

DR. MICHAEL MURRAY'S

NATURAL LIVING NEWS

EXPERT ADVICE FOR EVERYDAY LIVING

November/December 2014

CRANBERRIES
THE HEALTHFUL
HOLIDAY BERRY

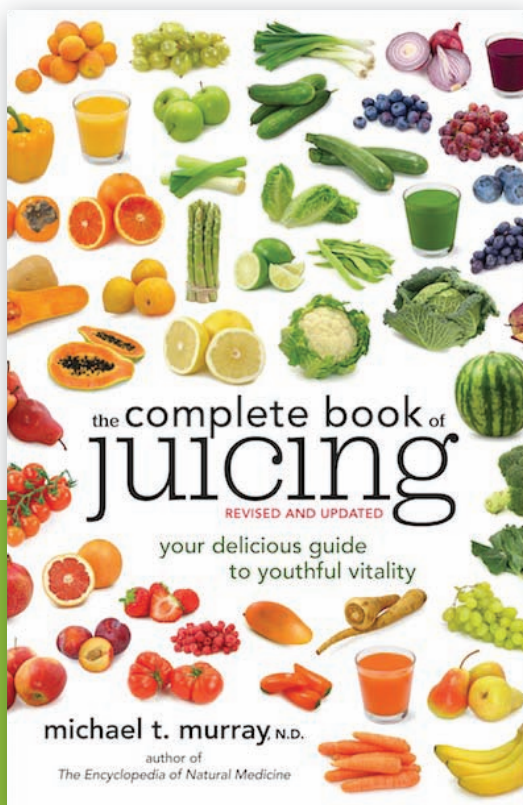
VITALITY
IN A GLASS

NATURAL
INDIGESTION
RELIEF

5 **CANCER**
PREVENTION
TIPS

PLUS: Hope for
ALZHEIMER'S
SUFFERERS

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TIPS FOR THE HOLIDAY SEASON

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The holiday season can spell doom to your health goals if you don't plan ahead. It is common for people to overindulge, get off their regular routines, and experience more stress. To buffer against these effects, consider three natural helpers.

PGX, the secret to avoiding weight gain

Here's the secret to enjoying yourself during the holidays without gaining weight: taking PGX before or with your meals can dramatically increase your feeling of fullness, leading to a dramatic reduction in calories consumed. It can also help reduce after meal blood sugar levels, thereby helping to avoid one of the big consequences of eating a big meal—stress on blood sugar control.

Enzymes to support digestion

Another important supplement to have on hand during the holidays is a good digestive enzyme formula. If you overindulge, you need extra digestive enzymes; otherwise, you will be in distress or uncomfortable.

Tranquil Sleep to get to sleep—despite the stress

During the holidays, sleep disturbances can be a real issue. Sometimes it's due to stress, sometimes it's due to overindulgence, and sometimes it can be the result of alterations in a person's daily routine. Whatever the cause, Tranquil Sleep from Natural Factors is the answer. This formula provides three ingredients that work together to decrease the time required to get to sleep and the number of nighttime awakenings.

Final Comment

Loneliness is a major issue for many people during the holidays. Be sensitive to that, and reach out to people who may appreciate or need an act of kindness to brighten their day. Doing so will not only warm their hearts but yours as well.

In good health,

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read "Michael T. Murray, MD". The signature is fluid and cursive.

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

NATURAL LIVING NEWS

NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2014

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MOVEMENT

MOVE THROUGH DEPRESSION

If you are feeling blue, all you want to do is hole up and hunker down.

Unfortunately, that's the last thing your body—and your brain—need. A new study out of the University College London suggests that being physically active reduces the odds of being depressed by approximately 16 percent. The link between activity and depression goes both ways: An increase in physical activity translates into fewer depressive symptoms, while more significant depression corresponds to less activity. The good news is the exercise effect doesn't taper off—each additional



activity session can reduce your odds of depression by 6 percent.

It's enough to make anyone get moving. Even if you are not currently depressed, exercise exerts a protective effect, warding off depression among the population at large, not just those predisposed to the blues. So don't feel guilty when you hit the gym, go for a walk or bike ride, or take a dance class. You are doing what's necessary to ensure optimum physical *and* mental health.



WALK THIS WAY

Conventional knowledge has it that whatever mood we are in translates into our walking style—for example slumping our shoulders when sad or bouncing along when happy—and science is now backing up that belief. A new study, published in the *Journal of Behavior Therapy and Experimental Psychiatry*, demonstrates that merely imitating a happy or sad way of walking can have a similarly contagious effect on our mood. Our movements influence our feelings—a depressed walking style can make you more predisposed to a more negative mood. It's worth trying to put a spring in your step, especially when your feet are dragging. You might be able to hoof it to your happy place.

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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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CONDITION

5 WAYS TO REDUCE RISK OF BOWEL CANCER

Bowel cancer, also called colorectal cancer, is the second most common cancer in men and the third most common cancer in women worldwide, with 55 percent of cases occurring in developed regions such as North America and Western Europe. But recent research out of the German

Institute of Human Nutrition Potsdam-Rehbruecke indicates that adopting a healthy lifestyle goes a long way to prevention, especially in men. To see how you measure up, compare your habits to the healthy lifestyle index, comprised of five key health factors:

- A healthy weight
- Low abdominal fat
- Regular physical activity
- Smoking cessation and limits on alcohol
- A diet high in fruits, vegetables, fish, yogurt, nuts and seeds, and foods rich in fiber, and low amounts of red and processed meat

To really get the statistics on your side, it's *combining* lifestyle factors that matters most. According the study, compared to people who had only one of these healthy lifestyle factors, those who had two, three, four, or all five had a 13 percent, 21 percent, 34 percent, and 37 percent lower risk of developing bowel cancer, respectively. Furthermore, the research suggests that up to 22 percent of the cases of bowel cancer in men and 11 percent of those in women would have been prevented if all five of the healthy lifestyle behaviors had been adopted.





HOPE FOR ALZHEIMER'S

Alzheimer's disease is the sixth leading cause of death in the United States—and there has been no effective treatment for it, until now. Recently researchers at University of California Los Angeles (UCLA) said they've developed a program that shows memory loss being reversed for the first time. Alzheimer's, a complex disease affected by sleep, diet, and even exercise, seems to react favorably to a protocol that takes each factor into consideration. The small UCLA trial called MEND (Metabolic Enhancement for NeuroDegeneration) was based on a combination of lifestyle changes designed to enhance the brain's plasticity. Patients avoided simple carbs, gluten, and processed foods. They increased their fish intake, took yoga, and meditated. They were instructed to take melatonin, get adequate sleep, incorporate vitamin B12, vitamin D3, and fish oil.

The results? Within six months, nine of the 10 patients saw a noticeable improvement in memory. The other patient, who was in the late stages of Alzheimer's, did not show improvement. The findings suggest a lot of intervention, early on, may be the key to changing a person's metabolic processes in order to revive memory and cognitive function.

**NINE
OF THE
TEN**

**PATIENTS
SAW A
NOTICEABLE
IMPROVE-
MENT IN
MEMORY**

NUTRIENTS

D IS FOR EASIER DELIVERY

Pregnant women with low vitamin D levels had more painful labor than those with higher levels, says a new study out of Cedars-Sinai Medical Center in Los Angeles. In this groundbreaking study—the first to measure the link between vitamin D deficiency and pain medication use during childbirth—higher levels of vitamin D correlated to less pain medication. Vitamin D, obtained from sun exposure as well as from consuming fortified milk or juice, fish oils, and dietary supplements, is a relatively easy and inexpensive supplement to incorporate into one's diet. Preventing and treating low vitamin D levels among pregnant women may have a hugely positive impact on how millions of women experience labor pain.



MORE BANG FOR YOUR BENCH PRESS

Want a safe way to double down on the benefits of your exercise routine? Theracurmin, the most bioavailable form of curcumin, long known for its ability to improve heart health, can also dramatically increase the antioxidant capacity of your workout. In a study conducted by the Department of Sport Sciences, Waseda University, in Japan, participants who were given Theracurmin increased their blood antioxidant capacity. By elevating antioxidant levels in blood cells, the curcumin supplement also reduced exercise-induced oxidative stress. Curcumin (the yellow pigment of turmeric) significantly boosts the cellular return in our exercise investment.



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



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HEALING FOODS

BREAKFAST OF CHAMPIONS

As counterintuitive as it may seem, eating more in the morning may help you eat less throughout the day. According to new research out of University of Missouri–Columbia, eating a good breakfast—one that includes protein—may reduce food cravings and prevent overeating later in the day. Skipping breakfast turns out to be a setup for weight gain. Teens who eschewed the morning meal tended to overeat the rest of the day. Not eating breakfast increases cravings for sweet and high-fat foods,



while eating a breakfast high in protein reduces both kinds of cravings. This is your brain on breakfast: Dopamine levels, the reward center of the brain, rise dramatically, making you more satiated and less prone to snacking.

CALORIES IN CONTEXT

Most people—especially teens—don't really understand the implications of calories. Sure, a soda may have 250 calories, but that information doesn't become alarming until it's translated into what it takes to burn it off (5 miles of walking or 50 minutes of running). Researchers at Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health are targeting ways to make teens pay attention to calorie counts by posting "miles to walk" signs in corner stores in Baltimore. In the roughly 35 percent of teens who noticed the signs, the calorie and walking information combo did indeed impact their choices. Not only did they consume fewer caloric drinks, they also opted for smaller-sized drinks when they did buy them. According to the findings, before the new signage, more than half of teens were buying 16-ounce or larger servings. With the signs, the purchases of large-size beverages dropped to 37 percent. Doing the "exercise math," the research demonstrates, makes for a compelling deterrent.





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¹ 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).

JUICING

VITALITY SQUEEZE

An inspired life starts with quality foods to sustain it. The surest path to a healthier, more energetic, and disease-free lifestyle begins with a diet rich in natural foods, such as whole grains, legumes, fruits, and vegetables. Especially important on this path to health are fresh fruit and vegetable juices. Fresh juices provide valuable food factors that are vital to your health.

The advantages of increased energy, strengthened immunity, reduced risk of disease, strong bones, and the glowing complexion that is the evidence of great health can all be yours when fresh fruit and vegetable juices play a key role in

your daily diet. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, the National Cancer Institute, and many other health authorities are all saying the same thing: "Eat more fresh fruits and vegetables!" Juicing provides nutritional advantages of plant foods in a concentrated form that is easily absorbed by the body. It's the most efficient way to increase your consumption of these life-giving nutrients.

RICH SOURCE OF PHYTOCHEMICALS

In addition to nutrients, fresh juice contains a wide range of substances often collectively referred to as phytochemicals. Included in this category are enzymes;



HEALTH BENEFITS OF PHYTOCHEMICALS

PHYTOCHEMICAL	HEALTH BENEFITS	FOOD SOURCES
<i>Allium compounds</i>	Lower cholesterol levels, antitumor properties	Garlic and onions
<i>Carotenes</i>	Antioxidant, enhance immune system, anticancer properties	Dark-colored vegetables such as carrots, squash, spinach, kale, parsley; also cantaloupe, apricots, and citrus fruits
<i>Coumarins</i>	Antitumor properties, immune enhancement, stimulate antioxidant mechanisms	Carrots, celery, fennel, beets, citrus fruits
<i>Dithiolthiones</i>	Block the reaction of cancer-causing compounds within our cells	Cabbage-family vegetables
<i>Flavonoids</i>	Antioxidant, antiviral, and anti-inflammatory properties	Fruits, particularly darker fruits like cherries and blueberries; also vegetables, including tomatoes, peppers, and broccoli
<i>Glucosinolates & Indoles</i>	Stimulate enzymes that detoxify cancer-causing compounds	Cabbage, brussels sprouts, kale, radishes, mustard greens
<i>Isothiocyanates & Thiocyanates</i>	Inhibit damage to genetic material (DNA)	Cabbage-family vegetables
<i>Limonoids</i>	Protect against cancer	Citrus fruits
<i>Phthalides</i>	Stimulate detoxification enzymes	Parsley, carrots, celery
<i>Sterols</i>	Block the production of cancer-causing compounds	Cucumbers, squash, cabbage-family vegetables



JUICING

pigments like carotenes, chlorophyll, and flavonoids; and accessory food components. Every year, new phytochemicals are discovered, and they produce remarkable health-promoting effects. These discoveries emphasize the importance of not relying on vitamin and mineral supplements for nutritional needs beyond a health-promoting diet. Supplements are designed as additions to a healthy diet. That's why they are called *supplements*! A healthy diet must include not only adequate levels of known nutrients, but also large quantities of fresh fruits and vegetables for their high content of unknown and known phytochemicals.

FRESH JUICE VS. WHOLE FRUITS AND VEGETABLES

You may ask, "Why juice? Aren't we supposed to eat whole fruits and vegetables to get the fiber?" The answer: Of course you are, but you should juice too. Juicing fresh fruits and vegetables does provide some fiber—particularly soluble fiber. And it is the soluble fiber that has been shown to

lower cholesterol levels. Think about it—fiber refers to indigestible material found in plants. While fiber is very important for proper bowel function, it is the juice that nourishes us. Our bodies actually convert the food we eat into juice so that it can be absorbed. So, juicing actually saves the body energy. The result is increased energy levels. Juicing also helps the body's digestive process and allows for quick absorption of high-quality nutrition. Juicing quickly provides the most easily digestible and concentrated nutritional benefits of fruits and vegetables.

FRESH JUICE OR NO JUICE

Fresh juice is far superior to canned, bottled, or frozen juices. Fresh juice contains greater nutritional values. Plus, it contains enzymes and other "living" ingredients that prepared juices do not. Canned, bottled, and packaged juices have been pasteurized, which makes them shelf-stable but also causes the loss of vitamins and minerals, as well as other factors not yet fully understood.



To illustrate this, a group of researchers at Health Canada designed a scientific study comparing the antiviral activity of fresh apple juice to commercial apple juice from concentrate, apple cider, and apple wine. The most potent antiviral activity was found in fresh apple juice. Why? Commercial apple juices are produced using methods like pasteurization that destroy enzymes and alter many key compounds. In doing so, a great deal of the antiviral activity is also lost. Furthermore, although the fresh juice was greatly superior in health benefits to the other products, it lost its potency during storage. To get the maximum benefit from apple juice's antiviral activity or from any other fruit or vegetable, it is best to drink the freshest juice possible.

The compounds that are thought to be responsible for the antiviral activity of fresh apple juice are various flavonoid molecules that are found in highest quantities in fresh versus commercial apple juice.

Fresh apple juice also contains ellagic acid, a compound that exerts potent antioxidant and anticancer effects. Ellagic acid protects against damage to the chromosomes. It also blocks the cancer-causing actions of many environmental pollutants. Ellagic acid is not destroyed by freezing or freeze-drying, but it can be destroyed by heat. While fresh whole apples and fresh apple juice contain approximately 100 to 130 mg of ellagic

acid per 100 grams (roughly 3½ ounces), the amount found in cooked or commercial apple products is at or near zero. The flavonoid and ellagic acid content is exceptionally high in many berries—particularly raspberries and blackberries, which can contain up to 1.5 mg of ellagic acid per gram. The levels in berries are approximately five to six times higher than those levels found in other foods. But again, that only applies to the fresh fruit or juice.

GAIN THE BENEFITS OF JUICING

Five servings of vegetables and two servings of fruit each day is associated with a dramatic decrease in all the chronic degenerative diseases that afflict many Americans. But very few people actually eat those essential foods in the quantities they need. Juicing is extremely easy to incorporate into your life in order to reach these nutritional goals. Simply make a habit of drinking at least 12 to 16 ounces of juice each day. Fresh juice is a great way to start the morning—it's a tasty substitute for that cup of coffee. If you work away from home, make enough juice to fill your thermos and take it to work with you. A mid-morning or mid-afternoon juice pick-me-up is a healthy way to keep your energy level high. At lunch and dinner, start your meal with a "salad in a glass." Once you start experiencing some of the benefits of juicing, it will be easy to remember the importance of fresh fruit and vegetable juice in your daily routine.

JUICING

HEALTHY **HOLIDAY** CHEER

The holiday season is associated with a lot of traditional foods and beverages—some healthy, some not so healthy. For health-minded individuals, here are a couple of my favorite fresh juice recipes that offer an interesting use of sweet potatoes and cranberries—two popular holiday foods.

This recipe is one of my absolute favorite drinks. It is one of the richest drinks for carotene content, especially the red and orange carotenes. Drinking this juice will give you a year-round tan. I named this drink “Better Red Than Dead” because one of my professors, Dr. Ed Madison, gave a lecture on the benefits of carotenes with this title. His lecture really made an impression on me, and I have tried to maintain high carotene intake ever since. There is a strong correlation between carotene levels and life expectancy. A higher intake of carotenes is associated with a longer lifespan. This drink is phenomenal for raising carotene levels. In addition to taking advantage of the availability of sweet potatoes during the holiday season, it’s a great idea to load up on this drink for a few weeks before going on vacation to a sunny location because the carotenes will be deposited in the skin, where they will help protect against sunburn and damage to the skin.

BETTER RED THAN DEAD**INGREDIENTS**

- 1 beet, including top
- ½ medium-size sweet potato, cut into strips
- 3 carrots

DIRECTIONS

Juice the beet first, then the sweet potato, and then the carrots.





FRUITY CAROTENE FUN

This version is great for finicky kids (young and old). It takes advantage of the red pigments in berries, cherries, and cranberries to cover up the beet taste. This version provides a different class of red pigments, so it is very good to alternate with the other version. For the brave, you can substitute cranberries for the strawberries and cherries. It is a bit bitter, but very good for you!

INGREDIENTS

- 1 beet, including top
- ½ cup strawberries
- ½ cup pitted cherries
- ¼ cup cranberries
(or pomegranate pips)
- 1 apple, cut into wedges

DIRECTIONS

- Juice the strawberries and cherries first,
- then the beet, cranberries
- (or pomegranate pips), and apple.

INDIGESTION

A RATIONAL APPROACH TO INDIGESTION

When digestion isn't working correctly, it can feel like nothing is going right. And that's not too far from the truth. Ineffective digestion can cause a range of symptoms and can have far-reaching effects. Feelings of fullness or pressure after eating, constipation, diarrhea, and abdominal pain can all stem from digestive problems. The cause of those problems is often insufficient release of digestive factors such as stomach acid, pancreatic enzymes, and bile, as well as lack of beneficial gut bacteria.

Chronic digestive problems may be diagnosed as gastroesophageal reflux disorder (GERD), non-ulcer dyspepsia (NUD), or irritable bowel syndrome (IBS). Unfortunately, the drugs recommended to treat any of these conditions make up for in side effects what they lack in effectiveness. The most popular drugs, acid-blockers, work by blocking one of the most impor-

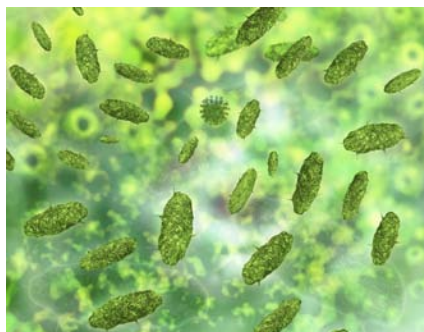
tant digestive processes—the secretion of hydrochloric acid by the stomach.

But the good news is that for most people with chronic indigestion, a natural approach focused on aiding digestion is effective and does not come with unwanted side effects.

NATURE'S ANSWER TO INDIGESTION

The drugs used to block acid and reduce digestive symptoms also block a normal—and necessary—body process. Acid-blocking drugs are associated with numerous side effects, such as digestive disturbances like nausea, constipation, and diarrhea. They can also cause nutrient deficiencies. That makes sense, since they're impairing digestion. Other potential side effects include pneumonia, increased fractures, and vitamin B₁₂ insufficiency.

Rather than focus on blocking the digestive process with antacids, the rational approach is to aid digestion. Start by eliminating dietary causes: overeating; eating too quickly; and consuming coffee, chocolate, fried foods, carbonated beverages, and alcohol. Other tips include decreasing the size of portions at mealtime, chewing food thoroughly, eating in a calm atmosphere, and not eating within two hours of bedtime.





LACK OF HYDROCHLORIC ACID

Although much is said about conditions caused by too much acid, a more common cause of indigestion is a lack of gastric acid. Hydrochloric acid (HCl) supplementation can produce complete relief in many individuals.

One way to determine if you have low hydrochloric acid levels is with a detailed gastric acid analysis. If that's not possible, here's another way to determine whether—and how much—HCl you need:

- 1 Take one HCl tablet (500 to 600 mg) at a large meal. If it does not aggravate symptoms, increase the dosage by one tablet at the next large meal.
- 2 Continue to increase the dose by one tablet per meal until you reach seven

tablets or until you feel warmth in your stomach, whichever occurs first. Warmth in the stomach means that you have taken too many tablets for that meal, and you need to take one fewer in the future.

- 3 After you have found the largest dose you can take at your large meals without feeling any warmth, maintain that dose at all of meals of similar size. You will need to take less at smaller meals.
- 4 When taking several tablets, spread them throughout the meal.
- 5 As your stomach begins to regain the ability to produce the amount of HCl needed to properly digest your food, you will notice the warm feeling again and will have to cut down the dose level.

INDIGESTION

LICORICE EXTRACT FOR PEPTIC ULCERS

Deglycyrrhizinated licorice (DGL) is licorice extract without glycyrrhetic acid, which can raise blood pressure. It's effective in treating even the most severe peptic ulcers. Rather than inhibit the release of acid, DGL stimulates the defense mechanisms that prevent ulcers from forming. It improves the quality and quantity of the protective substances that line the intestinal tract, increases the lifespan of the intestinal cell, and improves blood supply to the intestinal lining.

Numerous clinical studies show that DGL is an effective anti-ulcer compound. In several head-to-head studies, DGL has been shown more effective than Tagamet, Zantac, or antacids in both short-term treatment and maintenance therapy of peptic ulcers. The standard dosage is two to four 380 mg chewable tablets taken between meals or 20 minutes before meals. It may take up to four months before you feel the full effects.

DIGESTIVE ENZYMES TO THE RESCUE

Lack of digestive enzymes from the pancreas can cause indigestion. If you feel heartburn, abdominal bloating and discomfort, or gas within 30 minutes of eating, it is usually because of a lack of HCl secretion. Symptoms that occur after 45 minutes usually signal a lack of

pancreatic enzymes. But since the release of pancreatic enzymes is triggered by the HCl secreted in the stomach, HCl supplements can help that too.

Digestive enzyme products are the most effective treatment for pancreatic insufficiency. These preparations can include enzymes from hog pancreas (pancreatin) or vegetarian sources such as bromelain and papain, as well as fungal enzymes. I've seen the best results from multi-enzyme preparations focused on vegetarian and fungal sources. Follow label instructions for proper dosage.

FINDING THE RIGHT PROBIOTIC

Probiotics, the good bacteria in the intestinal tract, are available both as supplements and in fermented foods such as yogurt, sauerkraut, and kefir. The specific microorganisms found in these products are usually *Lactobacilli* and *Bifidobacteria*, the major probiotics in the human intestinal tract.

As people age, there are some major changes in the type of probiotics that inhabit the intestinal tract. These changes are the result of many factors—diet, prescription drugs, and a decline in digestive secretions. One of the key goals in older adults is to increase the levels of *Bifidobacteria* species. Supplementation with *Bifidobacteria* has been shown to produce a multitude of benefits in baby boomers and elderly people, including improved



Probiotics are available both as supplements and in fermented foods such as yogurt, sauerkraut, and kefir.

bowel function, enhanced immunity, and reduced inflammation.

The quality of probiotic supplements depends on two main factors: the characteristics of the strains contained in the supplement, and the number of bacteria that are viable when the supplement is taken. Viability depends on a number of factors, such as proper manufacturing and the “hardiness” of the strain, as well as packaging and storage of the product in the right amount of moisture and at the correct temperature.

I recommend taking a multiple-strain formula to provide a wider range of beneficial effects. The dosage of probiotic supplements is based on the number of

live organisms present in the product, so look for a product that lists the number of live bacteria at expiration versus at time of manufacture. Successful results are most often attained by taking between 5 billion and 20 billion viable bacteria per day.

FINAL COMMENTS

The biggest recommendation that I can make if you have minor digestive complaints is to make sure you match the right product to your primary complaint. Too often people with digestive complaints do not get results simply because they are using the right product for the wrong indication. For example, if a person’s primary digestive problem is a lack of stomach acid or pancreatic enzymes, even if they use the world’s best probiotic supplement, they are not going to get relief. So, my advice is to realize that a little detective work is required in dealing with digestive complaints. Don’t be disheartened if it takes a little trial and error to find the support you need.

CRANBERRIES

THE HEALTHFUL HOLIDAY BERRY

Cranberries seem to go into hiding between the months of January and November. But as the berries' unique and impressive health benefits continue to be identified, we have more reason to search them out year round.

KEY HEALTH BENEFITS

Outside of holiday feasts, cranberry is probably best known for its bladder protection. Several studies have documented the effectiveness of cranberry juice and extracts in preventing and treating bladder infections. The first modern scientific study with cranberries was a 1994 placebo-controlled study of 153 elderly women that was published in the

Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA). Results showed quite clearly that cranberries do help prevent urinary tract infection.

In the *JAMA* study, the women given the cranberry juice had fewer than half as many urinary infections as the control group, who received a placebo drink that contained no real cranberry juice. In this groundbreaking study, the dose of cranberry juice was 300 milliliters (about one and one-quarter cups). In most of the later studies, subjects have downed about 16 ounces (2 cups) of cranberry juice each day.





For many years it was thought that the way cranberry juice worked against bladder infections was by acidifying the urine and providing antibacterial effects. However, we now know there's more to it than that. The most likely explanation for cranberry's beneficial effects is that flavonoid components known as proanthocyanidins interfere with bacterial adherence the cells that line the urinary tract. In order to cause an infection in the urinary tract, bacteria must first attach to the cells that line it. By blocking the bacteria from attaching, we can prevent infection. In the case of an active infection, the proanthocyanidins can make it too "slippery" for the bacteria to maintain their hold. In the studies looking at cranberry extracts and bacterial adherence, cranberry extracts were found to decrease adherence in more than 60 percent of the strains of bacteria tested.

The scientific support for the positive effect of cranberry preparations in the

prevention and treatment of urinary tract infections (UTIs) is somewhat inconsistent. That may be because it does not prevent adhesion of all bacteria to the bladder cells, or it may be that the cranberry studied didn't provide an effective dosage of proanthocyanidins. So, while many people with a history of UTIs will gain benefit from cranberry, there will be some cases in which it will not.

To ensure the effectiveness of cranberry, it is important to use well-defined preparations standardized for proanthocyanidin content rather than commercial cranberry juice. Most cranberry juices on the market contain one-third cranberry juice mixed with water and sugar. Since sugar has such a detrimental effect on the immune system, use of sweetened cranberry juice cannot be recommended. Fresh cranberry juice is better, but most experts recommend using cranberry extracts concentrated for proanthocyanidin content instead.

CRANBERRIES

Using an extract instead of juice is also more cost effective. A 2002 study published in the *Canadian Journal of Urology* found that, while both cranberry juice and cranberry tablets protected against urinary tract infections, the average annual cost of cranberry tablets was \$624, whereas the cost of juice was \$1,400.

OTHER USES

Cranberries may help prevent kidney stones. They can also significantly reduce strong urine odor—a common problem in elderly people. Cranberries contain quinic acid, which, because it is not broken down in the body but rather is excreted unchanged in the urine, renders the urine mildly acidic. This mild acidity prevents calcium and phosphate ions from forming insoluble stones. In patients with recurrent kidney stones, cranberry juice has also been shown to reduce the amount of ionized calcium by more than 50

percent. Since 75 to 85 percent of kidney stones in the United States are composed of calcium salts, cranberry's effects on calcium may provide significant protection.

Like other berries, cranberries have also shown considerable effects in preliminary studies in protecting against heart disease and cancer due primarily to their flavonoid components.

DOSAGE RECOMMENDATIONS

There are a variety of cranberry products to choose from that vary greatly in quality, potency, and activity. Differences exist between the level of proanthocyanidins and formulation in commercially available tablets, capsules, and juices. Many products on the market are not standardized. For example, they may simply be dried whole-fruit powders, juice powders, and mixed juices with undefined amounts of cranberry juice.

Again, while fresh cranberry juice is a good alternative to commercial juices, a high-quality extract concentrated for proanthocyanidins is a better choice for people experiencing recurrent bladder infections. On the basis of the clinical studies, the amount of cranberry juice recommended for preventing bladder infections is 8 to 10 ounces daily. The dosage for a high-quality cranberry extract (concentrated 36:1) is 500 mg once or twice daily.



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THERACURMIN

SPICE IT UP FOR
JOINT HEALTH

Osteoarthritis (OA), also known as degenerative joint disease, is the most common form of arthritis. It is the result of degeneration of cartilage and is a slow, destructive process of the joints. The debilitating condition affects millions of people—including 80 percent of those over the age of 65 in the United States.

The onset of OA can be subtle. Morning joint stiffness is often the first symptom. As the disease progresses, there is pain on motion of the involved joint that is made worse by prolonged activity and relieved by rest. The weight-bearing joints such as the knees, hips, and spine, as well as the hands, are the joints most often affected with the degenerative changes of OA. These joints are under greater stress because of weight and use.

Nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) such as aspirin, ibuprofen, and

celecoxib (Celebrex) have become the main treatment of OA in conventional medicine. Although these drugs provide short-term symptomatic relief, they have significant side effects and may actually increase the rate of degeneration of the joint cartilage. Simply stated, NSAIDs appear to suppress the symptoms but accelerate the progression of OA.

Results from a new clinical trial indicate that an advanced, highly bioavailable form of curcumin known as Theracurmin may offer an effective alternative to improving joint health. Curcumin is the yellow pigment of turmeric (*Curcuma longa*), the spice that is the chief ingredient in curry. It has demonstrated significant anti-inflammatory activity in many experimental studies, but its clinical effects have been limited because of poor absorption in humans. Theracurmin, a special, highly bioavailable form of cur-





cumin, represents a major breakthrough in the clinical use of this natural product.

ABSORPTION IS THE KEY

As of October 2014, more than 5,000 scientific studies have focused on curcumin. Its primary biological effects relate to its action as a broad-spectrum antioxidant and profound anti-inflammatory agent. Its use in clinical trials has been limited due to poor oral absorption in humans.

Theracurmin is the most bioavailable form of curcumin, capable of increasing blood levels of curcumin significantly better than other forms of curcumin. It is a colloidal mixture produced by reducing the particle size of curcumin by over 100 times and emulsifying it with a natural vegetable gum.

Detailed studies have shown that Theracurmin is not only better absorbed, but it also stays in the blood far longer

than any other commercial form of curcumin. Studies have also shown it to be extremely safe, with no significant side effects or drug interactions noted.

Over a dozen double-blind studies have now shown Theracurmin to produce a wide range of health benefits, including positive results on heart and liver health, muscle fatigue, skin moisture content, mood, and vascular elasticity. Now a new study with Theracurmin conducted by researchers from the Orthopedics Division at Kyoto Medical Center in Japan is the first double-blind study confirming the health benefits of curcumin in patients with OA. The study has been published in the *Journal of Orthopaedic Science*.

HELP FOR OSTEOARTHRITIS

Because of the side effects and overall ineffectiveness of conventional medicines in treating OA, there's great interest

THERACURMIN

in finding more natural approaches. Curcumin has been suggested as a natural tool to not only decrease joint pain but also to slow the progression of OA. To test this hypothesis, researchers at Kyoto Medical Center enrolled 50 patients over 40 years of age with knee OA confirmed by x-ray. The patients took either Theracurmin providing 180 mg of curcumin or a placebo daily for 8 weeks. Blood biochemistry analyses were performed before and after 8 weeks of each intervention to evaluate safety. The patients' knee symptoms were evaluated at 0, 2, 4, 6, and 8 weeks.

Results showed that knee pain scores were significantly lower in the Theracurmin group than in the placebo group in those patients with moderate to severe symptoms. Theracurmin also reduced the use of celecoxib (Celebrex) much more significantly than placebo. While 60 percent of the placebo group still relied on Celebrex for adequate pain relief at the 8-week mark, only 32 percent of the Theracurmin group still needed the NSAID, and there was a strong trend toward eventual discontinuation. No major side effects were observed in the patients taking Theracurmin.

These results show that Theracurmin may safely help many people with OA improve symptoms and decrease need for NSAIDs.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS STUDY

This study is extremely significant for several reasons. First, it shows that if a highly absorbable form of curcumin is used, meaningful clinical improvement in pain and joint function can be achieved. What's more, the improvements were even greater in those with the greatest degree of discomfort. Second, to show such a significant advantage over a placebo in such a short-term study in OA is very impressive. There are published studies with other forms of curcumin in arthritis, but these studies are not double-blind, placebo-controlled studies. Instead, they are open trials where both the physician and patient know what is being used as treatment. Open-label trials in OA are generally not considered meaningful because there is such a high placebo rate with any new treatment in OA. In fact, about 60 to 70 percent of people in the placebo group experience significant improvement in both objective and subjective measures of joint pain and function.

Double-blind, placebo-controlled studies are designed to show the true treatment effect above and beyond any placebo response. Generally in OA this requires a much larger study group and much longer periods of time. Therefore, for Theracurmin to show such clear benefit in this relatively small, short-term study bodes well for people with OA. It may help them gain immediate and noticeable benefits.

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5-HTP YOUR QUESTIONS, ANSWERED

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.

The amino acid 5-hydroxytryptophan (5-HTP) is the intermediate step between tryptophan and the important brain chemical serotonin. A massive amount of evidence suggests that low serotonin levels are a common consequence of modern living. Modern diet and a stressful lifestyle can cause lowered levels of serotonin within the brain, which can lead to depression, obesity, migraines, fibromyalgia, and many other conditions.

It's important to maintain balanced serotonin levels to help avoid these health problems and others. Since 5-HTP is an important part of the production of serotonin, it's been the subject of a lot of research—and a lot of questions. Here are a few I've heard from readers.

Q What clinical research exists for 5-HTP?

A Clinical studies have demonstrated excellent results for all of the conditions linked to low serotonin levels. In fact, 5-HTP has outperformed antidepressant drugs, and recent studies have shown it to be quite helpful in reducing appetite and promoting weight loss in overweight subjects. Most commercially available 5-HTP is isolated from

a natural source—a seed from the African plant *Griffonia simplicifolia*.

Q How does tryptophan compare to 5-HTP?

A Tryptophan must be converted to 5-HTP before it is metabolized to serotonin. This conversion is impaired in many people. In addition, tryptophan requires active transport into the brain and competes with other amino acids for this transport site. In contrast, 5-HTP easily crosses the blood-brain barrier. Detailed studies show that while only 3 percent of an oral dose of L-tryptophan is converted to serotonin, more than 70 percent of an oral dose of 5-HTP is. In addition to increasing serotonin levels, 5-HTP causes an increase in endorphins and other neurotransmitters.

Q How effective is 5-HTP in aiding weight loss?

A It can be very helpful, especially in reducing excessive carbohydrate consumption. More than three decades ago, researchers demonstrated that administering 5-HTP to rats that were genetically bred to overeat and be obese resulted in a significant reduction in food intake. Further research revealed that these rats

(continued on page 34)



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5-HTP

had decreased activity of the enzyme that converts tryptophan to 5-HTP, which is itself subsequently converted to serotonin. In other words, these rats were fat as a result of a genetically determined low level of activity of the enzyme that starts the manufacture of serotonin from tryptophan. As a result, these rats didn't get the message to stop eating until they had consumed far greater amounts of food than normal rats.

The early animal studies with 5-HTP as a weight loss aid have been followed by a series of human clinical studies in overweight women. These studies show that 5-HTP is able to reduce calorie intake and promote feelings of fullness after eating. The average amount of weight loss during the 5- to 6-week period of 5-HTP supplementation averaged between 1 and 1.5 pounds per week—even in overweight women who made no conscious effort to lose weight.

Q What is the best way to take 5-HTP?

A Be sure to use chewable tablets or ones that won't dissolve in the stomach (enteric-coated). If 5-HTP acts in the stomach, it will produce significant nausea. For depression, weight loss, headaches, and fibromyalgia the dosage should be started at 50 mg three times per day. If the response is inadequate after two weeks, increase the dosage to 100 mg three times per day. For insomnia, take 50 to 150 mg 30 to 45 minutes before going

to bed. Start with the lower dose for at least three days before increasing dosage. You can take it with food, but if you are taking it for weight loss, take it 20 minutes before meals.

Q What about using 5-HTP with antidepressant drugs?

A Although 5-HTP has been shown to work very well with antidepressant drugs in clinical trials, you should always consult with your doctor before combining supplements and medications. It is theoretically possible for serotonin levels to get too high. The result is a condition known as the "serotonin syndrome," which is characterized by confusion, fever, shivering, sweating, diarrhea, and muscle spasms. With a doctor's supervision, 5-HTP can be used in conjunction with antidepressant drugs.

Q Are there any contraindications for 5-HTP?

A Do not use 5-HTP during pregnancy or lactation, if you have Parkinson's disease or scleroderma, or if you're taking methysergide or cyproheptadine.

Q Is 5-HTP safe for long-term use?

A Yes, some people with a genetic defect in the conversion of tryptophan to 5-HTP require lifelong supplementation. Just to be safe, long-term continual use of 5-HTP should be monitored by regular annual eosinophil determination. This determination is part of a standard laboratory blood test known as a complete blood count (CBC).

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