



DR. MICHAEL MURRAY'S

NATURAL LIVING NEWS

EXPERT ADVICE FOR EVERYDAY LIVING

March/April 2014

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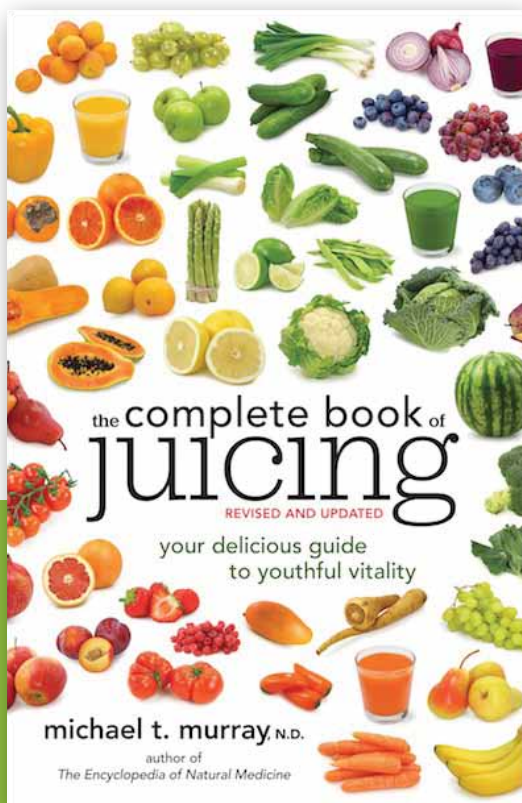
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A NOVEL IDEA TO REBUILD THE BRAIN AFTER INJURY, PROVIDE THE BRICKS

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The brain is the body's most metabolically active organ, so it makes sense that it would require a constant supply of vitamins, minerals, essential fatty acids, and other brain-critical nutrients—especially after a trauma. Yet this notion just doesn't seem to make sense to the mainstream medical community.

A growing body of clinical studies highlight the role of nutritional therapy in brain and mood disorders, but let me tell you about interesting case report I read on CNN.com. It told the story of a young boy named Grant Virgin, who was hit by a car and ended up in a coma. His father, John, refused to accept the doctors' assessment that nothing could be done for Grant. According to the medical team, Grant would never speak, walk, or even recognize his parents or other family members—and there was nothing modern medicine could do for him.

Instead of shrugging their shoulders in acceptance, his parents started trying to rebuild Grant's brain through nutrition, including high-dose fish oils. After two weeks, Grant emerged from his coma and began to speak. Several months later his parents are convinced that he will emerge from his ordeal better than before.

Grant's case is just one of seven of such near miraculous recoveries with fish oil supplementation. It makes a lot of sense, given what we know about fish oils' effects on the brain. As Dr. Michael Lewis, founder of the Brain Health Education and Research Institute, asked in the CNN article: "If you have a brick wall and it gets damaged, wouldn't you want to use bricks to repair it?"

This story says a lot about faith even when the odds are stacked against you. But it also made me think about the many people who have suffered brain injuries that may have been reversed with proper nutritional strategies. Instead of being told there is nothing to do with people with brain injuries, maybe it is time for conventional medicine to reach out to naturopathic physicians, nutritionally oriented health-care providers, and others to try to bring these people back.

—Dr. Michael T. Murray
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DR. MICHAEL MURRAY'S

NATURAL LIVING NEWS

MARCH/APRIL 2014

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HEALING FOODS

GREEN TEA PHYTOSOME FOR WEIGHT LOSS

The many benefits of green tea are fairly well known. These benefits are attributed to the polyphenols (also known as catechins) in green tea. But not many people know that these active compounds are poorly absorbed in the body. So in order for their potential benefits to be realized, they need to be modified. One method to improve the absorption of these valuable compounds is by forming a Phytosome—an herbal product in which plant compounds are complexed directly with phosphatidylcholine, the chief ingredient of lecithin. In the case of green tea phytosome, a high-quality decaffeinated green tea extract standardized for polyphenols is complexed to phosphatidylcholine. The result is three to five times better absorption. Better absorption means better results.

The superiority of the phytosome form of green tea for weight loss was proven in a double-blind study published in *Alternative Medicine Review* in 2009. The study involved 100 overweight people. Half received the green tea phytosome (150 mg twice daily) and the other half received a placebo. Both groups were placed on reduced-calorie diets (approximately 1,850 calories/day for men and 1,350 calories/day for women).



After 90 days on the reduced-calorie diet, the average weight loss in the control group was 9.9 pounds. In contrast, 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! There was a 10 percent reduction in the green tea phytosome group's belly fat compared, with a 5 percent reduction in the control group. Male participants did even better in this category, showing a 14 percent reduction in waist circumference compared with a 7 percent reduction in the control group.

The significance of this study is obvious: While people can lose considerable weight by eating fewer calories, the addition of green tea phytosome can triple the success.



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¹ Di Pierro 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).

NUTRIENTS

BRAIN CELL-PROTECTING EFFECTS OF THERACURMIN

Curcumin, the substance in turmeric that gives it its yellow color, provides a host of health benefits. But most curcumin isn't actually very easy for the body to absorb, which means that its health potential often goes unrealized. However, a specially formulated version of curcumin, called Theracurmin, actually is well absorbed in the body.

Theracurmin is produced by reducing the particle size of curcumin by over 100 times and emulsifying it with a natural vegetable gum. Research shows that Theracurmin is capable of increasing

blood levels of curcumin much more than other forms—including other forms that claim enhanced absorption. Detailed studies have shown that Theracurmin is:

- Absorbed over 300 times better than regular curcumin.
- The only product form that has been shown to produce a clear dose response.
- Extremely safe and clinically tested.

Theracurmin stands out as an exceptional antioxidant. And that's key to its health benefits: Antioxidants fight oxidative stress, which has been implicated in





the progression of degenerative disorders of the brain including Parkinson's and Alzheimer's diseases. It's also linked to stroke and trauma. To determine how Theracurmin could be used in brain health, researchers at Kyoto University recently conducted a study looking at how the supplement prevents oxidative damage to brain cells.

In this study, the protective effects of curcumin and Theracurmin were evaluated using rat brain cells and exposing them to a toxin in a laboratory (*in vitro*) experiment. The researchers wanted to determine exactly how curcumin or Theracurmin prevented cell death. Did it work by increasing the level of the antioxidant glutathione within the cells, or was the curcumin itself working as a direct antioxidant on the cells?

To find out, the researchers either left the cells untreated or they treated them with curcumin or Theracurmin for 24 hours before adding the toxin. Then they continued to treat the cells with curcumin

or Theracurmin for the next 24 hours. When the brain cells were exposed to the toxin without Theracurmin or curcumin, they died quickly. But when either Theracurmin or curcumin was added to the cell culture, there was a definite protection against cell death.

But what was even more important was that when the researchers looked at the direct protective effects of curcumin and Theracurmin, they found that it was significantly more potent than glutathione. The researchers concluded that the primary effect of curcumin and Theracurmin in protecting against brain cell death was its own antioxidant effect. The glutathione-boosting action was secondary.

This study is important because it provides additional evidence that curcumin and its highly bioavailable form, Theracurmin, offer significant benefits in promoting brain health as people age or are exposed to various toxins that can damage the brain.

CONDITION

LONG-TERM JOINT HEALTH

For years, glucosamine and chondroitin have been used to effectively treat knee osteoarthritis. However, the combination can take up to a month to be effective, and it can be accompanied with uncomfortable gastrointestinal distress. Now another formulation is showing promise for naturally reducing joint inflammation, and possibly in only seven days.

Natural Eggshell Membrane (NEM) is formulated from the inner lining of eggshells. In 2009, a peer-reviewed study published in the journal *Clinical Interventions in Aging* showed NEM can be used to treat pain and inflexibility associated with joint and connective tissue disorders. The researchers tested the participants at the beginning of the study and then at seven and 30 days. The participants experienced a 72 percent reduction in general pain, a 43 percent increase in flexibility,

and a 76 percent reduction in range of motion-associated pain.

Exactly how NEM is able to help improve joint and connective tissue disorders has not yet been determined, but it could be a result of the various protein and enzyme components in the membrane. Eggshell membrane contains collagen and hyaluronic acid, which have previously been used alone as dietary supplements for joint health.

Given the well-documented dangers of NSAID medications such as ibuprofen, any effective alternative is a reason for celebration. What sounds more promising about solutions such as NEM as compared to painkillers is in the long-term effectiveness. NEM may actually help repair some damage that has already been done to the joint, or at least help prevent further damage. With a simple painkiller, you may not feel it, but the damage is continuing.



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MOVEMENT

BACK BOOTCAMP

Drug-free back pain solution

For people with chronic back pain, relief is elusive. Conventional medicine tends to treat the problem with increasingly damaging approaches—from opiate painkillers to steroid injections to surgery. Opiates only mask the pain and include a high risk of addiction. And steroid injections increase risk of spinal fracture. But surgery is the most problematic of all the possible treatments, given risks of complications and infections. Plus, it's not a magic bullet by any means—one in five spine surgery patients end up having more back surgeries, according to a 2007 article in the journal *Spine*.

What's the alternative to these intrusive medical interventions? Some practices at the New England Baptist Hospital (NEBH) have been trying a new approach, with impressive results. The key is to look at back pain in a different way than we're used to seeing it. Rather than trying to address structural damage, the NEBH experts propose that age-related back pain is likely the result of hypersensitive nerves.

And it can become a self-perpetuating cycle, since when people experience back pain, they are more likely to lessen their physical activity. Instead of alleviating pain,



1 IN 5

The number of spine surgery patients who require additional surgeries

less activity means weaker core and back muscles, and that makes the pain worse. The way to address that problem, then, is to strengthen the back and core while pushing through pain the person may be experiencing—in essence, retraining how they perceive and handle pain.

NEBH has a program the patients affectionately call “Back Bootcamp.” (Visit www.tinyurl.com/NEBHback for a glimpse.) In it, specially trained therapists take patients through routines that strengthen and stretch the back. The exercises challenge the outer edges of movement. By expanding the range of motion in a controlled and safe manner, the patients learn that the extent of their mobility is more than their hypersensitive nerves would have led them to believe.

This type of rethinking the common medical paradigm is important to bringing us back to a natural state of health. And it teaches us that often the best healer of our body is our body.

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VISION

5 NUTRIENTS TO BOOST VISION AND EYE HEALTH

As we age, it's common to experience changes in vision. But while some changes are just a nuisance, others can cause serious impairment of vision. The good news is that nutrition plays an enormous role in the prevention and treatment of the leading causes of impaired vision in North America. And that means targeted supplements can help us maintain eye health, prevent eye diseases like cataracts and macular degeneration, and improve visual function when these conditions develop.

Packing your diet with richly colored fruits and vegetables is one of the best ways to lower your risk for cataracts and macular degeneration. Initially it was thought that this protection was the result of increased intake of antioxidant vitamins and minerals. However, we now know that various “non-essential” food components—lutein, zeaxanthin, lycopene, and flavonoids, among others—are even more important for eye health than traditional antioxidants like vitamins C and E or selenium.

In addition to a colorful diet, be sure to incorporate these five essential nutritional components that will keep your vision front and center.

1. LUTEIN AND ZEAXANTHIN

The carotenes lutein and zeaxanthin are critically important to the health of the macula. The macula is the part of the eye needed for sharp, central vision. It's what lets us see things that are straight ahead of us. Lutein and zeaxanthin help prevent oxidative damage, thereby protecting against macular degeneration.

Low levels of lutein and zeaxanthin within the macula represent a major risk factor for the disease. In fact, people with macular degeneration have 35 to 40 percent less lutein in their maculas than people without macular degeneration. In addition, a study published in the journal *Nutrients* in 2013 shows that supplementing with lutein and zeaxanthin not only helps prevent macular degeneration, it can actually improve visual function in people who already have it. Specifically, in subjects with macular degeneration, 10 to 15 mg of lutein daily improves glare recovery, contrast sensitivity, and visual acuity.

Lutein is also important in preventing cataracts and improving visual function in people with existing cataracts. Like the macula, the human lens concentrates lutein and zeaxanthin. In fact, these are the only carotenes found in the human lens. Early this year, the journal *Nutrients*



analyzed seven large studies that showed that higher lutein intake is associated with decreased likelihood of needing cataract surgery. In addition to protecting against developing cataracts, lutein can also help improve visual function in people who have them.

2. FLAVONOID-RICH EXTRACTS

Flavonoid-rich extracts of blueberry, bilberry, pine bark, or grape seed also offer valuable benefits in improving eye health, as well as protecting against cataracts and macular degeneration. Beyond their powerful antioxidant activity, these extracts have also been shown to exert positive

effects on improving bloodflow to the retina. They also improve visual processes—especially night vision. A daily dose of 150 to 300 mg of one of these flavonoid-rich extracts will support eye health.

3. NUTRITIONAL ANTIOXIDANTS

Nutritional antioxidants like beta-carotene, vitamins C and E, zinc, copper, and selenium are extremely important for eye health. While research has often focused on just one of these nutrients, studies conducted by the Age-Related Eye Disease Study Research Group (AREDS) confirm that these nutrients function better together than they do apart. Yet even

VISION

something as simple as taking vitamin C or zinc can produce dramatic effects in preserving eye health. For example, several studies have demonstrated that vitamin C supplementation can prevent cataract formation, halt progression and, in some cases, significantly improve vision. One study published back in 1939 in the *Archives of Internal Medicine* demonstrated that use of vitamin C supplements

for 10 years or more was associated with a 77 percent lower rate of cataract formation. These results are astounding when you consider that cataracts are a source of a tremendous financial burden on our society. Cataract surgery is the most common major surgical procedure done in the United States each year for people on Medicare.

(continued on page 18)

FISH OILS FOR DRY EYE SYNDROME

Dry eye syndrome is a very common eye disease. It happens either when you produce fewer tears, or when your tear film evaporates too quickly. As with many other vision problems, it becomes more common when we age. In fact, approximately one in three elderly people suffer from it.

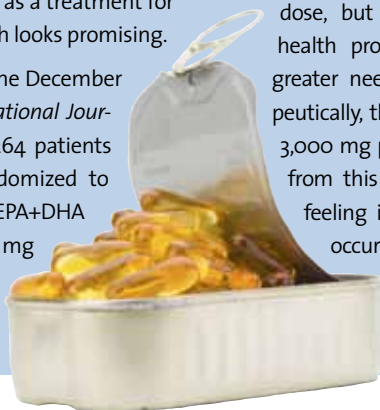
Inflammation plays a central role in dry eye syndrome. Since the omega-3 fatty acids eicosapentaenoic acid (EPA) and docosahexaenoic acid (DHA) have been shown to reduce inflammation, researchers have begun considering them as a treatment for dry eyes. And the research looks promising.

In a study published in the December 2013 issue of the *International Journal of Ophthalmology*, 264 patients with dry eye were randomized to receive either 1,000 mg EPA+DHA (650 mg EPA and 350 mg DHA) daily or a placebo for three months. They were evaluated at sev-

eral points throughout the study to look for improved tear production and signs of inflammation in the lining of the eyes.

The result? More than half—65 percent—of patients in the EPA+DHA group had significant improvement in symptoms at 3 months. That's compared to only 33 percent of patients in the placebo group. The improvement in symptoms was largely a result of reduced tear evaporation. It appears that EPA+DHA help retain the water content of the lining of the eye.

Typically 1,000 mg EPA+DHA is an adequate dose, but that's just for general health promotion. When there is greater need or when used therapeutically, the recommended level is 3,000 mg per day. While the results from this study are excellent, my feeling is that they would have occurred faster and been even more impressive if the 3,000 mg EPA+DHA dosage had been used.



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VISION

Zinc is perhaps the most important mineral for eye health. It plays an essential role in the retina's metabolism and the visual process. An early study in 1971 showed that in more than 90 percent of cataract cases, levels of zinc are very low. Zinc is also involved in protecting against macular degeneration. In 2008, the journal *Current Eye Research* published a two-year double-blind, placebo-controlled trial involving 151 subjects that demonstrated that the group taking a zinc supplement had significantly less visual loss than the placebo group.

4. COENZYME Q10 (COQ10) AND ACETYL-L-CARNITINE

These two nutrients play a critical role in energy production. CoQ10 is to our cells what a spark plug is to a car engine. Acetyl-L-carnitine functions as the fuel injection system. Just as the car cannot function without that initial spark, cells in our body cannot function properly without CoQ10 and carnitine. CoQ10 and carnitine perform their functions primarily in the mitochondria—the cell's energy producing compartment.

Although the body makes some of its own CoQ10 and carnitine, research shows significant benefits with supplementation, particularly in patients with heart disease or those taking cholesterol-lowering drugs. In terms of eye health, the mitochondria within the retina are especially vulnerable to toxic byproducts

of cell metabolism. That makes supplementation with acetyl-L-carnitine (a highly absorbable form of carnitine) and CoQ10 especially important. In one double-blind study, published in the journal *Ophthalmologica* in 2005, the combination of acetyl-L-carnitine (200 mg), omega-3 fatty acids (EPA 460 mg/DHA 320 mg), and CoQ10 (20 mg) was shown to improve visual function and macular alterations in the early stages of macular degeneration. In addition, it stopped the disease from progressing in 47 out of 48 cases.

5. FISH OILS

Hardening of the arteries (atherosclerosis) is strongly associated with eye health. Just as in atherosclerosis, omega-3 fatty acids from fish oils play an important role in the prevention of eye conditions like macular degeneration. The recommended dosage of a fish oil supplement to support eye health is enough to provide approximately 1,000 mg of EPA+DHA—the two important omega-3 fatty acids.

FINAL COMMENTS

If you have any signs of visual impairment, you absolutely must be properly evaluated by a physician. I recommend that you get a baseline eye exam and then follow the program for a minimum of six months before getting retested. Success is achieved if the condition has not worsened or if there are signs of improvement.



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* Based on clinical testing on the forearm and forehead.

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LEMON

IS LEMON THE LATEST CANCER-FIGHTER?

Among citrus fruits, lemon is the most finicky. It's sensitive to low temperatures, which means it's difficult to cultivate. But, unlike other citrus trees, the lemon tree bears fruit continuously. And if you can get past the fruit's sour taste, you'll find it provides a number of health benefits. Including, the ability to protect against cancer, according to research.

KEY HEALTH BENEFITS

Lemons are rich in vitamin C and potassium. The vitamin C content and storage capacity of lemons made them useful for sailors in the battle against scurvy during long voyages. Lemons also contain substances known as terpenes. The term terpene probably conjures up images of cleaning solvents, but while naturally occurring terpenes are actually used as alternative to synthetic terpenes in many natural cleaning products, the primary health benefits of terpenes revolve around some impressive anticancer effects—in prevention and possibly even treatment.

The most important terpene in lemons is limonene. Limonene and related terpenes have shown considerable benefits in animal studies against a wide number of cancers. Preliminary studies in humans are also showing promising results. For

example, six individuals with advanced cancers were able to halt the progression of their cancer for periods of time ranging from six to 12 months while taking d-limonene.

ANTICANCER EFFECTS OF LIMONENE CONFIRMED IN HUMAN STUDIES

In a recent study conducted at the University of Arizona Cancer Center, 43 women with newly diagnosed, operable breast cancer electing to undergo lumpectomy (surgical excision) were given 2 grams of limonene daily for two to six weeks before surgery. Blood and breast tissue were collected to determine the level of d-limonene and its metabolites, as well as changes in systemic and tissue biomarkers of breast cancer risk or carcinogenesis.

Results showed that d-limonene was found to preferentially concentrate in the breast tissue, reaching high tissue concentration, whereas the major active circulating metabolite, perillic acid, did not concentrate in the breast tissue.

Results also showed that d-limonene supplementation resulted in a 22 percent reduction in the expression of tumor markers. Specifically, d-limonene reduced the expression of breast tumor cyclin D1.



Cyclin D1 is one of the frequently overexpressed proteins and one of the commonly amplified genes in breast cancer. The gene that leads to cyclin D1 formation is an estrogen-responsive gene. The overexpression of cyclin D1 occurs in more than half of invasive breast cancers. Recent evidence also shows that cyclin D1 interferes with the anticancer effect of the chemotherapy drug tamoxifen in estrogen receptor-positive breast cancers—potentially accounting for treatment failure with tamoxifen therapy.

The benefits seen with d-limonene in this study should be followed up in women with breast cancer who are expressing cyclin D1.

JUICE FOR HEALTH

D-limonene is available as a dietary supplement, but it is easily obtained from the diet. In lemons the highest content of limonene is found in the peel and white spongy inner parts. A typical, average-sized lemon has about 300 mg of d-limonene.

One of the best ways to take advantage of the health benefits of lemons and achieve adequate d-limonene intake is by juicing them. But since lemon juice is usually too sour on its own, most people mix it with other juices. Fortunately all you need to do is add half a lemon or one whole lemon, complete with peel, to just about any fresh fruit or vegetable juice including green vegetable juices.

If you are going to juice whole lemons, be sure to choose organic. If you can't find organic lemons, soak or spray non-organic ones with a biodegradable wash, then rinse.

Other dietary sources of terpenes are other citrus fruits, berries, cherries, and volatile herbs such as peppermint, basil, thyme, and rosemary. To learn more about the medicinal effects of fresh fruit and vegetable juice, please consult my completely revised and updated *The Complete Book of Juicing* (Random House, 2013).

RELATIONSHIPS

KEYS TO ENDURING RELATIONSHIPS IN THE 21ST CENTURY

Researchers in the United Kingdom recently published the results of their new survey: “Enduring Love? Couple Relationships in the 21st Century Survey.” The findings provide a lot of practical guidelines for better relationships. One of the most important, according to Dr. Jacqui Gabb, senior lecturer in social policy at Open University and coauthor of the report, is that, “Actions really do speak louder than words and many people consider a loving gesture to be as valuable as hearing ‘I love you.’”

While grand romantic gestures like giving flowers or other gifts of affection are appreciated, they don’t nurture a relationship as much as the little things in life—such as helping out with household duties like washing dishes, bringing your partner a cup of tea, or watching TV together.

ENDURING COUPLES

One of the differences in this survey was that it only enrolled participants in long-term relationships. The researchers analyzed data from the UK cohort, which consisted of 4,494 adults, in an effort to answer the question: How do couples experience, understand, and sustain the qualities of their long-term relation-

ships? In particular, they focused on gender, generation, and parenthood to understand how quality and stability are experienced and imagined in long-term relationships while also exploring what “relationship work” couples performed to stay together. After gathering data and analyzing the information, they discovered a number of surprising insights of enduring relationships. Here are some of the key findings:

- Level of education has little to do with relationship success. Better-educated participants did not have better quality relationships or greater happiness with their lives than those who were less-educated.
- Religion does matter. While there were no differences in scores for relationship quality, relationship with their partner, and happiness with their relationship among religious and non-religious participants, religious-minded individuals were found to be happier overall with their lives when compared to others.
- Compared to middle-aged men, both younger and older men tended to score higher on relationship



quality and general happiness with their relationship.

- While researchers found mothers had the highest degree of happiness in their lives, they were also considerably more negative about their relationship quality with their partner than any other group (child-free men, fathers, and child-free women).
- Mothers were also almost twice as likely as fathers to name their child (or children) as the most important person in their lives.
- Fathers were much more likely than mothers to value their partners as the most important person in their lives.
- Heterosexual parents were the least likely of all couples to take much-needed couple time, to say “I love you,” and to pursue shared interests.

HOW TO IMPROVE YOUR RELATIONSHIP

When findings such as these are published, it is important to take from them

the constructive, practical findings in order to improve our relationships. Here are some suggestions.

First, the research clearly indicates that the little things matter. That is not to say the big things aren’t important—they are, and no amount of little things can take the place of the necessities of love, appreciation, respect, and kindness in a relationship. But what the findings indicate is that the fuel for enduring these big parts of the relationship is taking care of the little things.

What are some examples of the little things? Simple acts of kindness that show you care. This may be an unsolicited compliment, taking the trash out without being asked, or remembering to screw the toothpaste cap back on. Anyone involved in a relationship knows they have traits, habits, and characteristics that grate on their partner’s nerves like fingernails on a chalkboard. Minimizing these tendencies as best as

RELATIONSHIPS

possible has a big impact on relationship quality.

Another key is participating in shared experiences—doing things together. It is a real “connector” in relationships.

Lastly, when asked whether a stressful situation (experienced in the last two years), such as a house move, bereavement, or layoff, may have adversely impacted their relationship, the responses from participants showed enduring couples pull together through such difficult life events. In fact, the greater number of stressful events reported led to higher scores on the three measures of relationship in the study: quality, partner relationship, and relationship maintenance.

In my analysis of the findings, I see three areas of focus from a practical perspective:

- Pay attention to the little things.
- Find ways to share joint experiences.
- Handle stressful situations as a team.

To effectively take the necessary steps, I have always found asking the right question will produce the right answers. Here are some suggested questions to ask every morning and perhaps throughout the day:

- How can I show my partner/spouse love and appreciation today?
- What is a pet peeve that my spouse/partner has with me that I can make a conscious effort to eliminate today?

- What can we do together as a couple today that can help our bond?
- What can I talk to my spouse/partner about today that he/she will be excited to discuss?
- What are the key areas of stress in my partner's life and how can I help relieve some of that stress today?
- What do I need to say or not say today to help create an enduring relationship?

FINAL COMMENTS

Human beings need relationships. In my lectures I will often joke that if you are having trouble in your relationships with humans that you should get a pet. This statement always seems to get a laugh, but I am very serious. We need positive relationships in our lives. Considerable research shows that a relationship with a pet can be almost as positive as human relationship. Studies have shown that owning or caring for a pet can relieve loneliness, depression, and anxiety, and even promote a quicker recovery from illness. It is sad that many people in relationships that also have pets end up treating their pets a lot better than their partner. They would never ignore their pet's need for sustenance, affection, and love, but often do not pay attention to the needs of their spouse.

The bottom line is that research is really only showing what many would express as common sense. Nonetheless it is only common sense if we also apply it to our lives.

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NEUTRALIZER

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ASHWAGANDHA

CALM STRESS AND CLEAR YOUR MIND

Ashwagandha (*Withania somnifera*) is one of the most revered plants in Ayurvedic medicine. In Sanskrit *ashwagandha* means “the smell of a horse,” indicating that the herb imparts the vigor and strength of a stallion. In addition it was traditionally used to help people recover from an illness. Many of the rejuvenative uses of ashwagandha parallel those of *Panax ginseng* in Chinese medicine. That’s why it is often referred to as “Indian ginseng.” However, ashwagandha is not a member of the same botanical family as ginseng.

An exceptional form of ashwagandha is Sensoril—a multi-patented, standardized extract that has considerable scientific support in the medical literature. Foremost is the clinically proven ability of Sensoril to protect against the negative effects of stress. This benefit is attributed to compounds in Sensoril known as withanolides. Sensoril features the highest levels of these stress-fighting active compounds from ashwagandha available. These compounds mimic the body’s own stress-reducing hormones to lower cortisol and fight the ravaging effects on the body, mind, and spirit.

A CLOSER LOOK

The development of Sensoril was the result of intense scientific investiga-

tions on the antistress action of various compounds in ashwagandha. Sensoril is standardized to contain the proper amounts of the compounds glycowithanolides, withaferin-A, and oligosaccharides, which research has shown to promote optimal antistress activity.

Sensoril is derived from the freshly harvested roots and leaves of specially cultivated *Withania somnifera* obtained from the northern regions of India. The roots used in Sensoril are from plants not more than two years old as roots from older plants, which are generally used in many commercially available extracts of Ashwagandha, may contain very little, if any, glycowithanolides (the known anti-stress components).

FIGHT STRESS

Sensoril is unique as an antistress agent because it produces a relaxing effect while increasing energy levels and reducing fatigue. It has a reputation of being the most effective adaptogen—a substance that counteracts the negative effects of stress by balancing and harmonizing adrenal function. Adaptogens also work at the cellular level to help increase the energy, vitality, and strength often compromised by physical or emotional stressors. Sensoril’s patented, potent formula exceeds conventional

MANY MECHANISMS OF ACTION

Sensoril works with the body's natural biological systems to help restore balance to the body and normalize body functions. It helps to increase the body's resistance to stress and reduce physiological responses to stressful events. Sensoril's comprehensive mechanism of action, by balancing and harmonizing body systems, delivers a variety of benefits to maintaining good health. Among other things, Sensoril:

- Helps counteract the negative effects of stress.
- Increases resistance to fatigue.
- Supports healthy weight management by inhibiting stress responses that can lead to overeating.
- Helps promote mental clarity and concentration.
- Helps increase resistance to stress and tension.
- Helps protect against the effects of aging by protecting against free radical damage to cells.



adaptogenic activity, providing antistress properties to help the body increase resistance to fatigue while improving overall well-being.

Sensoril has been studied in a double-blind, placebo-controlled human clinical trials using both objective and subjective criteria. In the largest study, published in 2008, the goal was to assess the efficacy of Sensoril in addressing many of the negative effects of chronic stress in humans, including elevated cortisol levels. The Sensoril group showed statistically significant

improvements in both objective and subjective measures when compared to the placebo group.

The objective measures showed Sensoril at the dosage of 250 mg per day reduced cortisol levels by 24 percent, reduced fasting blood sugar, improved cholesterol levels, lowered C-reactive protein, and raised the level of dehydroepiandrosterone (DHEA) by 32 percent.

People taking Sensoril also experienced increased energy, reduced fatigue, better sleep, and less irritability. All in all they experienced increased feelings of overall

ASHWAGANDHA

well-being, with a significant reduction of stress symptoms.

Sensoril works by buffering the effects of stress on the pituitary and adrenal glands. When we experience stress, the body responds by releasing a number of stress hormones and chemicals. For example, stress causes the release of adrenocorticotrophic hormone (ACTH) from our pituitary gland. That in turn causes the release of cortisol by the adrenal glands. Damaging long-term effects of stress are most often the result of a chronic cycle of elevations of cortisol depriving the body of sufficient recovery time. Sensoril works by reducing the level of circulating ACTH and cortisol to effectively “shut off” or deactivate the stress response.

Sensoril is an important weapon in the battle against stress and elevated cortisol levels. For best results, the typical dosage of Sensoril is 125 to 250 mg twice daily.

ENHANCE MENTAL FUNCTION

In a study conducted at the University of Pittsburgh, Sensoril was proven to enhance memory and mental cognition in a double-blind clinical trial in healthy people with short-term memory loss and focus issues. Sensoril at a dosage of 250 mg per day improved the ability to concentrate by 76 percent and reduced forgetfulness by 57 percent.

Several mechanisms have been proposed to explain Sensoril’s benefit on brain

function. The consensus is that the withanolides in Sensoril enhance cognitive function using several complementary mechanisms of action that improve the overall health of brain cells, as well as the communication between brain cells.

Some of the benefits noted may also be due to Sensoril’s ability to lower cortisol levels. Cortisol negatively impacts the amount and type of connections between brain cells and causes degeneration of parts of the brain associated with concentration, focus, and memory (the cerebral cortex and hippocampus). On the flip side, Sensoril boosts the level of DHEA, which is an important adrenal hormone that boosts mental cognition by protecting the brain against the harmful effects of cortisol. This ability of Sensoril to balance the cortisol:DHEA ratio is a major factor underlying its beneficial effects on many body systems.

SAFE FOR EVERYDAY USE

In human clinical trials, people taking the recommended dose of Sensoril (125 to 250 mg once or twice daily) experienced no adverse effects. Additionally, Sensoril has a comprehensive safety profile and is GRAS-affirmed (Generally Regarded as Safe). It can be taken as a daily tonic 365 days a year. In fact, clinical research has shown that Sensoril’s effectiveness in improving health continues to increase the longer it is taken. So not only is it safe and effective for daily use, but its effects keep getting better with time.

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Q&A WITH MARITA SCHAUCH, ND

FROM THE EDITOR

Do you have a question for our experts? 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 fall asleep every night at the same time, but find myself waking up in the middle of the night. Why does that happen, and is there anything I can do about it?

A Sleep disturbances are becoming a regular health concern in my office. Patients are either falling asleep and waking up in the middle of the night, or having trouble falling asleep initially. This is a classic symptom of adrenal exhaustion. Research shows that sleep disturbances are related to an increased sensitivity to stress hormones such as cortisol. Cortisol has a natural rhythm—normally peaking between 6 and 8 a.m., then gradually declining throughout the day. For people with chronic stress, that rhythm is reversed: Cortisol is low in the morning and higher levels in the evening. There is a group of excellent natural herbs called adaptogens that regulate cortisol. These herbs have been studied in individuals who are under high stress, such as doctors, graduate students and nightshift workers. Herbs such as Rhodiola, Siberian ginseng, schizandra, suma, and ashwagandha help nourish the adrenal glands and promote a long, peaceful night's sleep.

Q I'm a 50+ woman who sits all day. I'm too tired to exercise when I get off work. Help?

A You may have heard the phrase, "Sitting is the new smoking." And it's true. We don't realize that long periods of sitting can have detrimental health consequences. Taking breaks during the workday is a great way to sneak in some exercise. Walking up and down the stairs or taking a brisk walk around your building will get your blood circulating and help alleviate that midday energy slump.

Q Since I turned 50 my waistline keeps expanding. I eat a healthy diet and exercise. What am I doing wrong?

A We often think of declining estrogen levels during menopause as the cause of an expanding waistline, but it is actually quite common for women to experience abnormally high estrogen levels during perimenopause and menopause, as well as earlier in life. High estrogen levels, also known as estrogen dominance, have been found to be a fat magnet. The more estrogen that's stored in fat tissue, the more estrogen accumu-

lates in the body. Estrogen dominance can develop as a result of diet, a sluggish liver, or toxins from environmental factors found in plastics, cosmetics, and pesticides. The herb milk thistle has a long history of being a very safe liver detoxifier. A healthy liver helps to eliminate and detoxify harmful and excess estrogens in order to boost the body's metabolic rate. Other beneficial herbs to help balance high estrogen levels include curcumin, calcium-d-glucarate, DIM, indole-3-carbinol, and sulforaphane.

Q I'm tired and cold and seem to gain weight easily. Is there anything I can do to combat my fatigue?

A You are not alone. Unfortunately, 13 million people in the United States are undiagnosed with hypothyroidism or low thyroid because of very limiting thyroid blood testing. Fatigue, cold intolerance, and weight gain are characteristic for hypothyroidism. I tell my patients they should be looking for a TSH blood test of under 2.0 for an optimal thyroid function. The current "healthy" norm is 0.35–5.5. Nutrients for both thyroid hormones (T4 and T3) are imperative for a healthy metabolism. Compounds such as adequate iodine, manganese, L-tyrosine, ashwagandha, copper, and guggul all help support the production of both thyroid hormones.

As a practicing naturopathic physician, I have had excellent success with Natural Factors® WomenSense® products, which offer safe, effective natural options for women of all ages.

Q I'm having a terrible time with hot flashes and night sweats! Are there natural products that can safely give me some relief?

A Ah yes, hot flashes...a common complaint. Since news broke confirming the negative impact on women who took synthetic hormone replacement therapies (HRT), many women have been seeking natural products for menopausal symptoms. Hot flashes and night sweats are thought to be caused by a number of factors, such as stressed adrenal glands, an abrupt decline in estrogen levels, and poor diet. Black cohosh is an herb that has safely addressed the symptoms of menopause for more than 40 years. Chaste tree, dong quai, gamma-oryzanol, and hesperidin are also very promising herbs that can help women transition through menopause smoothly.

Marita Schauch, ND, is an expert on women's health and, in addition to her clinical practice, keeps a busy lecture schedule. Schauch has recently released her book, Making Sense of Women's Health and is a women's health educator for Natural Factors.

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-Dr. Marita Schauch

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Dr. Marita Schauch, N.D.

Dr. Marita Schauch is an expert on women's health and, in addition to her clinical practice, keeps a busy lecture schedule. Dr. Schauch has recently released her book, *Making Sense of Women's Health*. Dr. Schauch is also a women's health educator for Natural Factors.

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