# Alternative Medicine: What Works?

By Bill Sardi

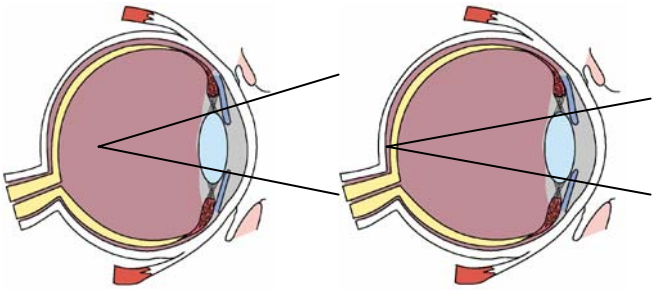
Faced with an unremitting health problem that conventional treatment cannot resolve, would you opt to try alternative therapies? Many people do. Even the most educated are often attracted to less invasive or more natural therapies. But do they work? Let's examine some of the sometimes deceptive, sometimes effective, alternative therapies that circulate in the health rumor mill and never seem to fall into obscurity.

## 1. Palming the Eyes

A popular alternative medicine doctor suggests his eyeglass wearing middle-aged website viewers begin to practice what is called palming of the eyes. Palming involves light pressure against closed eyelids in bright sun. Here's how the palming trick works.

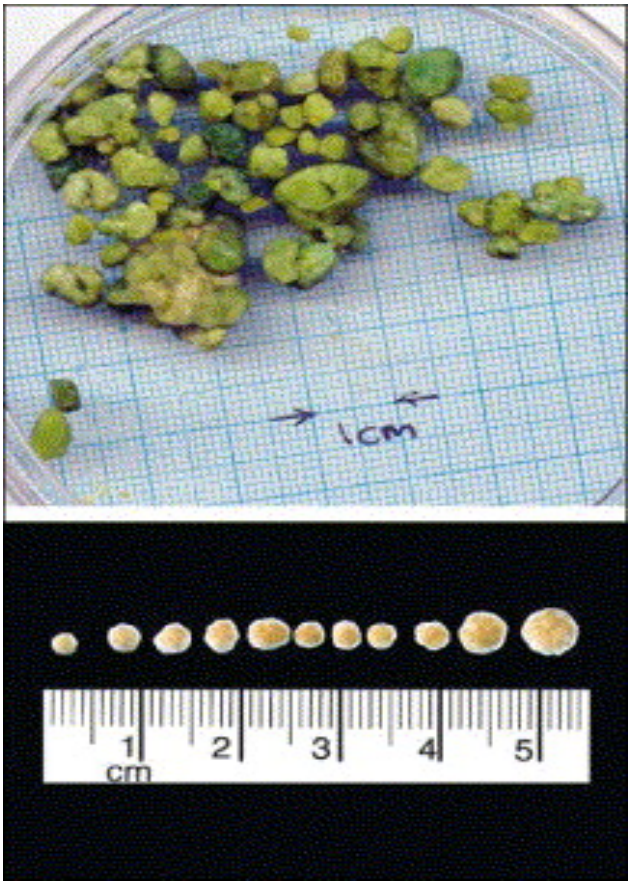
The human eye precisely focuses on objects, both near and far. Most people who wear eyeglasses or contact lenses are nearsighted, that is, objects focus in front of the retina rather than on it. (See eye diagram below, at left)

If cornea and lens of the eye brings objects into focus at a point just one millimeter in front of the retina, then a person will require a 3 diopter eyeglass prescription, which is a fairly thick pair of glasses. If pressure is applied against the eyes for a time, such as when palming, the eyes will be momentarily compressed by about a millimeter. **Temporarily, near objects will come into focus without the need for artificial lenses**. This will give a person the idea that eye exercises like palming actually work, especially with repeated palming.



*Drawings show light entering human eyes and the retinal focus point. At left, focus point falls short of the retina which results in nearsightedness (myopia). Only up-close objects can be brought into focus. At right, after eyeball has been compressed by palming, the length of the eye is shorter and the focus point falls on or closer to the retina, resulting in less dependence upon eyeglasses for a short period of time, till the eye returns to its original shape.*

## 2. The olive oil gallstone cure




A frequently published alternative treatment for gallstones is the olive oil/lemon juice flush. According to a newly published report, **gallstone sufferers may have the false impression that they have expelled gallstones** after undergoing an olive oil/ lemon juice flush. An April 16 report in the British journal Lancet, (Volume 365) says stone sufferers may actually be passing *"soap stones"* that emanate from the combination of oil and lemon when mixed with digestive enzymes.

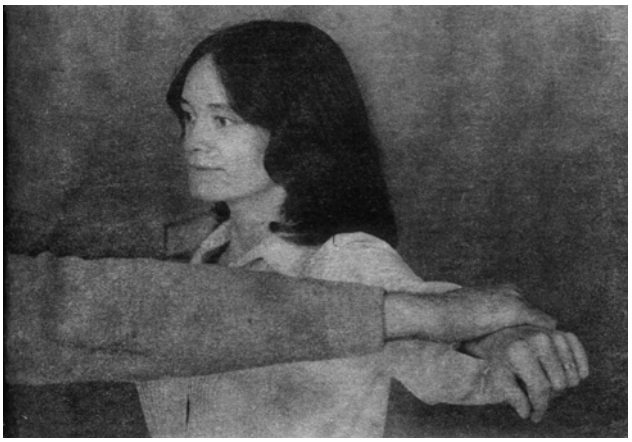
Examination of stones, expelled after an olive oil/lemon juice flush, reveal they contain no cholesterol or calcium that are found in bona fide gallstones. Doctors obtained greenish *"soap stones"* from a gallstone patient after an olive oil flush and compared them to the real gallstones surgically removed from the same patient. Photographic and biochemical evidence clearly shows olive oil complexes with the potassium and acids in lemon juice to create what only appear to be gallstones when they are expelled. (See photo at left)

*Soap stones shown above, produced and expelled after olive oil/lemon juice gall bladder cleanse. Below, actual gallstones removed from the same patient.*

Other recent studies show olive oil may excite the production of bile, which may help with gall bladder symptoms, but evidence does not show olive oil/ lemon juice regimes actually cause gallstones to be expelled.

For scientifically sound information on how to dissolve gallstones naturally, refer to the new e-book, *"Gall Bladder Remedies."* (Available from the Natural Health Librarian) Citing authoritative references from the medical literature, the e-book shows how a regimen of amino acids, vitamins, grain extracts and natural emulsifiers can dissolve most gallstones quickly and effectively.

# 3. Applied Kinesiology (muscle testing)



Doctors can conger up all kinds of methods to get patients to come to their offices. Chiropractors are popular because of their non-invasive treatments. In the 1960s Dr. George Goodheart, a Michigan chiropractor, originated what is known today as applied kinesiology, or muscle testing. The effectiveness of this practice is in the mind of the patient. For example, a patient may hold a bottle of vitamins in one hand and the practitioner tests muscle strength in the other arm. Supposedly, if the ingredients in the vitamin bottle are potentially beneficial, the person will be able to resist pressure applied to their arm. It is a wonder why so many patients put their faith in this ruse. Despite studies cited below which clearly demonstrate applied kinesiology has no reliability, it is in common practice. How does it work? It is revealed that the practitioner first slightly moves the arm quickly upwards to relax muscles so the arm can be pulled downward. The difference in technique is subtle and often undetected by the patient. If a person believes in applied kinesiology, then they must believe that there is some sort of energy field that is transmitted from a vitamin bottle to the patient. The ultimate test would be to muscle test for a bottle of vitamins and then, while still holding the vitamins, take the bottle out of the hand of the patient and see if strength was restored or weakened.

German researchers have been most active in testing applied kinesiology. A report published in the journal of

Journal American Dietetic Association 88: 698-704, 1988

**Applied kinesiology unreliable for assessing nutrient status.**

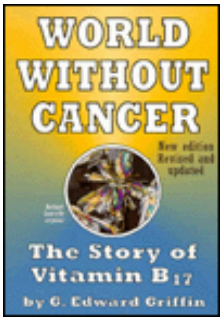
**Kenney JJ, Clemens R, Forsythe KD.** Pritikin Longevity Center, Santa Monica, California.

Applied kinesiology is a technique used to assess nutritional status on the basis of the response of muscles to mechanical stress. In this study, 11 subjects were evaluated independently by three experienced applied kinesiologists for four nutrients (thiamin, zinc, vitamin A, and ascorbic acid). The results obtained by those applied kinesiologists were compared with (a) one another, (b) standard laboratory tests for nutrient status, and (c) computerized isometric muscle testing. Statistical analysis yielded no significant interjudge reliability, no significant correlation between the testers and standard biochemical tests for nutrient status, and no significant correlation between mechanical and manual determinations of relative muscle strength. In addition, the subjects were exposed in a double-blind fashion to supplements of thiamin, zinc, vitamin A, and ascorbic acid and two placebos (pectin and sucrose) and then re-tested. According to applied kinesiology theory, "weak" (indicating deficiency) muscles are strengthened when the subject is exposed to an appropriate nutritional supplement. Statistical analysis revealed no significant differences in the response to placebo, nutrients previously determined (by muscle testing) to be deficient, and nutrients previously determined (by muscle testing) to be adequate. Even though the number of subjects (11) and nutrients (4) tested was limited, the results of this study indicated that the use of applied kinesiology to evaluate nutrient status is no more useful than random guessing.

*Complementary Therapy & Medicine* concludes that applied kinesiology is ***"no more useful than random guessing."*** [Complementary Therapy Medicine 9: 141-45, 2001] Below is a study of applied kinesiology conducted by the Pritikin Longevity Center in 1988. It also found no credence for this practice.

This is a practice that patients want to believe. It is not directly harmful or costly. Patients have choices and can elect to submit themselves to disproven practices if they desire. Applied Kinesiology thrives if for no other reason than the tremendous fear many patients have for conventional medicine. Patients tolerate muscle testing over needles, biopsies and x-rays.

## 4. Vitamin B17 (also known as laetrile or amygdalin)




What are cancer patients to do? The 30-year, 30+ billion dollar campaign to cure cancer has failed. Survival rates have not improved and many cancer patients are told, after undergoing numerous rounds of radiation and chemotherapy, there is nothing more that can be done. So the search for alternatives is often begun when the cancer has spread and there is even less hope for remission.

One popular alternative cancer cure is **vitamin B17,** also called **amygdalin** or **laetrile.** Derived from apricot pits, laetrile is not a vitamin.

According to the entrenched cancer treatment establishment, laetrile B17 is a *"toxic drug that is not effective as a cancer treatment."* But according to its advocates, laetrile B17 is a natural remedy against cancer that has a high cure rate. Who can the public believe?

*The Hunza Valley in remote Pakistan, where residents are reported to be immune from cancer due to their consumption of laetrile (amygdalin) B17 in apricot pits.*

It is the **cyanide component of laetrile B17 that kills cancer cells.** Laetrile was used as a cancer treatment long before the modern controversy erupted over its use. As early as 1845, doctors were using purified amygdalin (laetrile) to treat cancer patients. In the 1920s and 30s travelers to the Hunza Valley in Pakistan claimed they couldn't find a single case of cancer among the people who lived

there and attributed it to the apricot kernals that contained laetrile B17 in the Hunza diet.

GERAINT SMITH reports fro

**Cyanide is the latest hope for a cancer cure**

THE cyanide-producing cells that make one of Africa's staple food crops deadly if eaten raw have been genetically engineered to hunt and kill human cancer cells, according to research presented today.

Scientists at Imperial College and the private company Antisoma have successfully targeted bowel cancer cells grown in culture, killing them by harnessing the defence system against predators of the cassava plant.

Cassava root is pounded and cooked to make a basic source of carbohydrate in much of sub-Saharan Africa, but if eaten untreated, it can paralyse or kill because it contains large quantities of cyanide.

They are hoping it is the first stage to finding a safe, effective treatment for a range of tumours that will side-step cancer's ability to become resistant to drugs. However, any treatment is likely to be years away.

Scientists have harnessed the system which other plants including almond and hydrangea also evolved to defend against insect predators, in order to deliver cyanide only to tumour cells, the festival at Imperial College was told today.

The experiments show that "the concept of cyanide-targeted tumour cell killing" works. "We are actively working to develop a higher-potency system able to act upon other types of cancer," Dr Mahendra Deonarain of the college's biochemistry department will say.

Cassava is one of a number of plants that respond to a predator attack by producing cyanide. The team linked the gene for the cyanide-making enzyme with a human gene for an antibody that recognises a protein associated only with colorectal cancer.

"Detailed characterisation of this has shown it is able to bind to the colorectal cancer cells and to generate cyanide simultaneously." Dr Deonarain says.

However, he warns that this is not "the optimum molecule we want". That, he hopes, will come with further work. "The treatment of cancer has not

In controlled studies, rats with cancer appear to live longer when given leatrile B17. Most of the human studies have employed purified oral or intravenous laetrile B17, **not apricot pits** which are widely sold as a cancer remedy. The renowned Dr. Hans Nieper of Germany later endorsed laetrile B17 for prevention of cancer, **but not as therapy for existing tumors.**

One secret of the laetrile B17 cancer therapy is the described ability of an enzyme called glucuronidase to liberate cyanide from its carrier molecules and deliver it to tumor sites. Glucuronidase is more abundant where inflammation, infection and tumors occur. Therefore, the carrier molecules (nitrilosides) render laetrile B17 relatively harmless until it is unzipped by glucuronidase. When removed from its carrier, cyanide is delivered at the right place, at the right time. A report in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* even attests to the lack of toxicity when intravenous laetrile B17 is employed. [Journal American Medical Assn 245: 591-94, 1981]

What modern medicine did to discredit laetrile B17 was to conduct a dog study where the unzipping enzyme (glucuronidase) was prematurely produced by combining B17 with almond paste. The dogs developed nerve damage from the prematurely released cyanide. Even advocates of natural medicine who advocate the use of laetrile B17 say it **should not be used combined with apricot kernels that may pre-release cyanide**, but it should be purified and administered orally or intravenously, where it is subsequently attached to carrier molecules (glucuronidated) in the liver and transported to cancerous tissues.

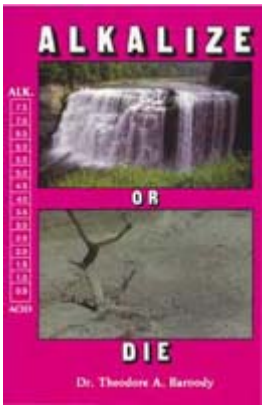
In 1998 researchers in London attempted to activate laetrile B17 specifically at tumor sites without toxicity to healthy cells by conjoining to cloned antibodies that would direct the drug to the cancer site. This experiment increased the cancer-destroying properties of amygdalin by 36 fold and practically eliminated toxicity! [International Journal Cancer 78: 712-19, 1998]

So the advice offered by cancer doctors, that *"laetrile B17 should not be used to treat cancer,"* apparently is correct if you are referring to apricot pits. [CA Cancer J Clin 41: 187-92, 1991] Apricot pits themselves can cause potentially fatal cyanide poisoning. [Annals Emergency Medicine 32:742-4, 1998] Laetrile B17 treatment, administered either intravenously or orally as a purified product by a physician, may be effective.

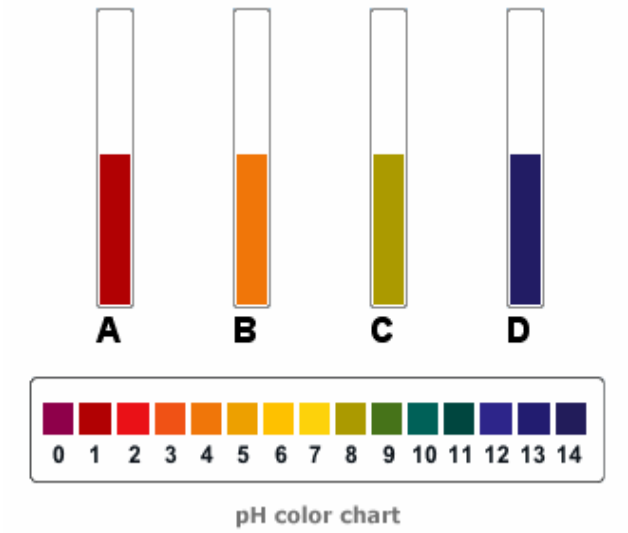
The legendary idea that the Hunza Valley people in remote Pakistan are immune

from cancer is poorly founded. The people there live 40-65 years on average and they are reported to develop cancer like other Pakistanis. There are no accurate birth records to document their longevity. For a more thorough discussion on whether the Hunzas actually are long lived and immune from cancer, go to http://www.thierrysouccar.com/articles/article037.html

## 5. Akalinity for Health




Acidity is an undesirable state, say many alternative health practitioners. The idea sounds plausible. The theory that an alkaline state is biologically beneficial began in the 1930s when two-time Nobel Prize winner Otto Warburg discovered that cancer cells are acidic. In reality, **modern testing reveals cancer cells are more alkaline than acid**, which is why they cannot ward off cancer causing toxins or germs. Cancer cells are energetically weak and must produce energy via fermentation. A byproduct of fermentation is lactic acid which is expressed outside the cell, which prevents cancer drugs or natural therapies from reaching the cancer cell. This is called drug resistance.




Recently a physician received a sales pitch from a representative of a company selling a green drink purported to cure cancer because of its alkaline promoting properties. The physician took out a pH test strip, placed it in a dish and poured the drink solution on it. The green drink was acidic!

**The human body utilizes acidity to protect itself from germs**. The stomach is acid. Without stomach acid germs like H. pylori can grow which can result in stomach cancer. An acid state is required to absorb many nutrients from foods and supplements, such as iron, calcium, zinc, vitamin C and B vitamins. Frequent use of antacids often results in a vitamin B12 deficiency. The bladder must maintain acidity or bacteria will adhere to the bladder wall, resulting in bladder infection.

The only exception to the rule is in the oral cavity where acid-forming streptococcus bacteria reside. The acidity

of Streptococcus then eats through the enamel in teeth, resulting in dental cavities. But alternative health practitioners frequently advise their patients to test the pH orally with test strips. Overgrowth of the Streptococcus bacteria, or even reflux of stomach acid into the oral cavity, can result in an acidic state in the mouth. The pH in the mouth does not reflect the pH in other organs in the body.

A neutral pH is automatically maintained in the blood circulation. If it were dependent upon what humans eat, a state of acidosis would likely be common and require frequent trips to the hospital. In fact, the body continually maintains pH in the blood within a very tight range (7.35–7.45). For more information about pH and cancer, go to **KnowledgeofHealth.com**