rhéaume-Bleue, ND

Are you taking calcium or vitamin D to keep your bones strong? If so, I've got some good news and some bad news for you. Let's dispense with the bad news right away. In April 2011 nutrition researchers showed—for the third time—that women who take calcium supplements, with or without vitamin D, experience about 20 percent more heart attacks and strokes than women who don't take calcium. Ugh. Millions of women take these supplements because they are

proven to increase bone mineral density and lower osteoporosis and hip fracture risk. However, it seems that a portion of the added calcium that doesn't reach our bones winds up clogging arteries, leading to heart disease.

The good news is that other research has recently identified a nutrient that can safely guide calcium into bones and teeth, where we need it, while keeping the mineral out of arteries—and even clear away pre-existing arterial calcium deposits. This is the action of

Natto, Japanese fermented soybeans, are an excellent source of vitamin K₂.



vitamin K₂, a long misunderstood fat-soluble vitamin that works with vitamin D to put calcium where it belongs. If you are concerned about bone health, heart health, fertility, children's health, or just being healthy in general, vitamin K₂ provides a key piece to the nutritional puzzle.

Vitamin K₂ and the Calcium Paradox: How A Little Known Vitamin Could Save Your Life (Wiley & Sons, 2012) is the first complete guide to a new essential nutrient that was overlooked for 70 years, due to a case of mistaken identity. This book is not just for calcium and vitamin D takers—and definitely not just for women. In 2007 researchers declared that most “apparently healthy” people are deficient in vitamin K₂ to some degree. This is taking its toll in the form of heart disease, osteoporosis, cancer, diabetes, tooth decay, and many other preventable health conditions.

Vitamin K₂ was once abundant in our diets. Back when animals grazed on pasture, foods like eggs and butter were brimming with vitamin K₂. As factory farming took over and animals were gradually removed from the pasture, vitamin K₂ levels plummeted and deficiency crept in. So how can you get vitamin K₂ back into your diet? In addition to grass-fed meats, certain cheeses, like Gouda and Brie, are very high in vitamin K₂. Other sources include goose liver and a Japanese fermented soybean



food called natto. If you don't eat these foods on a regular basis, you can take a supplement that provides 120 mcg of vitamin K₂ (as natural MK-7) and 1,000 IU of vitamin D. One a day is a good health maintenance dose for children and adults, while two or more capsule are indicated for concerns like osteoporosis, heart disease, and diabetes. Check with your doctor before taking a vitamin K₂ supplement if you are on warfarin-type blood thinning medications.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Naturopathic doctor Kate Rhéaume-Bleue is a natural health expert, speaker, and frequent media guest. She is the author of Vitamin K₂ and the Calcium Paradox: How a Little Known Vitamin Could Save Your Life (Wiley & Sons, 2012).

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