



Wellness Miracles

Top 50 Natural Cures & Home Remedies

Bonus Reports

- *Killing the Tiny Bug Behind
Most Recurring Skin Problems*
- *Super Boosting Adult Stem
Cell Production*



Feel Better, Be Happy and Live Longer

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1. Acne

Acne is a skin condition that is caused by clogged hair follicles, usually from a combination of oil and dead skin cells. Breakouts usually occur along the face, chest, shoulders or upper back, but acne can occur wherever hair follicles are present. While mild cases cause only minor breakouts—pimples, blackheads, and whiteheads—severe cases can present with painful red nodules and potentially scarring cystic lesions.

The most common causes of acne are excessive oil production, hormonal changes found during puberty or before menstruation, and bacterial growth within the follicles. Consumption of certain foods, exposure to greasy substances, friction, and stress can contribute to acne formation. Some people are genetically predisposed to developing acne.

Conventional Approach

Many people find relief using over-the-counter acne medications like benzoyl peroxide creams and cleansers that contain salicylic acid. Both help to clear clogged pores by reducing bacteria and inflammation. Topical retinoids (Retin-A) can also reduce breakouts.

Moderate cases might require oral antibiotics, steroids, or chemical peels. Contraceptives can ease some hormone-related breakouts. Certain prescription medications like isotretinoin (Amnesteem) and the androgen blocker spironolactone (Aldactone) are used in difficult or severe cases.

Natural Alternatives

Fish Oil

Contrary to popular belief, consumption of fats and oils don't contribute to acne formation. In fact, studies have shown omega-3 fatty acids like fish oil actually reduce inflammation associated with acne. Omega-3 fatty acids are most prominently found in fatty fish like salmon and anchovies.

Tea Tree Oil

Tea tree oil contains properties effective against bacteria, viruses, fungi, and protozoa. Also an effective anti-inflammatory compound, tea tree oil has long been used topically to reduce symptoms of moderate to severe acne.

Moringa Oil

Moringa oil has antiseptic and anti-inflammatory properties, is vitamin rich, and acts as a moisturizer. It can be found in shampoos, lotions, lip balms, and lotions. When used topically, moringa oil has shown to reduce acne breakouts.

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2. ADHD

Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) is a condition that causes restless hyperactivity, difficulties when attempting to pay attention or focus, and impulsive behavior. It is usually first noticed in young children as an inability to hold still, but it often continues into adulthood. Other symptoms include difficulty following instructions and meeting deadlines, disorganized behavior, and severe distractibility. People with ADHD tend to be forgetful about everyday commitments, and often lose important items like keys or cell phones despite attempts at getting organized.

ADHD is a genetic condition, with males far more likely to develop symptoms, although children exposed in utero to cigarette smoke, drugs, or alcohol are also at higher risk. People with ADHD are more likely to have learning disabilities, issues with anxiety and depression, and higher predispositions to substance abuse. Many children with conduct disorder also have ADHD.

Conventional Approach

Currently, amphetamines like dextroamphetamine-amphetamine (Adderall) and similar compounds like methylphenidate (Ritalin) are most often prescribed for ADHD. Both are stimulants, and can come with unpleasant side effects like appetite loss and insomnia.

Selective norepinephrine reuptake inhibitors like atomoxetine (Strattera) and other antidepressants like bupropion (Wellbutrin) are prescribed when stimulant side effects are intolerable. Other commonly used drugs include guanfacine (Intuniv) and clonidine (Catapres). Behavior therapy is often beneficial.

Natural Alternatives

Yoga or Meditation

Since people with ADHD have a hard time sitting still, exercises in relaxation & mindfulness can help to slow both physical & mental hyperactivity. Techniques learned through yoga or meditation can be applied to other areas in a person's life, which may improve some ADHD symptoms.

Elimination Diets

Some believe food sensitivities may play a role in ADHD symptoms. Anecdotal reports claim avoidance of foods like dairy, wheat, and milk, or elimination of additives like artificial colors, can reduce some symptoms.

Omega-3 Fatty Acids

Omega-3 fatty acids are essential for proper brain function and development. Studies have shown children with ADHD tend to have lower omega-3 levels. While trials with various types of supplementation have had mixed results, overall, supplemental omega-3 does appear to be beneficial.

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3. Allergies (seasonal)

Who doesn't love springtime, with all of its blooming flowers, buzzing honey bees, and lush foliage? Perhaps you, if you suffer from seasonal allergies/hay fever. Pollen-related allergy symptoms can manifest any time of year, but tend to be worse in the spring and summer seasons, when airborne pollens are especially high. Pollen allergies are a result of an overzealous immune system's response to a "foreign substance" finding its way into the body (via absorption through the lungs or skin). In this case, pollen from grasses, flowers, weeds and trees.

For most people, the immune system realizes that the pollen is not a threat, cleans house a bit, and goes about its business. In the case of allergy sufferers, however, the person's immune system decides to wage all-out war on the pollen, and the person experiences the characteristic profuse sneezing, itchy and runny nose, wheezing, rashes, and itchy, watery, red or swollen eyes. These symptoms come about in part because of the release of histamine from immune system cells called mast cells. Histamine is an amine that acts as a hormone, which causes dilatation of the blood vessels (leading to flushing, rash, and/or itching), increased mucus production, and bronchoconstriction (which can cause wheezing and coughing).

Conventional Approach

The market is saturated with over the counter allergy remedies (emphasis on the word "remedy" as these medications are no cure, they simply manage symptoms), and many prescription drugs are available as well. Allergy medications can come in the form of oral medications, nasal sprays or eye drops. Commonly used allergy medications include antihistamines and decongestants. As the name implies, antihistamine medications help block the effects of histamine in the body, thereby reducing associated symptoms. Examples of over-the-counter antihistamines include Allegra, Benadryl, Claritin, and Zyrtec.

Prescription oral allergy meds include Clarinex and Singulair (also known as montelukast) --- a leukotriene inhibitor, which works differently than antihistamines. Astelin is a prescription nasal antihistamine spray (applied directly into the nasal passages). Prescription antihistamine eye drops include Patanol and Optivar.

Some examples of decongestants that are available over-the-counter and by prescription include Sudafed tablets or liquid, Afrin nasal sprays, and Visine eye drops. Since antihistamines and nasal sprays are known to cause headaches, dry mouth, drowsiness and other unpleasant symptoms, many sufferers seek a natural solution to their allergies.

Natural Alternatives

Many can experience relief from a little plant called *Urtica dioica*, aka stinging nettle (yes, the leaves themselves are quite stingy). This botanical, which is native to Europe, Asia, northern Africa, and western North America, when processed into an herbal remedy, is renowned for its natural antihistamine effects. Stinging nettle is believed to work by keeping the walls of those pesky mast cells stable, which helps prevent the release of histamine.

Stinging nettle is available as dried leaf, freeze-dried leaf, extract, capsules, tablets, and as root tincture (a solution of the herb in alcohol). If you go the encapsulated route, try 600 mg of the freeze-dried extract. If you're feeling industrious, a nettle infusion is also an option. A nettle infusion is a strong tea made with the leaves of the stinging nettle plant (depending on where you live, you might even be able to find some nettle in your backyard). You can use dried or fresh nettle depending on availability and personal preference.

To make an infusion with dried nettle:

Boil four quarts of water. Pour the boiling water over half a pound of dried nettle. Cover the water with a lid and let it sit for at least seven hours. Next, strain the nettle out of your infusion. To use, drink eight ounces as a preventive measure or as symptoms occur. This infusion can be refrigerated for one week.

To make an infusion with fresh nettle:

Put about 2.5 ounces (about 75.5 grams) of fresh nettle in a pot. Pour four quarts of boiling water over the nettle. Cover the pot and let it sit for at least seven hours. Then strain out the nettle and use the remaining liquid as needed.

You may consume as much of this infusion as desired. To improve its taste you can mix eight ounces of the infusion with your favorite juice. The medicinal effects of the infusion generally occur within thirty minutes of ingestion.


Stinging nettle may not be appropriate for people taking blood-thinning medication, blood pressure-lowering medication, diuretics, or medications that lower blood sugar, such as for diabetes.

References and Links:

Roschek, B., Fink, R.C., McMichael, M., & Alberte, R.S. (2009). Nettle extract (*Urtica dioica*) affects key receptors and enzymes associated with allergic rhinitis. *Phytotherapy Research*, 23(7), 920-6.

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4. Alzheimer's and Dementia

An estimated 47 million people live with some form of dementia, a group of progressive conditions that begin with impaired memory and cognitive decline and eventually lead to death. Alzheimer's disease is the most common form of dementia.

Multiple factors likely play a role in disease onset, including genetics, lifestyle, history of head trauma, and heart disease. A buildup of proteins called plaques and tangles are believed to kill off certain parts of the brain, leading to disease. The exact cause of these buildups is still unknown.

Conventional Approach

The current treatments for Alzheimer's dementia are medications that raise neurotransmitters in certain areas of the brain. Cholinesterase inhibitors, which help replenish reduced levels of acetylcholine, improve brain function and mood. Moderate to severe cases are often treated with a medication called memantine, which helps brain cells communicate more effectively and slows disease progression. Antidepressants can also be helpful in reducing depressive and erratic behavior.

Natural Alternatives

Soy

Low estrogen levels have been linked to higher instances of Alzheimer's disease in women. Plant-based estrogens found in foods like soy could be helpful for high-risk women undergoing hormonal changes. Researchers warn that increased estrogen levels can increase the risk for certain breast and ovarian cancers, so risk versus benefit should be weighed.

Vitamin D

Studies have indicated chronic, low levels of Vitamin D could contribute to the onset and progression of Alzheimer's disease. In a 12-year study that included 916 participants over 65 years old, those with longstanding Vitamin D deficiencies were three times more likely to develop

Alzheimer's disease.

The Mediterranean Diet

Evidence suggests regular consumption of foods known to increase cardiovascular disease also increases a person's chance of developing Alzheimer's and other forms of dementia. Anti-inflammatory foods like those found in the Mediterranean diet have shown to dramatically reduce chances of both cardiovascular disease and dementia development.

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5. Anxiety

You're likely to get "stressed out" on occasion; it happens to the best of us. But if you suffer from severe and pervasive levels of anxiety --- to the point where it adversely affects every aspect of life, including work, interpersonal relationships, and of course mental and physical health --- you know that it can be life-shattering.

Anxiety is characterized by feelings of fear, uneasiness, and nervousness. Typical physical symptoms include shakiness, increased heart rate, difficulty breathing, muscle tension, intrusive thoughts, and digestive troubles. Anxiety is often triggered by stressful events, but can also come out of nowhere; the person simply "feels anxious" without a direct cause. Anxiety sufferers continuously feel apprehensive and worried about many simple matters in their lives and often retreat into social solitude, which can exacerbate the situation.

Conventional Approach

Millions of Americans take prescription anti-anxiety medication, such as benzodiazepines (e.g., Diazepam, aka Valium, typically used for acute anxiety such as panic attacks), antidepressants (e.g., Prozac, for ongoing maintenance of anxiety symptoms) and beta-blockers (e.g., Propranolol). Unfortunately, individuals can become dependent on these medications, and they often come with a host of unpleasant side effects (e.g., weight gain, night sweats, sexual dysfunction). Fortunately, a plethora of natural alternatives are available.

Natural Alternatives

First Things First - Lifestyle

Eating a healthy diet consisting of whole foods (as opposed to processed, packaged, or fast food), regularly practicing relaxation techniques such as deep breathing or meditation, staying active, getting out in nature, and getting enough sleep go a long way toward stress management. Additionally, it is important to limit caffeine and alcohol consumption, and cigarette smoking – these things wreak havoc with the body's physiological response to stress and deplete the body of nutrients that play a critical role in maintaining healthy mood.

For more targeted support, consider one of the following remedies:

Lemon Balm

Derived from the word “honey bee,” *Melissa officinalis*, aka Lemon Balm, has been shown to help calm anxiety and, when taken in the right dosage, is safe and effective. Historically, lemon balm was steeped in wine to lift the spirits or ameliorate the pain of a bee sting. In present times, a published study of *Melissa officinalis* demonstrated that 600 mg of this herb helped elevate mood and mitigate stress.

Sold in tincture form, as a tea or in a capsule, lemon balm should be taken in small doses. Used in combination with other herbs, lemon balm can alleviate insomnia and promote sleep. Lemon balm’s relaxing effects may be due to the presence of terpenes, plant chemicals with health-promoting properties. Lemon balm may interfere with sedatives, thyroid medications and HIV medications.

Kava Root

Kava, a plant native to the South Pacific, has been used as a calmative for thousands of years. In the modern world, it is often used to address anxiety, stress, and insomnia. Kava works in part by helping to calm the nervous system. It contains a compound called kava-lactones that are believed to be responsible for its anxiolytic (anxiety-reducing) effects.

The Mayo Clinic and other sources note that extensive kava usage has been associated with liver damage in some studies, although in most cases, those who experienced liver damage had pre-existing liver health problems. Thus, it is important to discuss the use of kava with a health-care practitioner to determine if it is right for you.

Passionflower

Passionflower is another plant with anxiolytic properties, including the ability to mitigate panic attacks, improve sleep quality, and bring emotional balance to individuals experiencing excess levels of anger or sadness. It contains compounds that help calm the nervous system and relieve muscle spasms. Specifically, passionflower may help boost levels of GABA, a neurotransmitter that supports a relaxed but focused state of mind (in fact, low levels of GABA have been implicated in anxiety disorders). Passionflower is available as a liquid extract or capsules, or the dried leaves can be brewed as a tea.

Pregnant women should not take passionflower, as it can potentially stimulate uterine contractions. Additionally, passionflower may interact with prescription anxiety medication.

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6. Arthritis

Arthritis is a painful condition of the joints. It can be caused by a variety of things: injury (traumatic or repetitive motion), inflammation (from infection like Lyme Disease or autoimmune disease like Lupus), or wear and tear on the joints (from age or genetic conditions). About 1 in 5 adults and 1 in 250 children suffer from some kind of arthritis, and it is the leading cause of disability in the US. In the most common type of arthritis, osteoarthritis, disintegration of the fluids and cushioning around the joint causes pain, grinding, and sometimes nerve impingement. This condition is also expensive, with annual arthritis costs in excess of \$156 billion, which includes medical care and lost wages of employees with the joint disease. Patients often seek help and are often more than interested in getting relief from the pain, regaining range of motion, and getting back to work or play.

Conventional Approach

Medications like NSAIDs, nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs, are usually the first line of treatment for arthritis. Over the counter medications such as ibuprofen (Advil, Motrin) or Naproxen (Aleve) are the most popular, but others called Cox-2 inhibitors, like meloxicam (Mobic) or celecoxib (Celebrex) are available by prescription. These medications have been shown to have various cardiac and digestive side effects.

Other treatments can include steroid injections into the painful joint, oral steroids in the case of autoimmune flare-ups, or surgeries to repair or replace the joint. While these treatments do provide relief to many, results vary from patient to patient. No surgery or steroid therapy is without risk, however.

Natural Alternatives

Physical Activity

It can be really hard to get started on an exercise program when you are in pain, but it is impossible to make a healthy amount of joint fluid unless you get moving. If you are unsure where to

start, a physical therapist can show you how to create a routine that is safe, effective, and can not only help you get relief but also increase muscle stability around the joints.

Dandelion

Anti-inflammatory properties of dandelion have been known for centuries. Due to the high contents of linoleic, the dandelion leaves are especially effective in treating joint pain or rheumatoid arthritis. Linoleic acid is required by the body to suppress inflammation and regulate immune responses. Insufficient amounts of this fatty acid often lead to joint pain in various areas of the body. Dandelion leaves are frequently used in salads. It shouldn't be taken with certain medications though, such as blood thinners, diuretics, certain antibiotics, or medications that lower blood sugar, so check with your medical provider before taking dandelion. Also, if you are allergic to ragweed, daisies, chrysanthemums, or marigolds, you may have an allergic reaction to dandelion.

Magnesium

This essential mineral is needed by the body, but the human system cannot produce it itself. It is a fundamental factor to help the bones mineralize continually. In addition, magnesium relaxes the muscles and relieves the stiffness and pain. Many biomechanical responses in the body are dependent on sufficient amounts of magnesium including the heartbeat. Higher bone density and minimized possibility of joint pain typically can be achieved by adequate levels of magnesium. The best source of this important mineral component can be found in dark leafy greens, such as spinach, as well as nuts and beans.

Turmeric and Herbs

Turmeric lowers inflammation and can help with many kinds of arthritis pain --- including the kind that is caused by autoimmune disease. One study showed that individuals had less pain and lower levels of disability when taking a cocktail of turmeric, winter cherry, boswellia, and zinc, although it is hard to say if it was the turmeric itself or the combination of the herbs and minerals that brought the most benefit.

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<http://www.umm.edu/health/medical/altmed/herb/turmeric>

A close-up photograph of a woman with long, wavy brown hair using a white inhaler. She is holding the inhaler to her mouth and inhaling. The background is a soft-focus green, suggesting an outdoor setting with foliage.

7. Asthma

If you have ever experienced or witnessed a severe asthma attack, you know that this is not a condition to take lightly, and in fact can be downright terrifying as the person struggles to get enough air into the lungs. Asthma is believed to affect nearly 8% of the U.S. population, according to statistics from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC). Even if a person does not experience severe attacks, the chronic, low-level breathing difficulties associated with milder cases can take a serious toll on the body.

In simple terms, asthma is a chronic condition that affects the lungs and airways. Similar to allergies, asthma typically occurs when the immune system overreacts to the presence of pollen, dust, dander, food, etc., with the end result of inflammation in the lungs. In turn, the airways constrict, causing the characteristic wheezing and breathing difficulties. There is also a strong emotional component to asthma - in other words, anxiety and stress play a significant role in both triggering asthma symptoms in the first place, and in determining their severity.

Conventional Approach

Conventional treatment of this condition generally involves two approaches: fast-acting, acute relief to alleviate an ongoing attack (these usually work within 5 minutes, and last about 5 to 6 hours), and long-term management of symptoms. These medications have a fancy name: beta-agonist bronchodilators (Albuterol is a common example). As the name suggests, they work primarily by helping to relax the muscles surrounding the airways. Typically, these medications are inhaled directly into the lungs. Pills, tablets, and intravenous forms are also available, but may have more side effects.

Although beta-agonists mainly affect the muscles of the airways, they may potentially also affect muscles in the heart, resulting in faster heartbeat and palpitations. They can also affect muscles attached to skeletal muscles, resulting in shakiness. Typically these side effects subside with regular use of the medication, but in some cases they do not subside, and the person may have to try a different medication, or learn to use the inhalers in a way that delivers the medication directly to the lungs, minimizing the amount that gets absorbed in the mouth.

Natural Alternatives

If you suffer from asthma, don't leave your inhaler at home. However, quercetin is a bioflavonoid that has shown great promise in helping reduce the symptoms of asthma over time. Quercetin is an antioxidant compound found in foods such as onions, apples, berries, tea, and red wine, and is readily available in supplement form. Quercetin's ability to help vanquish asthma symptoms is likely due to its ability to block immune cells from releasing histamine. Histamine is an amine that causes bronchoconstriction (tightening of the airways), and which is released from immune system cells called mast cells when the immune system overreacts to the presence of things like pollen and other allergens. Quercetin also has powerful anti-inflammatory effects.

Recommended dose of quercetin for asthma: 500 mg twice daily.

Quercetin may interact with antibiotics, and with medications metabolized by the liver. If you are taking any prescription medications, check with your healthcare provider regarding the use of quercetin for asthma.

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8. Athlete's Foot

Athlete's foot – you don't have to be an athlete to get it. In fact, it is estimated that anywhere from 15% to 25% of people have athlete's foot at any given time. Athlete's foot is a fungal infection of the top layer of the skin between the toes, although the infection can spread to other parts of the body (and potentially to other people), especially if you touch your feet and then touch another part of your body. This type of fungal overgrowth tends to thrive in those comfy spaces between the toes because the fungi love the warm and wet environment (which is why a primary prevention strategy is always keeping the feet clean and dry). If the infection spreads across the sole of the foot it is referred to as moccasin athlete's foot.

Although a common case of athlete's foot is far from life-threatening, the symptoms can be quite bothersome: scaly, cracked skin, inflammation and burning at the site of infection, blisters and itching. Additionally, the condition can be quite tenacious, and often requires prolonged treatment. Risk factors for athlete's foot include being genetically predisposed, being prone to allergies, having sweaty feet, wearing shoes that don't allow air circulation, or a weakened immune system.

Conventional Approach

There are over the counter topical creams, powders and sprays that are applied directly to the affected area. These products contain an ingredient that stops the growth of the fungus or kills it. But the treatment does require some patience - fungal cells are stubborn and it takes some effort to vanquish them! For severe cases there are also prescription antifungal drugs, such as Metnax and Naftin, which are topical preparations. Diflucan and Lamisil are prescription antifungals that are taken orally. These oral medications may adversely affect liver, kidney, or even heart function, and side effects may be exacerbated if taken with other medicines.

Natural Alternatives

Some good basic hygiene can go a long way toward reducing the symptoms of a current infection and preventing future ones. After bathing, the feet should be dried thoroughly. Keep your

feet sweat-free by wearing cotton socks, and change them frequently during the day - and don't wear shoes that are too tight or that encourage your feet to sweat, such as those made of canvas or leather. Wear slippers or flip-flops instead of going barefoot when using the showers at the gym, locker rooms, pools, or any other public areas with high traffic. For symptomatic relief you can use a paste of baking soda mixed with water applied directly to the affected area to help minimize itching and burning.

For more targeted support, a natural alternative is tea-tree essential oil. Tea-tree oil comes from the leaves of the *melaleuca alternifolia* tree. This relative of the myrtle is a native of Australia and its leaves and oils have been used by the indigenous population for many years. It is believed to have antifungal and antibiotic properties. When applied daily to the infected area, tea-tree oil may be an effective topical medication to reduce the burning, itching and scaling that is evident in athlete's foot, and prolonged use of the oil may decolonize the skin of the fungi.

Simply apply a light coating to the affected area 2 or 3 times a day (you can apply it directly or put a few drops on a cotton ball), and continue to apply it for at least 2 weeks after signs of the infection have disappeared to ensure the fungus is eradicated. Because the oil is highly concentrated you may experience a temporary burning sensation upon application (it is also quite pungent, so those sensitive to smells may find the scent a bit strong). Tea-tree oil products are readily available at health food and herb stores. Look for products that are 100% tea-tree oil for maximum effectiveness and purity.

Tea-tree oil is toxic if ingested in large quantities and may cause skin irritation if applied at too high a concentration—to assess your level of sensitivity, test a very small patch of uninfected skin first, before applying to the infected area.

References and Links:

Crawford, F. (2009). Athlete's foot. BMJ Clinical Evidence, Published online 2009 Jul 20.

<http://www.informedhealthonline.org/athlete-s-foot.2675.en.html>

<http://www.webmd.com/skin-problems-and-treatments/tc/athletes-foot-medications>

A microscopic image showing a dense cluster of purple, spherical Candida cells. Some cells have small red dots on their surface, possibly representing budding or internal structures. The background is a textured, brownish surface.

9. Candida Overgrowth/Yeast Infection

Believe it or not, we are supposed to have yeast living in our bodies. In fact, our bodies are host to literally trillions of microorganisms, and in healthy individuals, these organisms coexist in a state of balance with our “human” cells. It is often when an imbalance occurs—when an otherwise innocuous or even beneficial organism has the opportunity to overgrow, that trouble can start.

A great example of this is when a specific yeast, known as *Candida Albicans*, causes what is commonly known as a yeast infection. Yeast overgrowth can occur in any part of the body, but vaginal yeast infections are extremely common. This type of infection is typically characterized by intense itching, redness and soreness in the external vaginal tissue, and often there is vaginal discharge. Some people with chronic *Candida* infections also experience emotional or psychological symptoms such as irritability, mood swings, and “brain fog” (for example, you frequently misplace your keys or forget what you were going to say, or simply have a hard time staying focused). Fortunately, there are some simple things you can do to reduce the likelihood of a yeast infection.

Conventional Approach

Non-prescription antifungal remedies, such as Monistat or Clotrimazole, are topical and are applied directly into the vagina. These can be purchased over the counter at most drug, grocery, and department stores in a variety of strengths and dosages. If over-the-counter preparations prove ineffective, these same types of medications are also available in prescription-strength amounts. Common prescription antifungal medications include the oral Fluconazole, also popularly known as Diflucan and Nystatin. Nystatin is an older antifungal and is more often used for mouth fungus (thrush) or topical applications (such as fungal infections under the breasts or ringworm) than the newer treatments when it comes to treatment for vaginal yeast. These remedies work by killing off the offending yeast cells (which are fungal in nature). Side effects of oral antifungals can include upset stomach, abdominal pain, diarrhea, flatulence, headache, rash, and indigestion.

Natural Alternatives

Avoid sugar. As if we needed yet another reminder that sugar is bad for us! If you suffer from yeast infections, however, it is crucial to restrict your sugar intake. This is because yeast cells feed on sugar – therefore, limiting their food supply can help expedite recovery from yeast overgrowth. This includes avoiding not only foods such as cakes, cookies, muffins, and candy, but refined grains as well (white rice, white bread, etc.) This is because these foods are high in simple carbohydrates, which quickly become sugar in the body once digested—as far as those yeast cells are concerned, refined grains are as good as sugar.

Take probiotics. Probiotics are beneficial microorganisms which impart health benefits to the host that ingests them (i.e., you). Many are formulated to contain specific bacterial strains that help the body in the fight against candida overgrowth. Probiotics help crowd out unhealthy microorganisms, and help create a more acidic environment in the vagina, which curtails yeast growth. Side effects of probiotics are rare, tend to be mild and digestive (such as gas or bloating), and typically subside once the body has had a chance to adapt to the shift in microorganism balance.

Probiotic supplements are readily available in health food stores in capsule, powder, and liquid form—the best choice is the one that you are most likely to take on a regular basis (e.g., if you dislike taking pills, powder or liquid may be a better option for you). Dosing depends on the product, but many products involve taking a single dose once daily. Eating cultured yogurt, even the yummy frozen kind, can help maintain a healthy yeast/bacteria balance, too.

The above two recommendations go a long way toward maintaining healthy yeast levels on an ongoing basis. However, if you need more targeted support, there are many natural antifungals out there such as oregano oil, garlic, and caprylic acid (a fatty acid found in coconut oil). While consuming these in food form is helpful, if you have an active infection you may want to consider taking these in supplement form. Yeast-fighting formulations containing these ingredients are readily available in health food stores.

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10. Cancer Treatment Effects

Cancer is very serious and often the treatments are brutal on the body. While newer immuno and genetic therapies show promise of treating Cancer with fewer side effects, traditional and widely used Cancer treatments such as chemotherapy, radiation therapy, and surgery can leave patients fatigued, nauseated, unable to eat, and often managing high levels of pain. Many of these effects can persist long after treatment ends, and multiple symptoms often require multiple approaches for relief.

Conventional Approach

Doctors currently treat chemotherapy- and radiation-related fatigue by addressing its comorbid issues, which are most commonly anemia, pain, depression. Additional iron in the diet often alleviates anemia, although prescription medications are sometimes prescribed. Acetaminophen or ibuprofen alone can be helpful for mild to moderate pain, but opioid painkillers are sometimes prescribed to alleviate breakthrough pain.

Chemotherapy-induced nerve pain is often treated with steroids and certain anti-seizure medications, and antidepressants are often used to treat both depression and many types of low-level pain.

Natural Alternatives

Supplements

Ginseng, an herbal supplement, and L-carnitine, an anti-inflammatory supplement naturally found in liver and muscle meat, have both been shown to reduce fatigue in cancer patients.

Cannabinoids, compounds derived from the Cannabis sativa plant, are becoming more widely accepted as treatments for both pain and nausea. Studies have actually found some cannabinoids' antiemetic properties to be superior to commercially available anti-nausea medications.

Acupuncture

Acupuncture is a technique that stems from ancient Chinese medicine. It involves placing fine needles in the skin along various nerve pathways, which are believed to influence pain and other important neurological functions. While many believe patient expectation plays a significant role in reported pain relief, studies consistently show acupuncture as being an effective treatment against chronic pain. However, doctors warn that those undergoing chemotherapy are at increased risk for infection and should consider other forms of treatment first.

Hypnosis

Hypnosis is a relaxation technique that makes people more receptive to suggestion, often performed by a licensed therapist or psychologist. It can retrain the brain to respond differently to pain and other forms of discomfort. Patients learn how to redirect their perceptions through altered states of consciousness, which they can then apply as needed to reduce pain perception, calm the body, and ease depression.

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11. Chronic Fatigue Syndrome

Chronic fatigue syndrome (CFS) presents as fatigue that worsens with exercise and does not improve with rest. Other symptoms include headaches, swollen lymph nodes in the neck or armpits, sore throat, difficulty concentrating, painful joints and muscles, and disordered sleep. The cause is still unknown. CFS can look like a number of other illnesses, and because there are no specific tests for it, diagnosis must be made through the exclusion.

Since it can persist for months or even years, CFS can have a devastating impact on social activities and work performance, which can lead to isolation and depression. CFS reportedly affects a significantly higher number of women to men. However, men also might be less likely to seek medical help, and therefore could be underrepresented.

Conventional Approach

Since the cause of CFS is unknown, treatment consists solely of symptom management. Non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) are recommended for mild to moderate pain. Some types of physical therapy have also proven helpful. Doctors often treat related depression and anxiety with antidepressants and anti-anxiety medications, and will sometimes prescribe sleep medications for persistent insomnia. Stimulants are sometimes used to treat severe cases.

Natural Alternatives

Acupuncture

Acupuncture is an ancient Chinese practice of placing fine needles along certain nerve routes. While the exact mechanism behind acupuncture's effectiveness is unknown, many people report reduced pain with acupuncture treatment. Doctors advise patients to seek out a licensed specialist to reduce the risk of infection.

Gentle Yoga

Yoga teaches deep breathing, muscle stretching, and relaxation techniques, all of which can

boost mood and reduce anxiety. While strenuous exercise is not recommended for CFS, gentle muscle-strengthening techniques can help ease some muscle pain.

Melatonin

Melatonin has shown to improve sleep quality in those with CFS, and studies have also indicated that can improve physical activity and concentration levels. The two are likely connected, suggesting sleep quality could be an important factor in CFS treatment.

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12. Common Cold

The common cold is an upper respiratory disease that is usually caused by the human rhinovirus. Symptoms can last anywhere from a week to 10 days, and usually include stuffy nose, sneezing, sore throat, cough, headache, low-grade fever, minor body aches, and general malaise. Most of the time, a cold is nothing to worry about (other than the misery it brings) and will run its course, although young children are at higher risk for more frequent and severe infections. An increasing fever, worsening of symptoms, wheezing, ear pain, and unusual drowsiness are all signs the infection might need medical attention.

Conventional Approach

Decongestants in the form of nasal sprays and cough syrups can help relieve upper-respiratory symptoms, although use longer than five days can result in rebound congestion. Decongestants are not typically recommended for children under 6 years old.

Over-the-counter pain relievers like acetaminophen can help relieve headache and fever. While adults may opt for aspirin, never give a child with flu-like symptoms or chicken pox aspirin, as it can cause a rare but potentially deadly condition called Reye's syndrome.

Natural Alternatives

Zinc

If taken within the first 24 hours of symptom onset, zinc may help to reduce a cold's length and severity. Studies on its effectiveness have been mixed, but side effects can include nausea and a bad taste in the mouth. Zinc taken via nasal sprays has been linked to a loss of smell, sometimes permanent.

Echinacea

Like zinc, studies on Echinacea's usefulness vary, although most will agree the supplement can reduce cold length by at least half a day. Part of the reason for the disagreement might be that

different extracts can come from different parts of the plant. Also, there are multiple species, which may also vary in effectiveness. Those with healthy immune systems generally tolerate Echinacea well, although it isn't recommended for those with autoimmune diseases.

Vitamin C

While not much evidence exists that Vitamin C can prevent colds, studies have shown it can reduce illness length if taken before the first symptoms emerge. Those who are at increased risk for catching colds may benefit from daily Vitamin C supplementation.

References:

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13. Constipation

Most people prefer not to think about it, but as the saying goes: “Everybody poops.” But the truth is, not everyone poops every day. And not everyone poops easily. While “ideal” bowel movement frequency is somewhat individual, generally speaking, having at least one bowel movement per day—that passes completely and comfortably, without straining, excessive effort, or pain—is a good goal.

Common causes of constipation include lack of fiber in the diet, not drinking enough water, lack of physical activity, and stress—when we are chronically stressed, our bodies “de-prioritize” digestion, and this can cause a reduction in the muscle contractions that move food and waste through (and out of) the digestive tract. Certain medications (check with your doctor) and food allergies (e.g., dairy or gluten) can also contribute to the problem. While not a disease in and of itself, chronic constipation is a serious problem that should not be ignored—being constipated is a bit like putting the trash out to the curb but no one comes to take it away. Over time, this becomes a serious health hazard.

Conventional Approach

Simply increasing both water and fiber intake (preferably in the form of vegetables and fruit) can resolve many mild or temporary cases of constipation. Breaking the habit of eating on the run (e.g., in the car while fighting traffic on your morning commute) or simply when in a hurry is also advisable.

Common over-the-counter remedies for constipation come in a variety of forms, including bulk-forming, lubricant, and stimulant. Bulk-forming laxatives are typically fiber in supplement form, such as Metamucil or Citrucel. Fiber works by increasing the water content of the stool. This helps move stool through the digestive tract more quickly.

Lubricant laxatives make the stool more slippery, and add a slick layer to the intestinal walls—this type of laxative can be helpful if one is prone to hard, dry, difficult to pass stools. Typically, this type of laxative contains mineral oil, and should not be used in the long-term, as mineral oil

may reduce the availability of important fat-soluble nutrients (such as vitamin A, D, E and K) in the body. MiraLAX, also known as polyethylene glycol, draws water into the intestines to make it easier to “go.” For some people, cramping and other side effects can become a problem. Stimulant laxatives, as the name implies, help stimulate the muscle contractions that help propel waste through the colon. This type of laxative is typically quite effective, especially in acute cases of constipation, but should also not be used long-term. Chronic use of stimulant laxatives (such as Ex-Lax, Dulcolax) can cause dependency, to the point where the colon gets “lazy” and loses its natural ability to move waste on and out. Stimulant laxatives can also cause abdominal cramping.

Natural Alternatives

Magnesium can be used as a laxative. There are several types of magnesium available, and the isotope magnesium citrate seems to be best for constipation. In fact, it may be just as effective as commercial laxatives.

Coffee stimulates the colon. In fact, it is far more effective with the caffeine than without it. A diet rich in fiber-laden fruits and veggies with plenty of water can help prevent constipation and keep you going. Berries and green, leafy vegetables are among your healthiest options.

Castor oil, your grandmother’s answer for everything, is truly a laxative and will help you go more easily.

Aloe Vera, the wonder plant, strikes again. Find a preparation at the local health food store that contains the Aloe latex, which is the gel from the plant, as this is the part of the plant that can help you produce more regular and softer poop.

Prevention is better than needing a cure, and eating a few dried prunes every day or drinking a glass of prune juice is a good way to maintain a healthy digestive system. Sesame seeds are often sprinkled on bread before baking, and they are a tasty addition to salads or other foods. The seeds add roughage and aid digestion to make elimination easier, but consumption should be limited to 1/2 ounce per day.

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A close-up photograph showing two hands gently touching a person's scalp. The hair is dark and slightly messy. The skin on the scalp appears to have some flaking or redness, which is the focus of the article. The hands are positioned to feel the scalp, possibly checking for dandruff or irritation.

14. Dandruff

A flaky scalp typically isn't cause for alarm, but it can certainly generate some discomfort and social anxiety. Dandruff is essentially just the shedding of dead skin cells from the scalp—which is what happens to everyone's scalp—it's just that in the case of dandruff the person is experiencing enough shedding for it to be visible, which may also involve redness and itching/irritation.

While dandruff can't be "cured," in most cases it can be managed with specialized shampoos. In some cases, dandruff may be simply a case of dry skin; for instance, it tends to occur more frequently in winter. In other cases, the person may not be shampooing their hair frequently enough (which promotes oil build-up), or may have a sensitivity or allergy to their favorite shampoo or other hair care product. Occasionally, bacterial or fungal overgrowth may be involved. You may be at higher risk for dandruff if you are male (supporting the theory that male hormones play a role), are between the teen and middle age years, are prone to oily hair, or if you are not eating a healthy, nutrient-dense diet—in particular, diets low in the mineral zinc, B vitamins, and healthy fats (such as those derived from fatty fish) can potentially increase your risk of dandruff and dry skin.

Conventional Approach

Several types of over-the-counter dandruff shampoos are available. Zinc pyrithione shampoo (the active ingredient in Head & Shoulders) has antibacterial and antifungal properties. Other shampoos containing either coal tar (such as Neutrogena T/gel) or selenium sulfide (such as Selsun Blue) work by slowing the rate at which skin cells on the scalp die and flake off. Still others contain salicylic acid. Ketoconazole is a potent broad-spectrum antifungal agent that is available both over-the-counter and by prescription. All of these shampoos are quite potent, and the scents can be off-putting. As most of these are designed to strip the scalp of oil, they also strip the hair itself of its natural oils, often leaving hair too far on the other end of the spectrum (i.e., overly dry).

Natural Alternatives

If you want to eliminate those flakes without having to endure the harshness of those shampoos, consider one of the following:

Vinegar

Apple cider vinegar helps restore the pH balance of the scalp and inhibits the growth of yeast. It also cleans the hair follicles and helps unclog pores. Try a mix of 2 tablespoons of apple cider vinegar, 2 tablespoons of water and 15 drops of tea-tree oil (tea-tree oil is an essential oil renowned for its skin-healing, antibacterial, and antifungal properties). Apply directly to the scalp, massage and rinse. Do this natural treatment twice a week.

If you are more partial to white vinegar, this type can help as well. White vinegar consists of acetic acid that also helps reduce fungal growth and relieves itching. Add one-half cup of white vinegar to 2 cups of water. After shampooing, rinse your hair with this mixture. Wait 10 minutes and shampoo again.

Lemon Juice and Yogurt

Like vinegar, lemon juice contains acids that fight fungi and help relieve itching on the scalp. Mix the juice of a lemon with one-quarter cup of plain yogurt (make sure there is no added sugar)—good quality yogurt contains healthy microorganisms (probiotics) that help vanquish undesirable bacteria and fungi. Apply the mixture to the scalp, leave on for 20 minutes and then shampoo your hair. If you want something simpler, another method is to mix 3 teaspoons of lemon juice with a little water and leave on for about 5 minutes. Rinse and shampoo.

Olive Oil

With regular use, extra-virgin olive oil can help resolve a dry scalp. Warm it up a bit, massage into your scalp and wrap your hair in a warm towel. Leave on for 45 minutes and shampoo your hair afterward. Use this remedy several times a week. If you don't already consume it regularly, consider adding more extra-virgin olive oil to your diet as well.

Dryness is not just an external problem—consuming healthy fats such as olive oil and extra-virgin coconut oil (which also has powerful antibacterial and antifungal properties) can help “moisturize” from the inside out.

You won't be flake-free overnight, but over time, you will find these natural treatments very effective without subjecting yourself to dangerous, unnatural, stinky chemicals.

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15. Depression

Depression affects an estimated 350 million people globally. Symptoms can include difficulty concentrating, fatigue, feelings of hopelessness, irritability, loss of interest in activities previously enjoyed, physical pain, and of course persistent feelings of sadness.

Everyone feels low at times, and we all experience feelings of sadness in the face of upsetting or difficult life events. True depression, however, occurs when these feelings become persistent and overwhelming, last for long periods of time, and interfere with every domain of one's life (work, school, family, relationships, etc.). Despite its prevalence, depression is still often stigmatized, and viewed as a condition that must be kept "secret."

While the causes of depression are still not fully understood, contributing factors include biological differences: people with depression appear to have physical changes in their brains that others do not; neurotransmitter function in the brain; hormonal fluctuations and/or triggers, such as postpartum depression; and genetic predisposition. It is important to consult your healthcare provider if you suspect you may be suffering from depression.

Conventional Approach

Treatment for major depression typically involves prescription antidepressant medication, psychological counseling, or both. Individual or group therapy is often indicated in combination with medication. A class of antidepressants called SSRIs (e.g., Prozac, Zoloft) is commonly prescribed for depression. "SSRI" stands for Selective Serotonin Reuptake Inhibitor. Serotonin is a chemical (neurotransmitter) in the brain associated with positive mood. In simple terms, SSRIs help make serotonin more readily available in the brain. Unfortunately, antidepressants have a variety of side effects, including weight gain, night sweats, nervousness, insomnia, and sexual side effects, and may also cause an increase in suicidal thoughts in certain individuals.

Natural Alternatives

St. John's Wort is a popular natural alternative to prescription antidepressants. St. John's Wort

is a perennial herb that grows wild around the globe, and has been used for thousands of years as a remedy for anxiety and insomnia (both of which often go hand in hand with depression). It has been found to be more effective than a placebo in a wide range of clinical research, and is associated with significantly lower rates of side effects compared to its pharmaceutical counterparts. This herb may also play a role in the regulation of genes that exert control over the physiological response to stress.

St. John's Wort can potentially interact with other prescription medications (especially prescription antidepressants) as well as other herbal supplements, so tell your healthcare provider about everything else you are taking before trying St. John's Wort. It is generally not indicated for children or pregnant women.

Meditation

The methods used when practicing meditation often provide relief and relaxation for patients experiencing modest symptoms of depression. Meditation may produce consistent results and can be mastered fairly quickly. There are various forms of meditation, each with its specific benefits. The practice has been known for creating positive physiological effects due to its relationship between body and mind.

Acupuncture

Typical symptoms of depression often include mood swings, chronic fatigue and lack of interest in life. It is frequently accompanied by pessimistic thoughts. The practice of acupuncture is based on a belief that the positive flow of energy throughout the body ensures good health. Depression, stress and anger or other conditions disrupt that flow. Acupuncture restores and stimulates the animation of vitality and releases the endorphins resulting in significant relief.

Chamomile Tea

Chamomile tea relaxes the blood vessels and releases tension. It has been successfully used for treatment of depression as it soothes and calms the system stressed by the illness. This antidepressive herb may provide relief when used in combination with other natural remedies.

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Bowden, J. (2008). *Most effective natural cures on earth: The Surprising unbiased truth about what treatments work and why*. Beverly, MA. Fair Winds Press.

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<http://www.drugs.com/sfx/st-john-s-wort-side-effects.html>



16. Diabetes, Type 2 (TIID)

Keeping our blood sugar levels on an even keel is arguably one of the body's most important functions, and the hormone insulin is tasked with that responsibility 24/7. Insulin's job is to usher sugar out of the bloodstream and into our cells where it can be used for energy.

The persistently high blood sugar that occurs in people with Type II diabetes (TIID) is dangerous, and takes a major toll on the body. With TIID, blood sugar is chronically elevated, so the body keeps pumping out insulin to try to bring it back down. However, eventually the body's cells get tired of hearing insulin's message to keep taking in more sugar, and stop responding. This is referred to as insulin resistance, and is a hallmark of TIID.

Controlling TIID is about managing insulin and blood sugar (blood glucose) levels, and these factors are profoundly affected by dietary practices. That is, consuming too much of the wrong types of foods (including, you guessed it, all forms of sugar, and simple carbohydrates, such as refined white flour, white rice, pastries, etc.) is a major contributing factor to TIID. Symptoms of TIID include increased thirst, hunger and urination, fatigue, irritability, and weight gain. Health conditions associated with TIID include cardiovascular disease, high blood pressure, kidney disease, and nerve damage.

Conventional Approach

Many cases of TIID can be managed with dietary and lifestyle practices: limiting intake of sugar and refined grains, eating sufficient protein and healthy fat with all meals and snacks, getting regular exercise, and getting sufficient good-quality sleep.

When these factors alone do not resolve things sufficiently (or if the person is unwilling to adhere to these recommendations) a class of medication called oral hypoglycemic agents can be used to treat TIID. Some of these increase insulin production (Glipizide/Glucotrol); others increase the cells' use of glucose (Avandia), and others like Metformin improve the sensitivity of the body's cells to insulin so that your body uses insulin more effectively. Metformin also lowers glucose production in the liver. Unfortunately, these medications tend to lose their effective-

ness over time, and tend to have side effects, such as nausea, diarrhea, weight gain, and in more rare cases, increased risk of heart failure and fractures.

Natural Alternatives

Cinnamon

If the thought of those side effects makes your blood (sugar) boil, head to your spice rack and grab the cinnamon. Valued since 2000 BC, cinnamon turns out to be an excellent blood sugar manager. It contains a water-soluble flavonoid called methylhydroxychalcone polymer (MHCP), and this extract appears to closely mimic insulin activity in the body. Specifically, this compound in cinnamon encourages cells to become more sensitive to insulin. In fact, insulin and cinnamon work together synergistically; they are more effective together than when either one is used on its own.

Daily ingestion of 1 to 3 grams of cinnamon has been shown to reduce not only serum glucose, but also triglycerides and LDL cholesterol. Try adding more cinnamon to your foods—oatmeal, yogurt, hot beverages, add it to spice rubs, etc. If you don't care for the taste, capsules are also available. Consider taking 500 mg, twice daily of the encapsulated form. Cinnamon is generally safe when used in amounts commonly found in foods and when taken by mouth in medicinal doses.

Aloe and Herbs

While cinnamon is very popular, there are other natural support strategies, too. Aloe vera can have an impact on blood sugar levels, and has many digestive benefits as well. Bilberry extract supports blood vessel health, which can be important for those suffering with diabetes and its cardiovascular effects. Ginger, known for many health benefits, also may help with managing blood sugar naturally.

Other herbs that show real evidence in lowering blood sugar include Bitter Melon (not for use when pregnant), Fenugreek seeds, Gymnema and American ginseng (not for use if you have cancer).

If you are taking other medications for diabetes or blood sugar control, consult with your health-care provider before using herbs in conjunction with other blood sugar-lowering medications. Remember, herbs have very powerful medicinal uses, so they aren't just something that "can't hurt to try." Some combinations can cause blood sugar to drop to dangerously low levels or can interact with prescription medications.

A Healthy Heart

Because of the strong link between TIID and heart disease, using Coenzyme Q10 (CoQ10), Niacin, and Omega-3 fatty acids to control high blood pressure and cholesterol can be essential. Additionally, the antioxidants Beta-carotene, Vitamin C (1000 mg per day) and Vitamin E (800 IU per day) may also be helpful.

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17. Diarrhea

Diarrhea is characterized by loose, watery stool. It can come with cramps, often with frequent bowel movements, and in much greater amounts than usual. Acute diarrhea, usually caused by an infection, can last between 2 days and 2 weeks. Diarrhea can also be caused by antibiotic use, food poisoning, food intolerance, some medicines, stomach surgery, autoimmune diseases, IBS, and travel.

Chronic diarrhea, which lasts longer than four weeks, can be a sign of a more serious infection and should be addressed by a doctor. Diarrhea that comes with a fever over 102 F, bloody or black stools, or dehydration should also be evaluated.

Conventional Approach

If the diarrhea is being caused by an infection, it might require antibiotic treatment. Over-the-counter remedies like Pepto Bismol can be helpful in most cases, although they can worsen some types of infections. If the cause is inflammatory or autoimmune, your doctor will want to treat the illness behind the cause.

Natural Alternatives

Probiotics

Probiotics provide the gut with the healthy bacteria it needs to function at its best. Those found in yogurt and other cultured or fermented foods can be added to the diet, and supplements are also available in capsule form. Brands and strains can vary in quality, so always compare labels for the broadest and most effective dosing.

BRAT Diet

Some foods are more helpful than others in reducing diarrhea symptoms. The BRAT diet (bananas, rice, applesauce, toast) is low-fiber, easy to digest, and binding, all of which can reduce symptom severity. Other easy-to-digest foods are oatmeal, boiled or baked potatoes, baked

chicken, and chicken soup.

Coconut Water

Coconut water contains the electrolytes and hydration found in sports drinks, but with a portion of the sugar. Replacing lost fluids is essential to avoiding dehydration and enabling faster recovery.

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18. Dizziness and Vertigo

Dizziness is the sensation of feeling off balance or lightheaded, while vertigo describes the feeling of tilting back and forth or being in a spinning room. Symptoms can become worse with movements such as standing up or walking, or in some cases, even a turn of the head. Severity can be bad enough to force a person to sit or lie down, and nausea often coincides. Episodes can last from seconds to hours.

Dizziness and vertigo can result from a number of different conditions. Issues with the inner ear, motion sickness, and medication side effects are common causes. Infection, Meniere's disease, migraine headaches, neurological conditions, dehydration, drops in blood pressure, and anxiety disorders can also cause bouts of dizziness and vertigo.

Conventional Approach

Treatment for dizziness and vertigo depends on the cause. Common medications prescribed are water pills, which help reduce fluid in the ears, antihistamines, anti-nausea medications, anti-anxiety medications, and medications for migraine headaches.

Physical therapy can include canalith repositioning, which involves moving the head in therapeutic ways, balance therapy, which is beneficial to those with inner ear problems, and psychotherapy for dizziness caused by anxiety disorders. In severe cases, surgery may be performed to remove the part of the inner ear that's sending faulty signals.

Natural Alternatives

Herbal Supplements

Turmeric, cayenne, ginkgo biloba, and ginger are all believed to relieve vertigo symptoms. While cooking with fresh herbs is a great way to add them into a daily regimen, they can also be taken in capsule form.

Hydrogen Peroxide

Vertigo caused by wax buildup can be remedied by removing the wax. Use of cotton swabs inside the ear isn't recommended, but hydrogen peroxide is a safe alternative. Lie on your side and drip the solution into the affected ear. Allow it to sit for 5-10 minutes, or until the bubbling slows. Drain the ear well.

Alcohol Swabs

Nausea that comes along with vertigo can be just as debilitating. Many people believe the scent of alcohol is helpful for nausea. Some theorize the areas of the brain responsible for both breathing and nausea can affect one another, as their nerve centers are close to one another. Others feel that the deep breaths required to smell the alcohol cause a crossover in wiring that has a direct impact on nausea. Many report relief in as little as five minutes.

References and Links:

www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/dizziness/basics/symptoms/con-20023004

<https://www.vertigotreatment.org/post/home-remedies-for-vertigo>



19. Dry Mouth

Dry mouth, also known as xerostomia, is the result of insufficient saliva in the mouth. A vast number of medications cause dry mouth, as can certain cancer treatments and medical conditions that affect the salivary glands. Smoking or chewing tobacco and use of some recreational drugs, most notably methamphetamines and marijuana, can cause severe symptoms. Dry mouth can also come as a part of ageing.

Saliva protects gums and teeth, lubricates the mouth and throat, and provides some digestive enzymes. Dry mouth can result in bad breath, gum disease, sore throat, difficulty eating or swallowing, decreased pleasure in eating, mouth sores, yeast infections, and changes in sense of taste.

Conventional Approach

Oral rinses containing xylitol, a naturally-occurring sugar alcohol that has antibiotic properties, can relieve symptoms and help prevent tooth decay. Biotene and Act for Dry Mouth both contain xylitol. Fluoride treatments are sometimes used by a dentist to protect enamel. In severe cases, prescription medications such as pilocarpine (Salagen) and cevimeline (Evoxac) are used to increase saliva production.

If dry mouth is the result of a medication side effect, alternative treatments might be considered.

Natural Alternatives

Spicy Foods

The body naturally responds to spicy foods with saliva in an attempt to dilute the mouth and alleviate perceived capsaicin burn. Eating spicy foods like hot peppers can stimulate the saliva glands and improve issues associated with taste dysfunction.

Citrus Fruits

Foods high in citric acid can help reduce disease-causing bacteria in the mouth and stimulate saliva production. Lemons and limes contain the highest amounts of citric acid, but all citrus fruits contain it.

Aloe Vera

Aloe vera has long been a trusted remedy for cuts and burns, but it also can be used to combat dry mouth. It contains antioxidants and other compounds that can lubricate the mouth, increase saliva production, and improve sense of taste. A proven antimicrobial, aloe vera can also help protect against gum disease.

References and Links:

<https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/dry-mouth/symptoms-causes/syc-20356048>

<https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/dry-mouth/diagnosis-treatment/drc-20356052>

<https://www.organicfacts.net/dry-mouth.html>

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3395293/>

https://www.sciencedaily.com/terms/citric_acid.htm

<https://www.webmd.com/vitamins-supplements/ingredientmono-996-xylitol.aspx?activeingredientid=996>



20. Earache

Earache is usually caused by an infection in the middle ear. The pain is caused by fluid accumulation and related inflammation, which creates pressure behind the eardrum. Children are more susceptible to infection, and can sometimes require antibiotic treatment.

Inflammation or serious infections of the ear, left untreated, can lead to torn eardrum, hearing loss, systemic infection—which can rarely include meningitis—and hearing-related developmental issues in children.

Other, less serious causes of earache are sinus infections, ear wax buildup, teeth grinding, and trauma.

Conventional Approach

Since most earaches are self resolving, doctors recommend holding off on treatment until it's deemed medically necessary. When an earache is accompanied by a fever, appetite loss, or lethargy, antibiotics are usually prescribed.

Over-the-counter pain medications like acetaminophen can help relieve pain, inflammation, and fever. Never give aspirin to a child or teenager infected with chickenpox or exhibiting flu-like symptoms, as it can cause a potentially life-threatening condition called Reye's syndrome. Warm compresses can also ease ear pain.

Natural Alternatives

Massage

Massaging the area of the neck directly below the ear can prompt the Eustachian tubes, which are often blocked during infection, to drain.

Irrigation

If ear pain is being caused by excess wax pressing against the eardrum, Gentle irrigation with

saline, hydrogen peroxide, coconut oil, or olive oil can soften wax and flush it out. Do not irrigate an ear with a perforated or ruptured eardrum, or in ears with implanted tubes. Consult a doctor before irrigating if the person has diabetes or a weakened immune system.

Natural Antibiotics

Garlic and onion both contain properties that can fight infection and relieve pain. Tinctures made by heating garlic in oil—a clove to a tablespoon—or the juice runoff from a heated onion to irrigation solutions. Always make sure tinctures are cooled before use.

References and Links:

<https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/ear-infections/symptoms.causes/syc-20351616>

<https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/ear-infections/diagnosis-treatment/drc-20351622>

<https://articles.mercola.com/sites/articles/archive/2016/09/21/earache-home-remedies.aspx>

A woman with long brown hair is shown from the chest up, wearing a blue spaghetti-strap top. A red, glowing, heart-shaped area is visible on her upper chest, and her right hand is placed over it. The background is a plain, light gray.

21. Eye Health/Macular Degeneration

Risk of blindness is a genuine concern for many individuals. The leading cause of blindness in those under age 60 is complications of long-term diabetes, and the leading cause of blindness in those over age 60 is progressive visual loss due to macular degeneration (MD). The macula is the portion of the retina responsible for vision acuity, or sharpness.

There are two types of age-related macular degeneration (ARMD): “dry” (involving changes in retinal cells) and “wet” (involving growth of abnormal blood vessels); the former is much more common. In either case, vision becomes increasingly blurry, and color vision is also impacted. Straight objects may appear distorted or bent, there may be a dark spot near the center of the field of vision, or parts of words may be missing while reading.

The precise causes of MD are not fully understood, but it is believed that they are related to insufficient disposal of waste from cells, and/or free radical damage (free radicals are basically unstable, highly reactive molecules that cause cellular damage in the body). Thus, it is no surprise that risk factors for MD include things such as smoking, poor diet, obesity, and high blood pressure.

Conventional Approach

While there is currently no known cure, there are a variety of methods for dealing with MD.

An implantable miniature telescope involves, as the name suggests, implanting a tiny device that magnifies images onto the retina and reduces the relative size of the central blind spot associated with MD, improving central vision.

Lucentis is a colorectal cancer treatment drug that treats advanced cases of “wet” MD. It works by inhibiting proteins that stimulate the growth of new, abnormal blood vessels in the body.

Macugen and Eylea are treatments that also attempt to inhibit the proteins associated with undesirable blood vessel growth, and involve injections of a therapeutic molecule into the eye to

attack said proteins. Injections are performed on an ongoing basis.

Laser therapy is used to destroy actively growing abnormal blood vessels.

With photodynamic laser therapy, a light-sensitive drug is injected into the bloodstream and absorbed by the abnormal blood vessels in the eye. A cold laser is shined into the eye to activate the drug, damaging the abnormal blood vessels.

Natural Alternatives

If the thought of all those injections and lasers doesn't thrill you, there are steps you can take to support overall eye health and help prevent and slow the progression of MD.

Lutein and Zeaxanthin

Load up on your dietary antioxidants! Antioxidants are compounds found in plants and are responsible for plants' vibrant colors—they are also a big part of why eating lots of fruits and vegetables is so good for our health. This is because antioxidants help protect the cells in our body from damage due to things like inflammation, over-exertion, chronic stress, and even just the natural by-products of cellular metabolism. Two antioxidants that are especially supportive of eye health are lutein and zeaxanthin. Zeaxanthin and lutein belong to a category of antioxidants called carotenoids, and are superheroes for our eyes. They help filter and absorb harmful blue light, which interferes with the sleep-wake cycle, causing harmful inflammation and cellular damage in the eyes. Blue light is a serious concern for the modern world, as we are constantly exposed to it. Blue light is emitted by LED lights and virtually every electronic screen you can think of: smartphones, computers, tablets, televisions, etc.

Loading up on your green and yellow vegetables is a great way to boost your lutein and zeaxanthin levels. Good fruit and vegetable sources of zeaxanthin and lutein (which occur together as a "package" in nature) include kale, spinach, Swiss chard, collard greens, kiwi fruit, grapes, zucchini, bell peppers, saffron, papaya, spirulina, broccoli, and cabbage. If you are not a fan of these foods, you can also take lutein as a supplement. Consider taking 10 mg per day for prevention of macular degeneration, or 20 to 40 mg if you already have it. (Note: most products on the shelves will also list the zeaxanthin content).

References and Links:

Bowden, J. (2008). *Most effective natural cures on earth: The Surprising unbiased truth about what treatments work and why*. Beverly, MA. Fair Winds Press.

Murray, M. T., & Pizzorno, J. (2012). *The Encyclopedia of Natural Medicine, Third Edition*. New York, NY. Simon & Schuster, Inc.

Richer S, Stiles W, Statkute L, Pulido J, Frankowski J, Rudy D, Pei K, Tsipursky M, Nyland J. (2004). Double-masked, placebo-controlled, randomized trial of lutein and antioxidant supplementation in the intervention of atrophic age-related macular degeneration: the Veterans LAST study (Lutein Antioxidant Supplementation Trial). *Optometry*, 75(4), 216-30.

<https://www.macular.org/lutein>

<http://www.aoa.org/patients-and-public/caring-for-your-vision/diet-and-nutrition/lutein?sso=y>

<http://www.allaboutvision.com/conditions/amd-treatments.htm>

<http://www.webmd.com/eye-health/macular-degeneration/age-related-macular-degeneration-treatment>

A close-up photograph of a woman's face and neck. She has long, wavy brown hair and is looking down with a pained expression, holding her right hand to her neck. The background is dark and out of focus.

22. Fibromyalgia

Fibromyalgia is a disorder that causes widespread musculoskeletal pain and fatigue, which can be debilitating. Other issues frequently seen with fibromyalgia are sleep disorders, problems with memory and concentration, and mental health issues like depression and anxiety. Some people also experience irritable bowel syndrome (IBS), headaches, irritable bladder, and temporomandibular joint (TMJ) disorder.

While the cause is still under debate, some researchers believe the issue lies in the way certain neurotransmitters interact with the brain. For reasons still unknown, it is believed people with fibromyalgia have higher numbers of neurotransmitters associated with pain. This can result in hypersensitivity, even with minimal stimuli.

There exists some evidence that genetic factors are at play. Women are affected more often than men, for example, as are those already diagnosed with arthritis or lupus or have family members with fibromyalgia. Since there are no medical tests specifically for fibromyalgia, diagnosis must be made through exclusion of other health issues that can cause similar symptoms.

Conventional Approach

Over-the-counter pain relievers like acetaminophen can help, although some people are prescribed the painkiller tramadol. Narcotic painkillers are not beneficial, as they can lead to addiction and decreased pain tolerance. Some antidepressants, such as Cymbalta, have been shown to reduce fibromyalgia pain and ease fatigue. Some people are prescribed muscle relaxants for sleep. Certain anti-seizure medications, like Lyrica and Neurontin, have also proven helpful for some people, yet don't seem to help others.

Natural Alternatives

Yoga

Yoga combines stretches, exercise, and mindfulness, which can help alleviate fatigue and re-

duce stress. Even a small amount of exercise can lift energy levels and improve sleep quality. Use caution when exercising, as strenuous activity can sometimes exacerbate symptoms.

Antioxidants and Omega-3 Fatty Acids

Inflammation increases fibromyalgia pain, so a diet high in anti-inflammatory foods could help to reduce it. Omega-3 fatty acids, which are found in fatty fish like salmon, has excellent anti-inflammatory properties, as do vegetables high in antioxidants, such as green or black tea, cruciferous vegetables like broccoli, and bright, colorful vegetables.

Epsom Salt Baths

Warm baths with Epsom salt, or magnesium sulfate, can reduce muscle pain and relax the body. Some believe fibromyalgia could be caused by a magnesium deficiency. Since the body can absorb magnesium through the skin, Epsom salt baths can be a great way to raise magnesium levels in those who are deficient.

References and Links:

<https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/fibromyalgia/diagnosis-treatment/drc-20354785>

<https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/fibromyalgia/symptoms-causes-syc-20354780>

<http://www.lifehack.org/530934/8-home-remedies-relieve-fibromyalgia>



23. Flatulence

Flatulence occurs when air passes through the lower gastrointestinal tract. Most people experience mild flatulence, passing “gas” an average of 10-12 times a day. Sometimes people create excessive gas by swallowing air. This can be the result of chewing gum, sucking on candy, smoking, eating too quickly, or wearing poorly fitted dentures.

Excessive gas can also occur after a person has eaten vegetables containing fiber the stomach cannot digest. This “insoluble” fiber --- found in beans, onions, fructose, and cruciferous vegetables like broccoli and cabbage --- is instead broken down by bacteria in the small intestine, and those bacteria produce gas. People who are lactose intolerant or gluten sensitive are more likely to experience more flatulence. Painful or excessive flatulence can sometimes be symptoms of more serious medical issues, such as irritable bowel disorder (IBD), gastroenteritis, and Crohn’s disease.

Conventional Approach

Unwanted flatulence is often treated with over-the-counter medications like Gas-X and Maalox. In more severe cases, underlying medical issues might need to be addressed in order to treat symptoms. IBD and Crohn’s disease, for example, can both benefit from anti-inflammatory medications and dietary changes.

Natural Alternatives

Relaxation Techniques

Stress affects the gut, especially when underlying issues are involved. Some people have found yoga, meditation, or a regular exercise routine to reduce gastrointestinal distress.

Vitamin and Mineral Supplements

If flatulence is part of a bigger problem, such as poor absorption, a person can become deficient in some vitamins and minerals. People are most commonly deficient in Vitamin B-12, Vitamin D,

and Vitamin K. Minerals most often found deficient include calcium, iron, and magnesium.

Digestive Enzymes

Digestive enzymes are arguably one of the best remedies for flatulence. Digestive enzymes break down what the stomach can't, leaving less for intestinal bacteria to ferment and metabolize. The less food bacteria are left to ferment, the less gas they are able to produce. Different enzymes break down different types of foods. Most people find supplementing the enzyme alpha-galactosidase reduces normal intestinal gas. People with other gastrointestinal conditions that result in digestive issues might require additional digestive enzymes.

References and Links:

<https://www.drugs.com/condition/flatulence.html>

<https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/gas-and-gas-pains/diagnosis-treatment/drc-20372714>

<https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/gas-and-gas-pains/symptoms-causes/syc-20372709>

<https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/inflammatory-bowel-disease/diagnosis-treatment/drc-20353320>

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<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/flatulence/causes/>



24. GERD

We've all experienced at least a bit of heartburn at one time or another – that time we over-indulged during the holidays, or ate something we know we are sensitive to but just couldn't resist. For some, however, the symptoms far greater than simple heartburn are a daily burden, and many suffer from what is known as Gastroesophageal Reflux Disease, usually referred to as GERD ("gastro" refers to the stomach; esophageal refers to the esophagus, the tube that connects the throat and stomach).

In basic terms, GERD is when stomach contents head in the wrong direction and make their way back into the esophagus. The associated burning sensation, due to stomach acid coming in contact with the esophagus, can be downright excruciating. Unlike the stomach, the esophagus has no barrier of protection from harsh stomach acids. The primary symptom of GERD is burning chest pain that can spread to the neck and throat region—some have even likened it to the sensation of having a heart attack. It can also sometimes feel as though food is making its way back into the mouth, leaving an acid or bitter taste.

Conventional Approach

Conventional GERD treatment typically involves prescription drugs such as Nexium, Prevacid, and Prilosec. These drugs are called proton pump inhibitors, and they work by inhibiting an enzyme necessary for acid secretion. Unfortunately, people can become dependent on these medications, and they can also over-suppress stomach acid, such that the person taking the medication can no longer properly digest and absorb nutrients from food. Recently, they have even been linked to stomach cancer.

Natural Alternatives

One little known (and perhaps seemingly contradictory) natural remedy for GERD is orange peel extract, also known as d-limonene (the supplement form). As the name suggests, d-limonene is an oil extract derived from the peel of oranges (or other citrus fruits).

D-limonene works by helping stimulate esophageal peristalsis (peristalsis refers to the wave-like muscle contractions that propel food through the digestive tract—in the right direction!). This, in turn, helps move acid and liquids back into the stomach where they belong. A general recommendation is to take d-limonene in 1000 mg doses once a day every other day, for 20 days, then take as needed.

Do not take orange peel extract/d-limonene if you have ulcers, or if you are pregnant or nursing.

References and Links:

<https://www.nytimes.com/2017/10/31/well/live/heartburn-drugs-tied-to-stomach-cancer-risk.html>

<http://www.diagnose-me.com/treatment/orange-peel-extract.html>

<http://www.drweil.com/drw/u/QAA400477/What-Quenches-Heartburn.html>



25. Gout

Gout is a form of metabolic arthritis. It is the result of the body not being able to properly metabolize uric acid, which is created when the body breaks down chemicals called purines. Purines are natural substances found in every cell in the body, and in most foods. Foods with high levels of purines include liver, anchovies, mackerel, dried beans, peas, beer, and fructose (i.e., fruit sugar). Normally, uric acid dissolves in the blood and is excreted, but for those with gout, the excess uric acid turns into crystalline form, and collects in the big toe, other joints (ankles, elbows, knees), and in some cases, the kidneys. The pain of this collection of crystals can be excruciating. Other symptoms include swelling, redness, and joint stiffness. Although gout occurs more frequently in men, postmenopausal women are also at increased risk.

Conventional Approach

Gout is often treated with NSAIDs (non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs), such as ibuprofen (Advil, Motrin) or naproxen sodium (Aleve). While these medications may be effective in treating symptoms in the short-term, they do not address the causes of gout. They also come with the potential risk of stomach pain, bleeding, ulcers, and even cardiac health risks --- particularly if they are used continuously over a long period of time.

Another approach is a medication called Colchicine (e.g., Colcrys, Mitigare). Similar to NSAIDs, colchicine addresses the pain caused by gout, but does not address the causes. Potential side effects include nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea. Corticosteroids (such as Prednisone) may also be used, particularly if the person cannot use NSAIDs or colchicine. Side effects may include mood changes, increased blood sugar levels and elevated blood pressure. There are also medications that either block uric acid production (such as Alopurinol) or enhance uric acid removal from the body (such as Probenecid).

Natural Alternatives

Some good lifestyle approaches include limiting alcohol, soda and sugar-sweetened beverages. Additionally, a natural remedy for gout may be as close as your fruit bowl: cherries. Cher-

ries contain anti-inflammatory compounds called anthocyanins, which are responsible for both cherries' red pigments and relieving the pain of gout. Specifically, anthocyanins can help block inflammatory pathways in the body, and reduce blood levels of uric acid, which means fewer uric acid crystals—and thus less pain. Anthocyanins are also found in red and purple fruits such as raspberries and blueberries, but cherries—tart cherries in particular—contain higher levels. A recommended dose is to consume 10 to 20 cherries per day. Liquid preparations of tart cherry juice are also available at health food stores. Products vary, but generally speaking 1 tablespoon of tart cherry extract equals approximately 45 to 60 cherries. If you go the liquid extract route, follow the directions on the bottle. Pills and capsules are available as well.

Consuming large quantities of cherry juice can potentially cause diarrhea and/or stomach upset, so go slow if you opt for cherry juice over cherries in their whole form.

References and Links:

Bowden, J. (2008). *Most effective natural cures on earth: The Surprising unbiased truth about what treatments work and why*. Beverly, MA. Fair Winds Press.

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<http://doi.org/10.1002/art.34677>

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<http://www.webmd.com/arthritis/news/20101110/cherries-may-cut-risk-of-gout-flare-ups?page=2>

<http://www.arthritis.org/living-with-arthritis/arthritis-diet/best-foods-for-arthritis/cherries.php>



26. Hemorrhoids

Hemorrhoids. They're a delicate topic, but a ubiquitous problem. It is estimated that up to one-third of the people in the U.S. have hemorrhoids to some degree. Hemorrhoids refer to a swollen vein or group of veins in the region of the anus. Hemorrhoids are often caused by excessive straining during defecation, but can also be caused by pregnancy, and anything that increases intra-abdominal pressure such as vomiting, coughing, sneezing, and heavy lifting. Some individuals have a genetic predisposition toward weak veins.

There are two basic types of hemorrhoids: internal, and external. External hemorrhoids occur below the anorectal line (are visible outside the anal opening), and may or may not have blood clots (called a thrombotic hemorrhoid). External hemorrhoids can be extremely painful. Internal hemorrhoids occur above the anorectal line inside the anal canal. In some cases, internal ones can become enlarged such that they protrude outward.

Symptoms of hemorrhoids include itching/irritation in the anal region, and one may also see bright red bleeding on the surface of the stool, on the toilet paper, or in the toilet bowl (this bleeding is not necessarily painful). Hemorrhoids may resolve spontaneously, but often persist. If you know you have hemorrhoids and have severe pain and/or swelling, consult your health-care provider for guidance.

Conventional Approach

Most cases of hemorrhoids do not require surgery or other treatment unless they are very large and painful. For more persistent or troublesome cases, there are a variety of treatments. Rubber band ligation involves applying an elastic band to an internal hemorrhoid to cut off its blood supply and within a week the hemorrhoid simply falls off. Sclerotherapy involves injection of a scar-forming agent into the hemorrhoid, causing the vein walls to collapse and the hemorrhoid to shrivel.

Cautery is another option—this involves use of infrared radiation, laser, and cryosurgery. Hemorrhoids can also be removed surgically, but this is generally considered a procedure of last

resort, as there may be severe postoperative pain and it typically requires several weeks of recovery.

Topical medications such as Preparation H or RectiCare are often used externally for symptoms. They are designed to shrink swollen tissue and some contain a topical lidocaine to numb the area. However, they don't solve the underlying issues and are limited in their effects.

Natural Alternatives

If the above treatments don't sound fun, your best bet is to take measures to reduce the likelihood of hemorrhoids. If your hemorrhoids are a result of constipation, simply ensuring adequate intake of water and fiber (ideally from fresh fruits and vegetables) can go a long way toward resolving those times of stool-stubbornness. Interestingly, hemorrhoids are not common in cultures where a high-fiber, whole-foods diet is the norm.

Flavonoids (or bioflavonoids) are a class of phytonutrients known to be helpful in the prevention of hemorrhoids. These antioxidants can be found in foods such as citrus fruits, berries, and green and red vegetables (all the more reason to consume copious quantities of fruits and vegetables!). Flavonoids are believed to be especially helpful for hemorrhoids due to their ability to strengthen the walls of our veins. In addition, these flavonoids have anti-inflammatory properties, promoting overall blood vessel health. Citrus fruits (e.g., oranges, lemons, limes, grapefruit) in particular contain a wide variety of beneficial bioflavonoid compounds and may be especially good at supporting blood vessel integrity.

It may be easier to obtain adequate quantities of bioflavonoids by taking them in supplement form, as the recommended dose for hemorrhoid treatment is 3 to 6 grams (that's the equivalent of 3,000 to 6,000 mg) of bioflavonoids per day. At these levels, citrus bioflavonoids may not be suitable for individuals with kidney stones or anemia. Consuming large quantities of grapefruit may not be appropriate for individuals taking prescription medications; consult with your healthcare provider prior to doing so if you take any prescription drugs.

Witch Hazel is a natural astringent that can be used topically to ease symptoms. You can use pre-moistened pads as wipes, or apply with a soft cloth. This tends to shrink the tissue naturally, provides some pain relief and cooling to your more painful flare-ups.

References and Links:

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<http://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/hemorrhoids>

<http://www.whfoods.com/genpage.php?tname=nutrient&dbid=119>

<http://www.webmd.com/digestive-disorders/tc/hemorrhoids-treatment-overview>



27. Hiccups

Hiccups usually occur when a person has swallowed too much air, has eaten too much, has consumed too much alcohol, or has undergone some kind of physical or emotional stress. Hiccups usually only last a few minutes, but they can continue for hours. More severe cases can persist much longer. When hiccups last longer than two days, they can indicate other medical issues. Gastroesophageal reflux, external irritation of the eardrum, and masses in the neck and throat can trigger longer bouts of hiccups. Meningitis and encephalitis can interfere with the nerves that control the diaphragm, which can lead to hiccups that can last for months. Traumatic brain injuries, strokes, and other neurological issues like multiple sclerosis can also cause intractable hiccups.

Conventional Approach

In most cases, hiccups go away without treatment. Some swear by various methods to alleviate them, but no one approach seems to work universally. In more severe cases, doctors will prescribe major tranquilizers like chlorpromazine (Thorazine) or haloperidol (Haldol). Metoclopramide (Reglan), which is used to treat gastroparesis, and the muscle relaxer baclofen (Gablofen) are also sometimes prescribed. Hiccups caused by anesthesia or surgery are usually treated with ephedrine or ketamine. In extreme cases, injections or surgery on the nerves themselves may be necessary.

Natural Alternatives

Hypnosis

When hiccups persist and no physical cause can be found, some turn to hypnosis. Surprisingly, many people have found relief from persistent hiccups through hypnotic suggestion, which simply focuses on the hiccups naturally coming to an end.

Acupuncture

Several clinical studies have shown acupuncture to be effective in treating persistent hiccups in

people with numerous underlying causes. Acupuncture is relatively safe when performed by a licensed practitioner, but should be used with caution in those with impaired immune systems or blood clotting conditions.

Folk Remedies

When all else fails for hiccup relief, sometimes the simplest solutions work the best. Many people believe sipping or gargling cold water, holding their breath, or breathing into a bag to be quick and effective home remedies.

References and Links:

<https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/hiccups/diagnosis-treatment/drc-20352618>

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<https://rarediseases.org/rare-diseases/hiccups-chronic/>



28. High Blood Pressure

The term “blood pressure” refers to the pressure of the flow of blood against the inner walls of the blood vessels. In a blood pressure reading (e.g., 120/80), the top number, known as systolic blood pressure, refers to the amount of pressure exerted on the blood vessels when the heart contracts and pumps blood throughout the body; the bottom number, known as diastolic pressure refers to the amount of pressure exerted when the heart relaxes, between heartbeats.

While our blood pressure fluctuates dramatically over the course of a day, chronically elevated blood pressure, also referred to as hypertension, is generally characterized by a systolic reading consistently above 140, and/or diastolic reading consistently above 90. High blood pressure is associated with a host of negative cardiovascular outcomes, including heart attack, congestive heart failure, atherosclerosis (fatty deposits in the arteries that cause them to harden), and stroke.

Conventional Approach

Conventional treatment for high blood pressure often includes lifestyle recommendations, such as eating a healthy diet, minimizing salt intake, regular exercise, not smoking, and maintaining a healthy weight. When these lifestyle changes aren't enough, often prescription drugs are brought on board, such as diuretics, beta-blockers, and ACE inhibitors, which help the blood vessels relax. As with most medications, these drugs are not without potential side effects, including increased urination, erectile dysfunction in men, and leg cramps.

Natural Alternatives

Garlic

If you suffer from high blood pressure and do not want to take prescription medication for it, garlic can help. This odiferous but flavorful relative of the lily plant has been used as a treatment for many conditions ranging from athlete's foot and ringworm to stomach cancer and repelling ticks.

Most of garlic's beneficial effects can be attributed to one of its primary active constituents,

known as allicin. Allicin's beneficial effects on blood pressure may be due to its ability to help reduce inflammation in the body. It has also been shown to dilate blood vessels, which has the effect of lowering blood pressure.

Oral dosing typically involves taking 200 to 600 milligram supplements twice a day. Supplements are available in powdered or liquid gel capsules. If you are not a fan of taking pills and don't mind some potent garlic breath, try chopping up one clove of raw (not cooked) garlic and take with water once daily. Roasting or otherwise cooking garlic reduces the effectiveness of allicin and is therefore not as beneficial.

Nutraceuticals

There is evidence that a variety of nutrients and supplements can help lower blood pressure naturally. Omega 3 fatty acids, or adding fish to your diet twice a week, can help lower both high cholesterol and blood pressure. Magnesium and calcium both have an effect as well, and are especially useful in adult women to protect against bone loss. Along with Vitamin D, these all work not only individually, but also in concert with one another for a variety of health benefits - including your hypertension.

Some medications like diuretics can also lower another essential mineral, potassium. Potassium also works with the above mentioned calcium and magnesium as a electrolyte that helps keep the health and body healthy. You can overdose on potassium, so be sure you need it or try to get it through your diet - for example, bananas are high in natural potassium.

L-arginine, an amino acid, and Coenzyme Q10 both have the ability to help lower blood pressure as well. Keep in mind that they may interfere with some medications like blood thinners or erectile dysfunction medications, so use caution if you're on certain prescription medications.

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29. High Cholesterol

Cholesterol is a waxy, fat-like substance that is found in every cell in the body, and is essential to life. In fact, we need cholesterol in order to produce certain hormones (such as estrogen and testosterone), it is an integral part of cell membranes (including brain cells), and it helps transport important fat-soluble vitamins throughout the body. Thus, the problem is not so much cholesterol in and of itself, but when our levels become “too high.” Both genetics and lifestyle choices can play a role in cholesterol levels. Although, regarding the question of whether elevated cholesterol levels actually translate to increased risk of heart disease, conventional guidelines propose the following:

- * Total cholesterol scores are considered best at 200 mg/dL or below; borderline, from 200-239 mg/dL, and high, at 240 mg/dL or above.
- * HDL is considered most healthy at 60 mg/dL and above; good, between 40-50 for men and 50-59 mg/dL for women; and poor, below 40 mg/dL (men) and below 50 mg/dL (women).
- * LDL is considered healthy at 100-129 mg/dL; borderline, high at 130-159 mg/dL, and high, at 160 mg/dL or higher.
- * Triglyceride levels are best at 150 mg/dL or below; borderline, high at 150-199 mg/dL and high, at 200 mg/dL or above.

Conventional Approach

Conventional intervention typically involves the prescription of statin medication (Pravastatin, Lovastatin, Lipitor, etc.). These medications lower cholesterol by inhibiting an enzyme needed for the production of cholesterol in the body. Unfortunately, statin medications can cause a variety of negative side effects and health risks. Common side effects include nausea, diarrhea, and constipation. Less common but more serious side effects include liver damage, muscle pain (statin myopathy), muscle inflammation, and neurological problems, memory loss or cognitive impairment.

Natural Alternatives

Guggul is plant resin. The lipids it produces have been used extensively in Ayurvedic medicine in India. It has been shown to lower triglycerides effectively. It isn't without side effects, and can

cause allergic reactions in some people. Here in the U.S., it can be purchased in capsule form from many health food and natural supplement stores.

Red Yeast Rice contains a chemical that is similar to what you would find in a statin medication, and is a proven alternative to medications. The yeast in the rice may also help lower LDL as well, and is used extensively in Chinese medicine. It also may be purchased in supplement form. Krill oils and other omega oils can raise HDL, which in turn helps fight the “bad” LDL and triglycerides in some people, especially when the high cholesterol is diet related.

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30. IBS (Irritable Bowel Syndrome)

Irritable bowel syndrome, commonly referred to as IBS, is a disorder of the digestive tract. Symptoms vary from one individual to the next, but can include abdominal pain/cramping, mucus in the stool, bloating, diarrhea, constipation, or alternating episodes of both. Unfortunately there is no quick-fix for IBS, so it is generally viewed as a chronic condition requiring ongoing management. While diet, genetics, hormones, the nervous system or stress can be at the root of IBS, there are likely multiple causes - some of which remain unknown.

Conventional Approach

As stress can be a contributing factor, conventional treatment may include education on stress management techniques, such as yoga, meditation, and deep breathing. Additionally, anti-anxiety medication may be prescribed for those suffering from psychological distress.

Individuals might also benefit from an elimination diet. Removing any potentially offending foods such as dairy, grains, eggs, etc. for a period of time can help identify if it is a dietary or food allergy issue.

Prescription antispasmodics like dicyclomine/Bentyl, hycosamine/Levsin may help alleviate abdominal pain. Antidiarrheals such as loperamide/Immodium or laxatives ---depending on whether things are moving too quickly or too slowly - can help in the short-term.

Natural Alternatives

Research suggests that enteric-coated peppermint oil capsules have the ability to relax the gastrointestinal muscles in the small intestines, relieving abdominal pain. Additionally, peppermint oil may result in less abdominal distension/bloating, reduced stool frequency for those experiencing diarrhea, and reduced flatulence. It is imperative that only enteric-coated capsules are used. Peppermint oil is extremely potent, and can cause a burning sensation or acid reflux-like symptoms.

Probiotics that contain *Lactobacillus acidophilus* and *Bifidobacterium* may be helpful, as they help to restore the natural bacterial balance in your intestines.

Avoid artificial sweeteners, as these are a popular trigger, especially ones such as sorbitol. More water and physical activity may help, as well. Adding a little ginger to your diet, some extra fiber, and even melatonin may help some IBS symptoms.

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A microscopic view of various bacteria, including rod-shaped and spherical forms, set against a dark teal background. The bacteria are illuminated, showing their textures and structures.

31. Influenza

Influenza (the “flu”) is an infection caused by a number of viral strains. It attacks the upper respiratory tract, which includes the throat, nose, and lungs. Although symptoms - lung and nasal congestion, sore throat, fever, chills, body aches, headache, and fatigue - can feel severe, the infection usually isn’t dangerous in healthy adults. However, young children, the elderly, pregnant women, and those with compromised immune systems or certain preexisting conditions are at risk for potentially life-threatening complications such as pneumonia. Influenza is spread when droplets from coughs or sneezes allow the virus to become airborne, or when an infected person leaves traces on a surface such as a doorknob. The disease is spread when someone breathes in the airborne virus or touches a contaminated surface before touching the nose, eyes, or mouth. A person is usually contagious before symptoms even appear, and can remain so throughout the course of the illness. Some symptoms, such as cough and fatigue, can linger for weeks after the infection has been eliminated.

Conventional Approach

The most common form of treatment for the flu is prevention, by getting an immunization in late summer or early fall before the infectious season begins. Influenza usually doesn’t require any special treatment, and it typically resolves within 3-7 days. Doctors recommend bed rest, drinking plenty of clear fluids, and over-the-counter pain relievers like acetaminophen and ibuprofen for pain and fever.

For those at risk for more serious infection, doctors will prescribe antiviral medications like oseltamivir (Tamiflu) or zanamivir (Relenza). However, these treatments are only effective if administered within the first 48 hours and can have unpleasant side effects.

Natural Alternatives

Olive Leaf Extract

Olive leaf extract contains the antioxidant oleuropein, which has anti-inflammatory and antimicrobial properties.

icrobial properties. Olive leaf extract can be found in capsule form, or as a tea.

Ginger Root

Ginger root is an effective treatment against nausea and upset stomach. While influenza generally doesn't present with nausea and vomiting, ginger root can be a powerful tool when it does. In addition, consuming hot drinks like ginger tea can help with congestion.

Probiotics

The best way to combat influenza is by having a healthy immune system, and the majority of the immune system resides in the gut. Supplementing good gut flora with probiotics including Lactobacillus and Bifidobacterium strains boosts the immune system and helps the body combat infections.

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32. Insomnia

We all experience sleepless nights on occasion, but many people are persistently unable to get a good night's sleep, either because they cannot fall asleep, cannot stay asleep, or both. People who struggle with insomnia awaken feeling unrefreshed and have difficulty staying awake during the day. Ultimately, every aspect of their lives is adversely affected. For those with chronic insomnia, the consequences can be serious, such as traffic accidents, problems performing at work, and mood swings to name a few.

Lack of sleep has even been linked to metabolic problems such as obesity and dysregulation of blood sugar levels, and may increase a person's risk for things such as high blood pressure, heart disease and diabetes. Reliance on copious amounts of caffeine during the day to combat daytime drowsiness can, of course, perpetuate the cycle of poor quality sleep. In many cases of insomnia, the inability to get good quality sleep may be due to physiological mechanisms, such as chronic pain, sleep apnea, or even heartburn. However, psychological factors such as stress, anxiety, and depression are also common culprits.

Conventional Approach

While conventional medicine offers a number of sleeping aids, these medications may present their own serious side effects, including sluggishness, erratic behaviors, impaired motor function and risk of addiction. Common prescription sleep aids include Ambien, Lunesta, and Sonata. Although these medications are not indicated for long-term use, they may be habit-forming. Others rely on over-the-counter aids such as antihistamines, or even cold medicines that happen to cause drowsiness. However, while these preparations may help a person get to sleep, the person may still awake feeling groggy and unrested.

Natural Alternatives

There are many lifestyle factors that can help resolve bouts of insomnia. These include avoiding caffeine and alcohol (although alcohol is a nervous system depressant, ultimately it interferes with sleep quality), regularly engaging in relaxation techniques such as meditation and yoga,

not eating close to bedtime, and avoiding stimulating or stressful activities prior to bed. Another important factor in the modern age is limiting your “screen time” prior to bed --- as the emitting light interferes with our sleep-wake cycle. Humans are truly creatures of habit—it is also helpful to try to go to bed and get up at the same time every single day (even on weekends).

For a little extra support, tart cherries (the Montmorency variety in particular) may provide a natural alternative for those suffering from mild to moderate insomnia. Research suggests that drinking eight ounces of tart cherry juice twice a day can extend sleep for up to 90 minutes per night. This dramatic effect on sleep can be attributed to two main factors. First, cherries are a natural source of melatonin, which is a hormone secreted by our brains that helps regulate the sleep-wake cycle. Second, tart cherries contain a healthy amount of tryptophan, an amino acid which can help to induce drowsiness. The red pigments in tart cherries also contain an enzyme that can help to decrease the breakdown of tryptophan, giving it more opportunity to do its “drowsiness-inducing” thing. General recommendation: drink an 8-ounce glass of unsweetened cherry juice in the morning followed by another 8-ounce glass approximately two hours before bedtime.

There are a few other treatments that may help as well. Melatonin is a hormone that is produced by your brain to help with falling asleep, and is a widely used supplement to help with insomnia or occasional sleeplessness. 5-HTP (5-hydroxytryptophan) is an amino acid that may help you relax. There have been times where tryptophan supplements have been tainted and caused illness, and it can interact with other medications such as antidepressants. Some also find that chamomile, either as a supplement or as a tea, to be very relaxing and to induce sleep.

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33. Lyme Disease Support

Lyme disease is a spirochetal infection typically caused by *Borrelia burgdorferi*, *Borrelia mayonii*, *Borrelia afzelii* or *Borrelia garinii*. The bacteria are transmitted by infected black-legged (deer) ticks. The first sign of disease is usually erythema migrans, or a “bull’s eye” rash, which can develop anytime between 3-30 days after transmission. Although some people never experience a rash, others develop erythema migrans in multiple areas.

The disease presents in three stages. The first stage causes flu-like symptoms, and infection can be overlooked if erythema migrans was not observed. A few months after the initial infection, the second stage presents with joint pain and severe fatigue, sometimes with nausea and vomiting or additional erythema migrans rashes. Left untreated, the disease will progress to its third stage, which can lead to meningitis, neurological disease, or heart block.

Conventional Approach

The currently accepted treatment for Lyme disease is a 2-3 week course of antibiotics, usually doxycycline, amoxicillin, or cefuroxime. If the disease has progressed to the brain, stronger intravenous antibiotics may be required. Symptoms can linger for months, sometimes years, after treatment. There has been an ongoing debate over the efficacy of single-course antibiotics, especially in those who have developed late-stage disease. Some doctors believe the disease can become chronic, with prolonged courses of antibiotics necessary to prevent further disease progression. Others insist lingering symptoms are the result of “post-Lyme syndrome,” which is likely an autoimmune response that requires supportive therapy instead of additional antibiotic treatment. Regardless, Lyme is a serious infection that should be treated by a physician, although natural alternatives are great for support.

Natural Alternatives

Garlic

Garlic has excellent natural antibiotic properties, contains antioxidants and essential enzymes, and is a good source of several essential vitamins and minerals. The anecdotal evidence for its

disease-fighting abilities is vast. Garlic can be eaten raw, made into a tea, or taken in capsule form.

Turmeric

Turmeric contains antioxidants, and has natural anti-inflammatory and antibiotic properties. It has been used to help against a number of infections, including Lyme disease.

Cat's Claw

Cat's claw, or *Uncaria tomentosa*, has antimicrobial properties, can alleviate fatigue, and has anti-inflammatory properties that can help combat joint inflammation and pain.

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34. Ménière's

Ménière's disease is a disorder that causes bouts of vertigo, a sensation that the room is spinning, and tinnitus, the perception of high-pitched frequencies that are not triggered by outside stimuli. Other symptoms include a feeling of fullness in one ear and progressive hearing loss. Ménière's disease is believed to be caused by an imbalance of fluid in the inner ear. Some underlying causes are allergies, autoimmune disease, infection, head trauma, and migraine headaches. Some evidence suggests genetic predisposition may also play a role. Episodes can be sporadic, with several months sometimes passing in between symptoms. In some instances, the disorder self-resolves, although the majority of cases are chronic.

Conventional Approach

Benzodiazepines and certain antihistamines, such as meclizine, can be helpful for vertigo and nausea. Medications prescribed specifically for nausea can help with nausea and vomiting. Diuretics are sometimes used to reduce fluid retention, and patients are often told to restrict salt intake. In severe cases, surgery may be necessary. Procedures to remove obstructive tissue, place shunts, or sever the vestibular nerve can alleviate symptoms when all other treatments fail. Surgery on the vestibular nerve is often a last resort and only performed if hearing loss is already profound, as it renders the affected ear inoperable.

Natural Alternatives

Valerian Root

Valerian root, a natural sleep aid, has properties similar to benzodiazepines. Long-term use can lead to liver problems or withdrawals similar to those found in benzodiazepines, so valerian root should be used only for brief periods.

Tai Chi

While tai chi in itself cannot prevent Ménière's disease episodes, it can improve overall balance. Studies have shown tai chi to be beneficial in balance rehabilitation.

Dandelion Leaf

Dandelion leaf is a natural diuretic, with properties that are comparable to the medication furosemide (Lasix). It can be made into a tincture, drank as a tea, or eaten raw. While diuretics work well on the short term, long-term diuretic use can lead to other health issues. Diuretics should also be avoided by those with hypertension, kidney disease, and similar health conditions.

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35. Menopause

Sudden sensations of warmth spreading over the chest, face and neck. Red, blotchy skin. Rapid heartbeat. Profuse sweating. Chills. Dizziness. Fatigue. Insomnia and night sweats. Sounds a lot like someone suffering from the flu, but in fact, these describe the typical experience of menopause. For some, the bothersome episodes subside within a year, but for many, the symptoms persist for several years.

Conventional Approach

Historically, estrogen, or Hormone Replacement Therapy - usually combined estrogen and progestin - is prescribed to help with hot flashes and other menopausal symptoms.

In some cases, prescription antidepressants may be prescribed, as certain ones such as, Effexor, Prozac may help alleviate hot flashes—but in some cases, these medications can cause hot flashes/night sweats, and these medications come with their own laundry list of potential side effects like dizziness, weight gain, sexual side effects.

Natural Alternatives

Women who experience uncomfortable hot flashes who do not want to use HRT may benefit from a natural herbal remedy called black cohosh. Black cohosh is a native North American flowering plant, and is a viable alternative shown to relieve many of the symptoms of menopause, including hot flashes—in fact, it is the most widely used and studied herbal alternative to HRT.

Fortunately, black cohosh does not carry the same risk of adverse effects associated with estrogen use. In particular, unlike estrogen, it does not appear to increase endometrial thickness, which is associated with a higher rate of uterine cancer. While taking very large amounts of the herb can cause side effects, the incidence is very low compared with estrogen. Black cohosh may interact adversely with atorvastatin (Lipitor, a cholesterol-lowering drug) and shouldn't be used when pregnant or with certain medical conditions.

Pycnogenol is another natural substance from pine bark that can help with the symptoms, including vaginal dryness and fatigue. It is easily available in supplement form. If you have an autoimmune disease such as Lupus, check with your doctor as this could interfere with your medication.

Supplements or diets rich in soy may also help, but if you're on medication for hypothyroidism, it might be best to avoid additional soy in your diet. Red clover works with the same mechanism as soy, and so the same cautions would apply.

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36. Migraine

Those who suffer from migraines are well aware that they are much more than “just a headache.” The migraine experience varies from one person to the next, but common symptoms include intense, throbbing pain, and often intensified by going from sitting to standing. Nausea and vomiting, and sensitivity to light, sound, and smells are common. The pain can last anywhere from several hours to several days. Some also experience a migraine “aura,” typically presenting as visual disturbances, such as flashes of light or spots in the field of vision.

Conventional Approach

Many people use over-the-counter pain relievers to treat their migraines, including ibuprofen, aspirin, and acetaminophen. A combination of acetaminophen, aspirin, and caffeine, such as Excedrin, can be very effective in the acute treatment of migraine. A class of prescription medication known as triptans (common ones include Imitrex, Maxalt, and Zomig) works by constricting blood vessels in the brain and blocking pain pathways.

An antidepressant medication called Amitriptyline may also be prescribed (the dosage is different than what would be indicated for depression), and is believed to be effective in migraine treatment due to its ability to affect levels of the neurotransmitter serotonin (serotonin deficiency has been associated with migraines). Even Botox injections have been used to treat migraines.

Both over-the-counter and prescription remedies can be detrimental in the long run, because they can trigger what is known as “rebound” or “medication overuse” migraines. This creates a vicious cycle, because the person keeps taking even more medication in a desperate attempt to alleviate the pain. Additionally, long-term use of pain relievers can cause more serious issues like gastrointestinal bleeding.

Natural Alternatives

Individuals who suffer from migraines may find relief from an herb called feverfew. A member

of the daisy family, this perennial flowering plant is native to southeastern Europe, and has been shown to limit both the severity and frequency of migraines in many studies—without the risk of rebound. In fact, feverfew is the most frequently used herb for long-term prevention of migraines. Feverfew has been shown in research to be effective for reducing both the pain and nausea associated with migraines.

Feverfew should not be used by people allergic to members of the daisy family. Due to its potential anticlotting actions, people with blood-clotting disorders should consult their healthcare provider prior to using products containing feverfew.

Magnesium supplementation may help prevent migraine headaches. It can be taken by mouth, but topical oils and creams are available as well. It is easily absorbed through the skin. Magnesium is a mineral that plays a big role in the health of nerves and the vascular system, and it is often low in migraine patients.

Another great preventive is Vitamin B2, also known as riboflavin. It may reduce migraine attacks by half.

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A microscopic view of several mitochondria, showing their characteristic bean-like shape and internal network of cristae. The mitochondria are stained in shades of orange and yellow against a dark blue background.

37. Mitochondrial Disease

Mitochondrial disease occurs when the mitochondria—an essential part of nearly every human cell—begin to dysfunction. Mitochondria are responsible for about 90 percent of a cell's energy production, so even a small loss in productivity can eventually lead to multiple organ dysfunction. Depending on the organs involved, mitochondrial disease can cause a host of debilitating symptoms, including multiple organ failure. It can manifest in any organ in the body, and as a result, diagnosis is often difficult.

Mitochondrial disease can be inherited, the mutation passed on through either of the chromosomes or directly from the mother via mitochondrial DNA. Inherited mitochondrial disease usually first presents in childhood, but can become more severe over time. Mitochondrial disease can also occur as the result of spontaneous mutations, which can strike anyone at any age. Severity of the disease depends on the organs affected and the specific mutations involved.

Conventional Approach

Treatment for mitochondrial disease is usually supportive, addressing health issues that arise from affected organs. For example, if the disease affects the pancreas, treatment might include diabetes management. Neurological involvement causing epilepsy might require anti-seizure medications. Dietary changes can benefit those with gastrointestinal involvement.

Doctors warn those with mitochondrial diseases to avoid medications that are metabolized by the liver and to refrain from drinking alcohol, as they can hasten disease progression. MSG also appears to trigger symptoms in many people.

Natural Alternatives

Exercise

Exercises geared toward building strength and increasing endurance can help preserve muscle mass and strengthen other systems in the body. Physical therapy often benefits those with muscle or motor involvement.

Vitamins

Vitamin supplementation, particularly Riboflavin, Thiamine, Niacin and Vitamins C and E, have been shown helpful in increasing energy levels and slowing disease progression in some patients.

Supplements

There is mounting evidence that several supplements can help slow mitochondrial disease progression. Coenzyme Q10 can reduce migraines and ease certain heart conditions. Amino acids like L-arginine can help cells process protein more efficiently. L-carnitine has proven beneficial to those with kidney involvement. All are necessary for proper mitochondrial function.

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38. Motion Sickness

Motion sickness is the result of mismatched signals coming from the eyes and inner ear. Normally, movement of inner ear fluid coincides with movements perceived by the eyes. When a person is traveling on the road or by airplane, or watching a 3D simulation while the body is stationary, the conflict in senses can trigger nausea and vomiting. Other symptoms can include dizziness, profuse sweating, pale skin, hyper-salivation, and fatigue.

About 70 percent of the population is prone to motion sickness, but those between the ages of 2 and 12 are most vulnerable. Poor ventilation, anxiety, pregnancy, a history of migraines, a full stomach, and sitting backward or in the back of a vehicle can increase a person's chances of triggering motion sickness.

Conventional Approach

The most common treatment doctors prescribe is scopolamine (Transderm Scop), which is a patch designed to release medication over the course of three days. Oral medications include dimenhydrinate (Dramamine), promethazine (Phenergan), Cyclizine (Marezine), and Meclizine (Bonine). All have side effects that include dry mouth and drowsiness, and each can vary by person in its effectiveness.

Natural Alternatives

Ginger

Ginger has long been a trusted treatment for nausea. While studies have offered mixed results, many have shown ginger to help relieve motion sickness-related nausea. Ginger root can be made into a tea, added to foods, or taken in capsule form.

Peppermint

Peppermint can soothe the stomach and calm nausea, and many believe it to be helpful against motion sickness. Peppermint leaves can be made into tea, and their extract can be taken in loz-

enges or candy.

Chewing Gum

Studies have shown chewing gum or sucking on candy can help to prevent the onset motion sickness. Ginger chewing gum is commercially available, although peppermint gum is likely of similar benefit.

References and Links:

https://www.jstage.jst.go.jp/article/jje1965/37/3/37_3_105/_article

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/27563640>

<https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/motion-sickness-treatment/>

<http://www.umm.edu/health/medical/altmed/condition/motion-sickness>



39. Muscle and Leg Cramps

A muscle cramp occurs when a muscle contracts involuntarily, causing a sharp, sudden pain that can last from a few seconds to several minutes. Muscle cramps usually strike the calves, although any muscle can be affected. They also typically occur in bed, while the body is at rest, or as the result of strenuous exercise. Many times, the cause is idiopathic, which means there's no known medical cause.

Leg cramps are most frequent in people over 50, and in pregnant women. People who take statins, beta agonists, or diuretics can be at higher risk, as can people who abuse alcohol. Dehydration and electrolyte imbalances also increase the chances of having a muscle cramp. Although most muscle cramps are nothing to be concerned about, they can also signal medical problems such as diabetes, issues with the liver or thyroid, and certain neurological disorders.

People can decrease their chances of getting muscle cramps by staying hydrated and stretching regularly.

Conventional Approach

Most of the time, no treatment is necessary. Muscle cramps usually resolve on their own, although they can become frequent in some people. When muscle cramps interfere with sleep, doctors might prescribe diphenhydramine, a muscle relaxer, or a calcium channel blocker.

Natural Alternatives

Stretch and Massage

Stretching the affected muscle is the quickest way to relieve a cramp. For leg cramps in the calf, straighten the affected leg and flex the foot upward. Some people find walking, shaking the leg, or stretching while standing to offer quick relief. For cramps in the hamstrings, pull the extended leg upward, making sure not to bend the knee. Gentle massage while stretching can be especially helpful.

Epsom Salt Bath

Some doctors believe a magnesium deficiency can cause leg cramps. A warm bath can help ease tight muscles. Even more, the body absorbs magnesium from the Epsom salt through the skin, replenishing lost stores and further aiding against muscle tightness.

B Complex Supplement

Other doctors feel deficiencies in B vitamins are responsible for many muscle cramps. A supplement could help to reduce their frequency.

References and Links:

<https://my.clevelandclinic.org/health/articles/nocturnal-leg-cramps>

<https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/muscle-cramp/diagnosis-treatment/drc-20350825>

<https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/muscle-cramp/symptoms-causes/syc-20350820>



40. Osteoporosis

Osteoporosis is the result of reduced bone density. This occurs when the body is unable to manufacture enough bone to replace what it naturally loses over time. Symptoms include back pain, changes in posture and height, and bone fractures. Fractures of the hip are serious and can be fatal.

Those at highest risk for developing osteoporosis are white or Asian women with small frames, people with cancer or certain rheumatological diseases, and those who have taken long courses of steroids. People with eating disorders, celiac disease, or inflammatory bowel disease are also at an increased risk, as are smokers, heavy drinkers, and those with a family history of osteoporosis.

Conventional Approach

Bisphosphates like alendronate (Fosamax) and ibandronate (Boniva) slow the progression of osteoporosis by increasing the ratio of bone resorption. While shown effective against bone loss, their side effects include nausea, stomach pain, and heartburn. Rarely, they can cause serious issues like osteonecrosis of the jaw and atrial fibrillation.

In more difficult cases, doctors might add denosumab (Prolia) to an existing regimen or suggest teriparatide (Forteo) injections. Hormone replacement therapy like raloxifene (Evista) can help with perimenopausal bone loss due to low estrogen levels.

Natural Alternatives

Phytoestrogens

Studies have shown isoflavones found in soy, such as phytoestrogens like genistein and daidzein, have similar bone-protective properties as hormone replacement therapy (HRT). Dosage and efficacy are still under debate, but many researchers agree adding phytoestrogens to the diet can improve bone health.

Exercise

Weight-bearing exercises like walking, climbing stairs, or weight training have been shown to improve bone density, strengthen muscles, and improve overall health. Always talk to a doctor before beginning any exercise regimen.

Avoid Alcohol and Tobacco

Alcohol and tobacco both inhibit calcium absorption, reducing bone density. Alcohol interferes not only with the body's calcium and Vitamin D levels, but also the hormones necessary to absorb and use them. Studies show smokers have a 17 percent higher rate of hip fractures than non-smokers at age 60. At 80, that risk goes up to 71 percent.

References and Links:

<https://www.bones.nih.gov/health-info/bone/osteoporosis/conditions-behaviors/alcoholism>

<https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/osteoporosis/diagnosis-treatment/drc-20351974>

<https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/osteoporosis/symptoms-causes/syc-20351968>

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2667901/>

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/12936954/>

<http://www.who.int/tobacco/research/osteoporosis/en/>



41. Plantar Fasciitis

Plantar fasciitis is an inflammatory condition that causes intense pain at the base of the heel. The pain generally is at its most intense after periods of inactivity—such as lying in bed or sitting. It causes a sharp pain upon walking, which tends to improve slightly after the first few steps. Exercise will exacerbate the condition.

Plantar fasciitis is caused by excessive stress on the arch of the foot. The plantar fascia acts like a shock absorber, usually stretching as the foot bends. Lack of arch support, injury, or tightening of the tendons can lead to tears in the plantar fascia, which can then lead to chronic inflammation. Some people try to work around the pain by changing their gait, which only causes additional problems in the legs and back.

Conventional Approach

Custom orthotics offer arch support, which places less stress on the bottom of the foot. Other devices such as night splints gently stretch the tendons and allow the foot to heal. In more severe cases, steroid shots are sometimes used. When that fails, some patients may need to resort to surgery to remove scar tissue or sever the plantar fascia completely from the heel bone. This is a last-resort measure, as it causes additional weakening of the arch.

Natural Alternatives

Stretching Exercises

Exercises that gently stretch the arch and Achilles' tendon can increase muscle strength and reduce the spread of inflammation. Care should be taken to increase tendon length gradually, as overstretching can exacerbate pre-existing tears and make the condition worse.

Frozen Golf Ball Roll

Rolling a frozen golf ball between the plantar fascia and the floor can soothe inflammation, ease pain, and stretch the foot. Concentrate on and around the areas that hurt, then roll across the

entire arch.

Body Massage

Plantar fasciitis can affect the muscles and joints far beyond the immediate area. Stretching, relaxation, and massaging of the muscles along the feet, legs, and back can be helpful in easing overall symptoms.

References and Links:

<https://www.naturalremedies.org/plantar-fascia/>

<https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/plantar-fasciitis/diagnosis-treatment/drc-20354851>

<https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/plantar-fasciitis/symptoms-causes/syc-20354846>

http://running.competitor.com/2013/03/injury-prevention/five-do-it-yourself-remedies-for-plantar-fasciitis_50264#mUBkjygTiByfe0sM.99

A close-up photograph of a person's arm resting on a wooden surface. A white blood pressure cuff is wrapped around the upper arm, and a black stethoscope is placed over it. A hand is visible, adjusting the cuff. The background is slightly blurred, showing a white shirt and a green sleeve.

42. POTs and Hypotension

Postural orthostatic tachycardia syndrome (POTS) is a condition in which the heart rate raises more than 30 beats per minute upon standing from a seated position. It can also occur when sitting up from a lying position, and sometimes even while lying flat. Along with increased heart-rate, POTS can cause sudden drops in blood pressure, reduced blood volume, and increased norepinephrine levels. Symptoms include fatigue, headaches, nausea, shaking, fainting, chest pain, shortness of breath, and profuse sweating. 80 percent of POTS patients are women.

POTS can be caused by a number of diseases and disorders including amyloidosis, autoimmune diseases like lupus and antiphospholipid syndrome, Chiari malformation, diabetes, Ehlers-Danlos syndrome, hepatitis C, mast cell activation disorders, heavy metal poisoning, chemotherapy, trauma, and anemia.

Conventional Approach

Because the causes are so varied, POTS treatment can differ by patient. Most commonly prescribed medications are corticosteroids, beta blockers, benzodiazepines, SSRIs, SNRIs, medications for low blood pressure, and medications that can increase blood volume.

Natural Alternatives

Increasing Water Intake

Drinking more water can increase blood volume, which naturally increases blood pressure. Doctors warn against drinking excessive amounts of water, however, as that can lead to a dangerous electrolyte imbalance.

A Change in Diet

Studies have shown eating smaller meals requires less blood to go to the stomach, making more available as actual blood volume. In addition, increased salt intake can help with fluid retention, also increasing blood volume. Sodium plus water can have a huge impact on symptoms for

many patients.

Exercise

Some patients have shown improvement with light to moderate aerobic exercise. Retraining patients to rise slowly during all activities that require a change in posture is also beneficial, as is sleeping with the head elevated. Patients should talk to their doctors before beginning any exercise regimens.

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<http://hypermobility.org/help-advice/autonomic-problems/>

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3390096/>



43. Premenstrual Syndrome (PMS)

Premenstrual syndrome is a physiological, emotional, and psychological phenomenon, one that few women can boast having never experienced. PMS can strike anywhere from 7 to 14 days prior to the onset of menstruation, and for some women it is pervasive and debilitating, featuring symptoms such as fatigue, irritability, migraine headaches, breast tenderness, back pain, bloating and digestive distress (including constipation), swelling/water retention in the fingers and toes, sugar/carbohydrate cravings, mood swings, and painful cramps.

Many of these symptoms can be attributed to a hormonal profile in which estrogen levels are too high and progesterone levels are too low. Specific risk factors for PMS include: family history/genetics, age (it is more common for women in their 30s and older), lack of exercise, chronic stress, high caffeine intake, and a nutrient-poor diet—low levels of vitamin B6, calcium, and magnesium are especially problematic.

Conventional Approach

PMS can be difficult to treat given the wide variability of symptoms from one woman to the next (and one menstrual period to the next, for that matter). It is not uncommon for doctors to prescribe antidepressant medications to offset the anxiety and depression that can coincide with PMS. In some cases birth control pills may be prescribed, to help “balance out” hormone levels throughout the entire menstrual cycle, or even to halt periods altogether.

Many women turn to over-the-counter pain medications such as ibuprofen, or more targeted support, such as Midol, which contains acetaminophen (for pain), caffeine (which offsets fatigue and helps resolve headache symptoms), and an antihistamine called pyrilamine maleate (which helps with water retention). Needless to say, while these medications help alleviate symptoms, they do not address the underlying cause of PMS.

Natural Alternatives

The importance of a healthy, nutrient-dense diet cannot be overstated when it comes to deal-

ing with PMS. Avoiding caffeine, alcohol, sugar, and processed foods is especially important, too. Getting regular exercise and managing stress (for example, engaging in meditation and/or yoga) are also critical. All of these things are natural mood stabilizers, and directly affect your hormones.

Vitex, also known as chaste tree berry, is a plant native to Asia and Mediterranean countries, and has been used for more than 2,500 years in Egypt, Greece, and Rome for a variety of hormone-related concerns. Vitex appears to have the ability to increase luteinizing hormone (a reproductive hormone that triggers ovulation in women). This, in turn, induces a shift in the ratio of estrogen to progesterone, in favor of progesterone, which translates to reduced PMS and menstrual symptoms. Vitex has been shown in research to reduce the frequency of PMS-related migraine attacks, to improve mood, and reduce complaints of bloating, breast tenderness, fatigue, and insomnia.

References and Links:

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44. Restless Leg Syndrome

Restless Leg Syndrome (RLS), also known as Willis-Ekbom disease, causes an uncomfortable, irresistible compulsion to move the legs, especially when lying or sitting still. Unusual, often overwhelming sensations in one or both legs—described as crawling, creeping, itching, aching, or pulling—prompt the restless movement. Rarely, these sensations also extend into the torso and arms.

RLS affects up to 10 percent of the U.S. population, and more women develop it than men. While RLS can first strike at any age, most people begin experiencing symptoms in their forties or fifties. The discomfort can disrupt a person's ability to fall or stay asleep, sometimes significantly enough to affect work performance and quality of life. While genetics play a role in some cases, iron deficiency also appears to be an important factor. This may be why pregnant women and those in renal failure commonly experience RLS symptoms. Some medications can worsen symptoms, as can caffeine, nicotine, and alcohol.

Conventional Approach

The most commonly prescribed medications for RLS are dopaminergic drugs like pramipexole (Mirapex) and ropinirole (Requip). Other drugs include sedatives like temazepam (Restoril) and medications for nerve pain, such as gabapentin (Horizant). For extreme cases, some doctors will prescribe opioid narcotics.

Natural Alternatives

Warm Baths or Compresses

Some find RLS symptom relief by relaxing in a warm bath. The heat from the water can soothe excited muscles, and related changes in body temperature help to induce sleep. If a bath isn't available, warm compresses are also beneficial. Adding epsom salts to your bath can help you get extra magnesium, which can also be beneficial to soothe muscles and nerves.

Meditation or Yoga

Meditation and Yoga both teach relaxation techniques that can be helpful for RLS sufferers. For those unable to do yoga, some find a sensible exercise routine can also reduce symptoms.

Massage

Massage can relieve much of the physical discomfort that comes with RLS, especially if the sufferer also experiences muscle tightness. Many find relief by combining warm baths and massage.

References and Links:

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<https://www.ninds.nih.gov/Disorders/Patient-Caregiver-Education/Fact-Sheets/Restless-Legs-Syndrome-Fact-Sheet>

<https://www.rls.org/file/causes-092015.pdf>

<https://web.stanford.edu/~dement/howto.html>



45. Rosacea

Rosacea is a skin condition that causes redness, acne-like bumps, and visible blood vessels on the face. Nearly half of those with rosacea have problems with dry, irritated eyes and red, inflamed eyelids. Some people also experience a condition called rhinophyma, which causes an irreversible thickening of the skin on the cheeks and nose. Rhinophyma takes years to develop and usually affects men.

Rosacea cannot be prevented, but avoidance of alcohol, spicy foods, exposure to the elements, heavy emotions, cosmetics, and certain medications can reduce the likelihood of flares, which can last for months. Although fair, middle-aged women are most likely to develop rosacea, people who smoke or have a family history of the condition are at higher risk. The cause is still unknown, but some believe dermodex mites, which colonize the skin, could play a role.

Conventional Approach

Topical treatments include brimonidine (Mirvaso), which reduces redness by constricting blood vessels; the acne medication azelaic acid, which kills bacteria and decreases keratin production; and the antimicrobial metronidazole. While brimonidine typically shows results within twelve hours, azelaic acid and metronidazole can require up to six weeks to take effect.

Oral medications include antibiotics like doxycycline and tetracycline. In more severe cases of acne-like pustules, a stronger antibiotic, isotretinoin (Amnesteem, Claravis), may be prescribed. Isotretinoin should not be used by women who are pregnant or might become pregnant, as it is known to cause birth defects.

Natural Alternatives

Green Tea

Used topically, green tea can reduce inflammation and pustules associated with rosacea. Green tea contains antioxidants, polyphenols, and caffeine, the combination of which has shown to reduce rosacea redness. For added relief, try freezing the tea into ice cubes and using them to

soothe irritated skin.

Weak Acids

Weak acids like those found in lemon juice and apple cider vinegar work well as natural astringents, and can kill bacteria that exacerbate pustules. Apply lemon juice or apple cider vinegar directly to the skin once a day after washing, avoiding the eyes, and allow to air dry.

Tea Tree Oil

Tea tree oil has long been a trusted natural remedy for acne, and it works similarly for rosacea pustules. A 50 percent concentration has been known to kill dermox mites, which may reduce flares. However, higher concentrations can also cause skin irritation and therefore should be used with caution.

References and Links:

<http://dermatologytimes.modernmedicine.com/dermatology-times/news/green-tea-shows-promise-skin-treatment?page=1%2C1>

<https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/rosacea/diagnosis-treatment/drc-20353820>

<https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/rosacea/symptoms-causes/syc-20353815>

<https://www.rosacea.org/patients/itworksforme>

<http://rosacea-skin-care.com/rosacea-home-treatment>



46. Tinnitus

If you have ever been to a loud concert or spent time on the shooting range, you have undoubtedly experienced ringing in the ears. With brief exposure to loud sound of this sort, the ringing is almost always temporary. Some, however, have the misfortune of experiencing chronic ringing of the ears, commonly known as tinnitus. Tinnitus is when a person perceives a sound when no actual external noise is present. While ringing in the ears tends to be the predominant complaint, tinnitus may also be experienced as buzzing, hissing, whistling, roaring, chirping, “swooshing,” or any other similar disturbance.

The sounds experienced may be persistent, or intermittent. While tinnitus is not a disease in and of itself, it can be very unpleasant and burdensome for the person afflicted with it. Although it does not necessarily arise from hearing loss, this is the most frequent culprit. Aside from hearing loss, other potential causes of tinnitus include blockages within the ear such as impacted earwax, medications, high blood pressure, anemia, head or neck injuries, or simply getting older. Depending upon the severity, tinnitus can be quite debilitating, and interfere with one’s work, social life, sleep, and psychological well-being.

Conventional Approach

At this time, there is no known cure for tinnitus, and treatment options center on managing the symptoms on a physical and psychological level, and improving quality of life. Tinnitus may be worsened by cigarette smoking, drinking alcohol or caffeinated beverages, and stress.

In contrast, tinnitus may be helped by avoiding exposure to loud noise, maintaining healthy blood pressure, eating a healthy diet (to maintain overall health), avoiding aspirin, and managing stress. Due to the relationship between hearing loss and tinnitus, in some cases a hearing aid can help lessen the burden of tinnitus and mask the tinnitus sounds. For more serious cases, a cochlear implant may be recommended. These are surgically implanted devices used with deaf patients. They increase external sound, helping to distract the person from the internal sounds.

Natural Alternatives

A person with tinnitus may find relief from external sound-masking devices, such as a white

noise machine. This can be especially helpful for sleep, as the person is more likely to be aware of the sounds going on in their ears when their surroundings are quiet and they are attempting to go to sleep.

Relief may come from the herb ginkgo biloba. Ginkgo's primary mechanism of action involves increasing blood flow to the neck, head, and brain. It may also have anti-inflammatory properties, particularly with regard to inflamed blood vessels. Thus, ginkgo may help reduce the intensity of tinnitus symptoms by improving circulation to the capillaries that feed the nerves in and around the ears.

Ginkgo may cause dangerously low blood sugar levels if you are taking any blood sugar-lowering medications such as insulin or other medications for diabetes. Likewise, ginkgo may potentially increase the risk of bleeding when taken with other medications, herbs, or supplements that also increase the risk of bleeding. If you are taking any prescription medications or other herbal supplements, check with your healthcare provider prior to using ginkgo.

References and Links:

Tziridis K, Korn S, Ahlf S, Schulze H. Protective effects of Ginkgo biloba extract EGb 761 against noise trauma-induced hearing loss and tinnitus development. *Neural Plast.* 2014; Epub 2014 Jun 17. PubMed PMID: 25028612; PubMed Central PMCID: PMC4083883.

American Tinnitus Association

<https://www.ata.org/>

<http://www.webmd.com/a-to-z-guides/understanding-tinnitus-treatment>

<http://www.mayoclinic.org/drugs-supplements/ginkgo/dosing/hrb-20059541>



47. Toothache

When we think about treating a toothache, our brain may conjure up a cartoon image of someone with a bulging, pulsating jaw and a scrap of fabric wrapped around his or her head, tied in a bow. Generally speaking, a toothache arises as a result of inflammation of the pulp, the central portion of the tooth, which contains sensitive nerve endings. Possible causes include plaque build-up, a cracked tooth, poorly placed or failing crowns, TMJ (temporomandibular joint disorder), and of course the presence of cavities. More serious cases may involve an infection and/or gum disease.

Conventional Approach

Of course, tooth pain should not be ignored. If you are experiencing tooth pain and/or swelling that doesn't resolve within a few hours, seek professional help. Many cases of bothersome tooth pain can be remedied with over the counter analgesics, such as ibuprofen or acetaminophen. There are also over the counter topical preparations available, such as Oragel, which contain benzocaine, a topical pain reliever. These, of course, will temporarily resolve the symptoms in the short-term, but ultimately do not address the cause of the pain. If you are experiencing persistent tooth pain, a trip to the dentist will be unavoidable. Remember, dental health is important to your overall health!

Natural Alternatives

That cartoon image of wrapping your jaw is not far removed from an effective home remedy for tooth pain. If you are miserable, can't get to the dentist right away, and want a natural solution, try clove oil. Cloves have been used for ages to alleviate dental pain, and may be as effective as over the counter preparations. Cloves contain a compound called eugenol, which has natural anti-bacterial, anti-inflammatory, and analgesic properties that help both alleviate tooth pain by numbing the site of application, and help fight infection.

There are several ways that you can benefit from the anesthetic effects of cloves or clove oil. It is

recommended to rinse your mouth with warm salt water to remove any food particles or debris. For quick relief, moisten a cotton ball with clove oil, and place it directly along the gum or into the cavity, broken tooth, or dry socket. If you find that the clove oil is too strong (it may sting a bit at first), try mixing in a little olive oil. Soak the cotton ball in the oil mixture, and then place the cotton ball as a compress between the cheek and gum by the affected tooth. Hold in place until the pain is relieved. You can also mix a few drops of clove oil in some water and use it as a mouth rinse.

Clove oil is readily available in natural food and supplement stores. Keep some on hand in your natural first aid kit. If you are in a bind and don't have clove oil, you can use ground cloves or whole cloves from your spice rack. Take a pinch of the powder or a whole clove and place it on the gum where your tooth hurts. You should feel relief almost immediately.

It is important to note that when clove oil is taken internally in large amounts, it can cause liver problems or respiratory issues. The eugenol in clove oil may slow blood clotting, and is therefore not recommended for people with bleeding disorders. It is not recommended for children.

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48. Upset Stomach/Nausea

There are myriad causes of nausea and upset stomach. Regardless of the source, when in the midst of it, most would try virtually anything to alleviate the horrible sensation that your stomach would very much like to return its contents to sender. Potential contributors include motion sickness, influenza, surgery, food poisoning, pregnancy, dehydration or going too long without eating, food allergy, medication side effects, drinking alcohol, nervousness and anxiety—to name a few. Isolated cases may be accompanied by other symptoms such as headache, dizziness, vomiting, lightheadedness, or abdominal pain.

Conventional Approach

Unpleasant as it is, most cases of upset stomach are harmless, and resolve on their own. If you experience nausea and/or vomiting that lasts for more than 24 hours, consult your healthcare provider. Regardless of the cause, it is generally a good idea to drink gradually larger amounts of clear liquids, if tolerated, and avoid solid food until symptoms resolve.

Some medications that help address nausea include meclizine hydrochloride (Bonine), and dimenhydrinate (Dramamine), which are antihistamines. Emetrol is an oral solution that can address nausea caused by viral or bacterial infections. In some cases, some good old fashioned Pepto Bismol can help soothe the stomach until symptoms subside.

Natural Alternatives

Most mild to moderate cases of nausea can be addressed with some home remedies with natural ingredients.

Ginger is considered a “broad-spectrum” anti-nausea remedy and has been used in traditional systems of medicine for over 2,000 years. One of the ways that ginger helps ease stomach upset is by encouraging the secretion of digestive enzymes that help neutralize stomach acid, which can be a contributing factor. It also contains compounds that reduce excessive activity of the stomach by relaxing its muscles and acting as a sedative.

Ginger can be consumed as a tea, in capsule form, or for the brave, can even be eaten raw. A tea can be brewed from the root itself by peeling a one-inch piece of fresh ginger and steeping it in hot or boiling water for a few minutes. For nausea and indigestion, a recommended dose is 1 gram of ginger per day, preferably in divided doses. For morning sickness, try 650 mg to 1 gram per day, depending on tolerance. If you are pregnant, do not take ginger without first consulting your healthcare provider.

Side effects from ginger are rare, but could potentially include mild heartburn (even small amounts are very potent!) or mouth irritation. Taking it in capsule form may help offset these effects. People with gallstones should consult their healthcare provider before taking ginger. If ginger is too intense for you, or you are simply not a fan, try sniffing a slice of freshly cut lemon: the smell of citrus may help reduce queasiness. The smell of peppermint may also help. Try peppermint tea (in very small amounts), if tolerated, or simply sniff some peppermint essential oil. These may be good options if you are pregnant or cannot take ginger for any other reason.

References and Links:

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<http://www.umm.edu/health/medical/altmed/herb/ginger>



49. UTI (Urinary Tract/Bladder Infection)

If you have ever experienced a bladder infection (also known as a urinary tract infection or UTI), you are sorely familiar with the symptoms: Painful, burning sensation during urination, increased urinary frequency and/or sense of urgency (and often, despite the urgency, only a small amount of urine is excreted), cloudy and/or foul-smelling urine, and sometimes pain in the pelvic region, lower abdomen, or lower back. UTIs are not necessarily limited to the bladder; they can occur in any part of the urinary system, including the kidneys, the urethra, and the ureters (which are the conduits connecting the kidneys and bladder), although infections of the bladder tend to be most common. UTIs generally occur when bacteria find their way into the urinary tract via the urethra, and decide to settle in and proliferate in the bladder.

Conventional Approach

Typically, UTIs are treated with a course of antibiotics, such as Bactrim, Amoxicillin, Ampicillin, or Cipro. While antibiotics are generally good at their job of killing off pathogenic bacteria, they also wipe out the “good guys,” the beneficial bacteria in our guts that promote health. Taking probiotics can help lower some of the side effects, such as stomach upset and yeast infections.

Natural Alternatives

If you suspect that you have a UTI, always consult your healthcare professional regarding diagnosis and treatment. If you are prone to bladder infections, there are things you can do to support the health of your urinary system and reduce the likelihood of recurrent infections.

Hydration

When you are in the throes of a bladder infection, urination can be extremely painful and you might be tempted to avoid drinking liquids. However, this is the last thing you want to do. Keeping yourself hydrated (by drinking as much water as you can) is critically important. This helps dilute the urine and supports the immune system’s efforts to rid the body of the offending bacteria. At minimum, aim to drink at least half your bodyweight in ounces of water per day (for example, if you weigh 150 pounds, drink at least 75 ounces of water per day). Avoid caffeinated

beverages (including coffee, tea, soda, and energy drinks), as caffeine is irritating to the urinary tract, depletes the body of important nutrients, and taxes your immune system.

Cranberry and D-Mannose

A common natural alternative for urinary support is cranberry. Cranberry's ability to reduce the frequency of UTIs has been attributed to the presence of a compound called d-mannose. D-mannose is a naturally-occurring sugar (a beneficial kind, in this case) that helps prevent bacteria from adhering to the bladder wall, thus enabling the body to sweep the bacteria from the body via urination. While drinking cranberry juice is a viable option, use only 100% cranberry juice that does not have added sugars (note: although bacteria love to feed on sugar, d-mannose is a wonderful exception).

If you want a bit more bang for your buck, try cranberry in supplement form—preferably one that indicates the d-mannose content, to ensure you are getting sufficient amounts of the compound.

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50. Warts

Warts are benign growths that usually appear on the hands, but can occur nearly anywhere on the body. They are caused by the human papilloma virus (HPV), which is usually spread by direct contact or transfer between objects. HPV usually doesn't penetrate healthy skin, infections typically occurring through cuts or other openings.

There are over 150 strains of HPV, only a handful of which cause genital warts. The majority of them cause common warts. Plantar warts grow in the pads of the feet, are extremely virulent, and can be painful to walk on. Filiform warts usually infect the eyelids and other areas of the face, and have a finger-like appearance. Flat warts are the size of a pinhead, have a smoother appearance, and are more often found on the knees and elbows.

Conventional Approach

Most cases of common warts will resolve on their own within 2-3 years, but they are contagious as long as the infection persists. For this reason, most people opt to have them removed. Salicylic acid can be applied at home, but requires multiple applications. Doctors can freeze them off using liquid nitrogen, which is more effective but sometimes leaves traces of the virus behind. These treatments can cause irritation and blistering, but usually do not leave behind any notable scarring.

Natural Alternatives

Sandalwood Oil

Sandalwood oil, when used topically, is an effective treatment against common warts, although the treatment period can last for months. However, sandalwood doesn't cause the irritation salicylic acid can, and therefore is a much safer alternative.

Duct Tape

It is believed HPV requires oxygen to thrive. For this reason, keeping a wart covered for several

weeks can slowly kill the infection. Soaking the wart and filing away excess skin with a clean pumice stone between tape changes can expedite treatment time.

Silver Nitrate

Silver nitrate is a compound with antimicrobial properties, and is also sometimes used as a cauterizing agent. It can cause burns to the skin, so it should be used with the same caution as other corrosive agents.

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Bonus Report #1:

Killing the Tiny Bug Behind Most Recurring Skin Problems

Are you having problems with your skin? You're not alone. It is our largest organ, and it is the one everyone sees first when they look in the mirror. Skin breakouts can plague anyone. They can be annoying for some, but downright scarring, disabling, disfiguring, or painful for others. The natural response is to do what you can to manage the symptoms, perhaps by reaching for a special soap or a topical medication, directly treating the blemish. Unfortunately, you might be overlooking the possibility that your skin problems are the result of something far more nefarious going on far beneath your skin's surface. Pimples, rashes, and red or itchy skin can all be symptoms of larger, often chronic, issues that could be affecting your entire body. You may find yourself treating and treating your skin, keeping it clean and cared for... but no matter what you have tried, the issues always come back. How would you feel if you could treat your entire body naturally and have those unsightly and irritating skin problems clear up for good?

It is finally possible.

Researchers are changing how we define ourselves as living organisms, with recent studies suggesting 90% of the cells that make up the human body are not human at all --- they're actually numerous strains of bacteria. Most of these bacteria are beneficial, with only a small portion responsible for disease. In fact, the majority of the digestive and immune systems are composed of beneficial bacteria, and wouldn't be able to function at all without them. Certain kinds of beneficial bacteria are absolutely essential to keep us healthy.

When the other types of bacteria and yeasts that aren't healthy take hold and grow beyond the boundaries that keep them in check, however, it can result in health conditions that include weight gain, slowed metabolism, and skin breakouts. The connection between low energy levels and unhealthy skin has been established, but we're now learning that that connection is far bigger and more profound than previously understood.

The Human Microbiome

The human body is a complex balance of cells and microbes. The health of all our organs, including the skin, depends on that balance. Still, few of us understand the impact our daily habits can have on our own personal microbiomes. Research is finding we genuinely are what we

eat, and the typical American diet is throwing most people's systems into chaos.

In the gut alone, 25 trillion microbes work alongside the body's cells, most of them beneficial. Not all bacteria colonize the same people, however. Studies have found distinct differences in the types of gut bacteria that thrive in skinny versus obese people. Incidentally, many of these same bacteria are believed to affect the body well beyond the gut. Under some conditions when these "bad bugs" begin to experience overgrowth, they can wreak havoc and cause inflammation throughout the body --- even all the way to the outer layers of our skin. Different types of microbes require different types of food, so what we eat has a direct impact on the balance of microflora found throughout the body. When we feed more of the bad microbes than the good, all sorts of related health problems can arise.

Maintaining the Skin

As we mentioned earlier, the skin is the body's largest organ, and it's more active than it looks. Our skin is constantly in a state of renewal and repair, replicating quickly enough to replace 90% of the epidermis in only 3 months. Just like in the digestive tract, the skin is covered in microbes, and maintaining a proper balance is essential to getting and keeping healthy skin.

Some studies suggest that the majority of acne isn't caused simply by clogged pores, but by inflammation below the surface of the skin. This inflammation is the result of harmful flora overgrowth spreading to other organs in the body, resulting in immune responses. When that inflammation hits the lower dermal layers, it can cause a number of different skin problems.

Diet and Skin Health

The connection between diet and skin health has long been under debate. The anecdotal evidence for certain foods causing skin blemishes is overwhelming, but doctors' responses have been mixed. Numerous people have made a connection between greasy food consumption and acne, for example, but no real data backs it.

Similarly, some believe the growth hormones found in many dairy products can cause blemishes, although hormones are unlikely to survive the stomach. Even if they did, there is no evidence that bovine growth hormone affects human hormone levels, despite anecdotal evidence to the contrary. It is no wonder that there is so much confusion about diet and healthy skin.

Many doctors agree that sugar affects skin health, but disagree on the reasons for it. One theory is that foods high in sugar, which strongly affects insulin levels, can cause acne by increasing the reproductive hormones associated with acne breakouts. Others look at the way insulin levels affect the body's ability to break down and use food. This eventually results in a production of enzymes called advanced glycation end products, which degrade the skin's collagen and elastin and damage skin quality and elasticity.

Feeding the Disease

More recently, research has shown that sugar feeds yeasts and other harmful microbes in the body. In addition to contributing to poor skin quality, overgrowth of these organisms can lead to gastrointestinal upset, inflammation, brain fog, and fatigue. Just as high sugar intake can cause harmful microbial overgrowth, that same overgrowth can cause you to crave more sugar. This vicious cycle is common, so don't feel bad if you've been caught up in it.

Recent discoveries have revealed these microbes actually produce hormones that influence your eating patterns. If you're on a high-sugar diet and you constantly find yourself craving sweets, chances are the craving isn't yours at all, but instead signals coming from the bad flora in your intestines. The bad flora wants more sugar so it tells the brain to consume sugar, carbs, etc. This leads to a damaging cycle of poor eating habits, poor health, and poor skin quality. Even worse, it can lead to other complications such as obesity and diabetes.

This bad intestinal flora can also proliferate if their beneficial counterparts are compromised. One of many jobs beneficial intestinal bacteria are responsible for is keeping harmful bacteria minimized. When beneficial bacteria are depleted, the harmful microbes go unchecked. Poor diet, alcohol consumption, and antibiotic use can all contribute to beneficial bacteria die-off. Probiotic-rich foods like yogurt can supplement beneficial bacteria in the body, but those bacteria also need to be fed.

Lectins

Lectins, which are plant proteins found most abundantly in grasses, grains, goji berries, and legumes, can also damage the gut. This can lead to stomach pain, heartburn, and fatigue. Naturally developed by plants as a chemical defense mechanism, lectins are difficult for humans to digest. Grazing animals like cows have multiple stomach chambers specifically designed to break down lectins; omnivores simply don't have the stomachs to make good use of the proteins.

Lectins also mimic insulin, which can interfere with actual insulin levels. This can have dire effects on the way your body processes both sugars and other proteins. Lectins, like any material the stomach cannot break down, interfere with the GI tract's structural integrity. This makes it easier for the bad microbes in the gut to affect other areas of the body. The biggest offender is agglutinin, found in wheat germ --- also found in wheat grass, the subject of a health craze that began decades ago. While still considered a "health food" by many, some doctors now warn that although wheat grass juice does contain some nutrients, the lectins it contains make the risks outweigh any possible benefits.

The Polyphenol Connection

Many of the bacteria that thrive in skinny people use micronutrients known as polyphenols as fuel. The early human diet was rich in polyphenols, but that changed with the rise of agriculture. When our diet shifted from what we could forage and hunt to what we could grow, wheat and

other grains took the place of many other plant-based foods. Unfortunately, our bodies weren't designed to survive on grains, and as a result we often convert them into fat instead of usable energy.

Polyphenols have been found to clear the skin, increase metabolism, lower cholesterol, boost the immune system, stabilize blood glucose levels, and strengthen the digestive system. Even more, they're crucial to good health. One study followed two groups of participants for twelve years, with one group eating a diet high in polyphenols and the other group eating a typical American diet. In those twelve years, the group consuming polyphenol-rich foods experienced 30% fewer deaths than the group on a low polyphenol diet.

By keeping beneficial bacteria well fed, you can improve your overall health, lose excess weight, reverse some gastrointestinal problems, and even clear acne and other major skin issues.

So, What are Polyphenols?

Polyphenols are antioxidants that can be found in exotic berries and a number of different plants. There are four subgroups of polyphenols: phenolic acid, flavonoids, lignans, and stilbenes. Flavonoids can be found in berries, while lignans are in certain seeds like flax, chia, and sesame. Stilbenes can be found in grapes, and are the "healthy" component to red wine. Other foods that contain polyphenols include green and white tea, mulberry leaf, turmeric, ginger, bitter melon, and cocoa.

Not only do polyphenols keep skin looking healthy, but they can also protect against free radical damage caused by the sun. Unfortunately, it can be difficult to obtain adequate amounts of polyphenols in most contemporary diets, even those high in fresh fruits and vegetables, so many people turn to supplements.

Other Antioxidants

Just as some foods may contribute to poor skin health, others can help to improve it. Foods rich in antioxidants can protect cells from excessive damage.

Carotenoids

Dark, leafy greens and colorful, antioxidant-rich fruits and vegetables contain carotenoids. These contribute to good cell health by reducing free radical damage. Evidence suggests carotenoids can protect against oxidation of cells. Such damage can lead to poor skin quality and premature aging. Carotenoids fortify skin cells by creating a protective layer within the skin itself that reduces sun damage. However, the skin can only store so much, and you can deplete your stores by smoking, drinking alcohol, or eating a diet low in carotenoids.

Since carotenoids collect in the skin, they can complement nearly all types of skin tones by

adding a hint of natural color. One study compared the appearance of suntanned skin with skin highlighted by carotenoids, and the majority of participants preferred the carotenoid-enhanced skin over the suntans. If you're unsure whether your skin is storing enough carotenoids, your dermatologist can use a special scanner that detects carotenoid accumulation in the dermal layers. Up to 80% of visible aging on the face can be attributed to sun exposure, so foods rich in these antioxidants actually reduce the rate in which you develop fine lines and wrinkles.

Leafy greens also contain zeaxanthin, which provides some added protection against the sun's radiation. It can increase skin elasticity, which can be especially noticeable around the neck and the jawline, where loss of elasticity can leave sagging skin.

Lycopene

The antioxidant lycopene, which is in tomatoes as well as pink or red-colored fruits like watermelon, grapefruit, and papaya, can reduce skin redness caused by the sun. Lycopene has also been shown to reduce damage caused by UV rays.

Omega-3 Fatty Acids

Omega-3 fatty acids, found in oily fish like salmon and some plant sources, is believed to improve the skin in multiple ways. Omega-3 fatty acids reduce inflammation, which can protect against redness and irritation. More importantly, Omega-3s are found in the lipid layer of the skin, which means it's essential for maintaining good skin hydration.

In addition to oils, adequate water intake is necessary to keep skin, and all of its components, properly hydrated. It allows sweat to pass to the skin's surface, which naturally removes toxins, and aids in skin elasticity. Some doctors recommend avoiding alcohol and coffee, which can cause your body to lose water instead of using it. Aim for 64 ounces a day of water, if you can. The Mediterranean diet, which includes olive oil, fruits, nuts, and seafood, is rich in Omega-3s and antioxidants. Other similar diets rich in antioxidants have shown comparable results, offering some protection against the damaging effects of UV radiation on the skin. Omega-3 fatty acids promote cardiovascular health, which aids circulation and keeps cells nourished with oxygen. They are also believed to have positive effects on other organs, such as the brain.

Other Skin-Friendly Foods

Carrots, Squash, and Sweet Potatoes

Foods rich in Vitamin A, such as carrots and similar orange plant foods, help with skin hydration and stimulate skin repair. Pollution, extreme weather, and sunlight all contribute to skin damage, but Vitamin A works alongside carotenoids and other compounds to minimize that damage.

For maximum effectiveness, eat carrots raw or juiced, and make sure not to deep fry sweet potatoes, as that will rob them of nearly all their nutrients.

Citrus Fruits

Citrus fruits are high in Vitamin C, which has long been identified as an immune system booster. Studies have also found that Vitamin C has similarly profound effects on the skin. In one study, middle-aged Caucasian women who ate diets rich in Vitamin C had notably fewer wrinkles than their counterparts.

Additionally, Vitamin C is essential in order for your body to produce collagen properly. Collagen is a protein that is the “building blocks” of a healthy body. It is found abundantly in your skin, muscles, tendons, connective tissue, and even most organs. Healthy collagen production is absolutely necessary for a healthy body --- and for your skin’s overall health, too.

Cucumbers and Bell Peppers

Cucumbers and bell peppers contain silica, a mineral that is necessary for healthy collagen and elastin. Although it can be found in many plant sources, it is most abundant in cucumbers, which people have long used topically to aid skin hydration and reduce signs of aging. Green beans and parsley are also rich in silica.

Pumpkin Seed Oil

Pumpkin seed oil is rich in Vitamin E, well known for its importance to healthy skin, nails, and hair. It inhibits 5-alpha reductase production in the body, one cause of hair loss. It also contains Vitamin A and several antioxidants, along with zinc, another mineral that is essential to good skin health. Pumpkin seed oil has a nutty flavor, and can be integrated into marinades and dressings. Unfortunately, it has a low smoke point, which means it’s not ideal for sauteing or use in stir-frys. Some people consume small amounts straight as a supplement, as is sometimes done with olive oil.

Vitamin B Complex

Some doctors are recommending their skin patients supplement their diets with a complete Vitamin B complex, which is actually 8 distinct vitamins. B vitamins help the body break down fats and proteins, as well as store and use them as energy. Without them, the body cannot regenerate cells. Deficiencies can cause several health issues, including severe gastrointestinal upset, fatigue, and poor skin quality. Some B vitamins can affect the adrenal glands and sex hormones, which also affect skin health.

Biotin

Biotin is also known as Vitamin H. It is a coenzyme that has been used for multiple health conditions, including hair loss, nerve pain, insulin resistance, and more. It seems to boost cell regeneration metabolically --- and that is why it is found in many supplements with a focus on hair, skin, and nail growth. Many people get healthy levels of biotin through their diets. But, because Biotin is plentiful in grains and dairy, however, those who reduce intake of these things in their diet may not be getting the amount they need. While it is also found in food such as eggs and salmon, not everyone may be getting all they need to keep their metabolism churning towards healthier skin.

A Chance Discovery

An unusual connection between nutrients consumed, gut microflora, and skin health was stumbled upon by a doctor who was neither a GI surgeon nor a dermatologist.

A morbidly ill patient had sought out bypass surgery from multiple heart surgeons, but his condition was so poor no one was willing to operate on him. He changed his diet and added numerous supplements to his daily regimen, and within 6 months, he'd lost 45 pounds. He took his case to a new heart surgeon, who also initially refused to treat him, but the patient begged for a new angiogram, convinced his new habits must have helped. With nothing to lose, the doctor ordered another angiogram. To the doctor's astonishment, the patient's new regimen had reduced the plaque levels in his clogged arteries by 50%, allowing the man to survive a life-saving quadruple bypass.

The doctor researched the numerous supplements his patient had been taking, eliminating those he found to be useless. He was left with a handful of extracts from various sources ranging from mulberry leaf to pine bark, which he found to have certain properties in common. Most notably, they all contained polyphenols.

When new patients were asked to add dark, leafy greens and supplements containing polyphenols to their diets --- taking on regimens similar to the initial patient's --- not only did their health improve on multiple fronts, but nearly every one of them who had suffered from skin problems quickly found themselves blemish-free.

Further research has suggested up to 93% of skin problems can be fixed by merely addressing the body's microbial balance. This includes supplementing probiotics, polyphenols, and the vitamins necessary to keep the gastrointestinal tract running smoothly.

So, which supplements are going to be the best at that? Some of the best we've tried include:

- Mulberry extract

- Green tea extract
- Probiotics
- All of the essential 8 forms of Vitamin B
- Biotin/Vitamin H
- White tea leaf extract
- Pine bark extract
- Bitter melon extract

Combinations of these and many of the other diet changes mentioned above have the potential to not only clear your skin --- for good --- but to also fuel and even heal your body in a way you may not have imagined before. Not only will your skin thank you, but adding the Polyphenols, antioxidants, and essential vitamins can help your blood sugar, your cardiovascular health, and more. You have one body. Taking care of that amazing and beautiful machine from the inside can make you healthier, happier, and even more beautiful on the outside. Imagine a day where you don't have to use a medicated face wash to kill outer bacteria because you fueled the good microbes from the inside out. Using only nature and what humans are truly supposed to eat and get in their diets, you've killed the yeast and the bad bugs --- keeping your largest organ looking and feeling great!

One more thing --- just don't forget to stay hydrated. Your water consumption matters to keep that glow too. Are you ready to fix your skin once and for all?

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Super Boosting Adult Stem Cell Production

Stem Cells --- A Remarkable Breakthrough

Illness strikes someone every day, be it cancer, an autoimmune disease, or some other dreaded condition. Up until recently, treatment for these and many other illnesses has been limited at best. Maybe you've been struck with something for which there is little that traditional medicine can do. But what if we already had in our own bodies everything we needed to recover from countless ailments? What if that treatment could affect our health in other areas as well, even how we age?

As we get older, we inevitably lose energy, experience fatigue, and suffer from a host of physical issues: weakening of muscles, aching joints, cognitive decline, thinning and graying hair, and sagging, wrinkling skin. Even people who stay in great shape and eat well-balanced diets are subject to the eventual effects of aging. While several factors likely go into the aging process, recent studies have found that adult stem cells play a very important role.

There are over 200 types of human cells[1] . Everyone begins as a zygote, or a fertilized egg, which divides into a blastocyst, or a group of roughly 200 cells. Those cells individually divide to form every organ and type of tissue in the body, as well as the umbilical cord and placenta. Most of these cells each play a singular role, ruled by their DNA. For example, most skin cells can only ever be skin cells, no matter how much they are manipulated in a lab. Stem cells are different, however.

Getting Past the Past

When we think about stem cells, most of us will jump straight to the ethical dilemmas attached to harvesting and manipulating embryonic stem cells. However, embryonic stem cells are no longer the only focus in human stem cell research. A different set of stem cells, adult stem cells, don't come from embryos, because they can be harvested from anyone at any age, from nearly any part of the body.

Adult stem cells carry important functions researchers are still working to understand. In fact studies have found adult stem cells, sometimes called "somatic" cells, are responsible for all

the healing that takes place in the body. We still don't know where all adult stem cells originate, but bone marrow has been established as one source. They are distributed throughout the body into "stem cell niches,"[2] where they lie nearly dormant until they're needed. There, they become specific to the types of organs or tissues they will one day repair.

Unlike research using human embryonic stem cells --- which can only be harvested from deceased human embryos --- the use of adult stem cells is completely ethical because the cells used are harvested from the patient's own body. While adult stem cells have only been an area of focus for a few decades, data suggests they are capable of being used just as broadly as embryonic stem cells.

Adult Stem Cells: Open Slates

Adult stem cells can become nearly any type of cell, virtually able to repair any kind of tissue. So far, researchers have been able to identify adult stem cells in the skin, brain, muscles, teeth, a few vital organs, and certain areas in the male and female reproductive organs. They are able to divide the cells into six main types:

- Skin stem cells maintain the skin and hair follicles.
- Hematopoietic stem cells are responsible for generating every type of blood cell.
- Mesenchymal stem cells, sometimes called skeletal stem cells, mainly form bone, cartilage, and fat cells.
- Neural stem cells repair certain types of nerve cells and related connective and protective tissue cells.
- Epithelial stem cells are found in the lining of the digestive tract, and repair and maintain cells responsible for several digestive functions.

Stem cells have been shown to change their assignments, such as a skin stem cell transforming unexpectedly into a connective tissue stem cell. This is known as "transdifferentiation." While it has been found many times in animal models, there is no evidence to date that it also occurs in humans. However, some researchers have found ways to modify adult stem cells genetically, so that any available stem cell might be used where it is needed therapeutically. Similarly, cells from malfunctioning organs can be harvested, reprogrammed and used to repair those same organs.

Unfortunately, adult stem cells are relatively rare, and they become reluctant to divide once they're outside the body. For this reason, scientists are currently working to develop new ways to farm and replicate them. Adult stem cell therapy could someday be used to develop treatments for diseases ranging from diabetes to cancer to heart disease. Certain hematopoietic stem cells have been used in transplants for decades, but as the technology advances, adult

stem cells from other areas could be used to heal potentially any organ in any person.

The numbers of stem cells in a person's body fluctuates with age. Children have the highest concentration of stem cells, their numbers high enough to completely regenerate a layer of skin in a week. Some people retain high levels of stem cells into old age, but they are a lucky few. Our bodies start out with 2-3 trillion stem cells in circulation. By the time most people are 35, their numbers have dropped by 45%. At 50, those numbers are down to 50%. By 65, it plummets to 90%. This is why older people tend to heal more slowly, even tiny bruises sometimes take weeks to heal.

Where the Research Began

Stem cells were first studied in the 1950s, after hematopoietic and mesenchymal stem cells were identified in bone marrow. Researchers found each type of stem cell could generate any cell within its type set, such as hematopoietic stem cells being capable of generating multiple types of blood cells.

Neural stem cells were discovered in the 1960s, during studies on rats' brains. Until then, it was believed adult brains were incapable of any kind of regeneration. The issue was under debate until the 1990s, when neural stem cells were found capable of generating both astrocytes and oligodendrocytes, the cells necessary for healthy neuron growth, protection, and maintenance, as well as the neurons themselves.

The United States has been slow to the advances of stem cell therapy, the stigma created by original research --- on human embryonic stem cells --- remaining long after its ban in 2001. But back then, the majority of stem cell research did focus on embryonic stem cells. Breakthroughs since then have led to a focus on adult stem cells, and newer studies have shed light on just how powerful and important they are.

Preliminary Studies

Researchers have learned numerous ways to manipulate stem cells, and studies continue to offer new breakthroughs. For example, new treatments for diabetes could be just over the horizon. In one study, mice with damaged pancreases were treated with genetically repaired pancreatic stem cells. While the treatment didn't fully restore organ function, it did improve enough for the mice to recover some blood sugar-regulating ability.

Just as promising is the research on the role stem cells play in aging and related degenerative issues. A study conducted at Stanford University compared stem cell levels in young, 2-month-old mice and geriatric, 24-month-old mice. They found a correlation between stem cell counts and muscle tissue quality. The older mice presented with 66% more defects in their stem cells

than those of the younger mice, their counts far more reduced. After their assessment, the older mice were injected with stem cells. Their muscle stem cell numbers increased dramatically, to the point where their muscles were restored to the same quality as their younger counterparts.

Even more impressive is a study that was conducted at University of Pittsburgh on geriatric “fast-aging” mice. Stem cell therapy allowed the mice to live an average of 70 additional days, three times their usual lifespan. Researchers compare that to a human being living as long as 200 years. Future studies could work to apply similar advances in human longevity.

Medical Trials

Initial findings have opened the doors to whole new avenues of study. Devastating, previously untreatable conditions are now potentially treatable, and researchers are hopeful to extend what they know to a variety of additional ailments. New, targeted therapies are continuously being developed.

Adult stem cells were used in the experimental treatment of a man with chronic inflammatory demyelinating polyneuropathy, a spinal condition that causes numbness and lameness in the extremities. In only two months, he went from being bound to a wheelchair, unable to feel his legs, to relearning how to walk. He made a full recovery.

A 10-year study on stem cells’ effects on scleroderma, a deadly autoimmune disease that causes a thickening of the skin and arteries, was conducted between 26 American and Canadian universities[3] . One group of 36 patients suffering from scleroderma underwent treatment to eradicate the faulty immune cells, and then received transplanted healthy blood stem cells. A second group of 39 participants received treatment with cyclophosphamide, which is the typical treatment for scleroderma, and no additional therapy.

At the end of the study, patients who had received the stem cell therapy reported their quality of life as nearly twice that of the participants on cyclophosphamide. Survival rate after six years was also significantly higher. Some stem cell-treated patients were even able to stop taking medication for scleroderma altogether.

Perhaps most promising, a 2010 study was conducted using stem cell therapy on individuals with multiple sclerosis (MS) and amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS[4]). Both are progressive diseases that attack the peripheral nervous system, significantly reducing functioning and quality of life, and both are fatal.

The 34 participants, 15 diagnosed with MS and 19 with ALS, were given stem cell therapy and re-evaluated after six months. All tests on motor functioning showed either disease stability or notable improvement. MRIs showed evidence of the transplanted cells migrating through the

central nervous system, and blood tests showed fewer neurological inflammatory markers for both patients.

U.S. Slow to Catch Up

Stem cell therapy has long been used outside the U.S., along with many therapies still yet to be approved by the FDA. For that reason, some people have opted to travel outside the country for treatments that might otherwise be unavailable. One example is an NFL quarterback who underwent an experimental stem cell transplant to treat bulging discs in his neck. He'd previously had three operations with no positive result, and he ended up unable to play football for a year. He experienced neck pain, weakness in his arms and legs, and on some days he had difficulty even standing.

Some called his trip to an exclusive clinic in Switzerland an act of desperation and likely to be a waste of money. However, this football player returned not only to make a comeback, but to have the best season for a quarterback to date. At nearly 38, he threw 5,477 yards, had 55 touchdown passes, helping to score 606 points, and went on to take his team to the championships.

This comeback is indicative of far more than simply a healed neck. Most football players are retired by that age, the demands of the game taking their toll on even the strongest and heartiest of players. While a direct connection is impossible to make, the correlation between that one treatment and the player's performance is compelling.

With so much data available by so many different universities and research hospitals, the continued FDA limits on stem cell therapy is nothing short of puzzling. Hopefully, it's only a matter of time before more recent advances find their way into mainstream medicine.

Broader Treatments

Further research in stem cell therapy could treat far more than illness and injury. Some believe it may even be able to turn back the clock.

A Harvard University study showed adult stem cell therapy not only repaired heart tissue and brain damage, but it also slowed vision degeneration and cognitive decline, revived damaged hair follicles, reduced joint and muscle pain, and improved skin elasticity. Similar findings have been found at John Hopkins University, M.I.T., and Harvard.

Research at Rockefeller University found a correlation between stem cell counts and smoother skin. Sanford Burnham Medical Research Institute found increased stem cell counts could stimulate new hair growth. The University of Naples, Italy found low levels of stem cells led to erectile dysfunction --- and that a boost in those levels could restore regular function.

Factors Within --- and Outside --- Your Control

Lifestyle choices can affect stem cell counts, and the typical American lifestyle --- the foods we eat, the average sedentary behaviors, and the pollutants we're all subjected to --- all contribute to stem cell deficiencies. What's worse, research indicates that decreased stem cell counts may be one of the largest contributing factors to aging. Put simply, the lower your stem cell count, the more quickly you may age.

Stem cell transplants can cost tens of thousands of dollars, none of which is covered by insurance. Add that to the many techniques that have yet to be approved in the United States, and most forms of stem cell therapy are really only available to those who have the means to travel and pay for the procedures in cash. That means, save for the select few who receive free treatment in clinical trials, many of these treatments are available exclusively to the rich.

Researchers have sought out other means of increasing stem cell numbers, with mixed results. One compound, GM-CSF, was found in vitro to increase stem cell numbers by 46%. However, GM-CSF is expensive to produce, so again, the treatment is out of reach of the average American.

Some Practical Alternatives

L-carnosine, an antioxidant, was found to increase in vitro stem cell counts by 25%. Researchers at Georgetown University gave L-carnosine to 25 patients to study its effects on cognitive function. After 12 weeks, their I.Q. scores were significantly higher. Three other studies conducted in the U.S., Britain, and Taiwan showed L-carnosine may help to prevent declines in cognitive function.

When combined with another antioxidant found in blueberry extract, L-carnosine's in vitro effects on stem cell counts jumped to 83%. It turns out that, when certain antioxidants and nutrients are combined, they work synergistically. This means each boosts the properties of the other, increasing efficacy. A study conducted at the University of South Florida had participants rate their physical fitness while using those two combined antioxidants. Within the first two weeks, participants reported feeling younger, stronger, and more energetic. They also had improved memory and experienced increases in sex drive.

Another promising supplement is the amino acid L-leucine, which seems to have a particularly effective influence in muscle strength. One study administered L-leucine to older mice, and then found their muscle stem cells to match those of younger mice. Another study conducted at Leeds Metropolitan University in England compared the performance of 26 amateur athletes, some taking the supplement others taking a placebo. The athletes who had taken L-leucine were able to lift 31% more weight than the placebo group.

Another study had participants between 40 and 75 to take a combination of L-carnosine, L-leucine, blueberry extract, green tea extract, and Vitamin D3 for six months. After only two weeks, 93% of participants reported feeling stronger, with more energy and far less fatigue. 87% reported clearer thinking, increased motivation, and felt like exercising more often. 80% said they had less muscle pain, and 73% reported less muscle pain. 73% also found their skin to look smoother.

Boosts to stem cell counts can have amazing benefits for those suffering from diseases or the degenerative effects of aging, but even healthy people in their prime can take advantage of these recent advances. High stem cell counts can help keep you in optimum health, slow the onset of aging, and keep you performing at peak levels. The potential technology, and the breakthroughs yet to come, will undoubtedly hold great promise in changing the way we look at modern medicine.

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