

DrWhitaker's

SPECIAL REPORT

Dr. Whitaker's

Uncensored Encyclopedia of Vitamin Secrets

**An A-Z Guide of
70 Common Ailments and Healthy
Alternatives to Treat Them**

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Table of Contents

Aging.....	1	Heart Failure	24
Alcoholism	1	<i>Lee's Success Story</i>	25
Age-Related Macular Degeneration (AMD).....	2	Heart Health.....	26
Allergies	2	Insomnia.....	26
Alzheimer's Disease.....	3	Irritable Bowel Syndrome (IBS).....	26
Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS) or Lou Gehrig's Disease	3	Immunity.....	27
Anemia.....	3	Joint Health	28
Anxiety	3	Kidney Disease	28
Arrhythmia.....	4	Liver Problems.....	29
Arthritis.....	4	Memory Loss	30
Asthma	4	Multiple Sclerosis (MS)	30
Back Pain	6	Muscle Cramps and Spasms	30
Bedsores	6	Neurological Conditions	30
Blood Pressure	6	Neuropathy	31
<i>Reflexology Helps With Blood Pressure— Plus Much More</i>	6	Oral Health.....	31
Blood Sugar Control	7	Osteoporosis.....	32
<i>Safe Sweeteners</i>	8	Pain Reduction	32
<i>Ken's Recovery From Diabetes</i>	9	<i>Corn Syrup for Bad Backs?</i>	33
Bone Health	10	Parkinson's	34
Brain Health.....	11	Plantar Fasciitis.....	34
<i>Coffee for Short-Term Memory</i>	12	Premenstrual Syndrome (PMS)	34
<i>Nutrients Helped Sally's Dementia</i>	13	Prostate Health.....	35
Bruises	13	Psoriasis	35
Cancer Prevention and Treatment.....	14	Respiratory Health	35
Cataracts	16	<i>Houseplants for Improved Air Quality</i>	36
Cholesterol	17	Rosacea	36
<i>Fish for Health</i>	17	Sense of Smell.....	37
Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD).....	18	Sexual Health and Performance	37
<i>Getting Your Hands on Glutathione</i>	19	<i>Drugs That Can Interfere With Performance</i>	37
Cold and Flu.....	19	<i>Rule Out Sleep Apnea</i>	39
Crohn's Disease/Inflammatory Bowel Disease (IBD).....	19	Shingles.....	39
<i>How Glutamine Helped Josh</i>	20	Sleeplessness	40
Constipation	20	Smoking Cessation.....	40
Deep Vein Thrombosis	21	Stroke	41
Diabetes.....	21	<i>What If You've Already Had a Stroke?</i>	41
Dry Eye Syndrome.....	21	Urinary Tract Infections	42
Eczema.....	21	Vaginal Dryness.....	42
Emphysema	22	Vision	42
Fatigue.....	22	Weight Control.....	43
Gas/Bloating	22	Wound Healing	43
Gastroesophageal Reflux Disease (GERD)	23	<i>Chewing Gum for Health?</i>	44
Glaucoma	23	Wrinkles	44
Hearing.....	24		
Heartburn	24		

Note: Julian Whitaker, MD, has extensive experience in the areas of preventive medicine and natural healing. All recommendations in this report have met stringent criteria for safety and effectiveness; however, they have not been reviewed by the Food and Drug Administration. The recommendations in this report are not intended to replace the advice of your physician, and you are encouraged to seek advice from competent medical professionals for your personal health needs.

Dr. Whitaker's Uncensored Encyclopedia of Vitamin Secrets

Since the launch of *Health & Healing* in 1991, I've been researching and reporting on both conventional and alternative breakthrough therapies each and every month. Based on all my research, I could easily spout off a laundry list of safe, natural therapies for virtually all common health concerns. Here you will find some of my favorites ranging from those I uncovered many years ago right up to the present. I have organized them alphabetically by health condition to make it easy for you to locate the information you need most. I hope you find these solutions helpful, and I urge you to share what you learn with your friends and family.

Aging

Resveratrol is a phytonutrient found in the skins and seeds of grapes, peanuts, and a handful of other plants that protects them against fungus. It is also present in red wine, which is ubiquitous in French culture, and is the likely explanation of the "French Paradox"—why the French can eat a high-fat, high-calorie diet, yet have significantly fewer heart attacks and live longer than people in other countries.

The cardioprotective benefits of resveratrol are broad. It boosts levels of HDL cholesterol and nitric oxide, which relaxes the arteries and improves blood pressure. It thins the blood by inhibiting platelet aggregation and blocks the adhesion of clots to the artery walls, which is the cause of most heart attacks and strokes. It is also a potent antioxidant and anti-inflammatory agent that tends to minimize damage, even if you have a heart attack or stroke.

I'm not saying this supplement will give you license to have hollandaise sauce and Chateaubriand with every meal. But, it does provide protection against dietary indiscretions, and its benefits go far beyond heart disease: Resveratrol may actually slow the aging process and add additional healthy years to your life.

No supplement will ever replace the relaxation and sense of camaraderie a nice glass of wine provides, but to get the full benefit of resveratrol, you'll need to take it in supplement form. (Some red wines provide mere traces; grape juice has none at all.) **The suggested dose of resveratrol is 100 mg once or twice a day, taken with meals.**

The quality of resveratrol supplements varies considerably, so it's important to use a product with guaranteed stability and potency. The brand I recommend is Longevinex, which has a unique encapsulation process that preserves resveratrol. Longevinex also contains quercetin to enhance absorption and IP6,

a heavy metal chelator, in a base of lecithin, to help penetrate the blood brain barrier. It is available from Longevinex at 800-465-4000 or longevinex.com. To learn more about resveratrol, read *The Red Wine Pill* by Bill Sardi, available by calling 909-599-0840 or online at hereandnowbooks.com.

Alcoholism

Our current treatment of alcoholism, looking at it primarily as a character disorder amendable by group therapy and pressure, is a travesty. Alcoholism is a disease, a biochemical disorder that affects approximately 18 million Americans. And yet we continue to treat alcoholics as if they caused their disease.

Worse still, the myths surrounding this disease can be fatal. One particularly harmful misconception is that alcoholics have to hit rock bottom before they will seek treatment or can be effectively helped. This is as absurd as saying that a woman with breast cancer has to have multiple metastases throughout her body before she will respond to therapy. Another is that alcoholics drink to overcome emotional stress or hardship, and that they have control over their behavior. Folks, this is nonsense.

Despite widespread acknowledgement that alcoholism is, in fact, a disease rather than a psychological disorder, psychological "treatment" is usually all that is offered. This makes about as much sense as using group counseling to lower the blood sugar of patients with diabetes. Yet the evidence that alcoholism is likely caused by suboptimal intake of nutrients and can be treated with nutritional support is almost 50 years old. Here are my specific recommendations for overcoming alcoholism.

- If you drink alcohol at all, it is imperative that you **supplement with a potent daily multivitamin and mineral regimen**. This will not only reduce

alcohol intake and make it easier to control drinking, but also compensate for the nutrient losses that occur, even with social drinking.

- If you have an alcohol problem, the following supplements will help curb cravings: **500–1,000 mg buffered vitamin C whenever cravings hit (up to 10,000 mg daily) and 500–1,000 mg L-glutamine three times a day on an empty stomach. I also suggest taking additional calcium, magnesium, zinc, and B-complex vitamins.** You can find these supplements in health food stores.
- For a more detailed program, read *Seven Weeks to Sobriety* by Joan Mathews Larson, PhD. In it, Dr. Larson outlines a week-by-week nutritional protocol for overcoming addiction. Look for it in bookstores or order it online from *healthrecovery.com* or by phone, 800-24-SOBER (800-247-6237).
- If you're from the South like I am (I grew up in Atlanta), you're familiar with **kudzu**, a fast-growing vine that has overtaken more than 7 million acres of land, enveloping trees, telephone poles, and anything else in its path. But this pesky weed also has a positive side: It curbs alcohol cravings.

To test this, Massachusetts researchers set up a “lab” in an apartment where study subjects came after work. They took either a kudzu supplement or a placebo capsule and then drank as many beers as they desired. The experiment was later repeated and the kudzu/placebo groups were switched. Across the board, those taking kudzu drank more slowly and drank about half as much as when they were taking a placebo. **If you tend to overindulge, give kudzu a try. Look for a standardized kudzu extract in health food stores and take as directed.**

Age-Related Macular Degeneration (AMD)

Marked by deterioration of the macula, a small area in the center of the retina, age-related macular degeneration (AMD) results in loss of central vision and inability to see fine details. Two of the most protective nutrients against macular degeneration are lutein and zeaxanthin, carotenoids concentrated in the macula. Studies have shown that people who eat a lot of lutein- and zeaxanthin-rich leafy greens have a decreased risk of this disorder.

Another good source of these carotenoids is egg yolks. To study the effects of eggs on the macula, researchers from the University of Massachusetts in Lowell divided female volunteers into three groups and gave them six eggs per week (two groups ate eggs containing different levels of lutein and zeaxanthin) or placebo pills.

After 12 weeks, they found that eating eggs increased density of the macular pigment and raised blood levels of zeaxanthin, but had no effect on cholesterol. The only change in the placebo group was an unexpected increase in cholesterol. The researchers commented that although eggs contain fewer protective carotenoids than spinach and other leafy greens, their bioavailability to the retina is high. **To protect against macular degeneration, include one whole egg in your daily diet—and don't fret about your cholesterol. See [Vision](#) for additional recommendations.**

Allergies

If you're one of the nearly 36 million Americans afflicted with seasonal allergies, conventional medicine offers little help beyond nasal sprays, drugs, and allergy shots. Luckily, a new breakthrough from Germany may soon have you breathing a much-needed, natural sigh of relief.

Pollen blockers are ointments applied to the inside of the nostrils that literally block airborne allergens from entering your body. The offending particles stick to the petroleum jelly-like barrier before they have a chance to induce symptoms such as itchy or runny nose, congestion, or nasal irritation.

In a double-blind, placebo-controlled study of patients with seasonal allergies, 43 used a pollen blocker, while 48 used a placebo ointment four times a day for nine days. They were exposed to varying levels of pollen, dust, and other allergens until a reaction occurred; allergy symptoms and airflow rate were measured.

The pollen blocker reduced allergy symptoms by an impressive 60 percent with a 20 percent increase in air flow, while the placebo group only experienced a 25 percent reduction in symptoms with airflow increasing by 10 percent. Alergol Pollen Blocker Cream, distributed by Pronatura Inc., is a good brand. It can be ordered by calling

800-555-7580 or by visiting alergol.com. Use as directed. See **Asthma and Respiratory Health** for additional recommendations.

Alzheimer's Disease

See **Brain Health**.

Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS) or Lou Gehrig's Disease

See **Neurological Conditions**.

Anemia

Anemia is a blood condition that develops when you don't have enough healthy red blood cells to transport oxygen from your lungs to the rest of your body. General symptoms include fatigue, dizziness, rapid heart rate, and pale skin. Anemia can result from blood loss or decreased red blood cell production caused by an iron or vitamin B12 deficiency.

I don't recommend supplementing with iron unless a physical examination and blood tests reveal a deficiency. **If you feel you need to boost your iron levels, talk with your physician about taking iron supplements with bovine colostrum and vitamin C.** Ingredients in colostrum—the first, watery, nutrient- and antibody-rich milk made for mammalian babies by their mothers—improves the absorption of iron through the intestinal wall. Vitamin C supplements also enhance iron absorption.

Anxiety

We all experience some degree of uneasiness, apprehension, worry, fear, or even terror when we feel unsafe or threatened, or when we find ourselves in unnerving situations such as giving a presentation or taking an exam. It's normal to feel anxious in these circumstances. This "fight-or-flight" response is a survival mechanism that alerts your body to potential threats and gets you ready for action.

We can all tolerate a little stress—it makes us more alert and gives us an edge in certain situations. Chronic anxiety, on the other hand, is emotionally and physically debilitating. Nobody should have to live in

a state of constant fear and worry, or suffer through panic attacks or anxiety-driven insomnia, shortness of breath, gastrointestinal problems, and heart palpitations. Here are some of my favorite recommendations for dealing with anxiety naturally.

- I suggest that you first try **Gamma-aminobutyric acid (GABA)**. GABA is more than an amino acid. It is also one of the central nervous system's most important inhibitory neurotransmitters, meaning it stimulates receptors that inhibit, or calm down, activity in the brain. It works, in a sense, in opposition to the excitatory neurotransmitters that rev up the brain. Obviously these two types need to be in balance, and taking supplemental GABA when you're restless, anxious, or irritable helps restore necessary equilibrium. Because supplemental GABA is safe, nontoxic, and non-habit forming—in addition to being effective—it should be a front-line defense in the battle against anxiety. **For quick relief during an acute episode, open a capsule and stir it into water. For chronic anxiety, take 750 mg one to three times a day as needed.**
 - **Exercise** is a great way to both stave off anxiety and calm down an acute episode. If your body is already in the fight-or-flight mode, you might as well take flight! Going for a walk or jog brings down levels of stress hormones, boosts production of mood-enhancing neurotransmitters, and releases muscle tension. It's also a distraction that shifts your focus away from whatever is making you anxious.
 - I also recommend that you put yourself on a strict "**media diet**." Just take a look at these recent headlines: "Violent Crime in Cities Shows Sharp Surge, Reversing Trend;" "Global Warming Study: Rising Sea Levels a Threat to Major Cities;" "Food Allergies: One Bite Can Be Deadly." Scary news such as this bombards us every day. No wonder so many of us are anxious!
- For a period of one month, quit watching the news, reading the paper, looking at online news sources, and listening to the radio.** Think you'll be missing out? You will—on anxiety-provoking violence, gore, and nonsense.
- There are a number of other safe and effective supplements for easing anxiety besides GABA. **L-theanine**, an amino acid abundant in green tea,

raises your body's GABA levels and promotes calming alpha-wave activity in the brain. **5-HTP**, also an amino acid supplement, helps boost levels of serotonin, a neurotransmitter involved in mood and sleep.

- **Kava** (*Piper methysticum*), an herb used for thousands of years in the South Pacific islands, is renowned for its ability to cause profound relaxation and an overall sense of well-being. **Valerian**, another anxiety-reducing herb, is especially useful when taken at bedtime because it also induces sleep.
- I want to close with **Dilantin** (phenytoin). Rarely do I recommend prescription drugs, but Dilantin is an exception. Used for decades as an anti-seizure drug, low-dose Dilantin has an amazing ability to quiet the brain and eliminate symptoms of anxiety. It works by evening out the bioelectrical activity in the brain and normalizing neuronal activity. This helps tone down anxiety, anger, and other negative emotional states. Dilantin is available by prescription only. For more information read *The Story of a Remarkable Medicine* by Jack Dreyfus, available online at remarkablemedicine.com.

Whether you experience occasional anxiety or chronic worry, use these solutions to calm your mind and create the sense of tranquility that you deserve. If GABA doesn't do it for you, try the other anxiety-relievers discussed above, one at a time, and see what works best for you. All of these supplements are available in health food stores; take as directed.

Arrhythmia

The term "arrhythmia" refers to an irregular heart rhythm. Arrhythmias vary in severity from the fairly benign and treatable atrial fibrillation, to often deadly abnormalities in the ventricles. Arrhythmias prevent the heart from pumping blood properly and can deprive the brain of oxygen and cause it to shut down. While not all arrhythmias are fatal, they are cause for concern. Fortunately, there are natural therapies that can engender heart health.

- **Coenzyme Q10 (CoQ10)**, a potent antioxidant, is crucial for energy production in the mitochondria of all of your cells, but it is particularly active in your heart. While a bicep muscle has 200 mitochondria, your heart has a whopping 5,000, and

these cellular powerhouses need adequate levels of CoQ10 in order to produce energy. **Take 100–300 mg daily, in divided doses with meals.** Look for CoQ10 in your local health food store.

- **Fish oil.** Hundreds of studies confirm that the omega-3 fatty acids, specifically eicosapentaenoic acid (EPA) and docosahexaenoic acid (DHA), in fish oil help protect the heart. Among other cardiac benefits, fish oil is an extremely powerful anti-arrhythmic. DHA in particular helps stabilize the heart's electrical activity, reducing risk of fatal arrhythmias and sudden cardiac death. If you culture heart cells and look at them under a microscope, they clump together and spontaneously beat, rhythmically and in unison, just like a heart. In one experiment, Harvard researchers added different toxins to heart cell cultures that caused them to beat erratically. However, when they added omega-3 fatty acids at the same time, arrhythmias were prevented. **Take two to eight 1,000 mg fish oil capsules daily.**
- **IV Magnesium.** Given intravenously, magnesium is a powerful stabilizer of heart rhythm. Magnesium infusions have been shown to eliminate dangerous cardiac arrhythmias when more routine drugs have failed, and they are exceptionally safe. A few years ago I saw a patient, Pete, an avid cyclist who came to the clinic with severe ventricular arrhythmia, a potentially lethal rhythm disturbance of the heart. Because he was such a serious exerciser and therefore sweated a lot, I immediately suspected a magnesium deficiency and treated him accordingly. Just one infusion of magnesium quelled his arrhythmia completely, and he was back on his bike in less than a week. **IV magnesium must be administered by a physician, however, I also recommend taking 500–1,000 mg of supplemental (oral) magnesium daily to support healthy heart rhythms.**

Arthritis

See **Joint Health and Pain Reduction.**

Asthma

Millions of people rely on inhalers each and every day because the mere thought of a full-blown asthma attack—the wheezing, panicky, exhausting fight for

air and terrifying trips to the emergency room—is just too overwhelming to risk. But a recent review of several studies revealed that these inhalers may not be all they’re cracked up to be. Fortunately, there are safe, natural therapies that can reduce the frequency and severity of attacks, improve lung function, and lower drug use. Here are some that I recommend.

- People with asthma tend to breathe rapidly, deeply, and through the mouth. As a result, their CO₂ levels are low. To prevent further CO₂ losses, the smooth muscles of the airways constrict and spasm, bringing on shortness of breath and other signs of asthma. This effect leads to even more over-breathing, setting up a cycle of chronically low CO₂ levels.

To counter all of this, Ukrainian scientist Konstantin Pavlovich Buteyko created a series of exercises designed to restore normal breathing, raise CO₂ levels, and dilate the airways. These breathing exercises have been shown to dramatically improve symptoms and reduce drug use. In one study out of New Zealand, 38 patients with chronic asthma were instructed in the Buteyko method. At a six-month follow up, those in the Buteyko group had cut their use of inhaled steroids in half and their use of beta-2-agonists by 85 percent, compared to 0 and 37 percent, respectively, in the control group.

The Buteyko method is pretty simple, but you need to practice in order for it to become second nature. It basically consists of decreasing the volume of air you breathe by learning to use your diaphragm correctly and breathing through your nose. I’ve read scores of testimonials from people who have used this breathing technique to overcome asthma. Although the Buteyko method is popular outside the US, there are only a handful of practitioners in this country. To locate one, visit Buteyko Asthma Education at Buteyko-usa.com. *Kick Asthma Naturally*, a home education kit with a DVD and instructional booklets, is available by visiting kickasthma.com or calling 206-763-8862.

- Another technique for raising CO₂ levels is to **simply hold your breath**. Begin by breathing normally. After an exhalation, hold your breath for a count of five to 10 seconds. Resume normal breathing for 10 breaths. Repeat this sequence five or six more times. Do this cycle at least three or four times a day. **Remember, these breathing exercises are**

designed to prevent future attacks, not thwart an attack in progress—so don’t toss out your meds.

- Breathing exercises aside, there are supplements that can also curtail episodes. Foremost is **magnesium**, which relaxes the bronchioles and helps keep airways open. People with asthma are often deficient in this mineral, and taking magnesium has been shown to reduce drug requirements. (Intravenous magnesium sulfate can actually thwart an acute attack, but few emergency rooms use this lifesaving therapy.) **The suggested dose for magnesium is 500–1,000 mg daily.**
- You should also take **high-dose fish oil**, since inflammation of the airways is a key factor in asthma. In a study of patients with exercise-induced asthma, a fish oil supplement essentially reversed the asthmatic condition. **The suggested dose for fish oil is 3.2 g of EPA daily. If you take Coumadin or other blood-thinning medication, check with your doctor before taking fish oil at this dosage.**
- Similarly, the herb **butterbur** (*Petasites hybridus*) contains compounds that inhibit the inflammatory chemicals that aggravate asthma symptoms, and it has been demonstrated to reduce medication requirements as well as the frequency and severity of asthma attacks. Supplements such as **quercetin, bromelain, stinging nettle, vitamin C, and N-acetyl-cysteine** are also helpful because they dampen the allergic response that often sets off asthma attacks. **The dose of butterbur is 50–150 mg;** look for it in health food stores. A good allergy formula is **Natural D-Hist**, which is sold in doctors’ offices or may be ordered by calling 800-810-6655.
- Even drinking lots of **water**, which discourages histamine release, may confer dramatic benefits. One subscriber told me how increasing her eight-year-old son’s water intake helped him so much that within one month his tests of lung capacity went from 60 percent of normal on medication to 120 percent off all drugs.
- **Identify and avoid airborne and food allergens** that can trigger asthma flare-ups.

See **Allergies and Respiratory Health** for additional recommendations.

Back Pain

See Pain Reduction.

Bedsores

Bedsores, or pressure ulcers, are far from innocuous. These painful, slow-healing ulcers, which are epidemic in patients who are bedridden, paralyzed, or have limited mobility, can lead to systemic infections. In fact, complications from bedsore kill a minimum of 60,000 Americans every year!

A compelling study from “Down Under” suggests that **nutritional supplements** facilitate the healing of these common lesions. Australian researchers studied the effects of three nutritional protocols on hospitalized patients with bedsore. Group one was fed the regular hospital diet; group two was given the regular diet, plus two energy and high-protein supplements; and group three got the diet and energy/protein supplements, plus 9 g of arginine, 500 mg of vitamin C, and 30 mg of zinc. Only the patients receiving **supplemental arginine, vitamin C, and zinc** had significant improvements in healing.

This isn’t surprising, since all three of these nutrients are well known for boosting immune function. Nor is it surprising—unfortunate, but not surprising—that the results of this small but important study are unlikely to change hospital procedures or the way bedsore are treated. However, if you or a loved one is suffering from this painful and potentially serious condition, I suggest you take this study to heart and add these supplements to your daily regimen.

Blood Pressure

Experts predict that an astounding 90 percent of middle-aged Americans will develop hypertension at some point in their lives. This sounds extreme, but quite a few of the patients who come to my clinic have high blood pressure. One of them, Joan, had a reading of 144/84 when she came to Whitaker Wellness. Fortunately, our natural program of dietary changes and exercise, along with a handful of supplements and other natural therapies, help patients like Joan get their blood pressure under control. Here are some of the therapies I recommend for keeping hypertension in check.

- **Coenzyme Q10 (CoQ10)**, a potent antioxidant, is crucial for energy production in the mitochondria

Reflexology Helps With Blood Pressure—Plus Much More

One of our patients’ favorite therapies here at the clinic is reflexology, which involves placing pressure on specific “reflex” points in the feet, hands, and ears. Studies have proven a wide range of benefits for this therapy including faster wound healing, improved circulation, reductions in sleep and mood problems, and declines in gastrointestinal symptoms, to name just a few.

One small study also revealed that reflexology may be useful for hypertension and high triglycerides. A group of patients received two weekly treatments of professional reflexology for six weeks then self-administered foot reflexology twice a week for another four weeks. At the study’s conclusion, systolic blood pressure and triglyceride levels fell markedly, compared to a control group, and quality of life improved as well.

Although reflexology is not a massage per se, it feels wonderful and has profound healing and relaxing effects. To learn more about reflexology or to find a practitioner in your area, visit reflexology-usa.org or arcb.net. To receive treatment at the Whitaker Wellness Institute, visit whitakerwellness.com or call 800-488-1500.

of all of your cells, but it is particularly active in your heart. **Take 100–300 mg daily, in divided doses with meals.** Look for CoQ10 in your local health food store.

- When you think about lowering blood pressure, **celery** probably isn’t the first thing that comes to mind. But this crunchy vegetable deserves some serious attention. Loaded with potassium and magnesium, celery contains something even more important: 3-n-butyl-phthalide, a compound that relaxes the smooth muscle cells in the arterial walls, allowing the arteries to dilate and effectively lowering blood pressure.

One of the physicians at Whitaker Wellness decided to put celery to the test. **Every day for a month, she and her father juiced and drank one bunch of celery mixed with a little orange juice for flavor.** (It’s somewhat bitter on its own.)

Her father's systolic blood pressure went from 148 to 128 and hers went from 120 to 105.

- **Low-Sodium V8 juice** is also a good option. It works on two fronts to lower blood pressure. First, like celery, it contains a particularly high dose of potassium (840 mg per eight ounces) that helps keep blood pressure in check. Second, according to a study published in *JAMA*, it is an effective blood thinner, which further contributes to its antihypertensive effects. For many of my patients, simply drinking **12 ounces of Low-Sodium V8 juice daily** is enough to keep blood pressure in the normal range.
- **Chiropractic manipulation.** The idea that chiropractic manipulation can lower blood pressure has been floating around for more than 20 years, but a groundbreaking clinical trial has finally confirmed it. In this study, 50 patients with blood pressure greater than 140/90 were divided into two groups and treated with either a realignment procedure of the atlas (the top cervical vertebra) or a placebo adjustment. Improvements were seen in the treatment group in just three weeks. After eight weeks, the systolic pressure averaged less than 130, while the placebo group's blood pressure remained unchanged. To locate a chiropractor near you, visit chiropractic.org or call 800-423-4690. To make an appointment at the Whitaker Wellness Institute, call 800-488-1500.
- **High-dose folic acid** is another excellent therapy for hypertension. It reduces arterial stiffness, which relaxes the arteries, improves blood flow, and results in lower blood pressure. When Australian researchers gave borderline-hypertensive volunteers **5 mg of folic acid a day** for three weeks, their systolic blood pressure (top number) fell by nearly 5 mm Hg, compared to when they were taking a placebo. Five mg of folic acid may sound like a lot, but it's safe, well tolerated, and highly therapeutic. If you want to try this therapy and you can't find high-dose folic acid in your health food store, call 800-810-6655.
- **Balance3.** This Chinese herbal remedy is made from seven herbs: all-heal flower, chrysanthemum flower, honeysuckle flower, notoginseng root, water fairy flower, shiitake mushroom, and pagoda tree flower. At Whitaker Wellness, we have found that it lowers blood pressure rapidly

and consistently in a majority of patients who give it a try. We've treated scores of patients with Balance3 with terrific results.

A typical patient is Lorraine, who had hypertension for years. Before starting on Balance3, her blood pressure ran around 170/100. After treatment, it averaged 130/70. Although there are no published studies on this product, it appears that the herbs work together to dilate blood vessels and improve blood flow. **The suggested dose for hypertension is one tablet with breakfast and dinner and another two or three at bedtime, however, some patients found that the day-time doses made them sleepy. They cut back to taking it only at night and still report good results with blood pressure control.** Balance3 is available from the manufacturer, Balance Three International (877-746-5306 or balance3.com), or by calling 800-810-6655.

Blood Sugar Control

What you eat has a profound effect on your blood glucose levels. In fact, I believe one of the primary reasons many people have to monitor their blood sugar levels so closely these days is because more and more emerging nations are adopting the Western diet that we've "enjoyed" for years.

Indigenous diets of fresh fruits, vegetables, and legumes are being replaced with processed, refined foods that have been stripped of their natural fibers and nutrients. Meat has become more prominent in the daily diet, and fast-food restaurants are springing up all over the globe.

Fortunately, by reverting back to a more primitive diet and taking targeted supplements, you can easily—and naturally—promote and maintain healthy blood sugar levels. Here are some of my favorite therapies.

- **Nix saturated and trans fats.** Excess fat, particularly saturated fats from meat and altered trans fatty acids in processed foods, can wreak havoc on your body. As early as the 1920s, it was demonstrated that a high-saturated-fat diet not only causes weight gain but also decreases insulin sensitivity. So, if you want to maintain a healthy weight and blood sugar levels I recommend eliminating these foods from your diet.

Safe Sweeteners

By far, my favorite sweeteners are the natural ones. Topping the list is stevia. This herb has been used for over 1,500 years in South America and boasts worldwide popularity. It is calorie free and does not affect blood sugar levels. Just a few drops of a liquid concentrate or a dusting of powdered stevia is all you need to lend sweetness to any dish. It's the sweetener of choice at the Whitaker Wellness Institute, and if you haven't tried it yet, you should.

Running a close second is xylitol. This sweetener looks and tastes like sugar, making it ideal for baking. Better yet, it's good for your teeth: Xylitol actually reduces cavity and plaque formation, a dental claim approved by the FDA. Although xylitol is not calorie free, it is metabolized much more slowly than regular sugar and has an extremely low glycemic index. The only reported side effect is gastrointestinal distress when large amounts are ingested.

Although stevia and xylitol are my top choices for sweeteners, I realize that they aren't for everyone. Stevia's aftertaste can be a little strong for some, and, as I mentioned above, some people can experience digestive distress with xylitol. Fortunately, I recently discovered another sweetener that is also 100 percent natural that tastes just like sugar, but has 75 percent fewer calories and is 70–80 percent lower on the glycemic index. It is called Whey Low. Like xylitol, it is great for baking. You can also use Whey Low in tea and coffee, and anywhere else you would typically use sugar.

You can find stevia and xylitol in health food stores. Whey Low is available by calling 888-886-8213.

- **Avoid sugars and artificial sweeteners.** We've also become sugar junkies. According to US Department of Agriculture statistics, Americans consume an average of 149 pounds of sweeteners a year—not counting the artificial sweeteners such as aspartame (NutraSweet and Equal) that we con-

sume in over 7,000 products. Due to the negative effects sugars and artificial sweeteners can have on your blood sugar—and your overall health—it is best if you avoid them as much as possible. That being said, I know as well as you that cravings for sweet treats aren't going to disappear. Fortunately, there are healthy alternatives. See the box at left for the ones I recommend.

- **Cinnamon** contains an ingredient called methylhydroxy chalcone polymer (MHCP) which, in addition to being a potent antioxidant, improves insulin sensitivity. However, since some research suggests that chemicals in saliva render it ineffective, I don't recommend just adding ground cinnamon to your food. Take a water-soluble cinnamon extract instead. You can find water-soluble cinnamon extracts in health food stores. Other good options are to drink cinnamon tea or add cinnamon to ground coffee before brewing, since the undesirable compounds that cinnamon contains are eliminated when mixed in hot water. **The suggested dose is a quarter to a half teaspoon twice a day.**
- There are two trace minerals that offer additional support: **vanadium and chromium.** In fact, I believe one of the most effective and intriguing nutritional supplements for managing blood sugar levels is vanadium. This unique trace mineral, which is found in foods such as mushrooms and shellfish, may help promote insulin sensitivity. Studies show that vanadium (as vanadyl sulfate) has an insulin-like effect in the body and helps maintain normal blood sugar levels. **Try vanadyl sulfate under physician supervision. I recommend 30 mg daily. If you need extra support and are under a doctor's care, you can take up to 100–150 mg of vanadyl sulfate a day.** Vanadyl sulfate is available in health food stores (KAL is a reputable brand).

Chromium is an essential trace mineral often used in weight control. But those “in the know” realize that chromium also helps to support a healthy insulin response. This allows for better transport of glucose into cells for energy, which helps to promote healthy blood sugar levels. Chromium also promotes normal protein, carbohydrate, and

Ken's Recovery From Diabetes

In 2003, Ken W. was 63 years old and seriously overweight. He had been diagnosed with diabetes 10 years before, and he suffered with many of the complications of this disease, including diabetic neuropathy and retinopathy. He had multiple problems with his legs, and he was unable to walk on his own. He also had high blood pressure, asthma and bronchitis, severe arthritis in his neck and knees, and bowel and bladder problems. He was in constant pain, and he slept poorly. He felt hopeless because his doctor had told him there was nothing else he could do for him.

His wife, a subscriber, got him to visit the Whitaker Wellness Institute in June 2003. Unlike his doctors back home, we were quite confident that we could help Ken, so we got to work. He received IV infusions of glutathione and oxygen treatments, and within days he was breathing normally and off his inhalers. He underwent a course of acupuncture and reflexology, and his urinary incontinence quickly cleared up. For his knee and neck pain he had prolotherapy injections, and for his diabetes, hypertension, and weight, he was placed on a comprehensive nutritional supplement, diet, and exercise program.

fat metabolism. **I recommend 200 mcg of chromium picolinate daily.**

- ***Gymnema sylvestre*** is an extract from the leaves of a climbing plant native to the forests of central and south India. It has been used since the sixth century BC. The leaves of the plant contain gymnemic acids, which have been shown to slow transport of glucose from the intestines to the bloodstream. This in turn may help to keep blood sugar levels in the normal range. **For extra support, try 400 mg of *Gymnema sylvestre* daily. I recommend a maintenance dose of 200 mg daily.** A good source of *Gymnema sylvestre* is Natrol's *Gymnema Sylvestre*. It's available in health food stores.
- Another nutrient with promising benefits is **niacinamide**, also called nicotinamide, a form of vitamin B3 that has been shown to preserve beta cell function when administered in the early stages of type 1 diabetes. It does this by inhibiting free radical production and the activity of PARP, an enzyme that depletes cellular energy stores. A meta-analysis of

When he returned home after two weeks, his improvements motivated him to continue with the program. He came back to the clinic in March for a course of enhanced external counterpulsation (EECP) and hyperbaric oxygen therapy (HBOT), and his improvements accelerated. The swelling in his feet went down, and the sensation and function in his legs increased by leaps and bounds. By August 2004, he had lost 165 pounds, his blood pressure was under control, his blood sugar was within normal limits, and he was off diabetic drugs. His asthma and bronchitis were gone, and he boasted of having an "iron bladder." He still had some problems with his legs, but he was able to walk and work out in a gym, and he felt better than he had in 20 years.

When Ken went back to his doctor and told him how his breathing problems had cleared up in days, he was told, "That's impossible." After examining him, the doctor was incredulous, and was downright dumbfounded as Ken continued to make dramatic improvements over the following months. During one visit, this same doctor who had told Ken that there was nothing he could do for him quietly stated, "Keep up the good work."

10 controlled clinical trials demonstrated significant improvements in insulin production in type 1 diabetics who received niacinamide for up to five years, compared to those on placebo.

Although some studies have been negative, enough positive research exists to warrant a trial of niacinamide in early onset type 1 diabetes.

The amount of niacinamide used for new-onset type 1 diabetics is 25 mg per kilogram of body weight. Children often take 150 to 300 mg per year of age, up to 3,000 mg. This should be done only under a doctor's supervision.

- Research suggests that blood glucose levels can have an effect on nerve health. That's why I believe that in conjunction with promoting healthy blood sugar it is also important to nourish your nerves. The first supplement I recommend for promoting nerve health is **lipoic acid**, also called alpha lipoic acid or ALA. Lipoic acid is a vitamin-like antioxidant, referred to as the "universal antioxidant" because it is both fat- and water-soluble. This allows it to enter all parts

of the cell to neutralize free radicals. Research has shown that when taken in high doses, lipoic acid helps to support peripheral nerve health. **Depending on the amount of support you need, I recommend 200–400 mg of lipoic acid per day.**

More recently, it's been discovered that controlled-release lipoic acid has some advantages for patients with diabetes, since it stays in the system much longer. **The suggested dose of controlled-release lipoic acid for patients with diabetes or liver disease is 800–1,200 mg, taken in divided doses half an hour to an hour before eating for optimal absorption.** A good brand is NutraVene's Controlled Release Alpha Lipoic Acid, available at (800) 810-6655. Quick-release brands are sold in health food stores.

Another supplement I recommend for nerve health is **evening primrose oil**. Evening primrose oil, which contains the essential fatty acid gamma linolenic acid, has been shown to help support optimal nerve function. In one double-blind study carried out in seven medical centers, 480 mg of evening primrose oil taken daily for one year proved beneficial to patients' nerve health. Other studies have utilized doses of up to 6,000 mg per day with good results. **I suggest supplementing with evening primrose oil at a starting dose of 500–1,500 mg per day.**

Bone Health

Bone is in a constant state of remodeling as old, weak bone cells are broken down and replaced with new ones. Vitamin D is part and parcel of this process—in addition to facilitating calcium absorption and making bones stronger, it also enhances muscle function and improves balance and agility. This, in turn, reduces risk of falls and fractures.

Vitamin D is synthesized when your skin is exposed to ultraviolet-B (UVB) radiation from the sun. Therefore, the amount of vitamin D you produce is directly related to your UVB exposure, and for most North Americans, this equates to reduced levels in the wintertime. If you live in one of the southern states and you get outside in direct sunlight several times a week, you probably have decent levels of vitamin D. However, at latitudes 40 degrees or more north of the equator (Reno, Denver, Indianapolis, and Philadelphia all lie near this parallel), the angle of the sun during winter allows no UVB radiation to hit the earth. You could stand outside buck naked

in Seattle or Chicago at this time of year and you still wouldn't produce any vitamin D.

In a study conducted at King's College Hospital in London, medical records of 103 patients hospitalized with hip fractures were reviewed, and “almost universal vitamin D inadequacy” was noted—especially among those admitted during the winter (98 percent were deficient versus less than 83 percent in the summer). Similarly, Australian researchers found that older people in assisted-living facilities or nursing homes could dramatically reduce their risk of falls simply by taking vitamin D supplements.

Another very common but largely overlooked vitamin D–deficiency-related bone disease is osteomalacia. Marked by chronic diffuse pain and tenderness at specific points, it is often misdiagnosed as fibromyalgia. If applying moderate pressure on your sternum (breastbone) hurts, you should have your vitamin D level checked to rule out osteomalacia. Here are my specific recommendations regarding vitamin D.

- To ascertain your vitamin D level, ask your doctor for a 25(OH)D blood test, the only accurate test of vitamin D status. Optimal levels are between 40 and 60 ng/mL. **For healthy people with adequate sun exposure, 800 to 1,000 IU of vitamin D3 (cholecalciferol) per day should suffice. If you live north of the 40th parallel, I recommend 2,000 IU per day from late fall through early spring. During the summer, assuming that you get enough sun exposure, 800 to 1,000 IU should do the trick.**

Note: Fears of toxicity are overblown. Vitamin D is perfectly safe at these levels and, for short periods of time, in much larger doses. High-dose vitamin D may be required to overcome deficiencies, but it should be taken only under the care of a physician. For more about vitamin D, visit the Vitamin D Council's Web site: vitamindcouncil.org.

Here are some other ways to promote healthy bones.

- **Exercise.** Beyond making sure you get an adequate amount of vitamin D (and, of course, calcium), the single most important thing you can do to prevent or reverse osteoporosis is exercise. Gravity puts force on our bodies, keeps us earthbound and, by breaking down and initiating the rebuilding of bone cells, strengthens our bones. Without movement

and gravity (as in space flight or, less dramatically, prolonged bed rest or inactivity), bones soften.

Studies show that an exercise program can increase bone mass by five to 10 percent—and even more in those with low bone mass to begin with. No matter what their age, people who engage in regular weight-bearing exercise have higher bone density.

The best exercises for maintaining bone strength are those that strengthen muscle against gravity, such as dancing, walking, and mild weight lifting. Try to add two weekly strength-training sessions to your regimen.

- **Take strontium.** In a presentation on the prevention and treatment of osteoporosis for an educational conference of the American College for Advancement in Medicine (ACAM), Michael Uzick, NMD, touched on exercise and calcium, as well as vitamin D, but the focus of his talk was on strontium, a naturally occurring trace mineral. Dr. Uzick went over a number of studies demonstrating that supplemental strontium doesn't simply stop bone loss, but actually increases bone density.

In two placebo-controlled clinical trials published in the *New England Journal of Medicine*, strontium dramatically increased bone mineral density and reduced risk of non-vertebral fractures by 20 percent, hip fractures by 30 percent, and spinal fractures by more than 40 percent. Strontium is safe and generally well tolerated—there were no more reported side effects than in those taking a placebo in most of the studies. **The recommended dose is 680 mg of elemental strontium, taken at least two hours before or after eating or taking other supplements (calcium inhibits its absorption). Be sure that you are still taking other bone-building nutrients, including calcium, vitamin D, and vitamin K.**

- **Eat prunes.** Known mostly for their laxative effect, prunes (or dried plums as they are called these days) boast myriad health benefits. Rich in fiber, potassium, iron, antioxidants, and phytonutrients, they're high on the list of healthful foods. Recent animal studies have uncovered more good news: Prunes may reverse bone loss and promote bone formation.

In a recent study, female rats whose ovaries had been surgically removed were fed a diet supplemented with prunes, and marked restoration of bone

mass occurred. The results were so profound that researchers at Florida State University started a year-long clinical trial with postmenopausal women. Half of the women will add 9–10 prunes (100 g) to their daily diet, and the other half will consume an equivalent portion of dried apples. All of the women will take 500 mg of calcium and 200 units of vitamin D a day, undergo quarterly blood and urine tests, and have their bone mineral density measured at the start and end of the study. We won't know the results for a while, but the way I see it, why wait? Start reaping the benefits of prunes today.

- **Drink moderate amounts of beer.** Everyone knows that calcium plays a role in building strong bones, but silicon is also important. This mineral promotes greater bone mineral density by allowing other bone-boosting minerals to be absorbed into bone tissue. And guess what a primary dietary source of silicon is? That's right, beer. Furthermore, it's an exceptionally bioavailable form of silicon. Beer is also a great source of B-complex vitamins and is linked to lower levels of homocysteine and reduced risk of heart attack and stroke. **So enjoy an occasional cold one, but don't forget that the positive effects end after one or two daily drinks.**
- **Think vegetables.** A green salad is a virtual feast for your bones—it is high in calcium, vitamin K, boron, and other bone-building nutrients. Other plant foods are also rich sources of calcium without the high levels of saturated fat found in animal products.
- **Drink green tea.** Green tea is a good source of vitamin K, which improves bone mineralization.
- **Reduce salt.** Most everyone knows that too much salt raises blood pressure. But researchers also believe that elevated blood pressure can speed up the body's loss of calcium, which can lead to osteoporosis. Go easy on the salt, and be sure to read food labels for sodium content. **Use a salt substitute instead. Nu-Salt and Morton's Salt substitute are good brands that are widely available in supermarkets and health food stores.**

Brain Health

Every moment of every day, your brain performs incredible feats. Yet we take these everyday miracles—recognizing a face, recalling a phone number, solving a problem—for granted. Only when the ability to perform

Coffee for Short-Term Memory

According to the National Coffee Association, 54 percent of Americans drink coffee on a daily basis. If you're one of those people who swears you just can't function without it, you may be on the right track, at least as far as short-term memory is concerned. Austrian researchers conducted a study in which volunteers were given either 100 mg of caffeine (the amount found in about two small cups of coffee) in water or a placebo.

Twenty minutes later, when the caffeine's effects peaked, they underwent functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI) while taking a test of short-term memory. The scans revealed that caffeine produced greater than expected activity in the region of the brain that regulates memory, as well as the area that controls attention. It also improved reaction time in the test takers. Results were similar when the two groups were crossed over, with heightened brain activity found in those volunteers taking caffeine, as compared to those on placebo.

In addition to improving memory, coffee is also Americans' most abundant source of protective antioxidants. If coffee's not your "cup of tea," you'll get an equivalent dose of memory-boosting caffeine in three cups of green tea or two and a half cups of black tea.

them is lost or impaired do we consider the elegance and intricacy of brain function.

Prescription drugs, certain diseases, and chronic stress all may cause memory loss. However, aging is the primary culprit. The older we get, the more frequent mental lapses become, and the more alarming they may be. Surveys have shown that older Americans fear Alzheimer's disease and the loss of memory and "self" that it entails even more than heart disease and cancer.

Here are some of my favorite natural therapies for maintaining optimal brain function.

- **Lithium** provides tremendous support for the brain. It facilitates intercellular signaling and shields neurons from the adverse effects of toxic drugs and damage caused by interrupted blood

flow to the brain, and has actually been shown to help grow new brain cells. In a study published in the *Lancet*, researchers from Wayne State University in Detroit gave lithium to study subjects, and after four weeks observed in four-fifths of them a 3 percent increase in gray matter!

Lithium also appears to have a direct effect on amyloid-beta plaques and neurofibrillary tangles, deposits in the brain that are telltale signs of Alzheimer's. It blocks the activity of an enzyme required for their formation and, in animal studies, reduces the deposition of amyloid-beta by 40 to 78 percent!

Many people are wary of lithium because of its association with mental illness, and because it's perceived as dangerous. Granted, patients taking high doses must be closely monitored to prevent adverse effects, but for neuroprotection, we're only talking about 10–20 mg of elemental lithium (from lithium aspartate or orotate)—one to two percent of the amount in prescription drugs. At this dose lithium is quite safe, well tolerated, and highly beneficial. Lithium aspartate and lithium orotate are available in health food stores or may be ordered from the Tahoma Clinic Dispensary at tahoma-clinic.com or by calling 800-810-6655. **The general recommendation is 10–20 mg per day, taken in divided doses.**

- **B-complex vitamins** are essential for proper functioning of the brain, particularly vitamin B12. This vitamin is required for the production of the myelin sheaths that surround nerve cells. Deficiencies of vitamin B12, which are common in older people, may mimic dementia, and **B12 supplements sometimes completely reverse even severe memory loss. The suggested dose for healthy people is 150 mcg a day. For older people, especially those with signs of memory impairment, 1,000 mcg oral or sublingual vitamin B12 supplements are recommended daily.** Sublingual tablets that are dissolved under the tongue may get into the system more rapidly since they are absorbed through the buccal mucosa in the mouth and bypass the gastrointestinal tract, however, oral supplements work just as well.
- **Take more folic acid.** According to a study conducted by researchers from Columbia University Medical Center, folic acid protects against

Nutrients Helped Sally's Dementia

Sally R. was 72 years old when I first saw her. She had such severe memory loss and depression that her family had been advised to place her in a nursing home. Her daughter brought her to my office in a last-ditch effort to see if anything else could be done for her mother.

Sally was lethargic and her answers to my questions limited and perfunctory. She could not state the correct year or name the President of the United States, common questions on mental status exams. We placed Sally on a nutritional supplement program consisting of high doses of antioxidants, extra vitamin E, B-complex vitamins, essential fatty acids, and a combination of specific nutrients that target the brain. I also gave her mega doses of vitamin B12.

When Sally and her daughter returned in a month, I looked into the eyes of a different woman. She was alert, smiling, and made pleasant small talk. Her daughter said that her mood and memory were so much improved that they were no longer considering institutionalization. I did nothing heroic in Sally's care. I simply identified and treated underlying nutritional deficiencies.

Alzheimer's disease. The researchers enrolled a group of 965 New Yorkers who were 65 years old or older and did not have dementia, and measured their dietary and supplement intake of folate/folic acid and vitamins B6 and B12. The participants were followed for an average of six and a half years; over that period, 192 of them developed Alzheimer's. When the researchers looked at the study participants' intake of folic acid and vitamins B6 and B12 they found the higher the folic acid intake, the lower the risk of Alzheimer's disease. **I suggest you increase your intake of folate-rich foods (beans, leafy greens, and other vegetables) and take at least 800 mcg of supplemental folic acid daily.**

- ***Ginkgo biloba*** is an herb with a long history of treating memory and cognitive dysfunction. In addition to its powerful antioxidant effects, it also increases blood flow to the brain, which

facilitates the delivery of nutrients and oxygen and boosts overall brain function. Now, Italian researchers have shown that ginkgo works just as well as donepezil (Aricept), one of the most popular drugs for the treatment of Alzheimer's-related dementia. In a double-blind, placebo-controlled study, patients with mild-to-moderate dementia were given daily doses of either 160 mg of ginkgo, 5 mg of donepezil, or a placebo. After 24 weeks, the researchers concluded that ginkgo was "clinically comparable" in efficacy to the drug. **Look for *Ginkgo biloba* in health food stores, and go with the 160 mg dose used in the study. (Due to its only potential side effect of slight blood-thinning properties, ginkgo is unsuitable for people taking blood thinners such as Coumadin.)**

- I'm hooked on **Sudoku**, the popular puzzles that involve filling in missing numbers in a grid of 81 squares so that the numbers 1 through 9 appear only once in each row, column, and square. Sounds simple, but Sudoku puzzles can border on diabolical. They are so engrossing that once you get started it's hard to put them down. I focus so intently on my puzzles at times that I'm surprised I don't burn a hole right through the paper.

Games of logic like Sudoku give your brain a workout. Many scientific studies have demonstrated that doing puzzles, playing games, reading books, and learning new skills help to stave off age-related mental decline. Princeton researchers monitored the neural patterns of people doing Sudoku and found that these puzzles turn on the brain's associative memory, which allows us to discern patterns from partial clues. Give Sudoku a try. You'll find all levels of puzzles in daily newspapers, bookstores, and online at websudoku.com. Start with "easy." Beware, Sudoku is addictive.

Bruises

Bruising typically occurs when the tiny capillaries near the surface of the skin break after blunt trauma. As we age, our skin gets thinner and these blood vessels become more fragile, which can result in bruising from the slightest bumps and scrapes. Here is what I recommend to my patients at Whitaker Wellness.

- Aging aside, easy bruising can be due to a number of factors. **A common cause is drugs, especially**

blood-thinning medications (Coumadin/warfarin), anti-clotting drugs (Plavix), corticosteroids, and aspirin. Bleeding disorders and other diseases may also be an issue, so you should discuss these things with your doctor. (Do not stop taking any drugs unless advised to do so by your physician.) Another potential cause may be deficiencies in vitamin C or vitamin K.

- To speed healing and minimize the appearance of existing bruises, I suggest you try **topical vitamin K cream**. In a recent study, patients who had received laser treatment had significant reductions in bruising after applying vitamin K to the affected areas. Life Extension's Vitamin K Healing Cream is a good brand. It is available in health food stores or you can order it by calling 800-544-4440.
- **Arnica montana** is another tried-and-true remedy for healing bumps and bruises; we use **Heel's Traumeel** cream at the clinic, and this homeopathic remedy is also available as sublingual tablets. You can find it in health food stores or order it from various Internet retailers, such as *iherb.com*.
- **Bromelain**, a pineapple enzyme, has been shown to reduce trauma-related inflammation and swelling. Bromelain is widely available in health food stores.

Cancer Prevention and Treatment

The American Cancer Society (ACS) recently announced that for the second year in a row, there was a decline in annual cancer deaths: 553,888 in 2004, which is 3,014 fewer than in 2003. It also reported that the decline was not just a "statistical blip" but part of a continuing trend.

Before you get too excited, consider that the ACS's *Cancer Facts & Figures 2007* predicts that nearly 560,000 Americans—an increase of more than 6,000 over 2004—are expected to die of cancer this year. Furthermore, nearly 1.5 million new cases of cancer will be diagnosed.

Obviously, all the back-patting is a bit premature. Cancer kills more than 1,500 Americans a day. It is still our second most common cause of death and the leading cause of death among people younger than 85. Many of the cancer drugs approved in recent years have turned

out to be expensive duds, yet most of the multi-billion dollar annual research budget goes toward more of the same. And although experts state that at least one-third of cancer deaths could be averted by tackling obesity, nutrition, and inactivity, there is far too little emphasis on prevention. Here are some of my favorite recommendations for preventing and treating cancer.

- **Vitamin C** as a cancer therapy was pioneered by Linus Pauling, PhD. Along with Ewan Cameron, MD, Dr. Pauling conducted a number of trials showing that high-dose vitamin C resulted in remarkable improvements in quality of life and survival time of cancer patients. They followed hundreds of advanced cancer patients taking IV and oral vitamin C, tracked them against similar cancer patients not being supplemented, and found that those getting vitamin C lived up to six times longer than the patients in the control group. Subsequent studies funded by the National Institutes of Health (NIH) refuted Dr. Pauling's results, but more recently, NIH published a study finding that exposure to high concentrations of vitamin C (ascorbate) kills cancer cells, decreasing their survival rates by 50 percent.

The only way to achieve the concentrations necessary to kill cancer cells and microbes is to give vitamin C intravenously. Just 10 g of IV vitamin C, for example, raises blood levels of vitamin C higher than 250 g taken orally. Although conventional medicine turned its back on vitamin C decades ago, a handful of innovative physicians have quietly continued to research and treat their patients with IV vitamin C. One of these physicians is the late Hugh Riordan, MD, whose clinic in Wichita, Kansas, continues to utilize IV vitamin C in conjunction with other natural therapies. For more information on Dr. Riordan's clinic, the Brightspot for Health, call 316-682-3100 or visit *brightspot.org*. To schedule an appointment for IV vitamin C at the Whitaker Wellness Institute, call 800-488-1500.

- **Vitamin D.** Two meta-analyses looking at data from several studies that compared blood levels of vitamin D with breast and colorectal cancer incidence found that the lowest levels of vitamin D correlated with the highest risk of cancer, and as vitamin D levels rose, risk decreased. The correlations were so strong that the researchers con-

cluded that increasing vitamin D levels may well prevent two-thirds of colorectal cancer cases and half of breast cancer cases in this country.

The blood level deemed most protective (46 ng/mL) could, according to the researchers, be attained by taking **2,000 IU of supplemental vitamin D3 and, weather permitting, spending 10–15 minutes outdoors in the sun each day.**

Note: Although it may be surprising that the researchers suggest spending time in the sun in order to protect your body against cancer, there is a reason for this recommendation. Despite what most people believe, some sun exposure is actually good for promoting optimal health because this is the only way your body can produce vitamin D. More specifically, when UVB radiation in sunlight strikes the skin your body creates vitamin D.

- **Soy** may have powerful anticancer potential. Studies suggest that regular intake of soy decreases risk of cancers of the prostate, rectum, colon, stomach, and lungs. Antioxidant-rich compounds in soy help curb free-radical production, and encourage normal cell development by restricting the growth of blood vessels around tumors (angiogenesis). Isoflavones, or phytoestrogens, have weak estrogenic properties that bind to estrogen receptors and prevent stronger, potentially harmful estrogens from occupying receptor sites in the breast. Studies have suggested that genistein, another soy compound, inhibits the growth of implanted tumors in animals.

Try to consume at least 50 mg of soy per day. You can get this from ¼ cup textured soy protein, ¾ cup tofu or tempeh (a block of cultured soybeans that can be used as a meat substitute), 1½ cups soy milk, ½ cup cooked dried soybeans, or 3½ tablespoons soy protein powder. Soy protein powders are very concentrated. One ounce contains 13 to 24 grams of protein and 35 to 100+ mg of isoflavones. *Note:* Isoflavones may stimulate existing breast tumors, so if you already have breast cancer, don't take soy isoflavones.

Advanced cancer patients might want to consider soy isoflavone extracts such as **EcoGen Powder** or a concentrated fermented soy product called **Haelan 951**. They are rich in genistein and daidzein, the two most powerful isoflavones. In

one study, 239 patients with several types of cancer were given Haelan 951 in addition to chemotherapy and/or radiation. They experienced significant improvements in quality of life, energy, treatment side effects, and immune system markers. Haelan 951 is available in some health food stores or from the manufacturer at 866-542-3526 (800-5HAELAN) or *haelanproducts.com*. EcoGen Powder can be ordered from *chineseherbsdirect.com*.

Recommended brands of soy products include Enzymatic Therapy and Nature's Way, available in health food stores. For a free guide on soy foods and additional information on soy, contact the United Soybean Board at *soybean.org*.

- **Eat organic foods.** According to a National Research Council report, there are more than 200 known carcinogens in food. Chemicals are added to food to retard spoilage and enhance flavor and appearance. Coloring agents and nitrates used in hot dogs and cured meats may be cancer risk factors. Carcinogens can be generated during food preparation; for example, when fat in meat is heated, a very powerful carcinogen is produced. Smoking or charcoal-broiling meat creates nitrosamines that contribute to stomach cancer. Buy organic foods whenever possible.
- Most physicians recommend colonoscopy for patients age 50 or older. They are looking for colorectal adenomatous polyps, benign tumors that affect about a quarter of the people in this age bracket. Nearly all cases of colorectal cancer, which kills 57,000 Americans every year, develop from these polyps. **Curcumin**, a spice used to make curry, and the antioxidant quercetin, found in onions, both have reported anticancer effects.

Researchers examined five patients who each had five or more polyps and gave them 20 mg of quercetin and 480 mg of curcumin three times a day for six months. All five had significant improvements, with the average size of polyps dropping 51 percent and the average number decreasing by 60 percent. The only side effects were mild gastrointestinal disturbances, which disappeared after a few days. The researchers believe that much of the cancer-fighting potential lies in the curcumin. **Aim for a daily intake of 1,400–1,900 mg and take in divided doses.**

Curcumin supplements are available in most health food stores.

- **Avemar.** If you're battling cancer, you need to know about Avemar, a nutritional supplement that recently won the prestigious Nutraaward at Nutracon, a major tradeshow for nutritional supplement developers and manufacturers. Extracted from wheat germ and fermented with baker's yeast, Avemar increases natural killer cell activity, balances and coordinates the immune response, and inhibits replication and metastasis.

In a six-month Hungarian study of patients with colorectal cancer undergoing treatment, there were fewer new metastases (3 vs. 17.3 percent) and deaths (12 vs. 31.7 percent) in the group taking Avemar. Avemar also improves quality of life. Patients report reductions in pain and fatigue, an increase in appetite and weight, and, when used in conjunction with conventional treatments, better toleration and increased efficacy of chemotherapy and radiation. Avemar is sold by American BioSciences (their product is called Avé) in some health food stores and may be ordered from the Harmony Company at 888-809-1241, or theharmonyco.com. It's pricey, but definitely deserves a try.

- **Essiac Tea.** In 1922, Canadian nurse Rene Caisse met a woman who told her she had been cured of cancer by drinking an Ojibway Indian tea which consisted of four herbs: burdock root, sheep's sorrel, slippery elm, and Indian rhubarb root. Caisse made the tea for her aunt, who had inoperable cancer. Her aunt was completely cured, and Rene, naming the tea Essiac (Caisse spelled backwards), found her life's work. Rene Caisse never claimed that Essiac tea was a cancer cure, or that it would help everyone. But neither should we dismiss it as just another old folk remedy—its history is too solid to ignore. The individual herbs in Essiac tea have all been shown to have anticancer activity, and thousands of cancer patients in the past 70 years have claimed to have been helped by Essiac tea.

The most convenient and least expensive way to use Essiac tea is to buy the mixed herbs, brew your own, and store it in the fridge. **Drink two ounces three times a day at least one hour before meals.** Give it an initial trial of 12 consecutive weeks without interruption. Essiac tea is available in health

food stores, or from Altramed Health Products, 888-900-2299 or essiac-resperin.com.

- **Antineoplastons/Peptide Therapy.** This unique, nontoxic cancer therapy was developed by Stanislaw Burzynski, MD. Antineoplastons are small protein fragments or peptides produced in the liver that block the ability of cancer cells to divide. When production of antineoplastons drops due to age or other factors, cancer usually rears its ugly head. Dr. Burzynski discovered how to synthesize antineoplastons and has been using them to successfully treat cancer patients at his clinic in Houston, Texas. Administered by mouth or intravenously, these small protein compounds enter cells and alter specific functions of their genes. Some activate tumor suppressor genes that cause cancer cells to undergo apoptosis (programmed cell death), while others turn off oncogenes that would otherwise cause unbridled cell growth.

If you are interested in pursuing antineoplaston treatment, be aware that the FDA controls who gets to use the therapy and who doesn't. Patients with malignant brain tumors or low-grade lymphoma may begin therapy as soon as they are diagnosed, but those with other types of cancer are often required by the FDA to first undergo radiation or chemotherapy. Patients must be seen in the Burzynski Clinic in Houston, and may be required to stay in Houston for two to four weeks for daily antineoplaston administration and evaluation. It is an expensive therapy but is sometimes covered by insurance. To learn more about the Burzynski Clinic, call 800-714-7181 or visit the Burzynski Research Institute's Web site, cancermed.com, or the Burzynski Patient Group's Web site, burzynskipatientgroup.org.

Cataracts

Cataracts, or blind spots in the lens of the eye, progress dramatically as we age. Once a cataract begins to form, it can take anywhere from a few months to several years to have a noticeable effect on vision. Cataracts develop as a result of the process known as glycation, which occurs when sugars (glucose) react with proteins to produce harmful substances. To understand glycation's effect on the eyes, consider this: If you crack an egg onto a hot

frying pan, the clear part turns cloudy as the proteins undergo glycation. Likewise, this happens when the protein-dense lenses of the eyes interact with glucose—the eyes cloud over with cataracts.

Carnosine, a natural combination of two amino acids, is a very effective inhibitor of glycation. Studies show that a topical, time-release form of carnosine—n-acetyl-carnosine—can stop the glycation process in the lens, gradually reversing existing cataracts and preventing new ones from developing. One study comparing cataract patients who received a 1 percent solution of n-acetyl-carnosine eye drops with those who received placebo eye drops or no eye drops found that after six months 90 percent of the treated eyes showed significant improvement in overall visual acuity. This improvement was sustained throughout the 24-month study period, while the patients not receiving n-acetyl-carnosine showed significant deterioration.

For eye drops containing L-carnosine, you may want to consider Visual Ocuity, an advanced eye drop containing 1 percent n-acetyl-carnosine. The suggested use is to apply 1 to 2 drops in each eye 1 to 4 times daily. Please check with your physician before ordering if you have any kind of degenerative eye conditions. Visual Ocuity is available from Health Products Distributors, Inc. (800-228-4265 or integratedhealth.com). See [Vision](#) for additional recommendations.

Cholesterol

It seems like everyone's trying to lower their cholesterol, and about 13 million Americans are taking dangerous statin cholesterol-lowering drugs to bring it down. When a patient walks through the doors of Whitaker Wellness on one of these drugs, however, we immediately discontinue it and start them on natural therapies that accomplish the same goal in a much safer and saner manner. Here are a few therapies I recommend you use if you want to support healthy cholesterol.

- **Coenzyme Q10 (CoQ10)**, a potent antioxidant, is crucial for energy production in the mitochondria of all of your cells, but it is particularly active in your heart. This nutrient is essential for patients with all types of heart health concerns. Take 100–

Fish for Health

Everyone knows that fish is high in protein, low in saturated fat, and a good source of omega-3 fatty acids. Nevertheless, concerns about farmed fish, mercury, and other contaminants leave many people confused. Should you eat fish or not?

A Harvard research team recently concluded that the pros of eating fish far outweigh the cons, since fish consumption reduces risk of death from cardiovascular disease by 36 percent and total mortality by 17 percent. Yet researchers from the Institute of Medicine were not so optimistic, noting that only salmon and other fatty fish are cardioprotective and pointing to high levels of contaminants, especially in farmed fish.

When you sift through these studies, it isn't all that confusing. As I've been telling my patients and subscribers for years, avoid shark, swordfish, and king mackerel, which are unacceptably high in mercury. Make wild Pacific salmon your fish of choice, and also enjoy omega-3-rich sardines, herring, and small tuna, as well as shrimp, crab, halibut, and other species with low levels of contaminants. As for farmed fish, the Harvard group noted that farmed salmon contains twice as much omega-3 as leaner wild salmon, plus fish farming protects our oceans from overfishing.

300 mg daily, in divided doses with meals. Look for CoQ10 in your local health food store.

- **Flaxseed.** The soluble fiber and omega-3 oils in flax can dramatically lower cholesterol. One of my staff members tried it herself, and after three weeks of use, her total cholesterol level fell about 23 points. But don't use her as the norm. *Health & Healing* subscriber James, whose initial cholesterol level was 288, saw his numbers drop to 232 after 15 days, and plummet to an incredible 188 after six months. **Simply grind up a quarter cup once a day and sprinkle it on food or mix it into water or a smoothie.**
- **Krill**, the tiny, shrimp-like crustaceans plentiful in the polar seas, are a primary food of baleen whales. Research out of Canada reveals a remarkable benefit for us land-dwelling mammals as well:

lower blood lipids. In a randomized, prospective study, 120 patients with high cholesterol (194–348) were divided into four groups and given 1–3 g of krill oil (based on body mass index), 3 g of fish oil, or placebo. After three months, fish oil lowered total cholesterol by an average of 5.8 percent, LDL cholesterol by 4.5 percent, and triglycerides by 3.1 percent; it increased protective HDL by 4.2 percent.

One to three grams of krill oil, on the other hand, reduced total cholesterol 13–18 percent, LDL cholesterol 32–39 percent, and triglycerides 11–26.5 percent. Even better, HDL levels rose an impressive 44–59.6 percent. These changes are comparable to those achieved by statin drugs, yet krill oil is safe, natural, and relatively inexpensive. The brand used in this study was Neptune Krill Oil which you can purchase in health food stores or online at a number of vitamin retailers.

- **Niacin**, or nicotinic acid, is a form of vitamin B3 that not only increases levels of protective HDL cholesterol, but also lowers LDL cholesterol, triglycerides, lipoprotein(a), and other risk factors for heart disease. Its primary downside is the flushing it can cause when taken in therapeutic doses. Niacin dilates the blood vessels and promotes the release of histamine in the capillaries, resulting in a discomforting warm, tingly, itchy feeling.

You can minimize flushing by taking sustained-release (also called timed-release and controlled-release) niacin, rather than immediate release niacin. (I no longer recommend inositol hexaniacinate, or “no-flush” niacin, for lipid lowering because it doesn’t work as well.) Start with a low dose and build up gradually over the course of a few weeks. Taking it in divided doses with meals also reduces flushing, or you can take it all at once at bedtime so you’ll be asleep if flushing occurs. A baby aspirin (81 mg) or 15–25 mg of Benadryl half an hour before taking niacin at bedtime is helpful as well.

Most of our patients see benefits with 1,000–2,000 mg daily. High-dose niacin is best taken under the supervision of a doctor. In addition to flushing, other side effects include occasional gastrointestinal distress, skin sensitivity, and rare liver toxicity, so liver enzymes should be checked periodically. **High-dose niacin may worsen blood sugar control in diabetics, but with proper monitoring it can be used safely. If you have a peptic**

ulcer, gout, or liver disease, use niacin with caution. Niacin is sold by prescription (Niasafe) and over the counter in drugstores (Endur-Acin).

Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD)

Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, or COPD, is a devastating condition, which affects more than 16 million Americans, and is our nation’s fourth leading cause of death. Diseases that fall under the umbrella of COPD are marked by restriction of airflow to the lungs. Emphysema is a prime example. Conventional medicine has little to offer patients suffering with COPD. Fortunately, there are natural treatments available. Here are a few of my favorites.

- **Inhaled glutathione.** Free-radical damage plays a role in COPD, and glutathione is one of nature’s most potent antioxidants. Patients with chronic lung diseases have low levels of all antioxidants including glutathione, so it only makes sense that this powerhouse would be beneficial. Glutathione isn’t only protective either—in some cases it can even reverse damage. The key is to deliver glutathione directly to the lung tissues, and the only way to do this is to inhale it.

The liquid form of glutathione is placed in a nebulizer (a machine that turns liquid into vapors) and taken into the lungs by breathing through a mask or mouthpiece. The entire process is quick and easy. Those who use inhaled glutathione twice a day have noticed dramatic and lasting improvements. Inhaled glutathione can be used at home (see box on page 19) but does require a prescription. To locate an alternative physician in your area who may be willing to prescribe it, visit acam.org or call 888-439-6891. To become a patient and receive inhaled glutathione treatments at the Whitaker Wellness Institute, call 800-488-1500.

- **Ginger tea.** This herbal remedy was used in ancient Chinese medicine to treat a multitude of respiratory disorders, and it has proven particularly effective at breaking up mucus. Ginger tea is available in health food stores. You can also make your own from scratch. Just grind a one-inch slice of fresh ginger, squeeze the juice of half a lemon, and add to a cup of steaming hot water along with ¼ teaspoon cinnamon. Drink as necessary to loosen phlegm.

Getting Your Hands on Glutathione

Inhaled glutathione has been a lifesaver for many of my patients suffering with chronic obstructive pulmonary diseases. I strongly encourage anyone with these conditions to find a physician who is open to helping them obtain and use this treatment. (Both the glutathione and the nebulizer require a prescription.)

Glutathione may be ordered from McGuff Compounding Pharmacy at 877-444-1133 or mcguffpharmacy.com; Wellness Pharmacy at 800-227-2627 or wellnesshealth.com; and most other compounding pharmacies. Nebulizers, also called breathing machines, are sold by medical equipment companies, such as Tri-Med, Inc. at 303-617-1050 or tri-medinc.com.

Protocol for physicians: Glutathione 300 mg nebulized twice a day (200 mg/cc, draw 1.5 cc and place in nebulizer). Treatments take about five to 10 minutes and may be continued as long as the patient remains symptomatic.

- **Potassium iodide (SSKI).** This compound helps thin the mucus, enabling patients with chronic lung disorders to get the phlegm out. In my opinion SSKI is the best expectorant available. The suggested dose of SSKI is three to six drops diluted in water daily. It may be ordered from the Tahoma Clinic Dispensary at tahoma-clinic.com, or by calling 800-810-6655. **SSKI should not be used by anyone with an iodine allergy. If you develop a rash with use, discontinue it immediately. Be aware that high doses of iodine for prolonged periods may suppress thyroid function, so have your thyroid checked periodically.**

See **Respiratory Health** for additional recommendations.

Cold and Flu

See **Immunity**.

Crohn's Disease/Inflammatory Bowel Disease (IBD)

Crohn's disease is an inflammatory bowel disease (IBD) in the same family as ulcerative colitis. These chronic conditions are marked by inflammation and ulcerations in the intestinal tract. Conventional treatment is—no surprise—drugs, but there are more natural ways of managing IBD.

- **Avoid certain foods.** Food allergies are very common among IBD sufferers, so it is important to determine what foods irritate and inflame the intestinal tract. Common allergens include gluten (a protein in wheat, oats, barley, and rye), milk, citrus, and tomatoes. Processed foods, food additives, and preservatives should be avoided as well because they often contain microparticles and other compounds that irritate the gut.
- Another dietary modification that is extremely helpful for patients with IBD and other bowel problems is **sugar and starch restriction**. These carbohydrates cause bacterial overgrowth that leads to chronic inflammation in the intestines. Avoiding these foods, which include grains, potatoes, soy, milk, and all forms of sugar—as well as allergens unique to each individual—stops further damage to the gut and gives it a chance to heal.
- Because bacterial and/or yeast overgrowth is a prominent feature of IBD, **I recommend taking herbs such as Uva-Ursi, oregano oil, olive leaf, grapefruit seed extract, and plant tannins** to help eliminate this overgrowth.
- **Probiotics** such as *L. acidophilus* and *B. bifidum* also help replace the beneficial bacteria in the gut that are decimated by antibiotics and pathogenic bacteria and yeast. Good products include Natren's Healthy Trinity (866-462-8736 or natren.com) and Enzymatic Therapy (800-783-2286 or enzy.com).
- **Take fish oil**, which contains omega-3 essential fatty acids known for their anti-inflammatory actions. In a study published in *The New England Journal of Medicine*, nearly 60 percent of patients taking enteric-coated fish oil capsules remained in remission for a year, compared to just 26 percent of those taking placebo.

How Glutamine Helped Josh

When Josh was a junior in college, he spent a semester abroad. It was a great adventure and he loved every minute of it—until he woke up one morning in intense pain and was rushed to a hospital for an emergency appendectomy.

Over the next month, Josh was in and out of the hospital with fevers, infections, and fluid build-up in his abdomen. He then began having periodic episodes of gastrointestinal (GI) pain with severe cramping, diarrhea, and loss of appetite that increased in frequency after he returned to the US and throughout his senior year of college.

After graduation, Josh got a managerial job, working long hours under tremendous stress and that's when things went from bad to worse. His GI episodes accelerated, occurring up to four times a day, to the point that he eventually had to stop working. His parents, understandably concerned, took him to one doctor after another. According to Josh, "All of them would feel around, run some tests, and either give me a drug or pat me on the head and tell me everything was fine. One of them actually told me it was 'all in my head' and put me on an antidepressant."

Finally, Josh was diagnosed with Crohn's, and he was started on an intense regimen of steroids and anti-inflammatories. Yet nothing helped.

He continued to have pain, diarrhea, and further weight loss, wasting away from a once-muscular 170 pounds to a skeletal 126. After about a year of this, Josh had had enough. He refused to return to his gastroenterologist stating, "They just give me drugs and don't get down to the nitty-gritty." So, he started looking into alternatives.

A friend suggested that he contact the Whitaker Wellness Institute. He came to the clinic and was started on a program of diet, nutritional supplements (including glutamine with *Aloe vera*), and other natural therapies.

Today, Josh is on the road to recovery. He's back up to 152 pounds, and he feels "10 times better" than he did a year and a half ago, when he was taking numerous drugs and was essentially bedridden. But, perhaps most important, this young man has hope. He was told that Crohn's disease is chronic and incurable, and he would likely require surgery somewhere down the line to remove a portion of his colon. There was also the possibility of an ileostomy (external bag to collect wastes).

Josh still has to watch his diet, take supplements, and deal with occasional flare-ups. However, now that he has learned how to manage his disease, it no longer controls his life.

- The amino acid **glutamine** serves as a primary fuel of the cells lining the intestinal tract, plus it boosts production of glutathione, an important antioxidant. Together, these mechanisms help repair and restore integrity to the intestinal walls damaged by irritants such as NSAIDs, food additives, and aluminum. You can find glutamine in health food stores. Look for combination products that contain *Aloe vera*, which, along with **ginger, curcumin, licorice, slippery elm, and EGCG from green tea**, have been proven to improve symptoms of IBD.
- Many patients with IBD also have protein malnutrition, a factor that contributes to weight loss and poor health. At Whitaker Wellness, we use a product called **Seacure**, a protein concentrate that contains pre-digested, easily absorbed and assimilated peptides and amino acids. In addition to improving protein status, it also supports the GI tract. Seacure

is available from Proper Nutrition (800-555-8868 or propernutrition.com). Take as directed.

Constipation

At least four million Americans suffer from chronic constipation. Though aging can certainly play a role in constipation, this condition is primarily the result of poor lifestyle choices such as a low-fiber diet, lack of exercise, and insufficient intake of water. Here are some of my recommendations for treating constipation.

- The best treatment for constipation is to **increase your intake of fiber-rich plant foods**. I recommend eating a variety of fresh vegetables, fruits, beans, and grains, and incorporating freshly ground flaxseed into your diet.

- **Drink at least eight 8-ounce glasses of water each day.** This is an absolute must, folks. No half glasses!
- **Habitual exercise** will help keep you regular. Exercise for at least 30 minutes, four or five times a week.
- **Boost your supplemental vitamin C intake to 5,000–10,000 mg per day.** In Germany, vitamin C is an approved laxative. Build up to higher doses gradually.
- Over-the-counter laxatives are big business, generating sales of more than \$800 million per year. Among the safest and most healthful are Metamucil and other products that contain psyllium—an excellent source of soluble fiber that bulks up the stool and stimulates peristalsis, the wavelike contractions of the colon that keep things moving along.

Researchers from the University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center in Dallas recently tested a homemade concoction against psyllium. They found that it worked just as well—and cost half as much. In a six-week study, patients taking the “**pantry solution**” (consisting of **applesauce, wheat bran, and prune juice**) had improvements in bowel function that actually surpassed those of a control group taking the usual dose of psyllium. In addition to soluble fiber (which also helps lower cholesterol), this mixture provides a hefty dose of phytonutrients.

Here’s the recipe: Mix 1 cup applesauce, unsweetened preferred; 1 cup coarse, unprocessed wheat bran, available in health food stores; and ¼ cup prune juice. Store in the fridge and take four tablespoons daily.

- Constipation can also be caused by medications such as antibiotics, antihistamines, antacids, drugs for high blood pressure, cholesterol-lowering drugs, antidepressants, tranquilizers, and painkillers. **Talk to your doctor about your prescription and over-the-counter drugs to see if they are contributing to your problem.**

Deep Vein Thrombosis

If you’ve taken a long plane ride, you’re familiar with the discomfort, pain, and swelling that can occur in your feet and legs. What you may not know

is that compromised circulation caused by flying or sitting still for long periods of time can lead to a dangerous condition called deep vein thrombosis (DVT). In layman’s terms, DVTs are blood clots that form in the legs and restrict blood flow. They may also dislodge, causing potentially fatal blockages in the heart, brain, or lungs.

Fortunately, a solution is close at hand—or in this case “close at foot.” **Specialized compression stockings** (also called flight, travel, or gradient pressure socks) place increasing pressure from the ankles up toward the calves, boosting blood flow and improving circulation. An analysis of nine trials involving nearly 3,000 participants demonstrated that wearing “flight socks” during a seven-hour plane ride cut the risk of developing DVT by a whopping 90 percent.

These socks are not just for air travelers. They can also be helpful to anyone with circulatory disorders, diabetic complications, or peripheral neuropathy. One good brand is Jobst. To find a store near you that sells these socks, go to jobst-usa.com.

Diabetes

See [Blood Sugar Control](#).

Dry Eye Syndrome

According to Voltaire, tears may be “the silent language of grief,” but they’re also your eyes’ natural, protective lubricant. Unfortunately, 10 million Americans suffer with dry, irritated eyes because they don’t produce enough tears. This condition, known as dry eye syndrome, is increasingly common with advancing age, especially in women, and is usually treated with lubricating eye drops (artificial tears). While this may provide relief, it does nothing to correct or prevent the underlying condition.

Recognizing that inflammation of the tear-producing glands and the eye itself play a significant role in dry eye syndrome, researchers examined the relationship between dry eye and intake of omega-3 fatty acids, which have potent anti-inflammatory effects. Looking at data on more than 32,000 women involved in Harvard’s ongoing Women’s Health Study, they found that women with a higher intake of omega-3s had a much lower risk of dry eye syndrome than those with reduced intakes.

If your eyes often feel itchy, gritty, burning, or painful, you may have dry eye syndrome. To treat or prevent this common condition, eat plenty of wild salmon and other fatty fish, and take a minimum of 2,000 mg of supplemental fish oil daily.

See Vision for additional recommendations.

Eczema

Eczema, or atopic dermatitis, is a very common, painful, embarrassing skin condition, which usually comes on in early childhood and is marked by itchy, inflamed rashes. The underlying cause is an overactive immune system: It cranks the inflammatory response into high gear. Usual treatments for eczema include topical and oral corticosteroids, antibiotics to treat infected lesions, antihistamines to relieve itching, and immunomodulators such as Protopic and Elidel. (It should be noted, however, that the FDA has issued a warning that Protopic and Elidel may increase risk of cancer.)

German researchers recently tested a safe, natural therapy for eczema: **vitamin B12 cream**. A prime culprit in eczema is nitric oxide (NO), which is produced in response to chemical messengers called cytokines released by activated immune cells. B12 is a well-known scavenger of NO. Twice a day for eight weeks, 49 patients with eczema applied a B12 cream to one side of their body and a placebo cream to the other. At the study's conclusion, significant improvements were noted in the skin treated with B12 compared to that treated with placebo. Furthermore, it was safe and well tolerated. Vitamin B12 cream, which requires a prescription, is available from California Pharmacy and Compounding Center at 800-575-7776 or Wellness Pharmacy at 800-227-2627.

Emphysema

See Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease.

Fatigue

Lack of energy is another common problem that can be caused by a number of things, from low thyroid to sleep apnea to a serious disease. But for run-of-the-mill fatigue, I vote for ribose. **Ribose (alpha-D-ribofuranose)** is a simple, five-carbon sugar required in the production of ATP, the fuel that runs our cells.

Low stores of ribose mean less ATP can be generated, and that translates into sapped energy. Ribose shores up energy levels in cells throughout the body, giving you a natural energy boost.

The suggested dose of ribose is 5 g (one heaping teaspoonful) mixed in water, tea, or juice, or sprinkled on foods two to three times a day. Ribose is safe, well tolerated, and has no known drug interactions. The brand I recommend is Corvalen. (They also offer a product called CorvalenM geared specifically toward fibromyalgia and chronic fatigue that also contains magnesium and malic acid.) To order, call 866-CORVALEN (267-8253).

Gas/Bloating

Although we don't like to talk about it, everybody passes gas. In fact, the average person has 10 to 14 "episodes" daily, producing a total of a pint or two of gas. It comes from air we swallow, chemical reactions in the gut, and bacteria living in the intestines. But just because it's normal doesn't mean it's pleasant—excessive gas can result in bloating and discomfort, not to mention embarrassment. Fortunately there are some solutions that can provide quick, safe relief.

- **Simethicone** is the generic name for the active ingredient in Gas-X, Maalox, Mylanta, and related products. It works by decreasing the surface area and tension on gas bubbles in the gastrointestinal tract. This causes them to form larger bubbles that can be passed more easily (and more socially acceptably) by burping. **Available in drugstores in liquid, capsule, or tablet form, simethicone should be taken as directed after meals and at bedtime, if needed.** It is so safe and well tolerated that it is even used in infant formulas for colic.
- Even though they are very healthy for us, beans and cruciferous vegetables contain raffinose sugars that our bodies are unable to digest. That's why you should take **Beano** with meals. Beano contains the missing enzyme that enables our bodies to break down these sugars before they reach the large intestine where gas is produced. You can find Beano at drug stores such as CVS Pharmacy and Walgreens. For more information or to order it online, visit beanogas.com.
- If bloating is a problem, try supplementing with **digestive enzymes, including: protease, amylase,**

and lipase. Bromelain from pineapples and **papain** from papaya are also helpful. Good brands of digestive enzymes include Enzymatic Therapy (found in health food stores or online at *enzy.com*) and Total-Gest from Longevity Science/Klabin Marketing at 800-933-9440.

Gastroesophageal Reflux Disease (GERD)

Gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD) is caused by a glitch in the esophageal sphincter, the ring-like muscle at the bottom of the esophagus. Like a one-way valve, it opens when you eat or drink to allow food and liquids into the stomach, but most of the time it remains closed to prevent stomach contents from backing up into the esophagus. Unfortunately, this muscle occasionally relaxes enough to allow reflux, or backward flow, of gastric acid to spill into the esophagus.

Gastric acid is potent stuff—with a pH of 1 to 3 it could eat right through your skin. Unfortunately, while your stomach and intestines are shielded by a dense layer of mucus that allows them to tolerate a high degree of acidity, your esophagus lacks this protective lining, so even small amounts of corrosive acid in the esophagus can cause problems.

GERD's signature symptom is heartburn. Fifteen million Americans experience heartburn daily, and more than 60 million have it at least once a month. Occasional episodes are no big deal, but chronic exposure to gastric acid harms the esophagus and can lead to erosion, ulceration, Barrett's esophagus (abnormalities in the cells lining the esophagus), and increased risk of esophageal cancer.

Fortunately, GERD is both preventable and treatable, and it doesn't require expensive drugs. In most cases, it can be controlled with a few simple lifestyle changes and nutritional supplements. Here are some of my favorite therapies for GERD and heartburn.

- For prevention and treatment, my number one recommendation is **deglycyrrhizinated licorice (DGL)**. This herbal extract promotes your gastrointestinal tract's natural defense mechanisms, increases production of protective mucosal cells, and helps reduce inflammation. DGL has a long history of medicinal use and research, but my clinical experience is even more compelling. I have a stack of letters and comments from patients and

subscribers singing the praises of this inexpensive supplement for longstanding heartburn, chronic cough, asthma-like symptoms, hiatal hernia, and severe stomach and chest pain. All in all, DGL is a supplement that has been a consistent performer for my patients for more than 20 years.

The suggested dose of DGL is two tablets, chewed about 20 minutes before meals three times a day. Use only chewable DGL—it must be mixed with saliva in order to be effective.

Unlike regular licorice, DGL will not cause water retention, raise blood pressure, or lower testosterone levels. This supplement, which is also beneficial for ulcers and canker sores, can be found in most health food stores.

- Other preventive measures include avoidance of foods and beverages known to trigger esophageal sphincter relaxation, such as alcohol, caffeine, fatty and spicy foods, tomatoes, peppermint, citrus, and chocolate. Obesity, lying down after meals, pregnancy, tight-fitting clothes, and over-eating (the leading aggravator of acid reflux) also provoke symptoms by putting pressure on the stomach and esophageal sphincter.
- The amino acids **glutamine** (see page 19) and **5-HTP** (see page 27) are also helpful for treating acid reflux.
- To avoid triggering reflux during sleep, wait at least two hours after a meal before lying down. Elevating the head of your bed four to six inches is also useful. You might also want to try sleeping on your left side, as research suggests that heartburn symptoms are more pronounced in patients who sleep on their right side.

Glaucoma

Unlike macular degeneration and cataracts, which involve damage to tissues in the eyes, glaucoma is characterized by an imbalance between the production and outflow of fluid in the eye. This creates abnormal elevated eye pressure and can lead to loss of peripheral vision or "tunnel vision." This can happen very quickly with acute glaucoma, but most cases of glaucoma are chronic, meaning that "tunnel vision" occurs progressively over time. With chronic glaucoma, actual vision loss is gradual and there's time to take protective measures.

Most glaucoma patients are given drugs to control the pressure, but long-term use of vitamin C is safer and more effective. **Even in patients who don't respond to standard drugs, vitamin C supplementation at 1,500 mg daily has led to almost-normal pressure levels.** This happened with one of my subscribers, D.K. Two weeks after she started a regimen of vitamin C along with some of the other nutrients I recommend for vision, she not only passed a vision field test, but her pressure levels were lower than they had been since she first started tracking them. In an acute situation, vitamin C can be given intravenously to affect a greater initial pressure reduction. See [Vision](#) for additional recommendations.

Hearing

Tinnitus, which affects more than 15 million Americans, is characterized by a buzzing, ringing, or humming in one or both ears. Depending on the level of severity, it can adversely affect mood, sleep, and quality of life. Conventional treatment includes hearing aids and other devices that mask annoying sounds, biofeedback, and antidepressant and anti-anxiety drugs.

Findings from the University of Washington School of Medicine suggest that melatonin, a hormone most commonly associated with sleep, may also alleviate the bothersome symptoms of tinnitus. Researchers enrolled 24 patients, ages 18 to 70, who had been suffering with tinnitus for six months or longer and gave them 3 mg of melatonin every day for four weeks. During that time, and for an additional four weeks of follow-up, significant improvements in tinnitus were noted. Here are some of my other favorite therapies for preserving your hearing.

- **B-complex vitamins.** Noise exposure isn't the only cause of hearing impairment in adults. According to one study, auditory dysfunction is associated with deficiencies in vitamins B12 and folic acid, nutrients that promote healthy nerve function and circulation. Certain drugs, including acid-blocking drugs and bile acid sequestrants can deplete your levels or reduce absorption of vitamin B12, so if you are taking any of these medications you should talk to your doctor.

Supplementing with B-complex vitamins will not only help address any deficiency that may be present, but it will also help nurture the nerves that conduct hearing impulses and ensure a rich

supply of oxygenated blood to the all-important cochlea. **Therefore, be sure to take adequate doses of folic acid (400–800 mcg) and vitamin B12 (100 mcg). If you are over 65, I recommend taking even higher doses of vitamin B12, up to 1,000 mcg of oral B12 daily.**

- Limited but encouraging studies suggest that **vitamin A, zinc, and magnesium** also benefit the inner ear. Free radicals are felt to be key players in cochlear and hair cell damage, and these antioxidants could afford protection. **I recommend the following doses: vitamin A (5,000 IU), zinc (30 mg), and magnesium (500 mg).**
- **Ginkgo biloba and vinpocetine**, an herbal extract from the lesser periwinkle (*Vinca minor*) plant, also have been demonstrated to improve hearing. Life Enhancement makes a product called VincaHear Plus that contains these herbs, plus other nutrients for ear health. It is available in health food stores or by calling 800-543-3873. Take as directed.
- If you have hearing difficulties, **get a checkup** to make sure it isn't caused by an infection in the middle ear or a buildup of wax in the ear canal. In most cases, these problems can be easily treated.
- **Don't clean your ears with Q-Tips**, as this will likely push wax further back into the canal. Instead, try a drop or two of olive oil in each ear to soften and drain wax buildup.
- When you are around loud noises, **use ear protection.** Try disposable foam plugs sold in drugstores, or molded plastic plugs or protective earmuffs, available in sporting goods stores. Cover your ears with your hands if other protection is not available.

Heartburn

See [Gastroesophageal Reflux Disease](#).

Heart Failure

Heart failure occurs when the heart is unable to pump enough blood to meet the body's demands. The most common cause is a sequence of heart attacks which kill off heart muscle. Other causes include valve disorders, which force the heart to work harder, and global weakening of the heart muscle.

Whatever the cause, heart failure is on the rise. Approximately five million Americans currently suffer with this condition, and more than half a million new cases are diagnosed every year. According to Mayo Clinic researchers, heart failure is the number one cause of hospitalization among people over 64 years of age. Hospital admissions have skyrocketed by 155 percent since the early 1990s, making it our most rapidly growing cardiovascular disease.

Common symptoms include fatigue, weakness, shortness of breath, and fluid collection in the lower extremities or abdomen. Because symptoms usually sneak up gradually, they are often mistaken as signs of aging. This is unfortunate, because heart failure can be treated if detected early. Otherwise, prognosis is often dismal. Here are a few of the therapies we use at Whitaker Wellness for patients concerned about heart failure.

- **Coenzyme Q10 (CoQ10)**, a potent antioxidant, is crucial for energy production in the mitochondria of all of your cells, but it is particularly active in your heart. While a bicep muscle has 200 mitochondria, your heart has a whopping 5,000, and these cellular powerhouses need adequate levels of CoQ10 in order to produce energy. **Take 100–300 mg daily, in divided doses with meals.** Look for CoQ10 in your local health food store.

- We've been using **testosterone replacement therapy** at the clinic for more than 20 years. Results of the largest study to date of testosterone for the treatment of heart failure are resoundingly positive. Spanish researchers treated men with moderate chronic heart failure with Androderm patches (containing 5 mg of testosterone) or placebo patches for one year. At the study's conclusion, the men using testosterone were able to walk an average of 19 percent further than they could at baseline, their handgrip strength increased significantly, and their heart size began to normalize. All of these endpoints worsened in the placebo group.

Testosterone does much more than improve strength. It also bolsters the heart muscle, helps dilate the blood vessels, and curbs inflammation. Testosterone is natural, safe, inexpensive—and vastly underused as a therapy. **Talk to your doctor about topical preparations or injections, which are better tolerated than patches.** They may be

Lee's Success Story

The millions of patients required to fill beds in cardiac care centers across the country are not that hard to come by. All a heart surgeon or interventional cardiologist has to do is tell them, "If we don't operate, you're going to die in the parking lot." Presto! Grossly misinformed and frightened, people quickly embrace such "lifesaving" therapies as angioplasty, bypass, and other invasive heart procedures.

One such patient is Lee. Lee is a heart surgery veteran. Back in 1997, he had a heart attack and underwent angioplasty. Within months, his angina returned, and he was told the artery had closed up. So he had another angioplasty, then another. He finally ended up having a bypass. Despite all this, Lee was unable to walk more than half a block before severe chest pain and pressure forced him to stop and rest. Realizing that the route he was on wasn't working, he decided to come to the Whitaker Wellness Institute.

At the clinic we treated Lee as we treat all of our patients who have heart disease. We started him on a therapeutic diet and a mild exercise program. He underwent a course of enhanced external counterpulsation (EECP) and hyperbaric oxygen therapy (HBOT) to restore blood flow and help build collateral circulation. He began taking multiple supplements to address the underlying causes of heart disease, including fish oil to counter inflammation, red yeast rice and policosanol to lower his cholesterol, nattokinase to improve blood flow, and coenzyme Q10 to strengthen his heart.

Today, Lee rides his bicycle five to 15 miles a day and walks on a treadmill for 30 minutes at a nine percent incline without chest pain or pressure. He has lost 25 pounds and states that he feels better than he has in 10 years.

We see patients with improvements as dramatic as Lee's every day. It's not that hard to help them—we simply go back to the basics. Heart disease is systemic, not localized to a specific artery. The condition is multi-factorial, not just about cholesterol and blood pressure, and it is best treated by addressing all of the factors that increase risk of heart attack.

obtained through a compounding pharmacy. All forms of testosterone require a prescription.

- I've been extolling the benefits of **enhanced external counterpulsation (EECP)** for years. Often referred to as a "natural bypass," it's a proven therapy for relieving angina, increasing exercise tolerance, and improving circulation. Recent findings presented at the 10th Annual Scientific Meeting of the Heart Failure Society of America reveal that EECP is also an effective treatment for heart failure.

Researchers in India demonstrated that after a course of EECP (35–40 treatments), patients with heart failure doubled their exercise capacity and had a markedly better quality of life. Even more impressive, the benefits of the therapy were still present after a year. In another study, a research team from Florida examined 53 patients with systolic heart failure. After treatment, considerable improvements were seen in symptoms, ventricular function, exercise tolerance, and quality of life. EECP also improved levels of a marker of heart failure progression called BNP (brain natriuretic peptide).

To learn more about EECP or to obtain treatment at the Whitaker Wellness Institute visit whitakerwellness.com or call 800-488-1500. To locate an EECP provider in your area call 800-455-EECP (3327) or visit vasomedical.com.

Heart Health

- **Ribose** is particularly effective in restoring energy to the heart muscle. Research has shown that patients with heart failure and coronary artery disease who are given ribose feel better and are able to increase their level of physical activity. In one study, published in *Lancet*, 20 men between the ages of 45 and 69 with exercise-induced angina and coronary artery disease took either high-dose ribose (60 g daily) or a placebo. After just three days, the men receiving ribose were able to walk longer, and their onset of angina was significantly delayed.

Because ribose plays such an important role in restoring cardiac energy, we give it to all of our patients before and after undergoing enhanced external counterpulsation (EECP; see page 25 for

more information), and other medical facilities are following suit. Though ribose is seldom used by cardiologists, its benefits are so remarkable that a few are coming around. Ribose is now part of the formulary in about 50 hospitals nationwide.

For dosage recommendation and how to obtain ribose, see Fatigue. For other condition-specific recommendations, see Arrhythmia, Blood Pressure, Cholesterol, Heart Failure, and Stroke.

Insomnia

See Sleeplessness.

Irritable Bowel Syndrome (IBS)

Irritable bowel syndrome (IBS), also known as spastic colon, nervous indigestion, and intestinal neurosis, is a chronic gastrointestinal disorder that affects about 20 percent of Americans. Symptoms vary and include pain, bloating, gas, cramping, constipation, diarrhea, and abdominal pain. IBS is often confused with more serious gastrointestinal disorders such as Crohn's disease or inflammatory bowel disease (IBD) and is usually diagnosed after these more serious conditions have been ruled out. IBS presents a treatment challenge, and there is no sure cure. But the following natural therapies can provide long-term relief.

- **Examine your diet.** The first step toward controlling symptoms is to eat more fiber-rich foods—vegetables, beans, and fruits. Fiber is important not only for stool formation, but also for increasing the growth of beneficial microbes and diluting harmful wastes in the bowel. Also limit your intake of caffeine and sugar. Caffeine is a GI tract irritant that can be especially problematic for IBS sufferers. Many sugars are not properly digested and remain in the intestines, feeding the colonies of harmful microbes that reside there.

If these changes don't dramatically improve your symptoms, the next step is to identify foods that irritate your system and eliminate them from your diet. The best way to identify what triggers IBS in your system is to try an elimination diet; i.e., eat non-allergenic meals for at least one week to clear your system. Then add in new foods periodically and observe your reaction to them. The most com-

mon IBS offenders are dairy products, wheat, eggs, citrus, corn, and peanuts.

- **Eliminate stress.** Learning to relax can make a huge difference in alleviating IBS symptoms. Researchers at State University of New York studied 13 adults with IBS. They were divided into two groups. One group practiced a relaxation technique twice a day for 15 minutes. After six weeks, they reported significantly reduced symptoms, with particular improvement in diarrhea and bloating. Take time to relax—pray, meditate, or listen to classical music for 30 minutes a day.
- **Take 5-hydroxytryptophan (5-HTP).** IBS has also been linked to low levels of serotonin. Fortunately there are safe, natural substances like 5-HTP that can help raise serotonin. 5-HTP, a first cousin to the amino acid tryptophan, is the direct precursor to serotonin. In addition to its benefits for easing anxiety symptoms, 5-HTP is currently being studied as a pain therapy specifically for IBS. **Start with 30–50 mg of 5-HTP at bedtime, on an empty stomach. If necessary, increase slowly to 100 mg three times a day.** 5-HTP is sold in health food stores. You can also purchase the brand we use at the clinic from Metabolic Response Modifiers at 800-948-6296.
- **Green drinks** are condensed, dehydrated, highly nutritious supplements that consist of the juice of wheat or barley grass, alone or in combination with concentrates of other highly nutritious whole plants, such as beets, broccoli, carrots, apples, flaxseed, soy, and rice bran. Green drinks contain antioxidants and enzymes that facilitate digestion and absorption of nutrients, along with chlorophyll and a host of phytochemicals that possess remarkable healing properties. Reconstituted in water or taken in capsule form, green drinks are an important therapy for IBS. Good brands include Kyo-green, BarleyGreen, and Green Magma, available in health food stores.
- Other supplements that are beneficial include **Seacure** (see page 20), and herbal remedies such as **peppermint, cat's claw, and artichoke extract.** Look for the herbs in health food stores.

Immunity

A healthy immune system is the keystone for optimal health. Your immune system protects you from the foreign invaders that you are constantly exposed to, such as bacteria, viruses, and other toxins. Here are some of my favorite ways to boost immunity.

- **Echinacea.** Native to the North American Midwest, echinacea (*Echinacea purpurea*), also known as the purple coneflower, first garnered the attention of American settlers in the 18th and 19th centuries when they heard tales of this perennial plant being used by the indigenous people to treat a wide variety of illnesses. Since then, research studies have unraveled the mystery behind this herb's effect on the immune system. Echinacea supports your immune system by stimulating your white blood cells. These cells circulate throughout your body and call your defense mechanisms into action.

Cichoric acid, polysaccharides, and alkylamides are echinacea's active constituents, so be sure to look for a brand that contains specific levels of these compounds, or ask before you buy. You can find echinacea supplements and products at your local supermarket or health food store. Use as directed.

- **Colostrum** is produced by female mammals during the first 24 to 48 hours after giving birth. It contains immune factors the mother has acquired over her lifetime, along with antioxidants, vitamins, minerals, enzymes, amino acids, and growth factors. The immune factors in bovine (cow) colostrum are identical to those found in human colostrum, but at much higher levels. For example, while human colostrum contains a mere two percent of IgG, an antibody that responds to invasions by bacteria and viruses, bovine colostrum contains an incredible 86 percent of this important immune system component.

Over the past 20 years, more than 2,000 research papers have been published strongly supporting the benefits of bovine colostrum. There has also been a glut of promoters saying that colostrum cures any and all infectious diseases. At the Whitaker Wellness Institute, we recommend colostrum to our patients at the first sign of a cold or flu, and we also include it as part of an immune-enhancing program for more serious diseases. However, I would never suggest that colostrum is a cure-all. **The suggested dose of**

bovine colostrum is 4,500 mg twice daily on an empty stomach with water. Make sure the product you select is collected during the first 24 to 48 hours after birth from cows and is certified to be free of disease. You can find colostrum in health food stores.

- **Personal Hygiene.** Practicing scrupulous hygiene is a simple step you can take to supercharge your immunity. Although microbes can enter your system when an infected person in the vicinity coughs or sneezes, more commonly, you bring them in yourself by touching the mucous membranes of your mouth, nose, or eyes after coming into contact with a contaminated person or item, such as a glass or towel. In addition to obvious hygiene measures, such as washing your hands often, you can keep germs at bay by using the **Clenzology Advanced Hygiene System.**

It consists of tubs of soft soap that you dig your hands in to remove viruses and bacteria, especially from under the fingernails, an unusually contaminated area that is often missed during ordinary hand washing. It also includes facial dips to remove microbes from the nostrils and eyes. You simply fill a basin with warm water, add a special solution, and submerge your face in the water for a few seconds. This washes germs out of your eyes and nostrils before they can enter your body. The Clenzology System is available at health food stores.

Joint Health

Approximately 50 million Americans experience joint discomfort, so it's not surprising that a slew of products targeting this concern are on the market today. Because of the risks and side effects associated with many of them, I believe the best thing you can do is promote overall joint health and flexibility in the first place. Here are a few solutions you can use to support healthy joints.

- **Glucosamine.** A well-studied natural compound for joint health, I have used glucosamine in my practice for years—since it first became available in the United States—and I am convinced it is one of the most effective therapies for maintaining long-term comfort and joint health. Glucosamine is produced naturally in the body and is a key building block of cartilage tissue. One critical function of cartilage tissue is to help keep joints

moist. Glucosamine also helps to maintain normal space between the joints, which may help promote normal joint mobility and function. **I recommend 1,500 mg of glucosamine daily, in divided doses, with meals.**

- **Avocados and soybeans.** Compounds derived from the oils of these plants are one of the hottest new natural treatments for joint discomfort. That's because these extracts, called avocado/soybean unsaponifiables (ASU or FASU), have been shown to reduce inflammation, boost collagen formation in cartilage, and improve symptoms in people suffering with joint discomfort.

Belgian researchers evaluated its effect in a double-blind, placebo-controlled study involving patients with arthritis of the knee. For three months, study subjects took either 300 mg or 600 mg of ASU/FASU or a placebo daily. At the study's conclusion, those taking both dosages had marked reductions in pain and increases in function. Furthermore, 71 percent of them had reduced their NSAID and analgesic intake by more than half.

Sold as a prescription drug in France, ASU/FASU is now available in the US as a nutritional supplement. One good brand is Avosoy. Look for it in your health food store and take as directed.

Also see **Pain Reduction**.

Kidney Disease

Your kidneys process approximately 200 quarts of blood every day, filtering out about two quarts of waste products and extra water that is eventually excreted from the body as urine. These organs are so efficient and well-designed that you can get by with just one. However, when your kidney function drops below 10 or 15 percent, you're considered to be in end-stage renal failure, and your only hope is transplantation or dialysis.

Unfortunately, the prevalence of kidney failure has doubled in the past decade. The upside is that, except for those with inherited conditions such as polycystic kidney disease, the majority of the nearly 20 million Americans currently afflicted with some degree of kidney damage can avoid end-stage disease—if, that is, they are treated in time. Here are some of the natural therapies we use at Whitaker Wellness.

- **Getting diabetes and hypertension under control are the most important, but smoking cessation, regular exercise, and protein restriction have also been shown to retard the progression of kidney disease.** While healthy kidneys can handle the enormous portions of protein common to the American diet, excess dietary protein can accelerate kidney damage. **The usual recommendation for those with struggling kidneys is 0.6 grams per kilogram of ideal body weight. For a 150-pound person, that means 41 grams, the amount in one 3-ounce piece of fish, chicken, or beef, an egg, or half a cup each of beans and yogurt.**
- **EDTA chelation** is helpful for those with early kidney disease. Lead is a toxin, and even low levels have been shown to speed up progression of kidney damage. EDTA chelation is an FDA-approved therapy for removing lead that has also been shown to retard kidney disease. In a study published in the *New England Journal of Medicine*, researchers randomly divided 64 patients with chronic kidney disease and modestly elevated lead burdens and administered either a course of EDTA chelation or placebo infusions. When patients were reevaluated two years later, kidney function in the chelation group was significantly better than in the placebo group.
- Even more effective may be **enhanced external counterpulsation (EECP)**. EECP is a mechanical therapy that squeezes blood from the lower extremities up toward the heart and dramatically increases blood flow throughout the body. Although it is used primarily to treat patients with heart disease, EECP also benefits a long list of other conditions, including kidney disease. This is because, according to Debra Braverman, MD, a leading expert in EECP, it increases blood flow to the kidneys by 21 percent and urine production by 60 percent. To learn more about EECP and chelation for the treatment of kidney disease, visit whitakerwellness.com or call 800-488-1500.

Liver Problems

Contrary to popular belief, the leading liver problem in this country is not alcoholic cirrhosis or hepatitis, but nonalcoholic fatty liver disease (NAFLD). Afflicting roughly one in four Americans, it is not caused by alcohol or a virus but by obesity

and insulin resistance. At least half of all type 2 diabetics are affected by this condition, as are up to three-quarters of obese people. NAFLD is a progressive disease with three distinct stages.

Simple fatty liver, or steatosis, is characterized by elevations in liver enzymes and fatty deposits in the liver. If the disease is arrested in this stage, it remains relatively benign. Unfortunately, for one in five patients, it progresses to nonalcoholic steatohepatitis, involving inflammation of the liver. From there, half develop cirrhosis, marked by advanced and irreversible scarring, fibrosis, and loss of liver function. Fortunately, there are natural therapies that can help support the health of your liver. Here are some that I recommend.

- **Lose weight.** The best treatment for preventing and treating NAFLD is weight loss. Losing just 10 percent of body weight lowers fatty deposits and improves liver enzymes. Slow, gradual loss of a pound or two a week is most desirable, for rapid weight loss may actually worsen the condition. Getting diabetes and other manifestations of insulin resistance under control are also helpful. (For my recommendations on supporting healthy blood sugar, see page 7.)
- Because oxidative stress contributes to liver damage, antioxidant therapy is also useful. **The best-studied antioxidant for fatty liver is vitamin E, with doses ranging from 400 to 1,200 IU per day** resulting in reductions in fatty liver infiltration.
- **Triple therapy/IVLA.** If you've been diagnosed with more advanced liver disease, don't despair. Unlike other organs, the damaged liver has the unique ability to regenerate itself, provided that it gets a little help. We've had a lot of success at the clinic helping people who have hepatitis with "triple therapy," developed by my friend and colleague Burton Berkson, MD, PhD, who practices medicine in Las Cruces, New Mexico.

This potent combo of **lipoic acid, silymarin, and selenium** dramatically increases the liver's antioxidant defenses, stimulates the production of new liver cells, and curbs the proliferation of the hepatitis virus. There's even hope for often-fatal sudden liver failure.

When Dr. Berkson was a medical resident back in the 1970s, two patients with acute liver failure from amanita mushroom poisoning came into Case

Western Reserve Teaching Hospital in Cleveland, Ohio, where he was working. He remembered reading how lipoic acid might counter this deadly poison, and he managed to get a hold of some, which he administered in an intravenous (IV) infusion. Against all expectations, they got well.

By using this unconventional treatment, Dr. Berkson ruffled a few feathers. The chief doctor dismissed the role of lipoic acid stating, “They would have come around anyway.” When Dr. Berkson continued to administer lipoic acid to treat liver problems, he was labeled a troublemaker. Folks, we need more troublemakers like Dr. Berkson. Today, he is an internationally recognized clinical expert in the use of lipoic acid, and has helped thousands of patients with liver problems such as hepatitis B and C, autoimmune hepatitis, primary biliary cirrhosis, and primary sclerosing cholangitis.

“Triple therapy” for hepatitis and other serious liver diseases consists of 600 mg of lipoic acid, 900 mg of silymarin, and 400 mcg of selenium per day. For treatment with IV lipoic acid (IVLA) and “triple therapy,” contact Dr. Berkson’s clinic at 575-524-3720.

Memory Loss

See [Brain Health](#).

Multiple Sclerosis (MS)

See [Neurological Conditions](#).

Muscle Cramps and Spasms

Charley horses and nocturnal leg cramps plague all of us at some time or another. These painful muscle spasms are not only inconvenient, they interfere with sleep and quality of life. **Magnesium** is one of my favorite solutions because it relieves cramps by relaxing the muscles. This mineral has been shown to be extremely effective at reducing the occurrence of nighttime leg cramps, especially in pregnant women and older individuals.

At the clinic we use magnesium citrate, a highly bioavailable form of magnesium. **Look for powdered magnesium citrate, and take 420 mg in water**

about 30 minutes before bedtime. In addition to relaxing your muscles, it may help you sleep better too. (Some people are sensitive to larger doses of magnesium; if it causes diarrhea, reduce your dose.)

Neurological Conditions

At Whitaker Wellness we have treated many patients suffering from a wide range of neurological conditions—from ALS to MS to Parkinson’s, and the list goes on. Here are some of the treatment solutions I recommend.

- **Creatine** is being explored as a therapy for serious mitochondrial, muscle-wasting, and neurodegenerative diseases. In animal studies, creatine has been shown to improve function and delay disease progression in multiple sclerosis, Huntington’s disease, amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS), Parkinson’s disease, muscular dystrophy, and other neurodegenerative diseases. Several small human studies have demonstrated that supplemental creatine provides modest yet significant increases in muscular strength and improvements in daily activities in patients with various muscular dystrophies, neuropathic disorders, myopathies, and diseases involving muscle atrophy and weakness. One placebo-controlled pilot study found that when patients with early Parkinson’s disease took 10 g of creatine daily, disease progression was retarded.

If you suffer from any of these conditions, you may benefit from taking a dose of 5–10 g of creatine per day. The best-studied and best-absorbed supplemental form is creatine monohydrate, which is sold in health food stores. A careful review of the medical literature reveals that it is quite safe and well tolerated. I do not recommend it for people with kidney disease, however.

- **IV glutathione.** Glutathione, the body’s premier antioxidant, is significantly diminished in those with Parkinson’s disease, and IV (intravenous) supplementation can dramatically slow the progress of the disease. When Parkinson’s patients visit the Whitaker Wellness Institute, we immediately start them on a series of IV glutathione treatments. IV glutathione eases tremors and mobility problems, improves speech, and alleviates depression (a common side effect) in many patients with Parkinson’s disease. To learn more about

glutathione therapy at the Whitaker Wellness Institute, call 800-488-1500. For an instructional video that gives physicians and patients an overview of this treatment, contact David Perlmutter, MD, at 800-530-1982 or drperlmutter.com.

- One of the most promising treatment options for multiple sclerosis (MS), a progressive neurological condition caused by degeneration of the myelin sheaths surrounding the nerve cells, is **Prokarin** (formerly Procarin). Prokarin is a topical preparation of histamine and caffeine developed by MS sufferer Elaine DeLack, RN. It increases depleted levels of histamine, which appears to improve the function of demyelinated nerve fibers and stimulates myelin sheath regrowth.

In an article published in *Alternative Medicine Review*, 26 percent of patients treated with Prokarin for a minimum of six weeks experienced significant improvements in symptoms. Among the “significant” responses were disappearance of numbness in affected limbs, renewed bladder control, and recovery of the ability to stand, walk, or drive. Patients also often reported feeling better within hours of administration. **If you suffer from MS, I suggest you explore this innovative treatment. Prokarin is available by prescription from compounding pharmacies.** For more information, contact the medical research company EDMS (866-222-3367 or edmsllc.com) or California Pharmacy & Compounding Center (800-575-7776).

- **Omental transposition** is a surgical procedure for rejoining severed spinal cords that utilizes the omentum, a large fatty membrane that is located within the abdominal cavity. This physiologically dynamic tissue is a repository for neurotransmitters, angiogenic compounds that stimulate new blood vessel growth, and tissue and nerve growth factors. Developed by Harry S. Goldsmith, MD, omental transposition involves separating the omentum from its attachments to the surrounding intra-abdominal structures and, keeping its blood supply intact, stretching and snaking it up under the skin and securing it over the injury site in the brain or spinal column. This nutrient-rich environment dramatically facilitates nerve regeneration, resulting in extraordinary recoveries from debilitating injuries and diseases.

One of Dr. Goldsmith’s most dramatic successes was a 23-year-old woman whose high-speed skiing accident left her with a fractured vertebra, a severed spinal cord, and paralysis from the chest down. She contacted Dr. Goldsmith who agreed to perform the procedure. Eight months after her surgery, she was able to move her legs on command in a swimming pool, and after a year she had some movement in her left knee. Over the next year she regained abdominal muscle strength and learned to crawl. Six years later she was able to walk. Yes, she requires a walker, but this woman with a severed spinal cord who was told she’d never walk again is walking!

The benefits of omental transposition have been extensively documented in the medical literature. It has a solid track record for restoring function and improving quality of life in patients not only with spinal cord injuries but also with Alzheimer’s disease, stroke, cerebral palsy, Parkinson’s disease, and other serious neurological deficits. If you or someone you know may benefit from this procedure, contact Dr. Goldsmith by fax, 775-749-5861, mail, P.O. Box 493, Glenbrook, NV 89413, or email, hlgldsmith@aol.com.

- **Hyperbaric Oxygen Therapy.** For more information, see the box on page 41.

Neuropathy

See last **Blood Sugar Control** recommendation.

Oral Health

If you’re going to have a healthy mouth—and body—you’ve got to attack plaque. Plaque forms when *Streptococcus mutans* and other bacteria that reside in the mouth produce acids that stick to the teeth. This colorless bacterial film eats through the enamel, causing dental caries, and irritates the gums, initiating gingivitis, an early form of gum disease.

A good brushing after every meal will remove plaque from the exposed surfaces of the teeth. However, the area below the gum line is more problematic. This is where flossing comes in. It removes plaque from this inaccessible area. In addition to regular flossing, here are a few other solutions you can use.

- First and foremost is the **Sonicare electric toothbrush**, which uses high-frequency vibrations to dislodge bacteria and remove plaque between the teeth and below the gum line. The first time I used the Sonicare, I felt as if I had just been to the hygienist—that’s how clean my teeth felt. I have been a faithful user ever since. I’m not the only one. Post-market surveys show that five years after purchasing the Sonicare, nine out of 10 owners are still using it.

It’s easy to see why—and I mean that literally. In one study, the Sonicare reduced coffee, tea, and tobacco stains by 82 percent after 28 days of use, compared to a 39 percent reduction with a manual toothbrush. Other studies have shown that six months of use can reverse gingivitis and help reduce the size of periodontal pockets (a measure of gum disease). Sonicare toothbrushes are sold in department stores, pharmacies, and some dentists’ offices. For more information, visit *sonicare.com*.

- When I can’t brush after a meal I chew a couple tablets of **Fizz & Clean** (formerly called YOW!). These tablets, which contain sodium bicarbonate, silicon dioxide, and citric acid, produce a bubbling effect that dislodges small particles from the teeth. More important, it removes plaque. In a study conducted at the University of Southern California, daily use for a month resulted in measurably less plaque and decay-causing bacteria. One of my subscribers, Mariellen, wrote me that using it spared her from a root canal for a molar that became infected after her dentist replaced an amalgam filling. Fizz & Clean, from OraHealth Laboratories, can be ordered at 800-969-5227 or *fizzandclean.com*.

- To prevent gum disease, I use an **inexpensive version of Peridex**, a prescription mouthwash approved by the FDA for the prevention and treatment of gingivitis. **I mix Hibiclens, an over-the-counter antibacterial scrub containing the same active ingredient as Peridex—chlorhexidine gluconate—with mouthwash.** You’ll get all the benefits of Peridex at a fraction of the cost. A drawback of chlorhexidine gluconate is that it tends to stain the teeth, especially if you already have an accumulation of plaque. To avoid this, **I use the rinse and the Sonicare toothbrush at the same time.** Any staining that could occur with the mouthwash is broken up by the toothbrush.

To make your own chlorhexidine rinse, combine one-half ounce Hibiclens with 16 ounces of regular mouthwash. Swish with one-half ounce of this mixture for 30 seconds twice a day, then brush the rinse into your gums and teeth with the Sonicare. Do not swallow. Hibiclens may be purchased in drugstores.

- **Don’t forget to clean your tongue.** You probably don’t want to hear this, but your tongue is one of the dirtiest areas of the body. Its protective mucous coating makes it an excellent hideout for bacteria. You can brush your tongue along with your teeth, or use a tool from Ayurvedic medicine and scrape your tongue once a day. Curved thin metal or plastic strips designed for this purpose not only remove plaque-forming bacteria, but are also one of the most effective breath fresheners around. Look for a tongue scraper in your health food store, or order one from Dr. Tung’s at 800-222-0935 or *toothandgum.com*.

Osteoporosis

See **Bone Health**.

Pain Reduction

Millions of people experience everyday aches and pain and many take drugs to resolve them. The problem with drugs that address pain is that—as with any drug you take orally—they affect not only your aching back or throbbing joints but your entire body. And while they may provide relief, they do so at a cost.

Prescription narcotics such as Vicodin are addictive. Acetaminophen (Tylenol) increases your risk of liver and kidney damage. Nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) are hard on the GI tract, and many of them harm the cardiovascular system. And COX-2 inhibitors have caused hundreds of thousands of heart attacks and tens of thousands of deaths. In fact, due to concerns over increased cardiovascular risk associated with these drugs, two of them—Vioxx (rofecoxib) and Bextra (valdecoxib)—were taken off the market in late 2004 and early 2005.

Popping an NSAID or Tylenol every now and then to relieve an occasional ache or pain is perfectly acceptable. However, high doses and long-term use of oral pain-relieving drugs have a host of well-

Corn Syrup for Bad Backs?

For back pain that just doesn't respond to standard therapies, try a nonsurgical treatment called prolotherapy. Most low back pain is the result of weakened ligaments that are unable to keep the vertebra in proper alignment. Prolotherapy involves injecting a corn syrup-like solution into these weakened ligaments. This lightly irritating solution (a combination of dextrose, glycerin, glucose, saline, phenol, and lidocaine or xylocaine, along with a mild anesthetic) stimulates your body to produce new collagen, the fibrous protein in connective tissue. As collagen heals, it contracts, pulling the ligaments tighter, making them stronger and more stable. The end result is strong, tight new connective tissue that restores proper alignment. Pressure is removed from the nerves and discs, and pain resolves.

Prolotherapy (also known as sclerotherapy or reconstructive therapy) is remarkably effective—most doctors report it relieves pain in over 80 percent of patients with chronic pain. The rate at which tissue regeneration takes place varies, but by the sixth treatment you should notice overall improvement, and feel progressively better with each one thereafter. The usual course of treatment is three to four injections per month for three to six months. For more information about prolotherapy and doctors in your area, call the American College of Osteopathic Sclerotherapeutic Pain Management at 800-471-6114. You can also contact the American Association of Orthopaedic Medicine (AAOM) via their Web site at aaomed.org.

documented dangers. If you're suffering with chronic pain, I strongly urge you to try this therapy instead.

- **Topical NSAIDs and analgesics.** When a pain-relieving drug is mixed into a readily absorbed cream and rubbed into the affected area, the active ingredients penetrate the skin and can provide quick and dramatic relief. Equally important, these drugs are not systemically absorbed to any significant degree, and there is little risk of adverse side effects. A number of drugs can be administered in this form, but the ones we're using most often at the clinic are **ketoprofen**, an NSAID, and **ketamine**, an anesthetic. A compounding pharmacist simply

mixes individualized doses and combinations of these or other drugs into a cream or gel, and the patient applies it directly to the affected area (called "topical" application) two to four times a day. The results, as I can tell you from personal experience, are remarkable.

Many types of pain syndromes—arthritis, bursitis, carpal tunnel syndrome, fibromyalgia, sprains and strains, sciatica, low backache and muscle spasms—respond extremely well to topical drugs. This approach is also particularly effective for all types of neuropathic pain, including diabetic, peripheral, post-herpetic, post-surgical, and post-traumatic neuropathy.

Topical NSAIDs and analgesics require a prescription that can be filled at a compounding pharmacy. The best way for physicians to learn more about these drugs is to contact a compounding pharmacy such as California Pharmacy & Compounding Center at 800-575-7776 or californiapharmacy.com. To locate other pharmacies, contact the International Academy of Compounding Pharmacists at 800-927-4227 or iacprx.org.

In addition to topical prescription pain relievers, there are a number of safe, natural, over-the-counter alternatives. Here are a few of my favorites.

- The one we've had the most success with at the clinic is a **proprietary blend of Chinese skullcap and acacia, combined with ginger, rutin (a flavonoid), and bromelain and papain (plant enzymes)**. This formula is especially effective at quelling inflammation and pain caused by arthritis. **The suggested dose is one capsule twice a day.** (It should not be taken by patients who have ulcers or who are taking Coumadin.) Look for this product in your health food store or order it by calling 800-810-6655.
- Another OTC (over-the-counter) favorite is **fish oil**. Many of the cardiovascular benefits of the omega-3 fatty acids in fish oil stem from their potent anti-inflammatory activity. And since inflammation is the root of pain, fish oil is an obvious, yet overlooked, therapy. Joseph Maroon, MD, of the University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine, gave fish oil supplements to 250 patients with back pain, along with their usual medications (NSAIDs or COX-2 inhibitors). After

an average of 75 days, 60 percent of these patients had improvements in symptoms, and 59 percent were able to quit taking their drugs. **The recommended dose is at least 1,200 mg of EPA (eight or more capsules per day).**

- **Asalixx**, a unique white willow bark extract, is also a good option. White willow has a long history as an effective therapy for pain relief. In fact, aspirin was originally derived from the bark of this tree, although today's synthesized version contains only one of its components. Asalixx, on the other hand, has a wider range of active constituents, which contributes to its superior efficacy and safety. In a double-blind trial involving patients with low back pain, this supplement was shown to pack a pain-relieving punch similar to the much more expensive and dangerous COX-2 inhibitors. **Take two tablets twice a day as needed. (It isn't recommended for people with asthma or aspirin allergies.)** Look for Asalixx in your health food store or order it by calling 800-810-6655.

- **DMSO (dimethyl sulfoxide) and MSM (methylsulfonylmethane)** are compounds that are rich in sulfur, one of the most abundant elements in your body. Sulfur is a constituent of several key amino acids and is required for protein synthesis. It is involved in the formation of muscle, skin, hair, and nails and is a major building block of collagen, the connective tissue that makes up cartilage. Without this cushiony substance, your knees, elbows, hips, and other joints would grind away against one another with every movement.

Since ancient times, sulfur has been used for medicinal purposes, and to this day health seekers around the world flock to the rejuvenating waters of natural sulfur springs. The warm, mineral-rich waters relieve chronic pain and inflammation, facilitate healing, and improve function and range of motion. Unfortunately, most of us don't have sulfur hot springs in our backyards—which is why you should have DMSO and MSM in your cupboard.

The best thing about DMSO and MSM is they are both effective and safe. **Rub topical DMSO on painful joints twice a day.** Don't be alarmed if the label refers to DMSO as a solvent or to avoid contact with skin. This is just FDA nonsense. If you have sensitive skin, use a 50-70 percent diluted solution.

Daily doses of MSM range from 1,200 to 6,000 mg. MSM and DMSO may be purchased in health food stores or ordered by calling 800-810-6655.

Parkinson's

See Neurological Conditions.

Plantar Fasciitis

Plantar fasciitis (commonly known as heel spurs) is a painful condition caused by minute tears, inflammation, and tissue degeneration of the plantar fascia, the band of connective tissue that stretches across the bottom of the foot from the heel to the toes. Perhaps the most enduring therapy for the treatment and prevention of plantar fasciitis is support and stabilization of the foot. This can be achieved through use of orthotics, devices that are placed in your shoes to take pressure off the fascia and keep the supporting structures in proper alignment. One reasonably priced product that I've found is called **FABS (Foot Arch Band Support)** designed by Ivar Roth, DPM.

FABS are small, lightweight arch support pads on a thin band that wraps around the foot and is held in place with a Velcro strip. One size fits all, so they don't require any customization. They're small enough that they can be worn with most any shoes, even sandals. FABS are fairly inexpensive, running about \$30 a pair. More than 100,000 pairs of FABS have been used over the past decade, and the feedback from people of all ages and levels of activity is remarkable. FABS and MAGFABS, which have a 2,200-gauss magnet embedded in each arch support for further pain relief, are available from Dr. Roth's Footcare Products (800-486-0325 or drroths.com) or by calling 800-810-6655.

Premenstrual Syndrome (PMS)

While most women can live with the emotional and physical changes that may occur during the second half of the menstrual cycle, up to one in five women have full-blown premenstrual syndrome (PMS). For them, PMS symptoms such as mood swings, food cravings, bloating, weight gain, and breast tenderness are so marked that they interfere with quality of life. Fortunately, research shows that a couple of basic nutrients may offer a safe and easy way to prevent PMS: **calcium and vitamin D**.

In a study recently published in the *Archives of Internal Medicine*, researchers examined data on the dietary and supplemental intake of calcium and vitamin D of more than 2,000 women in their 20s, 30s, and 40s. **They found that the women getting at least 1,200 mg of calcium and 400 IU of vitamin D daily had a 40 percent lower risk of developing PMS.** Given this and all the other benefits of calcium and vitamin D, including prevention of osteoporosis and some types of cancer, it just makes sense for all women to add these nutrients to their daily supplement regimen.

Prostate Health

Enlargement of the prostate is very common in older men—but it's not inevitable. Here are some of the natural therapies I recommend for keeping your prostate healthy.

- **Eat lots of vegetables.** A study published in the *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition* concluded that the risk of developing an enlarged prostate, which is called benign prostatic hyperplasia (BPH), can be reduced by eating a diet rich in vegetables. Researchers from Johns Hopkins looked at 32,000 men they'd been following for approximately 20 years and found that the men who ate the most vegetables (fruit had no effect) were less likely to have BPH symptoms or surgery.
- **Pumpkin seeds** contain phytonutrients called cucurbitacins, which help slow the growth of the prostate. They do so by inhibiting the transformation of testosterone into dihydrotestosterone, the hormone that fuels BPH. Plus, pumpkin seeds contain high levels of zinc, which not only protects the prostate but also promotes bone and eye health. In addition, they are loaded with essential fatty acids, manganese, and other nutrients. **For prostate health, eat a small handful of pumpkin seeds daily.** You can find them in your health food store.
- In addition to diet, **saw palmetto and pygeum** remain first-line therapies for BPH. Both of these botanical extracts have a strong track record in reducing nighttime urination, hesitancy, and other urinary symptoms. Some studies even suggest that they protect against or slow the growth of prostate cancer.

Since BPH affects virtually all men as they get older, I recommend that men in their mid-40s

begin taking 160 mg per day of saw palmetto extract as a preventive measure. If you already have prostate problems, increase your dosage to a maximum of 320 mg per day. Make sure to choose an extract containing 85 to 95 percent fatty acids and plant sterols. I recommend 100–200 mg of a standardized extract (12 to 13 percent phytosterols) of pygeum daily, in divided doses with meals.

Psoriasis

One of the most distressing skin problems is psoriasis. A former employee of mine who suffered with this condition for 25 years described not only the pain of her bleeding, weeping lesions but also told me she felt like a leper during much of her childhood and adolescence. She tried every treatment imaginable for her psoriasis, from steroids to fish oil to fasting, to no avail.

Then she discovered an over-the-counter spray called **Blue Cap** (formerly called Skin Cap). It worked like nothing else for this woman, as it has for many, many others. I want to give you a heads-up about some controversy over Blue Cap. The FDA has reported that it contains a prescription steroid. The product's manufacturer denies this, stating the active ingredient is zinc pyrithione. It's a murky situation, but it hasn't deterred users who swear it's the only thing that gives them relief—including some of my patients who have been using it for years with no adverse effects. You can order it online at skintreat.net or by calling 800-810-6655.

Respiratory Health

When it comes to respiratory health, commonly prescribed medications can zap energy and leave the brain too foggy to even muddle through a conversation. There are better solutions for supporting healthy bronchial passages and overall respiration.

The first thing I would work on is the quality of the air in your home and workplace. As we spend more time indoors with the windows closed and the heater cranked up, exposure to dust mites, animal dander, insect droppings, mold, and other allergens soars. Concentrations of airborne pollutants such as smoke from fireplaces, gas from stoves and furnaces, volatile chemicals from household cleaners and building materials, and other airborne pollutants that trigger respiratory problems also build up. It's easy to

Houseplants for Improved Air Quality

What do philodendrons and air filters have in common? According to landmark NASA research, they both have the ability to rid your home of harmful airborne pollutants.

Plants are nature's air filters. They draw in airborne chemicals and other harmful compounds through their leaves and deposit them in the soil where they are broken down and utilized as plant food by microorganisms. This process effectively removes toxins such as nitrogen dioxide, formaldehyde, and benzene, to name a few.

I have live plants all over my home and office. In addition to their health effects, they brighten up the place. Experts recommend using one to three plants for every 100 square feet of living space. Spider plants, philodendrons, golden pathos, aloe vera, and Chinese evergreen plants all ranked highly in their ability to remove pollutants. Keep in mind that the soil in potted plants can collect mold and mildew over time, so keep an eye on them if you are susceptible to these allergens.

see how such an environment could bring on symptoms in sensitive individuals.

I'm not going to tell you to open your windows when it's 20 degrees outside, but there are things you can do to clean up your indoor air. Start by eliminating as many pollutants as you can:

- Ban smoking
- Replace furnace filters and make sure all fuel-burning appliances are properly vented and maintained
- Turn on exhaust fans when cooking and showering
- Use allergen-proof covers on your mattresses and pillows
- Maintain humidity levels between 30 and 50 percent, and clean dehumidifiers regularly
- Avoid air fresheners and aerosols
- Vacuum often and use nontoxic cleaners.

These precautions will only go so far. **I strongly suggest you also get an air purification system.**

They can really make a difference for people with allergies, asthma, or chemical sensitivities. Look for one that contains a HEPA (high-efficiency particulate air) filter. Used in hospitals and clean rooms, these filters remove particulate matter—the tiny particles of smoke, dust, soot, pollen, and other pollutants that are abundant in indoor air.

An air purifier should also incorporate a carbon filter, which soaks up volatile gases and other chemicals that are so fine they cannot be screened out even by a HEPA filter. The best systems also utilize ultraviolet light to kill bacteria, viruses, and other microbes. **The unit I recommend is the Sun-Pure Air Purifier.** It's available by calling 888-886-8213. It incorporates all of these features, plus it has sensors that notch it up when particulate levels increase and turn it down when things settle out. Placing it in your bedroom usually produces the best results.

Even if you don't have chronic respiratory problems, I believe that everyone, especially those of you who are cooped up indoors, would benefit from these recommendations. **For other condition-specific recommendations, see Allergies, Asthma, and Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease.**

Rosacea

Rosacea is a chronic skin condition characterized by redness on the cheeks, nose, forehead, and/or chin, often accompanied by small bumps, pimples, or visible blood vessels. It's an embarrassing condition because it's so visible, yet most of the 14 million Americans afflicted with rosacea don't seek treatment because they assume it's acne or something else that will go away on its own. They're wrong. In most cases, untreated rosacea gets worse.

There are several treatments for rosacea, including oral and topical antibiotics, steroids, and antioxidants. We use a treatment for rosacea at the clinic that beats everything else, hands down: **intense pulsed light (IPL)**. IPL works by selectively heating and destroying abnormal blood vessels that cause discoloration and other symptoms. It is similar to a laser but uses a broader spectrum of light so discomfort and downtime are minimal. The usual course is five treatments, and results are immediate and enduring. As an added benefit, IPL stimulates collagen produc-

tion, which reduces fine lines and smoothes the skin. For information on IPL treatment at the Whitaker Wellness Institute, call 800-488-1500.

Sense of Smell

Unfortunately, millions of people, most of them over 65, suffer with an impaired sense of smell—a condition that also affects sense of taste, enjoyment of food, and the ability to detect hazards such as smoke and spoiled food. If you're one of them and your doctor has told you age-related smelling loss is untreatable, don't give up.

- First, look into **reversible underlying conditions such as allergies, sinus inflammation, infections, nasal polyps, hypothyroidism, and smoking** that can alter sense of smell.
- Also **examine your drug regimen** for culprits such as anti-psychotics, reserpine, amphetamines, and prolonged use of decongestants.
- **Beef up your nutrient intake.** People with smelling impairment are more likely to be undernourished, and deficiencies in zinc and vitamins B1, E, and A have been linked with this condition. A **good daily multivitamin and mineral supplement is imperative.** (Aim for 30 mg zinc, 5,000 IU vitamin A, 50 mg B1, and 400 IU vitamin E.) Alpha lipoic acid can also help restore the sense of smell in some cases, so I recommend a trial of 300–600 mg per day.

Sexual Health and Performance

Unfortunately, for many men (and women) sexual activity often declines with age. As we age, hormone levels decline and free-radical damage increases—changes that can have a profound effect on sexual desire, performance, and enjoyment.

For many people, becoming less sexually active represents a sort of freedom. I've heard patients say of their changing sex lives, "Boy, am I glad that's over. Now I can concentrate on the things I enjoy and not be distracted by sex." However, others view a waning libido or decline in sexual enjoyment as a loss of a part of their identity. If this is how you feel, I want to reassure you that you have many options for enhancing sexual desire, performance, and pleasure,

Drugs That Can Interfere With Performance

One of the most common reasons behind sexual dysfunction is the use of prescription drugs. In fact, at least 131 drugs are known to cause sexual dysfunction and/or loss of libido. If you are on any medication—prescription or over-the-counter—and are experiencing difficulties, check with your doctor to see what can be done.

- Heart drugs are the biggest culprits: beta-blockers (Lopressor, Inderal), anti-arrhythmics (Norpace), and anticholinergics (Cogentin, Artane)
- Other harmful drugs include the ulcer drug Tagamet, muscle relaxants (Norflex), and some antidepressants (Elavil, Prozac). Prozac is more likely to cause reduced libido than impotence.
- The widely used allergy/cold medication Sudafed has been shown in studies to lessen the length and intensity of erections.

no matter your age, sex, or current sexual health. Here are some of my favorite therapies for promoting sexual health and performance.

- **Regular exercise is important.** A recent study showed that men who burned 200 calories or more a day in physical activity—a level that can be met with as little as two miles of brisk walking—had about half the risk of erectile dysfunction as did sedentary men.
- **Arginine.** Like Viagra, the amino acid arginine works by increasing concentrations of nitric oxide (NO), which relaxes arteries and improves blood flow. Erections occur when NO, produced in response to arousal messages relayed from the brain, triggers the release of cyclic GMP, another vasodilator, which in turn causes the smooth muscles of the spongy tissues inside the penis to relax, allowing these tissues to engorge with blood.

Although it has been ignored in the clamor over Viagra, for some men arginine is an equally effective and far less expensive option. My patients who are taking arginine for cardiovascular conditions (it improves overall circulation as well) often

report improvements in erectile function. Even those who don't have problems with impotence note increased duration and firmness of erections.

Women likewise report heightened sexual function with arginine. Although NO's role in female sexuality has not been as intensely studied, it is known to increase blood flow to the genital area, which increases sensitivity and lubrication, and to stimulate the release of hormones that may enhance the female sexual response.

Consult your physician before taking arginine if you are taking Viagra, nitroglycerin, or a related drug; if you are pregnant; or if you have any of the following: migraines, autoimmune disorders, AIDS, cirrhosis, depression, herpes, or cancer. While there are no firm contraindications to arginine in these conditions, it may be prudent to wait until further research clarifies its effects. I recommend 500–1,000 mg every two hours.

A relatively new entrant into the prosexual supplement arena is **Serectin**, a plant compound that appears to cue reproductive activity and regulate breeding cycles in wild animals. Serectin proves to be an important factor in the reproduction of many species, with positive effects on sexual activity, fertility, and embryo survivability. In addition, preliminary research shows Serectin to be very promising not only as a libido booster, but also as a therapy for maintaining a positive mood.

- **L-carnitine** is an amino acid derivative that plays a crucial role in metabolism: It chaperones fatty acids into the mitochondria where they are burned for energy, and transports byproducts of energy production back across the mitochondrial membrane. Our bodies produce carnitine and we get it from our diet (primarily meat), but tissue levels decline with age. Increasing levels by taking L-carnitine supplements has been shown to have profound therapeutic benefits—including enhanced sexual function.

In one study, Italian researchers looked at the effects of L-carnitine on heart function, mood, energy, and sexual function in 120 men, ages 60 to 74. The men were divided into three groups and given one of three protocols: testosterone, 4,000 mg L-carnitine, or a placebo. When they

were reevaluated after six months, the men taking testosterone showed significant improvements in all parameters. They felt more energetic, their heart function improved, they reported less depression, and they had increased libido and erectile function. This isn't all that surprising—testosterone has long been known to produce these benefits.

What is surprising is that L-carnitine produced even better results than testosterone in all areas, including sexual function! L-carnitine's ability to enhance erectile function was again demonstrated in another Italian study of diabetic men with erectile dysfunction who had not responded to Viagra. They were randomly assigned to take either Viagra alone twice a week or in combination with 2,000 mg of L-carnitine daily. After six months, 23 percent of the men taking Viagra reported improvements in erections, and 34 percent of them were able to have successful intercourse. However, an astounding 68 percent of the men also taking L-carnitine had improvements, and 76 percent were able to have intercourse.

The form of carnitine used in these studies was propionyl-L-carnitine, which is available in health food stores. The suggested dose is 2,000–4,000 mg daily. It is safe and well tolerated, although some people report mild gastrointestinal symptoms with high doses.

- **Oats** (*Avena sativa*)—yes, the kind you eat—contain compounds similar in structure to testosterone. These compounds allow more testosterone to remain unbound, or “free.” This is important, as free testosterone fires up your libido. In one study, combining oat straw with nettle extract increased sexual desire and performance in both sexes.
- **Yohimbe**, an herb from the bark of an African tree, was introduced centuries ago by sailors returning from Africa, where tribesmen swore it was an aphrodisiac. Reports of its efficacy were discounted by scientists until recently when its mechanism of action was discovered and the claims were validated. Yohimbe increases blood flow to the penis, allowing more rapid and rigid erections. It also increases libido and sexual intensity in men.

Rule Out Sleep Apnea

The most serious sleep-related medical condition, and one I am intimately familiar with, is sleep apnea. If you snore, chances are you are one of the 12 million Americans who have this problem. Befitting its name (apnea comes from the Greek word meaning “without breath”), obstructive sleep apnea occurs when the fleshy tissues at the back of the throat relax and block the airway, causing you to stop breathing. The brain, sensing oxygen deprivation, sends signals that wake you enough to take a breath.

This not only makes getting a good night’s sleep impossible, but also leads to a number of very serious problems. Sleep apnea triples your risk of hypertension, more than doubles your risk of stroke, and quadruples your risk of arrhythmia. It raises levels of C-reactive protein (an indicator of inflammation) and markers of oxidative stress, and is closely linked with obesity. It also interferes with insulin sensitivity and quintuples your risk of diabetes.

Extracts of the herb have been used to formulate the synthetic drug yohimbine hydrochloride (yohimbine), an FDA-approved, prescription-only impotence treatment. The herb yohimbe is available in some health food stores. Use as directed.

Warning: Yohimbe can cause nervousness and may raise blood pressure, so be sure to consult with your doctor before taking either form. Prescription yohimbine is not recommended for men taking tricyclic antidepressants or for men with hypertension, heart disease, or a bipolar disorder.

- **Quit smoking.** Men who aren’t motivated to quit smoking for the benefit of their heart and lungs might find a new resolve if they realized that smoking causes male impotence. The link between smoking and impotence is easy to understand. Smoking damages arteries, laying the groundwork for plaque buildup and atherosclerosis. Arteries narrow and stiffen, and blood flow is impaired. This affects the performance of the heart, brain, and penis. Women should also take note of the risks of smoking, as healthy blood flow is equally important to their sexual enjoyment. (To learn more about natural stop-smoking aids that I recommend, see page 40.)

Fortunately, sleep apnea is treatable. I used to snore like a freight train until I discovered I had sleep apnea and got treatment. Now, I use a continuous positive airway pressure (CPAP) machine, which gently blows a constant stream of air through a small mask and prevents the tissues in my throat from collapsing. I have to tell you it has changed my life. I sleep like a baby and wake up rested and invigorated. My wife loves it too—no more snoring or worrisome episodes when I would literally stop breathing.

At the clinic, we screen patients whom we suspect may have sleep apnea, or conditions resulting from it, with an inexpensive test called nocturnal pulse oximetry, which records pulse and blood oxygen levels periodically during the night via a small, clip-on sensor. If it is suggestive of sleep apnea, we recommend an automatic CPAP machine or refer them to a specialist for a sleep study. For more information on sleep apnea and its diagnosis and treatment, call American Sleep Systems at 866-364-7378.

Shingles

One in 10 Americans will endure the pain of shingles at one time or another. Caused by the same virus as chicken pox (*Herpes zoster*), shingles is characterized as a burning, tingling pain or numbness in the skin, followed by a rash with fluid-filled blisters. It can cause unrelenting pain that, in some cases, turns into a chronic condition called postherpetic neuralgia.

Unfortunately, conventional doctors overlook a safe, simple, and highly effective therapy for shingles: **intravenous vitamin C**. Jane Orient, MD, an internist in Tucson, AZ, reported on two cases of successful treatment of shingles with vitamin C in the *Journal of American Physicians and Surgeons*. One was a 40-year-old woman with a week-long history of severe pain on the right side of her chest. After receiving four IVs of 3 g of vitamin C every 12 hours and taking 1 g orally every two hours, her pain and rash completely resolved. The other patient also had an excellent outcome. We use IV vitamin C at the clinic to treat a number of infectious diseases, and it is extremely effective. To schedule an appointment at the Whitaker Wellness Institute, call 800-488-1500.

Sleeplessness

Do you have problems falling asleep? How about waking up in the night unable to go back to sleep? If you do, join the club. Nearly one-third of all Americans suffer with occasional sleeplessness. For many people, the inability to sleep doesn't seem to be caused by anything. However, a number of factors can contribute to it.

First, look at the drugs you're taking. Many prescription and over-the-counter medications, including some pain medications, drugs for attention deficit disorder, weight loss pills, amphetamines, and nasal decongestants contain stimulants that can keep you awake, especially when taken too close to bedtime. (The same goes for caffeine, alcohol, and tobacco.) Diuretics, commonly used to treat hypertension and heart failure, disturb sleep because they cause frequent urination, and antidepressants count sleeplessness among their many side effects. All of these drugs can be replaced with safer, equally effective natural therapies that do not interfere with sleep.

Second, rule out medical conditions that may disturb your slumber. Restless leg syndrome, characterized by unpleasant sensations in the legs, makes it hard to fall asleep. Benign prostatic hyperplasia (BPH) causes nighttime awakenings for trips to the bathroom. For women in menopause, hot flashes can ruin sleep. Depression and anxiety can also leave you tossing and turning at night. The good news is that all of these conditions can be addressed, and once they are, you can often say goodbye to sleep problems.

If you rule out the above factors and still experience occasional sleeplessness, there are natural remedies with impeccable safety records and unquestionable efficacy you can try. Here are a few of my favorites. They can be used individually or in combination. You can find them in your health food store.

- **L-theanine** is an amino acid derived from green tea. Renowned for its calming effects, L-theanine works by enhancing alpha-wave activity in the brain, which results in relaxation, and by increasing levels of gamma amino butyric acid (GABA), a neurotransmitter that calms the brain down and helps relieve anxiety. **The suggested dose is 200 mg of L-theanine, 30 minutes to an hour before bedtime, preferably on an empty stomach.**

- **Valerian** (*Valeriana officinalis*) is the most common sleep aid in Europe, and studies suggest that this herb works as well as prescription drugs, without the side effects. Like L-theanine, it helps relieve anxiety by working on GABA pathways, but it also has a mild sedative effect that helps you fall asleep more quickly. In some studies, valerian is used in combination with hops. Although hops is best known as an ingredient in beer, it is an approved therapy in Germany for insomnia and nervousness. **The suggested dose is 250–500 mg of valerian and/or 120 mg of hops, 30 minutes to an hour before bedtime, preferably on an empty stomach.**
- **Melatonin** has long been one of my top recommendations for sleep. Produced naturally in the pineal gland, melatonin is the hormone that regulates your circadian rhythms, or “body clock.” As darkness falls, melatonin secretion rises, signaling your body that it's time to sleep. After the age of 40, melatonin levels decline, which is one reason so many older people have trouble falling and staying asleep. In addition to facilitating sleep, melatonin is also useful for jetlag, and it's a potent antioxidant that promotes overall good health. **(I don't recommend melatonin for people under age 40—their bodies produce enough naturally.) The suggested dose is 1–3 mg of melatonin, 30 minutes to an hour before bedtime, preferably on an empty stomach.**

Smoking Cessation

If you smoke and are ready to kick this destructive habit out of your life, there are some nutritional aids to help you along the way. Before your designated quit date, purchase two bottles each of **Sulfonil (from Thorne Research)** and **buffered vitamin C**, both available from health food stores and online supplement retailers. Sulfonil is a sulfur-based compound that binds to the same receptor sites in the brain as nicotine. These receptors become habituated to nicotine, and once you quit smoking they scream for more. Sure, you can feed them more nicotine by chewing gum, sucking on a lozenge, or wearing a patch. However, I prefer Sulfonil because it satisfies the brain's need for nicotine and reduces cravings without providing the very thing you're trying to escape.

Beginning on your quit day, take two Sulfonil capsules when you wake up, and then one every four

to six hours during the day, and two more at bedtime. Drink lots of water to flush out your system. The biochemical addiction to nicotine will dissipate in two to three weeks, so you won't need to use Sulfonil for longer than that. After that time, you'll only be battling the habit of smoking. When the desire for a cigarette strikes, take 500–1,000 mg of buffered vitamin C, which can take the edge off the most intense of cravings. (Take no more than 10,000 mg per day.) Then do something to keep your mind and hands busy: take a walk, do household chores or paperwork, mess around on the computer, or visit a friend.

Stroke

Every year nearly 750,000 Americans suffer a stroke (technically called a cerebrovascular accident), and more than 150,000 of them die, making stroke the third-leading cause of death in this country. For the majority of those who do survive, lingering speech, motor, and vision problems are common. What makes this such a tragedy is that up to 80 percent of all strokes can be prevented. Here is what I recommend.

- **The single most important thing you can do to protect yourself from a stroke is to get your blood pressure under control.** (See my recommendations for blood pressure on page 6.)
- **Eat more fruits and vegetables.** If you know anyone who's suffered a stroke, you know that prevention is the best medicine. According to a study published in the *Lancet*, upping your intake of fruits and vegetables may be just the ticket for protection. This meta-analysis, which reviewed data from eight studies involving over 250,000 people, found that those who ate more than five servings of fruits and vegetables daily decreased their risk of stroke by 26 percent.

This should be a wakeup call for Americans, who only eat an average of three servings of fruits and vegetables a day. Fruits and vegetables contain a cornucopia of protective vitamins, minerals, and phytonutrients, and among the most important is potassium. Adequate potassium intake helps keep blood pressure in the normal range, and, as I mentioned above, hypertension is one of the primary risk factors for stroke. Boosting your consumption from three to five servings a day would increase your potassium intake by 50 percent.

What If You've Already Had a Stroke?

If you've already had a stroke, I have one recommendation for you: Get to a treatment center that offers **hyperbaric oxygen therapy (HBOT)**.

HBOT involves breathing 100 percent pure oxygen through a mask while sitting or reclining in a specially designed pressurized chamber. The pressure allows oxygen to dissolve in all the body's fluids, including areas with very poor circulation or oxygen deprivation. This massive infusion of oxygen results in remarkable benefits that cannot be achieved by any other therapy. Recent studies suggest that HBOT also mobilizes stem cells, which have the unique ability to differentiate, or transform into cells with specialized forms and functions—including neurons, which are damaged by stroke.

Stroke patients treated with HBOT can often avoid paralysis, speech difficulties, and other impairment if treated immediately after the stroke. Jackie, an active 76-year-old, came to our clinic for HBOT after suffering a stroke during an angioplasty. She hobbled into the office for her first treatment, using a walker and aided by her son and daughter-in-law. Two weeks and eight treatments later, she carried her walker over the threshold, and she continues to improve. But even those who begin treatment months or even years after their stroke achieve benefits.

HBOT's only downside is its availability and expense. A fair number of hospitals have hyperbaric chambers, but they charge \$1,000 to \$2,000 per hour of treatment. (We charge \$215 per hour.) Yet even if you could afford hospital-based HBOT, these facilities use it with only a fraction of the patients it could help. Your best bet is to find a private clinic that offers HBOT. But don't get your hopes up. This simple, safe, highly effective therapy is still invisible to most conventional doctors. To learn more about treatment at Whitaker Wellness, visit whitakerwellness.com or call 800-488-1500. For a listing of other clinics that offer HBOT, visit hbomedtoday.com.

Eating more produce isn't that hard. A piece of fruit with breakfast, a large and colorful salad for lunch, a couple of vegetables with dinner, and snacks of peanut butter and celery or raw vegetables and cottage cheese—that's six servings and some change right there. Bon appétit!

- **Recognize stroke symptoms.** If you suffer a stroke, your best hope for full recovery is to get to a hospital as quickly as possible. Unfortunately, while most people recognize the classic symptoms of a stroke—paralysis on one side of the body or the sudden loss of vision or speech—they are unfamiliar with more subtle signs. The majority of stroke patients in a recent California survey reported that their initial symptoms were less severe and came on gradually over the course of 15 minutes or so, rather than all at once. They did not connect these symptoms to stroke, nor did they seek immediate treatment.

Recognize the early symptoms of stroke: dizziness; dim, blurred, or lost vision; numbness or tingling in the mouth or cheeks; difficulty speaking or swallowing; weakness in the legs and arms; ache in the back of the head; nausea and vomiting. Seek medical attention right away, and as soon as you can, undergo a course of hyperbaric oxygen therapy. (For more on hyperbaric oxygen therapy, see the box on page 41.)

Urinary Tract Infections

Urinary tract infections (UTIs) are not something people like to talk about, but they are extremely common—and surprisingly easy to prevent. One subscriber told me she used to have frequent UTIs until she started drinking **unsweetened cranberry juice. At the first sign of an infection, she drinks one or two glasses a day**, and she says she hasn't had a UTI since she started this preventive measure.

Cranberry juice is one of those “kitchen remedies” that really works. These berries contain proanthocyanidins and a sugar called d-mannose that prevent *E. coli* bacteria from sticking to bladder walls and setting up residence in your urinary tract. Regular cranberry juice is full of sugar, so I recommended the unsweetened varieties. They are very tart, but you can sweeten them with stevia or xylitol. **Another option is cranberry extract supplements, which are sold**

in health food stores. If you're prone to infections, use cranberry juice or supplements regularly.

Vaginal Dryness

A common change that occurs with menopause is vaginal dryness. As estrogen production declines, the membranes of the vagina become thinner and less elastic, and production of lubricating fluid drops. Although this is not life threatening, it can make sexual intercourse difficult and uncomfortable. Of course, you can always use a personal lubricant, but I want to tell you about another solution: **vaginal estriol.**

Estriol is a type of estrogen produced in the body. When applied topically, estriol stimulates estrogen receptors in the vagina, increasing lubrication and plumping up tissues, yet its systemic effects are minimal. Studies suggest that this therapy may also help ward off urinary tract infections and improve incontinence. Topical estriol requires a prescription and is only available from compounding pharmacies that prepare it in suppositories, tablets, or creams that are inserted into the vagina. To find a compounding pharmacy in your area, check with the International Academy of Compounding Pharmacists (IACP) at 800-927-4227 or iacprx.org.

Vision

Vision problems plague many people as they get older, and whether it's an inability to read fine print, cataracts, dry eyes, floaters, glaucoma, or macular degeneration, these impairments interfere significantly with quality of life.

For more than a decade I've recommended **lutein, zeaxanthin, zinc, bilberry, and other nutrients that target eye health.** These nutrients consistently provide good results and I've heard this from many subscribers who use them, including Marilyn, who reported that her macular degeneration, a progressive condition that is the leading cause of blindness in older people, is now under control and holding steady. Another woman says they help with her vision and dry eyes. And a 93-year-old man told me that now his 40-year-old relatives depend on him to read fine print! **Look for vision products that contain 15 mg of lutein, 600 mcg zeaxanthin, 50 mg zinc, and 320 mg bilberry, among other nutrients.**

For other condition-specific recommendations, see Age-Related Macular Degeneration, Cataracts, Dry Eye Syndrome, and Glaucoma.

Weight Control

Without a doubt, weight control is a hot health issue. I have covered this topic many times in *Health & Healing*, and I even wrote a book about it. For a comprehensive weight loss program that really works, read my book *The Whitaker Wellness Weight Loss Program*, available in book stores, online at whitakerweightloss.com, and by phone at 800-810-6655. In the meantime, here are a few quick tips.

- **Daily weigh-ins for weight loss.** To weigh or not to weigh: that is the question. And, according to a recent study, the answer is yes. Researchers enrolled more than 3,000 overweight people who were on weight loss or weight maintenance programs and followed them for two years. About 20 percent of the study subjects reported that they never weighed themselves, while 40 percent did so daily or weekly. At the study's conclusion, daily weighers lost an average of 12 pounds while weekly weighers lost six pounds—and those who never weighed gained four pounds.

Although many weight loss programs do not recommend weighing in every day, this study suggests that the feedback received from stepping on the scales every morning helps keep dieters on track.

- **Calcium and weight control.** Numerous studies link a high calcium intake with a reduced risk of obesity. That's because calcium deficiencies stimulate the release of hormones that not only help convert calcium, but also promote fat storage and retard fat burning. But does getting extra calcium help with weight loss? Michael Zemel, PhD, of the University of Tennessee, divided overweight people into three groups and placed them on low-calorie diets containing varying amounts of calcium. After six months, the individuals with a daily calcium intake (mostly from dairy products) of 400–500 mg lost an average of 15 pounds. Those getting 800 mg lost 19 pounds, while those getting 1,200 mg lost 24 pounds, as well as a higher percentage of body and abdominal fat.

Although I'm not suggesting that calcium is the answer, the fact that two-thirds of Americans are

overweight and nearly three-quarters have inadequate calcium intake (a daily average of only 400–500 mg) does give me pause. What I do suggest, not only for weight control but for overall health, is that you increase your consumption of dietary calcium (nonfat cottage cheese is an excellent source of both calcium and protein), and make sure your daily multivitamin and mineral contains at least 1,000 mg of calcium.

- **Drink more water.** If you want to lose weight, here's another reason to drink more water. In addition to filling you up, it also burns calories. German researchers gave healthy, normal-weight volunteers two cups of water to drink, and within 10 minutes, their metabolic rates began to rev up, increasing after 30–40 minutes by an average of 30 percent. The researchers figured out that 40 percent of this energy expenditure was used to heat up the water from room temperature to body temperature, while the remainder was attributed to an increase in fat and carbohydrate burning stimulated by the sympathetic nervous system. **They concluded that drinking eight cups of water could burn off 100 additional calories daily—about as many as you'd expend during a leisurely 30-minute walk.**

Drinking ice water may burn off even more calories. Several years ago, a physician I know told me he lost 35 pounds simply by eating ice. Although I've never seen any research to support this novel method of weight loss, it makes sense, because your body must produce the energy to first melt the ice, then heat up the water. Just be careful not to break a tooth—and avoid brain freeze.

Wound Healing

I've been using sugar to dress open wounds for 20 years, but this therapy has been around for much longer—at least 5,000 years. Ancient Egyptians, Greeks, and Romans all used honey (which works just like sugar) to treat open wounds and burns. Today, antibiotic ointments are the treatment of choice for ulcers, cuts, scrapes, and burns. Yet honey and sugar are far superior to any antibiotic ointment ever used.

When sugar or honey is packed on top of and inside an open wound, it dissolves in the fluid exuding from the wound, creating a hyperosmotic, or highly concentrated, medium. Bacteria cannot exist in a hyperosmotic environment any more than a goldfish could live in the

Chewing Gum for Health?

Gum chewing goes way back. Ancient Greeks chewed on the resin of mastic trees to treat stomach problems, Mayans used the sap of sapodilla trees to clean their teeth, and North America Indians preferred spruce sap to freshen their breath. Today, gum remains as popular as ever, and new health benefits keep popping up. Chewing gum has been shown to increase saliva production and quell heartburn, improve performance on memory tests, and even help with weight loss—burning about 12 calories per hour. (Besides, if you have gum in your mouth, you won't be eating.)

Most remarkable, according to a study involving 34 patients recovering from bowel surgery, chewing gum also speeds healing. Half the patients chewed a stick of sugar-free gum three times a day for an hour at a time, beginning the morning after their surgery. They had a much faster return of normal bowel function, and they left the hospital more than two days earlier than patients who didn't chew gum.

Look in your health food store for brands such as Unique Sweet and Spry that are sweetened with xylitol. They are low in calories, contain no dangerous chemicals, and are actually good for your teeth.

Great Salt Lake. Scientists have tested the viability of many types of bacteria, including *Klebsiella*, *Shigella*, *Staphylococcus aureus*, and *Streptococcus pyogenes*, and none of them have been able to survive in a honey or sugar solution.

In addition to curbing infection, this therapy facilitates healing in other ways. It draws fluid out of the wound, which reduces edema (swelling). It provides a covering or filling and therefore prevents scabbing. It encourages the removal of dead tissue to make way for new growth. It promotes granulation, the formation of connective tissue and blood vessels on the surfaces of a wound. Finally, it supports the growth of new skin covering the wound. The net result is rapid healing with minimal scarring.

Sugar or honey dressing may be used to treat any kind of open wound or burn. (We use sugar at the clinic because it's less messy.) It will not work on abscesses or pustules that are covered with skin.

Do not use on a bleeding wound as sugar promotes bleeding. (By the way, sugar and honey are perfectly safe to use on diabetic wounds because they do not enter the bloodstream.)

1. Unravel a 4" x 4" piece of gauze into a long strip and coat it with Vaseline. Place it around the outside edges of the wound, like a donut.
2. Cover the wound with ¼-inch of sugar. (The Vaseline "donut" will keep it in place.)
3. Place a 4" x 4" sponge on top of the wound. Bandage it firmly but not too snugly with a cling dressing.
4. Change the dressing every one or two days. Remove, irrigate with water, saline, or hydrogen peroxide, pat dry, and repeat steps 1–3.

Wrinkles

Of all the physical changes that occur with age, none is more apparent than the changes in your skin. You may eventually feel the cartilage in your joints wearing thin, but wrinkles and lines stare back at you every time you look in the mirror.

Fortunately there are natural ways to dramatically slow down the aging of your skin, from sunscreens to antioxidant-rich moisturizers to unique topical growth factors that literally jump-start the rejuvenation process. Here are some of my favorite techniques to help keep your skin looking its best.

- **Use a full-spectrum sunscreen.** Most skin damage is caused by exposure to ultraviolet (UV) radiation from sunlight. To prevent UV damage, you must protect your skin from both UVB rays which cause sunburn, and UVA rays which penetrate into the deeper layers of the skin and cause you to look older. Both UVA and UVB rays can cause skin cancer. For everyday protection—even in the winter—use a full-spectrum sunscreen with an SPF of at least 15 to screen out UVB rays. For prolonged sun exposure, always use a sunblock. While a sunscreen will filter out most of the dangerous rays, a sunblock forms a physical barrier to prevent all UV rays from being absorbed by the skin.
- **Antioxidants.** You're probably familiar with taking antioxidants to boost your immunity, protect your cardiovascular system, and improve your overall health, but can they make you look younger? They

just might. German researchers conducted a three-month, placebo-controlled study in which 39 participants were divided into three groups. Group one was put on an antioxidant-rich daily supplement regimen consisting of 3 mg lycopene, 3 mg lutein, 4.8 mg beta-carotene (8,000 IU), 10 mg vitamin E (15 IU), and 75 mcg selenium. Group two was given the same amount of beta-carotene and vitamin E, but their dose of lycopene was increased to 6 mg and they did not receive lutein. Group three took a placebo. Skin density and thickness, wrinkling, smoothness, scaling, and roughness were measured at the study's onset and again at its conclusion. In both antioxidant groups, the density and thickness of the skin was markedly increased and scaling and roughness improved. No changes were noted in the placebo group.

Another antioxidant boon? Researchers in Jordan examined 100 study subjects with recently diagnosed acne and found they had lower concentrations of vitamins A and E than their acne-free counterparts. Furthermore, subjects with the most severe cases were found to have the lowest blood levels of vitamins A and E.

- **Use a good moisturizer.** An easy way to keep your skin hydrated is to use a moisturizer. In addition to soothing your skin, a moisturizer will produce immediate results in your appearance, smoothing out fine lines and wrinkles and plumping up the skin. Most any oil or lotion will help seal in moisture—you can even use olive oil. However, the drier and more damaged your skin is, the more careful you should be about selecting a moisturizer.

The best moisturizers contain either hyaluronic acid or essential fatty acids, preferably both. Hyaluronic acid binds with water to prevent evaporation, while essential fatty acids seal moisture into the skin. **Your moisturizer should be applied after washing your face in the morning and again at bedtime. If your skin is exceptionally dry, reapply during the day.**

- **Drink plenty of water.** Seventy percent of the dermis—the inner layer of the skin—is water. One of the main reasons our skin sags and wrinkles as we age is that the dermis loses about 30 percent of its total water content. The result is flat, dry-looking, flaking, itching skin. Moisturizers certainly help dry skin, but don't

overlook the importance of hydrating your skin from the inside by drinking copious amounts of fresh, purified water. This is vital for overall health and imperative for supple, moist skin. **I recommend at least eight 8-ounce glasses every day.**

- **Apply alpha hydroxy acids.** You can stimulate growth of new epidermal cells—the most superficial layer of skin—with alpha hydroxy acids (AHAs). These are natural substances that stimulate old cells to shed more rapidly, revealing the younger skin beneath the surface. They also increase the number of glycosaminoglycans—complex molecules that help skin retain moisture. By applying an AHA cream or lotion each night, you'll give your skin a fresher appearance and reduce fine lines and wrinkles. **Look for a product that contains eight to 10 percent AHAs—potent enough to make a real difference, but not so strong as to cause irritation.**
- **Try Aminocare cream.** Although wrinkles may not be life-threatening, they are a top aging concern. Now there's an innovative product that works at the genetic level to help maintain younger-looking skin: Aminocare cream, which contains several molecules that target the activity of two important genes involved in aging. In a pilot study conducted in France, 21 women, ages 41 to 61, applied this cream twice a day for 28 days to their entire faces except for an area around the outer corner of one of their eyes (crow's feet). Imprints were made of this area of both eyes of all participants before and after the study. They were then compared by laser profilometry, which measured wrinkle volume, depth, and complexity.

Significant improvements were noted in the areas treated with Aminocare cream, while untreated sites were unchanged or slightly worse. Participants also reported improvements in skin suppleness and softness. As far as I know, this is the only product that works at the genetic level to retard skin aging. Aminocare cream is available from Aminocare Products at aminocare.com or 800-856-8006.

drwhitaker.com

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