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HEALTHY BODY, MIND, AND SPIRIT

Benefits and Practices of Mindfulness

A Naturopathic Perspective

Obtaining Life Balance

Where Do I Start?

Targeted Use of Fish Oil

A Review of the Evidence

Vol. 2, No. 1 • Free
November/December 2017



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HOLIDAY SEASON?



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Editor's Letter



Our final issue of 2017 begins with the notion of balance, which is important to me, especially at this time of year. Work-life balance is a popular topic. However, in addition to having a family and career we need time for ourselves. With this in mind, our work-life balance should be

part of an annual review. We know that work and family go well before other needs, but where does our social life, fitness, relaxation, or even sleep fit in? Not to mention the desire to eat well and the importance of taking care of our health...

I prefer not to wait until the New Year to make resolutions or to change habits. When the seasons change, I like to make time to reflect on my life in order to refocus my priorities and live for the moment. That's why I particularly like this issue's featured articles on balanced lifestyles and the benefits and practices of mindfulness.

Scents linked to emotions create memories, and for me, the holiday season is full of familiar scents. Whether it's the aroma from the preparation of a classic holiday dish or the bouquet of essential oils diffused in the home, these scents remain etched in my memory. Whether you're taking time for yourself at home, or going out for the holidays, take the time to do what you love to create your own happy memories! On behalf of the whole team, I wish you love, health and peace.

Sonia Lamoureux
Editor-in-Chief

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Obtaining Life Balance

Where Do I Start?

by Dr. Krysten DeSouza, ND

We all have that one person in our lives who appears to have everything together. The person who seems to be able to do it all, enjoy it all, and always looks positively refreshed at the end of it all. Things come together with seamless effort, and as you stand in this person's presence with your hair in disarray, gasping for breath, and in utter panic mode because you can't find your keys, you wonder: "How *do* they do it?"

Well, finding balance in your life is a very individual thing and can look completely different for everyone. It involves a lot of introspection, honesty, and patience with oneself while changes are made into habits. They say it takes 21 days to break an old habit and 21 days to make a new habit. That means that within three weeks, you could be heading in one

of two very different directions, depending on what you choose.

How Does One Achieve Balance?

This is the part where introspection and honesty come into play. Take some time right now to read through the first few steps and think about your answers.

- 1. Roles:** Make a list of all the words that can be used to describe you, all the different roles you have to play in your life (e.g. sister, mother, friend, athlete, chef, etc.)
- 2. Prioritize:** Put things in order from most to least important, taking into account the things you *have* to do as well as the things you *want* to do for yourself.
- 3. Manage your time:** This is by far the most important step, and it can make or break your routine if not done properly. Set your goals for the day, and don't push yourself to accomplish things beyond this plan. Adding too much to your plate will make your day hectic, causing you to work less efficiently and burn out sooner. Planning the right number of things per day will leave you feeling accomplished and productive.
- 4. Delegate:** Do whatever you need to do to meet your deadlines, and things that don't need to be done by you can be done by someone else. Don't be afraid to ask for help if you need it. Most of the time, the people around you are not even aware that you are drowning in responsibilities

and would be completely okay with helping out if they knew exactly how you needed help. So be specific when you delegate a task and remember to always be appreciative, even if its not done exactly how you would do it.

5. Plan ahead: Set things up today to make tomorrow easier. Prepare lunches and snacks, get your gym bag ready, set out your clothes for the next day, etc. A little bit of time spent today saves a lot of time running around tomorrow.

6. Be patient with yourself: 90% of any experience is your perception of the experience. Every day will throw different challenges at you, and it's important to be flexible with your schedule to avoid feeling discouraged. If you are getting frustrated with yourself for not working faster or being more focused, your whole day will take on that same vibe. Take everything one day at a time, and don't forget to take deep breaths when you feel overwhelmed.



So Why Choose Balance?

Of course, we'd all like a reminder that our heads are still attached to our bodies every once in a while. That feeling of constant cloudiness, brain fog, and confusion can leave you disconnected from the world and struggling to make it through the day. But balance doesn't just begin with getting your head on straight and clearing your mental fogginess. As a holistic health-care professional, it is impossible to see the body as anything but the whole, and this means that finding true balance begins on the inside.

GUT

We are all familiar with the phrase "you are what you eat." But really, we should consider that we are only as good as the bacteria living within us. And because 75% of our immune system lives within our gut, we are really only capable of withstanding that which our bacteria can withstand. Thus, the balance of good and bad begins with the bacteria in our bodies.

DIET

Once our bacteria and gut health are in order, we can feel more confident that the nutrients we eat can be properly digested and absorbed by our bodies. Our next challenge is the balance of proteins, carbs, fats, and micronutrients within our diet. Food is our fuel (and our medicine!), and the balance of our nutrients will be different depending on our health and fitness goals.

WATER

Depending on our age and gender, our bodies can be made of anywhere from 50 to 75% water. Without even feeling thirsty, our need for water on the cellular level remains the same. When dehydrated, body processes start to slow down and function inefficiently. Fluid balance is a key component of athletic performance and can be very dangerous if overlooked.

EXERCISE

Depending on your health goals and personal interests, your exercise regime will vary. For those who struggle with exercise, finding balance could just be about equating gym days versus non-gym days in a week. For those who exercise regularly, balance is more about the types of exercise you do and the variety that comes with cardio versus strength training, or low versus high intensity.





Regular exercise is great. It reduces our risk for all sorts of chronic diseases (heart disease, diabetes, depression). But one thing to realize is that our bodies adapt to whatever stresses we put on them. Our bones are constantly remodeling and breaking down, depositing cells into areas where stronger bone structure is needed. Runners have strong bones in their legs, but this comes at the expense of weaker bone structure in their upper bodies. This means that slipping and falling on ice could lead to a fairly easy fracture in someone with very weak bone structure.

Alternating your workout routines will give your whole body a workout and improve your overall fitness.

If you don't have access to a gym, exercise could be intentionally taking the stairs or doing more gardening, housework, yoga, etc. Working out at home could include wall sits, pushups, planks, sit-ups, squats, and lunges.

SOCIAL

Even the most social of butterflies need a night to themselves every once in a while. And on the flip side, even the introverts can use a night out. Finding balance in your social life will allow you to get the rest you need, be productive at work, and keep your friends. If you are

finding it difficult to fit exercise and socialization into your day, consider switching up your hangout from the bar stool to the boardwalk. Your friends and your bank book will thank you!

SLEEP

In a busy schedule, sleep is often the essential that suffers. On average, we need eight hours of sleep per night, but this number varies between people. Sleep is important for helping your body to repair, and it allows your immune system to strengthen itself and prevent you from getting sick. Many smartphone apps are available with timers that can be set to remind you to get ready for bed or turn off the TV. Once you learn how many hours of sleep you need to wake refreshed and function properly the next day, you can try your best to incorporate that into your daily plan.

Other Things to Remember!

- **Maintain your support network**

For all the activities you carry out in a day, everything would seem



Other Recent NaturopathicCurrents.com Articles:

like less of a chore if you didn't have to do it alone. Running in a group is the perfect example of finding ways to be part of a supportive group while getting in your steps for the day. If cooking is a chore for you, get your kids involved with making salads, setting the table, washing dishes, etc. Turn on the music and make it a fun family experience!

• **Stress Management**

Laugh it off. Write your favourite uplifting quote on a business card, and stick it in your wallet so you always remember to keep cool in stressful situations. Keep your eye on the bigger picture and maintain perspective. Surround yourself with people who inspire and uplift you. Don't take yourself too seriously, and *always always* maintain your sense of humour.

• **Live in the Moment**

Focus on what you are doing right now, live in the present, and don't worry about the past. Have an idea what's coming in the future, but only so that it can help steer what you are doing today in the direction of what you want. Aside from helping you to do things properly, this drastically reduces the overwhelming burden you feel and can significantly reduce stress levels. Last piece of advice for today: Don't forget to breathe!

For references and other great articles, visit NaturopathicCurrents.com



Dr. Krysten DeSouza, ND

She strives to share her knowledge and experience with patients to help them discover more about their

health and find relief from their ailments.
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Lavender in Your Daily Life—Four Little-Known Uses

by Anne Hussain, ND, Birth Doula

Lavender oil is extracted via steam distillation of its flowering tops for topical application; however, in aromatherapy, the whole plant is used. The oil can be used in a variety of ways: ingested orally, inhaled, [. . .]



The Foundational Five—Naturopathic Approaches

by Christina Bjorndal, ND

The principles of naturopathic medicine decree that naturopathic treatments should always be uniquely tailored to work with each individual patient. Naturopathic doctors (NDs) look at patients [. . .]



Eight Mindfulness Techniques for the Everyday Athlete

by Alison Chen, ND

Today, I decided to think my way to a set of washboard abs... Who needs the gym, am I right? Unfortunately, no amount of thinking without action will get us into top physical shape. There's no getting around the [. . .]

Vitamin



by Philip Rouchotas, MSc, ND,
and Heidi Fritz, MA, ND

Vitamin C, also known as ascorbic acid, is a water-soluble vitamin and antioxidant in the body. Vitamin C is best known for its effects on immune function as well as for the treatment and prevention of various types of infections, most notably upper respiratory tract infections (URTI) such as cold and flu. A recent study found that supplementation with vitamin C plus probiotics was effective in reducing the rate of URTI by 33% compared with placebo in children attending preschool. The number of days with URTI symptoms was reduced by an average of 21 days

compared to placebo. Another study found that supplementation of 1 g (1000 mg) of vitamin C was helpful in reducing URTI among teenage athletes, a population which suffers from increased infections due to the physical stresses of training.

Vitamin C is also useful for other types of infections as well. For instance, one study showed that the addition of vitamin C to standard antibiotic therapy improved the effectiveness of the regimen in treating cervicitis (infection of the cervix) due to chlamydia. The addition of vitamin C to standard therapy with multiple antibiotics for

H. pylori infection of the stomach resulted in superior eradication of the bacteria, increasing eradication rates from 48% to 78%. Vitamin C has also been shown to benefit bladder infections. Finally, in a study of patients with sepsis—a serious systemic blood infection—following surgery, vitamin C supplementation was shown to help protect and improve the function of neutrophils, the specialized white blood cells responsible for fighting bacterial infection.

Article including references on our blog: newrootsherbal.com/en/blog

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Vitamin D and Adrenals

Emerging Research

by Philip Rouchotas, MSc, ND, and Heidi Fritz, MA, ND

Vitamin D has been in the spotlight in recent years. More Canadians are becoming aware of its importance in a number of roles including mood, immunity, and cancer prevention; and more Canadians seem aware of the importance of supplementation given our northern climates. Nonetheless, vitamin D is a hot topic amongst the research community, and new data continues to emerge. This article highlights some of the more novel applications of vitamin D based on such findings.

Often overlooked is the fact that vitamin D has a steroid structure and is actually considered a steroid hormone, similar to the sex hormones estrogen and progesterone, as well as the adrenal hormone cortisol (also known as the “stress hormone”). As such, it should not be surprising when it appears that vitamin D may augment some of the functions of these hormone signaling pathways. For instance, vitamin D has been shown to impact adrenal function and reduce inflammation—for instance, also a property of cortisol—and affect ovarian function in patients with fertility problems. This article will focus on adrenal function and inflammation.

Adrenal Function

The potential role of vitamin D in adrenal function is particularly

fascinating. The adrenals are the effector organ for the hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal (HPA) axis. The HPA axis becomes activated during times of stress, pumping out high levels of cortisol. Cortisol helps the body adapt to stress, combats inflammation, and talks to other hormones via the thyroid and ovaries. Over time, high levels of stress can lead to inadequate cortisol output, and this is commonly called adrenal fatigue.

While existence of the central hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal (HPA) axis—made up of organs in the brain that communicate with the adrenals—has been recognized for decades, new research has described a related entity called the skin HPA axis analog. This system seems to be comprised of skin pigmentation cells such as melanocytes. There seems to be a mechanism whereby local events in the skin, namely exposure to UVB radiation, seem to activate the skin HPA axis analog, which in turn interacts with and activates the central HPA axis. Indeed, research shows that exposure to UVB increases hormones such as corticotropin releasing hormone (CRH), a hormone released by the brain to signal activity to the adrenals. Vitamin D appears to mediate this effect in part, and can directly increase local expression of such factors as CRF and other HPA-activating factors such as POMC





(proopiomelanocortin). This begs the question whether vitamin D is involved in regulating the central HPA axis, and to what extent.

Another interesting study suggests that vitamin D may have a role in regulating glucocorticoids such as cortisol during pregnancy. In a study of pregnant animals, researchers induced vitamin D deficiency and compared results to outcomes in vitamin D sufficient animals. Maternal vitamin D deficiency decreased expression of an enzyme called 11 β -hydroxysteroid dehydrogenase type II, which inactivates cortisol as it passes through the placenta to the baby. This is a protective mechanism, since excessive cortisol exposure during fetal life is associated with a host of adverse outcomes, including decreased fetal growth, defects in placental health and blood flow, as well as increased risk of heart disease and diabetes in adulthood.

A cell line study found that vitamin D was involved in regulating cellular production and breakdown of cortisol. When adipocytes were exposed to vitamin D, they both produced two- to six-fold higher levels of cortisol, and simultaneously they increased up to two-fold the expression of the enzyme 11 β -hydroxysteroid dehydrogenase type I, which is responsible for breaking down cortisol in the tissues.

These studies suggest that vitamin D has a role in regulating cortisol metabolism and activity in pregnancy, as well as in nonpregnant states as well. Vitamin D appears to be involved in both the regulation of the HPA axis activation and the regulation of local cortisol concentrations at the tissue level. Although the precise relationship between vitamin D and adrenal function requires much further study and clarification, it seems that vitamin D sufficiency

may be more important than previously thought in regards to optimal adrenal function.

Rheumatoid Arthritis

Cortisol is the most powerful anti-inflammatory endogenous hormone in the body. It has been hypothesized by some that suboptimal adrenal production of cortisol may exacerbate symptoms of inflammatory conditions such as autoimmune arthritis. It is therefore of interest to note that recent studies demonstrated significant benefits on rheumatoid arthritis (RA) associated with vitamin D supplementation.

A total of 39 patients with early RA were randomized to receive standard treatment with methotrexate (MTX) and glucocorticoid medications, with or without the addition of vitamin D₃ as a single dose of 300 000 IU. After three months, the patients who received vitamin D reported significantly improved general health status.

Another study, of 150 patients with RA who had been on stable disease-modifying antirheumatic drugs (DMARDs) for three months, found that these patients were vitamin D deficient, and that the addition of vitamin D over a period of three months resulted in significant improvements in disease activity as well as an increase in vitamin D levels.

A review paper published in 2015 examines the relationship between vitamin D and various adrenal problems and calls for further research in this area. This will indeed be an intriguing area to follow in the coming years.

[Article including references on our blog: newrootsherbal.com/en/blog](http://newrootsherbal.com/en/blog)

Kids VS Bugs

Now that fall has set in and the winter months are approaching, chances are your child has experienced some sort of sickness and their immune system has taken a hit. It is no surprise to see your kid get sick up to eight times per year—they may even get *you* sick. But don't worry; this is a normal process for the development of an efficient and strong immune system! So how can you ensure the immune system is working at its best?

Start with the basics! Wash your hands with soap and water over using hand sanitizers. Hand sanitizers don't differentiate between the good and bad bacteria on our skin, and can actually have a detrimental effect on our immunity. Even worse: they can create superbugs that are resistant to antibiotics. Next, you want to drink plenty of water, eat a diet predominately focused on plant-based whole foods (think eating for the colour of the rainbow), reduce sugar intake, and get plenty of quality sleep.

Once your basics are covered, you can call in some additional support to help your immune system function optimally. The first thing you need to do is facilitate the growth of the good bacteria in your gastrointestinal tract (GIT) with the use of probiotics. Up to 70–80% of our immunity comes from the good bacteria in our GIT, and probiotics have an immunomodulatory effect—meaning they will help increase or decrease the immune response depending on the body's needs.

However, not all probiotics are created equal, and the most important thing you can look for in a capsule is that it is enteric-coated. This means the capsule can withstand the attack from the stomach acid, preserving the valuable bacteria inside. Not to fret though; if your kid can't swallow a pill, you can hide powdered probiotics in their food such as yogurt, smoothies, and apple sauce and still reap some benefits.

Next, take some vitamin D! It is critical in our innate and adaptive immunity, helping us fend off colds and reducing the duration by up to two full days. Dosing of vitamin D has recently been under critical evaluation for being too low, and current research is suggesting the following dosing guidelines to be more accurate:

< 1 y.o.	1000 IU/day
> 1 y.o.	2000–3000 IU/day
> 18 y.o.	8000 IU/day

It may take some time for these to be the official recommended dosing, so speak to a health-care professional before using these doses.

Finally, if you are worried your child is not getting enough nutrients from their diet—yes, kids have been known to be picky eaters—you can add in a multivitamin short-term to help boost immune function. Powder-delivered products may be much easier for kids to consume,

and making sure the supplement contains therapeutic doses of vitamins C and A, zinc, B vitamins, minerals, and iron will ensure a healthy physical and mental body.

In closing, getting sick this fall and winter is probably going to happen, but how long it lasts, how severe it is, and the frequency of it can be improved upon. Simple adjustments to your diet, lifestyle, and supplement regime could be all it takes. Think of catching these colds as keeping our immune system up-to-date! And always remember to get out in nature; it is after all the best form of medicine!

See you outside this fall and winter!



Dr. Tanner Alden, ND

Dr. Alden is a naturopathic doctor running a family practice in North Vancouver, BC. He has a keen interest in GI health, stress and burnout, and autoimmune disease.

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Lice Advice

Featuring Lavender and Neem

by Gordon Raza, BSc

There are few things that terrify parents of school age children more than news of a head lice (*Pediculus capitis*) infestation in the classroom. Topical over-the-counter drugs such as permethrin have long been the insecticide of choice for lice. Unfortunately, their 20-day lifespan leads to many generations of exposure to nurture genetic

mutations of these “nasty nits” and the emergence of drug-resistant species.

There are natural alternatives, with plenty of applications for organic essential oils such as neem and lavender for relief from lice infestation. Neem contains a complex compound called azadirachtin, which interrupts feeding behaviour of lice leading to their death, while biological activity of lavender effectively suffocates their respiratory system.

Careful examination of hair near the root and scalp should reveal sesame seed-sized lice that move, and yellowish-looking dandruff-like nits (eggs) if your child is indeed infected. Even if your child is lice-free,

adding a few drops of lavender essential oil to your regular shampoo could prevent infestation and give your family some peace of mind.

In the event of an infestation, add several drops of both lavender and neem essential oil to an organic shampoo, lather up, massage thoroughly, and leave in hair for as long as you can (at least ten minutes). This prolonged exposure will kill adult lice and erode the sticky substance that allows the nits (eggs) to cling to the scalp and shafts of hair. Rinse, then add some conditioner. The next step requires careful examination with a fine-toothed comb, plenty of patience, and perhaps a feature film the two of you can enjoy together. The incubation period for lice is between seven and ten days, so even if your child is symptom-free, this process should be repeated regularly during this period.

Hang in there; your patience and persistence will prevail!



Traveler's Diarrhea:

Size Matters with *Saccharomyces boulardii*

by Gordon Raza, BSc



Attempts to portray the action of probiotics within the gastrointestinal tract can get a little dramatic, with the portrayal of good probiotic species versus evil pathogenic strains. The truth is that both beneficial and potentially pathogenic microorganisms coexist within healthy individuals. Digestive, immune, and general health only tend to suffer when the balance of good bacteria is compromised. This can occur due to poor dietary habits which can fuel the growth of harmful, opportunistic microbes within the gut; antibiotic therapy which can disrupt the natural dominance of beneficial bacteria; or exposure to infection-causing bacteria such as *Escherichia coli*, *Clostridium difficile*, or *Salmonella* species to name a few.

For *E. coli* contamination—responsible for most cases of traveler's diarrhea—to *C. difficile*

infection—common within hospital environments—intervention with *Saccharomyces boulardii* has a clinical history exceeding 35 years for the prevention and treatment of these bacterial-driven diarrheal diseases.

A common term employed to describe its action is that it “crowds out harmful bacteria.” Indeed, the fact that *S. boulardii* cells are approximately ten times larger than pathogenic microbes plays a role for its effectiveness. The size advantage is amplified when beneficial cells multiply; they occupy even more space and compete for nutrients, which suppresses bacterial overgrowth.

The biological activity of *S. boulardii* works in several ways. It secretes an enzyme that breaks down and digests bacterial toxins. Animal trials also demonstrate *S. boulardii*

to strengthen immune response of the host (you) to these toxins. *S. boulardii* further helps reduce symptoms of diarrhea, with secretion of compounds that act as a roadblock to inflammatory pathways activated by bacterial infection. Inflammation of cells populating the brush border of the intestines compromise the protective mucosal lining and interfere with the critical role of fluid resorption which causes diarrhea.

Saccharomyces boulardii definitely suppresses the growth and activity of pathogenic microbes. Supplementation with a broad-spectrum probiotic is also recommended to jump-start your journey to recovery.

Here's to a natural “gut reaction” to restore your great health.

LIFE IN THE FAST LANE

A PROSTATE STORY

by Gordon Raza, BSc

Life is good: You're cruising down a four lane freeway with your traffic app predicting an on-time arrival to your destination. Then suddenly, you spot a stalled car with its hazards on. You naturally slow down to change lanes and glance over your shoulder out of curiosity. This behaviour—innocent as it seems—when multiplied over hundreds or even thousands of motorists, creates a traffic jam.

For most men approaching middle age, urogenital performance is on cruise control until the walnut-sized prostate gland falls prey to benign prostate hyperplasia (BPH), making urination more like a “stop and go” commute. This form of prostate enlargement reflects rapid growth of cells within the prostate gland, which gradually restricts the flow of urine in the urethra shortly after it exits the bladder. Subsequent pressure on the bladder leads to a slowdown of urinary stream and multiple bathroom visits. Even worse is the disruption of sleep patterns from night time urination (nocturia) and a feeling of incomplete voiding of the bladder which can negatively impact the spontaneity of intimacy.

There are one-dimensional drugs that either relax or exert a hormonal effect on the prostate, with potential side effects that range from nausea to back pain and even impotence. However, the emergence of nutraceuticals with a track record for side effect-free relief of BPH has led to the availability of side effect-free formulas for North American men.

Naturally sourced plant sterols, compounds that form cell walls within plants, are a critical component of formulas. When taken in therapeutic amounts, they interfere with the activity of an enzyme (5α -reductase) that converts testosterone to dihydrotestosterone, the hormone that accelerates cell growth within the prostate. Pumpkin seed oil, rich in nutrients beneficial for prostate health, further inhibits action of this enzyme.

In the same manner a well-balanced diet is recommended for good health, a diverse selection of nutrients is essential for a healthy prostate. Rye flower pollen extracts are becoming a mainstay for prostate formulas. They contain a mosaic of vitamins, carotenoids, minerals, amino acids, enzymes,

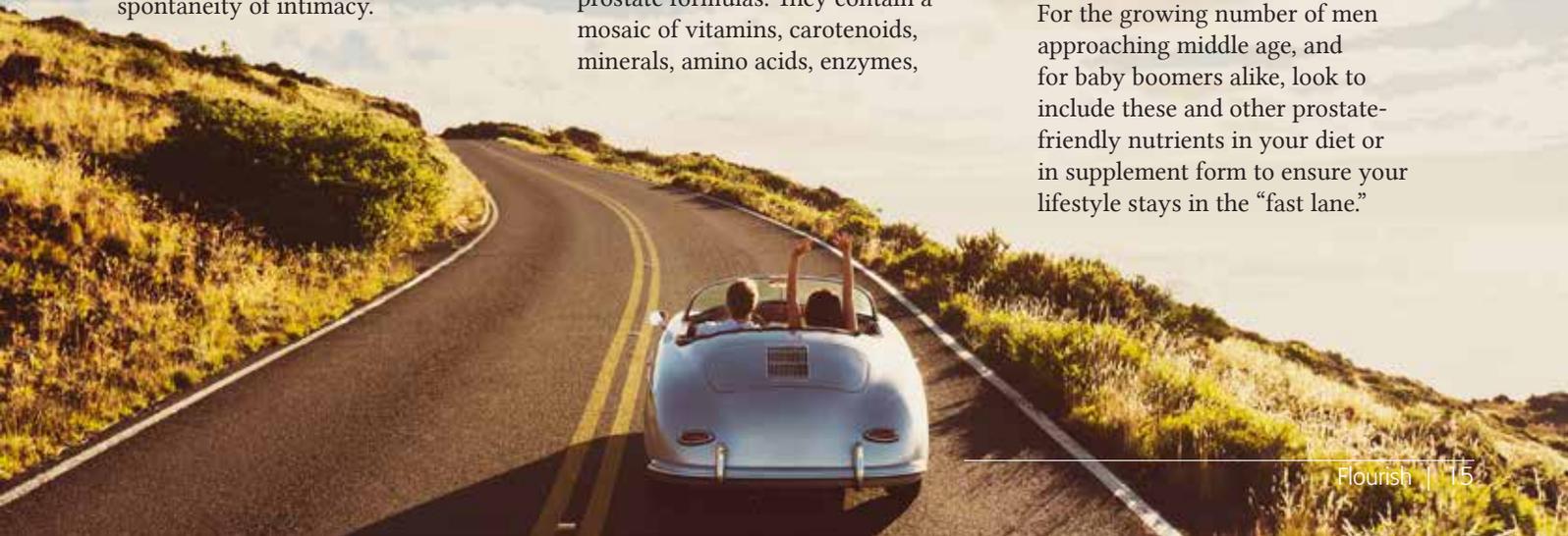
and fatty acids that work to reduce edema (swelling) and nonbacterial inflammation of the prostate.

Extracts from the berries of saw palmetto have been used for hundreds of years by Native Americans—including the Seminoles nation of Florida—for urogenital health and fertility. Modern extraction techniques render extracts of saw palmetto rich in fatty acids, plant sterols, and flavonoids that have been proven as effective as prescription drugs for relief from symptoms of BPH.

Selenium and zinc are among the magnificent minerals that contribute to prostate wellbeing; so if you don't eat oysters on a regular basis, look for these in a supplement.

The prostate gland multitasks to produce fluid critical for sperm transport and as the muscle that delivers the male complement of DNA responsible for conception. Unfortunately, this gland is situated where urogenital and reproductive lanes merge. An enlarged prostate can prove to be a roadblock for ongoing urogenital health.

For the growing number of men approaching middle age, and for baby boomers alike, look to include these and other prostate-friendly nutrients in your diet or in supplement form to ensure your lifestyle stays in the “fast lane.”



How You Can Support Your Liver This Holiday Season



We look forward to the holiday season all year long as a time of rest, festive gatherings with friends and family, and getting some closure for the year. But when December finally rolls around, the reality can often be quite different. A holiday diet rarely contributes positively to your health. Eggnog, excessive salt, and endless desserts can quickly add up; a hectic schedule can lead to even more stress than usual; and to top it all off, we're battling cold and flu season. Combined, all of these factors can really take their toll on our bodies, but especially on our diligent livers.

The liver performs many vital functions for our body, helping it to filter out toxins, process nutrients, and regulate hormones as well as the supply of some essential vitamins and minerals. Support this vital organ this holiday season by making a habit of following these tips to help you all year long.

Be Aware of the Risks

Your liver works to remove toxins from your body, so habits like consuming alcohol and junk food take away from the support it needs to do its job. Excessive drinking

can damage the liver and inhibit its performance, which in turn can lead to health issues like hormone disorders, chemical sensitivity, high cholesterol, fatigue, and even weight gain, to name a few.

A poor diet consisting of saturated fat and junk food can accumulate fat in the liver. Combined with poor exercise habits, it can lead to fatty liver disease. Minimize your indulgences during the holiday season, and maintain your exercise routine to help keep your liver healthy.

Natural Health Support for the Liver

In addition to keeping up with your diet and exercise, you may also want to consider natural supplementation. Milk thistle is an herb containing several substances that aid your liver's functioning. Specifically, silymarin is a flavonoid with antioxidant and anti-inflammatory properties that can protect the liver from toxins and help it to repair itself by growing new liver cells. Milk thistle is available in many forms, including capsules and liquid extracts, and a supplement can be a

convenient way to give your liver a boost.

A combination of stress and alcohol consumption can quickly deplete the body's store of B vitamins, which are not only necessary for the liver's detoxification process, but also contribute to many other functions in our bodies. In addition to a healthy, greens-rich diet, having a quality vitamin B-complex supplement handy can easily resupply your body with these important minerals.

Remember that there are many factors that can affect your health during the holiday season. Be aware of how you can support liver function including using safe, effective, and high-quality natural health products found at your local CHFA-member health-food store.



Michelle W. Book

A graduate in holistic nutrition and spokesperson for the Canadian Health Food Association (CHFA), she focuses on living life and raising a family focused on holistic health and wellness.



Magnesium

by Philip Rouchotas, MSc, ND,
and Heidi Fritz, MA, ND

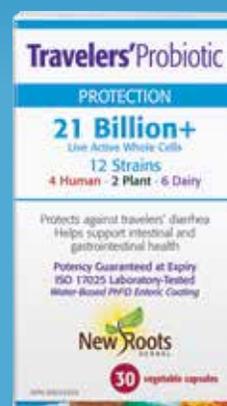
Magnesium deficiency is said to be one of the most common nutrient deficiencies. It is involved in regulation of impulse conduction in the nervous system as well as in the musculoskeletal system, where it functions as an inhibitory ion and muscle relaxant. Magnesium also serves as a cofactor for many biochemical reactions related to energy production in the body as well; for example, glycolysis and the Krebs cycle, both of which are important in the generation of a molecule called adenosine triphosphate (ATP). ATP is the chemical form of energy inside each cell. In the digestive system, magnesium also has a gentle laxative effect.

Supplementation with magnesium has been found to benefit conditions affected by muscle spasm, such as migraine, which is caused by spasm of the smooth muscle of blood vessels travelling to the head. Menstrual cramps, which are caused in part by contraction of the uterine muscle, are also improved with magnesium supplementation. Other conditions such as restless leg syndrome or calf cramping like charley horse may also benefit. Because magnesium is also an inhibitory factor in the nervous system, supplementation with magnesium may also help promote relaxation and sleep.

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PROUDLY 

Targeted Use of Fish Oil

A Review of the Evidence

by Philip Rouchotas, MSc, ND,
and Heidi Fritz, MA, ND

Oily fish and fish oil are the richest sources of long-chain omega-3 fatty acids, eicosapentaenoic acid (EPA) and docosahexaenoic acid (DHA). DHA is an important structural component of the brain and nervous system, while EPA is a powerful anti-inflammatory and mood-regulating nutrient. Fish-oil products have become more sophisticated in recent years, with variations on EPA:DHA ratio, dosing, etc. Research suggests that different oils may have superior effects for specific therapeutic goals or conditions. How does one determine the best oil in a given scenario?

Cardiovascular

Omega-3s first rose to prominence for their cardioprotective effects. GISSI, the Italian study of patients surviving a heart attack, was the first important trial demonstrating the ability of fish oil to lower the risk of coronary (heart-related) death. In this study, a dose of 1 g (1000 mg) combined EPA+DHA was given. This was among patients who were already receiving standard-of-care medications. Another study in Japan, JELIS, went on to show that at a higher dose, approximately 2 g (2000 mg) of combined EPA+DHA, supplementation with fish oil was

also able to prevent nonfatal second coronary events. At a dose of 2 g combined EPA+DHA, fish oil has also been shown to powerfully lower triglyceride, a component of a person's cholesterol profile that is associated with adverse cardiovascular health.

Inflammation

Many chronic health conditions are associated with abnormally high levels of inflammation. Some of these include arthritis, chronic pain, fibromyalgia, many skin conditions such as eczema and psoriasis, asthma, inflammatory bowel

diseases such as ulcerative colitis, and Crohn's disease. Indeed, it is thought that some of the process of plaque formation in the heart—atherosclerosis—is inflammatory in nature. It is also now thought that depression is partly inflammatory in nature. The list goes on...

Both DHA and EPA have anti-inflammatory effects, but EPA is superior in this regard. The enzymes cyclooxygenase (COX) and lipoxygenase (LOX) are responsible for metabolizing certain fatty acids to specific cytokines—signaling chemicals—in the body. These enzymes convert

the omega-6 fatty acid arachidonic acid (AA) into the proinflammatory cytokines prostaglandin E₂ (PGE₂) and leukotriene B₄ (LTB₄), thereby promoting further inflammation. Both DHA and EPA function as competitive inhibitors of these enzymes; this means that they can compete with arachidonic acid for “space” in these enzymes. The more EPA and DHA is taken up by the enzyme, the less arachidonic acid is taken up, and therefore the less proinflammatory cytokines are produced. In this way, both DHA and EPA are able to squelch inflammation.

In addition, DHA and EPA may both be metabolized into inflammation-resolving mediators called resolvins, protectins, and maresins. However, EPA is also metabolized into anti-inflammatory species of eicosanoids, and it seems to exert stronger effects on pathways like interferon signaling and genetic expression that result in anti-inflammatory effects. Therefore, EPA is considered to be a stronger anti-inflammatory compared to DHA, and a dose of 2 g of EPA is used for treatment of inflammation.

Mood

With respect to impact on mood, the evidence on EPA has now developed to the point that there exist multiple systematic reviews and meta-analyses of fish oils for depression, as well as other mental health conditions such as ADHD. The evidence clearly shows that EPA—not DHA—is the efficacious omega-3 when it comes to depression and ADHD. Sublette et al performed a meta-analysis of 15 trials including 916 participants. Researchers concluded that “supplements with EPA ≥ 60% showed benefit on standardized mean depression scores [while] supplements with EPA < 60% were ineffective.”

In a meta-analysis of ten trials involving 699 children with ADHD, researchers found that the proportion of EPA content in the fish oil was associated with its effectiveness for ADHD. Specifically, higher-EPA fish oil was “modestly effective” compared to pharmaceutical treatments for ADHD. It was suggested that “it may be reasonable to use omega-3 fatty supplementation to augment traditional pharmacologic interventions or for families who decline other psychopharmacologic options.”

EPA may exert anti-inflammatory effects in the brain and regulates cell-cell signaling as well as glucose metabolism in the brain. Studies show that supplementation with EPA may be equivalent to selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors (SSRIs) for mild to moderate depression. One study found that supplementation with 1000 mg of EPA was equally effective as 20 mg of fluoxetine (an SSRI) in treating major depression; however, the combination of EPA and fluoxetine was superior to either one alone. Response rates after four weeks were approximately 50% for either fluoxetine or EPA, but increased to 80% when both were combined. A dose of 1 g of EPA is considered therapeutic for the treatment of mood disorders.

Pregnancy

Finally, pregnancy is an important area where supplementation with fish oil has been shown to have significant benefits. Docosahexaenoic acid (DHA) is well-known for its beneficial effects on neurodevelopment, where it is a major component of the phospholipid bilayer membrane of neurons. In the third trimester, there is a rapid increase in the proportion of omega-3 fatty acids in the fetal brain, retina, and liver.

Studies suggest that fish oil supplementation during pregnancy improves measures of intelligence in children, including mental processing, hand-eye coordination, and problem solving. Fish intake during pregnancy has been associated with higher verbal IQ, social behaviour, fine motor, communication, and social development scores.

While the role of EPA is often overlooked in this setting, it is an important nutrient for ensuring the health of the mother, particularly in relation to mood. EPA may also improve the impact of DHA, as it has also been shown to upregulate fatty acid transport proteins in the placenta, thereby increasing fetal transfer of DHA. Given the evidence discussed above for mood, a 2:1 ratio of EPA:DHA is advocated for use in pregnancy.

Finally, taking fish oil during pregnancy reduces the risk of allergic disease, including eczema, asthma, and allergy in the offspring. Supplementation of between 2 and 4 g of combined EPA and DHA has been associated with an increase in the number of T-regulatory cells, that are involved in dampening an overactive immune response. Supplementation with fish oil has been associated with a decrease in the incidence of food allergy and eczema, and a reduction in the risk of asthma at the age of 16.

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Benefits and Practices of Mindfulness

A Naturopathic Perspective

by Dr. Sarah King, ND



Our lives are filled with a lot of “hustle and bustle”: commuting daily or travelling long distances, taking care of ourselves and/or others, keeping a schedule, getting work done, studying, training, raising kids, and trying to chase them down. Then we have the “electric circuit”: a vast electronic internet space with almost unlimited information, social networks, and instant messaging. We scroll through social-media sites and apps scanning for information—often as a distraction or to soothe boredom. But when was the last time you remember truly being in the moment? When was the last time you were able to quiet all the thoughts racing through your head, quieting your inner voice, ignoring the past and future, and just allowed yourself to enjoy the present moment?

It happens way less often than it should. Many of us are so consumed by events that happened in the past or with what is coming in the future. We plan ahead, we worry about things happening, we try to predict situations. Other times, we might dwell on past experiences or exchanges. Something that happened in the past may still weigh on your mind. And many of these thoughts can keep us in a stress loop. We worry so much about the

past and future that we forget to live in the present. I don’t mean “live in the moment” as a means of “seizing the day,” but in controlling our attention. This practice is known as mindfulness.

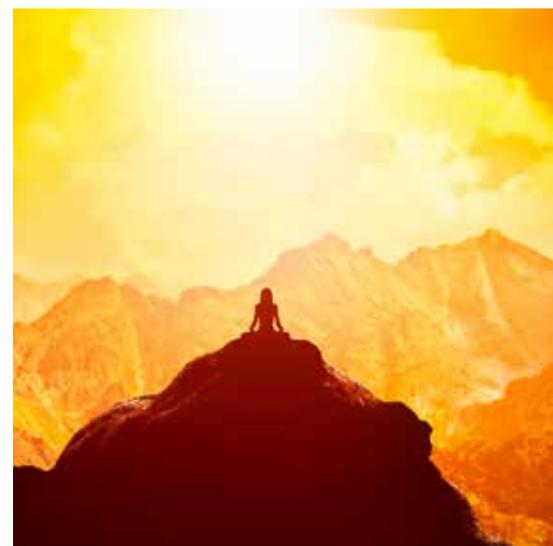
Mindfulness can be described in several ways, but ultimately is the self-regulation of attention and accepting the present moment nonjudgmentally. Originating from a Buddhist contemplative tradition, the intention is to accept the present moment with a curiosity and openness towards all aspects of that moment. This includes thoughts, feelings, emotions, and sensations.

Ordinarily, we can become trapped in a thought vortex spiraling away from us. One thought turns into an emotion; the emotion swells up and our thoughts follow it. In this way, mindfulness is a great way to calm those swells and can help alleviate anxiety. Practicing mindfulness is a means of practicing being in the present moment. With discipline, we train the mind to not think about “what might happen” or about things that have happened in the past that we still worry or stress over.

How often do you feel an emotional response from a past event? How often do you worry about something in the future? The emotions

associated with worrying or regrets can lead to anxiety, depression, and chronic stress. Typically, that’s where we find much of our stress: in thinking about things we have to do, things weighing on our minds, deadlines to meet, running into people that we don’t want to see, and situations that are uncomfortable. We can’t avoid these things, but we can change how we react to them. Practicing mindfulness can increase resilience to stress and reduce the reactivity to acute stressors.

In addition to focusing the attention on the present moment, mindfulness encourages a nonjudgmental attitude; letting go of our expectations and allowing what is





to be. It's not necessary to void the mind of the worry, but initially just to recognize that the worry is there. To not judge yourself for those thoughts and emotions, and to then bring your attention back to where you are in the present.

One exercise I often recommend to patients is to perform a self-check-in at least once per day. Remind yourself to check-in. Push a mental pause button on everything around you and ask yourself: "Body, in this moment, what do you need?" The answer to this question could be anything: food; water; a hug; a moment of silence; to have your shoes off; to wash your hands; or to talk to a friend, sibling, or parent. The purpose is to listen to your own body and mind, and find out if you've been too busy or stressed to meet your basic needs and to manage that stress. It is self-care in the most basic sense.

Mindfulness, like yoga, truly is a practice. It doesn't often come naturally, and can take time. Habits are hard to break—but it can be done. Set a timer or alarm, mark it in your day book or calendar, or simply have a reminder; a place, an item, an activity that jogs your memory: "I need to do a check-in!" An example would be for those who get stressed while driving, especially city-driving. I used to constantly catch myself clenching my jaw while driving. I would reach

my destination, and everything from my ears, my cheeks, and my teeth would be aching. I realized I was clenching while driving and needed to stop. I practiced catching myself sooner. At each stoplight or stop sign I'd check-in, and bring my attention to the jaw. If I was clenching, I would consciously relax the muscles of my face and jaw, sometimes letting my mouth gently gape open and hang, and repeat this each time I remembered to. Remembering is part of the practice. Shifting the attention, even for a moment, is the practice. Not beating yourself up or judging yourself for the action (in my case, clenching), is part of the practice.

Being mindful is truly a control over the attention, and thus leads to improved self-regulation, including emotional regulation and self-awareness. In addition to reducing symptoms of anxiety, depression, and PTSD, studies have shown that this cognitive awareness can also reduce pain severity.

Ways to Practice Mindfulness

Sit Still and Pay Attention to Your Senses:

Sight, hearing, smell, taste, and bodily sensations. Focus on each of these senses without any judgment.

Mindful Breathing: Your breath is always with you and can be used

as an anchor. You can control it, change its pace and depth, or let your brain naturally regulate it. Allow yourself normal breathing, and just pay attention to each breath in and out. Notice any sensations. Feel the belly rise and fall, as air flows in and out through the nose. Put your hand on your belly, and feel the movement of expansion on each inhale and contraction on each exhale. Elongate the exhales to slow down the nervous system. Anxiety can lead to shallow and rapid breathing, but a balance can be regained by practicing control.

Mindful Walking: Described as "meditation in motion," this practice can help with the awareness of bodily sensations while employing the feeling of being "grounded." There's something to be said for having your feet literally on the ground. If weather permits, this exercise can be accentuated with barefoot-walking through grass.

The exercise encompasses attention to physical movements, as a form of mindfulness, coupled with the psychological benefits of physical activity.

Stretching and Balance Postures

(Yoga): Similar to mindful-walking, flow and movement of the body with a focused attention promotes an awareness of the body's motions and sensations. Yoga is an excellent example of this, as each pose and movement incorporates attention on the breath and the body, whereas balance requires constant control and focus. There are many different types of yoga, and those who are new to the practice should start with a beginner's class or an "introduction to yoga" class to avoid injury and to gain further instruction on breathing techniques. Can't afford to join a yoga studio? There are a vast number of videos available, some of which are free online, to make your practice more cost-effective.

Body-Scan Meditation: A body scan is a great way to connect to the body and mind. This type of mindfulness practice is best done when lying down, allowing the muscles of the body to be at their most-relaxed state. There are many audio files and apps that can guide you through the process. If you don't want an audio guide, you can practice the scan with your own mind: Start with a few mindful breaths, then bring the attention to your feet and toes. Slowly work one body part at a time, up the legs, to

weight management (by preventing overeating), and to be more connected with what we put into our bodies. Simply give your food your full attention. Look at it, smell it, hold it in your mouth and enjoy its flavours and textures. Chew slowly, taking your time to enjoy each bite before swallowing.

Mindful Listening: How often do you get wrapped-up in your own thoughts during a conversation? Are you ever itching to get something out while someone else is talking? Or perhaps your mind begins to

describe what you're feeling. Next, write out the thoughts that have initiated or aggravated those emotions. What thoughts come to mind? And lastly, write out what actions you took because of those thoughts and emotions: Were they positive or negative? How might you change those actions, and what could you do instead?

The goal is awareness. Be aware of how things affect you, and become a better problem-solver; recognize how to approach situations differently. This type



the pelvis and hips, the belly, chest, and back; to the fingertips, up the arms to the shoulders, neck, jaw, face, and head. As your attention moves slowly from one part to the next, focus on any sensations you notice. Locate any tension, and imagine it melting away. End by focusing again on a few closing breaths.

Mindful Eating: Most of us eat several times per day, which makes this a great time to practice mindfulness, as you can do it with each meal and snack. Often, we are distracted during meals, whether with television, phones, or work. Mindful eating forces us to slow down and in such can help prevent indigestion, improve

wander, and you've disconnected from the conversation. Mindful listening requires your full attention on the person you're conversing with. When someone is speaking to you, try to pay attention and not interrupt them until they have completely finished speaking. Notice if your mind starts to wander, be aware of it, and bring your attention back to listening. After the other person has stopped speaking, take a breath before you respond.

Mindful Emotions: Create a "Thoughts, Feelings, Actions" chart. Take a moment to pay attention to what emotions you're experiencing. Be descriptive and use an "emotion" word bank (easily found via a Google search) to accurately

of mindfulness encourages the letting-go of automatic behaviours (panic, hurrying, etc.) and employs a cognitive way to approach difficult emotions or situations.

For references and other great articles, visit [NaturopathicCurrents.com](https://www.naturopathiccurrents.com)



Dr. Sarah King, ND

Dr. King believes in a holistic health approach; looking at both physical and mental causes of imbalance. [upperbeachhealth.com](https://www.upperbeachhealth.com)

Origins of Essential Oils

Herbs and plants have long been used to help relieve ailments, their causes, and their symptoms. In modern medicine, the story is a little different, as physicians began using synthetic drugs to alleviate symptoms rather than treat the actual cause. Momentary relief is provided, but the person never actually heals. The history of essential oils dates back thousands of years. Carbon-dated, 20 000-year-old cave paintings of paleolithic people in Lascaux, France, suggest the use of medicinal plants in everyday life. Furthermore, in many public records and studies, we can learn how Egyptians used essential oils, balms, perfumed oils, scented barks, resins, spices, and aromatic vinegar daily. They even had a god called Nefertum, the god of Perfume and Healing. The oils had all sorts of applications, ranging from purification of the soul to celebration

of gods, mummification for passage to the “afterlife”, personal hygiene, and even for sun protection.

Humans became aware of the healing powers of herbs by pure instinct resulting from survival, as well as by observation. The discovery of a Neanderthal burial site in Shanidar, Iraq, helped many scientists and researchers understand the historical importance of plants and flowers. Pollen samples taken from wild flowers were found close to the bodies of the deceased.

Eventually, manuals on herbs became increasingly popular and showed their use throughout history. The first manual published on herbs and plants, called *Le Grant Herbier* (in French), was printed in Paris by Pierre Le Caron in the late fifteenth century. *Le Grant Herbier* is a medieval pharmacopoeia which lists a large number of plants with their medicinal virtues. This was a leap in the right direction that led

to the recording and understanding of many medicinal plants and their uses.

The Beginning of Aromatherapy and Use of Essential Oils in Modern Times

Essential oils are used by many different cultures all over the world. In 1937, the French chemist and perfumer René-Maurice Gattefossé coined the term “aromatherapy.” Interestingly enough, he did not believe in the natural health movement at first. However, he became very interested in essential oils after he suffered a serious burn on his hands during an experiment, where he immediately immersed his burnt limbs into the nearest bath of liquid, which happened to be lavender essential oil. Later, he astonishingly observed that the burn had healed very quickly and left virtually no scar. He became fascinated by this outcome and so began his in-depth research on essential oils. This inspired him to experiment with essential oils on soldiers who were in military hospitals during the First World War. He used lavender, thyme, lemon, and clove oils for their antiseptic properties. His work, including the book *Aromathérapie. Les Huiles essentielles, hormones végétales* (Aromatherapy. Essential Oils, Plant-Based Hormones), mentions cures of skin cancer, facial ulcers, gangrene, and black widow spider bites.



How Are Essential Oils Made?

Oils are extracted in different ways. Most extraction techniques are based on the fact that the majority of essential oils mix with oils, fats, alcohol, and certain solvents, but not with water. Most pure essential oils are extracted from plants through steam distillation.

Uses for Maximum Absorption

The skin, being our largest organ, makes it easy for many nutrients or toxins to get quickly absorbed. Several studies have shown that close to 60% of topical products applied to the skin are directly absorbed into the bloodstream. Therefore, massaging your body

with essential oils for healing is very beneficial. The skin is permeable to fat-soluble substances and relatively impermeable to water-soluble substances. You can use carrier oils that are less thick for faster penetration, such as grape-seed oil.

Another way to reap the benefits from essential oils is through inhalation. Inhalation results in stimulation of the limbic system. The limbic system's nerve impulse leads to other areas of the brain that are responsible for secreting hormones, helping with metabolism and body functions. There are two methods to achieve this: By using an aroma diffuser to diffuse the scent, or by covering your head with a towel over a bowl of steaming hot water with drops of essential oils, inhaling the steam; a routine that is

most effective before bedtime. You may also hold the bottle of desired essential oil close to your nostrils for a similar therapeutic effect.

Health Benefits of Essential Oils

Essential oils are used by massage therapists, nurses, reflexologists, beauticians, etc. Through steam, vaporizers, or sprays, the oils can also be added to your bath. Due to their numerous health benefits, essential oils are increasingly being explored by the scientific community for the treatment of a variety of diseases such as cancer, HIV, asthma, bronchitis, strokes, alopecia, anxiety, hormonal imbalances, depression, insomnia, and pain, among others.

The Top 10 Must-Have Oils!

My emergency kit includes the following essential oils. I encourage people to invest in them to prevent ailments and to support the body's natural healing system.

1. **Oregano** helps alleviate colitis, diarrhea, gastritis, allergies, bacterial and viral infections, and the common cold.
2. **Lavender** is recommended for headaches, insomnia, depression, and nausea.
3. **Eucalyptus** helps fight coughs, common colds, influenza, etc.
4. **Chamomile** is very effective with burns, arthritis, menstrual and menopausal symptoms, and digestive problems.
5. **Peppermint** is an excellent remedy for nausea, headache, and motion sickness.
6. **Tea tree** helps alleviate common colds, bronchitis, and abscesses, and is a powerful antiseptic. It can also be used as a household cleaning agent.
7. **Thyme** relieves gas, intestinal worms, and hair loss such as *Alopecia areata*.
8. **Rosemary** decreases intestinal gas and fluid retention. It also helps to fight influenza and is a good antiseptic.
9. **Ginger** helps with indigestion, nausea, PMS, and inflammation, and it improves joint conditions.
10. **Clove** is an antibacterial, antiparasitic, and antifungal agent. It can also be used for tooth pain as well as a mouthwash.



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Stevia

A Brief History

When you consider the evident link between the excessive consumption of sugars and carbohydrates to the epidemic of obesity and diabetes that afflicts our society, the need for noncaloric sweeteners is self-explanatory. The logic is that by reducing the consumption of sugar, a decrease in excess weight should follow. As presented in the article “Les produits « sans sucre » feraient engraisser” (Sugar-Free Products Make You Gain Weight),^[1] substituting sugar for synthetic sweeteners does not produce the desired results. But what about stevia?

The Origin of Stevia

Stevia is a plant originally from Central and South America that belongs to the Asteraceae family; the same family as the daisy and echinacea. It has been used since ancient times to sweeten drinks and foods.

Stevia was identified by the botanist Moises Santiago Bertoni in Paraguay in 1899, hence its Latin name *Stevia rebaudiana* Bertoni. The first study that isolated and identified steviolosides (particularly rebaudioside A) dates back to 1931, in France.

The sweetening effect of stevia, more specifically steviolosides, has been known since the beginning of the twentieth century, and even way before that, given its traditional use. The Japanese were the first to work on the development of a noncaloric sweetener from stevia. Stevia was approved in Japan in 1970; at that time, Japanese regulations prohibited the use of synthetic sweeteners.

It's All About Profits

On this side of the ocean, it's a whole different story. We are in the era of the cyclamate and saccharin craze. In 1965, aspartame was discovered. All the molecules are patented. The markets are huge... as are the lobbyists! Who would profit from a natural and nonpatentable sweetening agent arriving on the market? (This would not be the first time that special interests are leading the political agenda.)

Next comes the controversy over the safety of stevia. According to the people against its market entry, stevia in all its form is dangerous for our health!

Offensive Research

During 1968, in the *Journal of Science*, researchers reported that a decoction of stevia affects the fertility of rats over a period of up to 60 days after the decoction was stopped. However, after further examination, the methodology



(concentration of the extract and identity of the plant) was not perfect.

A study from 1989 demonstrates that the consumption of stevia extract may have an effect on the fertility of rats, but that this effect is uncertain and certainly does not apply to males.

Another study shows that consumption of stevia extract

[1] Available only in French.

by male rats results in decreased testosterone, decreased sperm fructose content, and decreased fertility.

In short, this was the in vivo studies' offensive. Therefore, the sale of stevia was prohibited in the United States, and consequently in Canada.

Stevia as a Natural Product

Over time, the position of the authorities changed: In the mid-1990s, the ban on extracts was maintained, but the sale of the plant as a whole was permitted. Stevia was therefore found amidst the world of natural products. It should be noted that the plant itself has a very pronounced sweet taste:

It has between 45 and 300 times the sweetening power of sugar, depending on the season and the concentration of active ingredients.

Political War

Currently, with the rise against aspartame in the population, the industry giants of "unhealthy food" (Coca-Cola and PepsiCo) need to find a solution to improve their image and maintain sales. Hence, we have started to see studies and other research confirm the traditional safety of stevia and its purified compounds. Governments are now under pressure to approve stevia and its derivatives. Therefore, we have seen stevia appear in various countries.

In Canada, the use of the plant was officially approved in 2004; beforehand, it was not prohibited as a natural health product (NHP), since there was no regulation. In the United States, the use of stevia in a dietary supplement has been permitted—or finally, not prohibited—since 1995.

Regarding extracts, it was not until 2008 that purified rebaudioside A became available and approved in the United States, Russia, Switzerland, Australia, and New Zealand. In 2009, it was France's turn to approve it. In Canada, regulations for rebaudioside A were approved in September 2009.

Dangerous or Not?

Fertility

Stevia has long been used by indigenous populations in Central and South America; has it reduced the fertility of these populations? It appears not!

Allergies

Since stevia is part of the Asteraceae family (daisy, ragweed, etc.), the risk of allergies should be taken in consideration. However, the part used as a sweetening agent is the leaf, not the flower. Researchers who evaluated this possibility concluded that the risk of allergy is virtually nil and does not warrant a warning. Moreover, when a purified fraction or steviosides is used, the risk is completely absent.

Microbiota

Regarding the effect of stevia on microbiota, it is known that steviosides are used by *Lactobacilli* and *Bifidobacteria* as a source of nutrients. This correlation is not strong enough to claim that stevia has a prebiotic effect (which increases the population of good bacteria in the intestine). In contrast, this assures us that it has no deleterious effect on the intestinal microflora.

The history of stevia and its active principles is one of vested interests, lobbies, and big profits. When the industry giants were not interested, it was dangerous; now that they have an interest, it has become safe... But hasn't it always been?



Article including references and links on our blog: newrootsherbal.com/en/blog



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Culinary Corner

Lentil- and Mushrooms-Stuffed Acorn Squash



Ingredients

- 1 acorn squash
- 4 cups of spinach
- 1 cup white mushrooms, sliced
- 1 white onion, minced
- 1 garlic clove, minced
- ½ cup of dried lentils, cooked, or 1 can, rinsed and drained
- 1 cup dry quinoa, cooked
- ¼ cup walnuts or chestnuts, roasted and chopped
- ¼ cup pomegranate seeds (optional)
- ½ cup vegetable broth
- Salt and black pepper to taste
- 1–2 tsp. chili flakes
- 3 tbsp. olive oil, divided
- 2 tbsp. parsley, minced (fresh if available)

Instructions

Preheat oven to 350 °F (175 °C).

Cut acorn squash in half. Remove seeds. Rub squash with 1 tbsp. olive oil, and sprinkle with salt and black pepper.

Bake for 45–50 minutes or until softened.

On stovetop, heat pan with remaining olive oil, add minced onion and mushrooms, and begin to sauté for 5–7 minutes. When mushrooms are darkening and onions are translucent, add spinach and cook until wilted. Add chili flakes, salt and black pepper, lentils, quinoa, walnuts or chestnuts, parsley, and broth. Cook for an additional 2–3 minutes.

When squash has been removed from oven and cooled, remove some of the flesh from the squash and add to the mixture. Sauté for an additional 2 minutes with squash.

Remove from heat. Option to include pomegranate seeds.

Stuff the acorn squash. Garnish with parsley and enjoy!

Side note: You will likely have some extra stuffing; it is a great option for lunches.

Serves 2–4.



Angela Wallace

A registered dietician with the College of Dietitians of Ontario, personal trainer, and family food expert who specializes in women and child nutrition and fitness, she loves helping families get healthy together.

eatrightfeelright.ca

Mini Fruit Cake Balls (Raw and Vegan)



Cake Ingredients

- ½ cup almonds
- ½ cup shredded coconut
- ¼ cup cashews
- ½ cup pitted packed dates, chopped
- 1 tsp. almond extract
- 1 tsp. orange zest
- 1 tsp. lemon zest
- ½ cup mixed dried fruit (I like cherries, goji berries, mulberries, and raisins)
- 1 tbsp. lemon juice
- ¼ cup fresh orange juice
- ¼ cup chopped pecans

Frosting Ingredients

- 2 tbsp. melted coconut butter
- 1 tbsp. raw cashew butter*
- 2 tbsp. melted coconut oil
- ½ tsp. maple syrup



Heather Pace

A classically trained chef turned raw-dessert chef, she is a travel bug, a chocoholic, and a certified yoga instructor.

sweetlyraw.com

Cake Instructions

Soak the dried fruit in the lemon and orange juice for 30–60 minutes to soften and absorb the flavours. Strain the fruit, *but* keep the juice!

Grind the almonds, cashews, and coconut down to crumbs in a food processor. Add the dates, extract, and zests. Process until the dates are broken down and the mixture is combined. Add the soaked fruit mixture and pulse several times to incorporate it (briefly!). Add up to 1 tbsp. of the juice as needed to create a dough that holds together (it should be moist but *not* wet). Stir in the pecans by hand.

Use a mini ice cream scoop to create balls of dough and release them onto a parchment paper-lined tray. Place into the freezer while making the frosting.

Frosting Instructions

Whisk all ingredients together until smooth in a bowl set over a pot of hot water to make sure it stays warm and fluid while mixing. Now set aside, whisking periodically until it starts to thicken slightly (about 10 minutes). Pour over the chilled balls and it will firm up quickly. Store in the fridge.

Makes 20 mini balls.

**Note: Roasted cashew butter tastes very different to raw so will change the flavour and also change the colour.*

Creamy Carrot and Ginger Soup

(Dairy-Free, Gluten-Free, Nightshade-Free)



Ingredients

- 2 cups roughly chopped carrots
- 1 small or medium yellow onion, roughly chopped
- 2 celery stalks, roughly chopped
- 2–3 garlic cloves, halved
- ¼ cup chopped green onions
- 2 tbsp extra virgin olive oil
- 1 × 14 fl oz (400 ml) can premium full-fat coconut milk
- ¼ cup cooked chickpeas
- 2 tbsp. roughly chopped cilantro stems
- 4 tsp. lemon juice, or to taste
- 2 tsp. grated ginger, firmly packed
- 1½ tsp. white vinegar
- 1 tsp. Himalayan salt, or to taste
- ¾–1 tsp. dried dill, or to taste
- ½ tsp. ground cumin
- ½ tsp. black pepper
- ¼ tsp. curry powder
- ⅛ tsp. garlic powder
- ⅛ tsp. cinnamon

As the days become chillier during this time of festivities and company, there's nothing better to warm the body and soul than a delicious bowl of soup!

This dairy- and gluten-free recipe from YUM is not only delicious and super simple to make, but is also one that most people, even those with allergies and autoimmune conditions, can safely enjoy. Finding ways to be able to create meals that honour the unique needs of everyone is especially important during the holidays. Even better: This recipe is also sure to be a crowd pleaser, filled with ingredients that you probably already have on hand—bonus!

There is one problem with this recipe, though: Not only is it known to be crazy addictive, but it also doesn't last long! So, if you want to have leftovers or will be serving guests, be sure to double or triple the recipe. If you do, you will need to blend it in batches.

Instructions

Place the carrots, onion, celery, garlic and green onions in a large baking dish. Drizzle with the olive oil and stir to coat evenly. Bake in a preheated 315 °F (155 °C) oven for 45 minutes. Before the vegetables are done baking, purée the rest of the ingredients with the water in a high-speed blender, using the coconut cream can to measure the water. Then, add the roasted vegetables, and purée again until smooth and creamy.

Serve warm directly from the blender, or refrigerate for a chilled soup. This freezes well and can be gently reheated for future quick meals (don't overheat).

Makes 5 cups.



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flourish

December Blog Preview

For more articles on health, lifestyle, and wellness—add to that delicious recipes!—all in a more dynamic and accessible format, visit our *Flourish* blog at newrootsherbal.com/en/blog



Vitamin E for Great Looking Winter Skin

Vitamin E is abundant in both sebum, the substance that protects skin, and in skin cell membranes. Discover how supplementation with Vitamin E during harsh winter weather and contrasting dry interior environments can help preserve healthy youthful looking skin. [. . .]



Mint and Matcha Green Tea Truffles

For the holidays, what's better than delicious and energizing bites? These dark chocolate coated bites will increase your energy levels and provide a good source of antioxidants. [. . .]



Fall is a Time to Take Stock, Let Go, Gather and Prepare

In the fall, we are naturally inclined to collect ourselves and to gather and prepare for the harsh winter months. The fall can also be a time to turn a little more inward to examine and let go of what no longer serves us before the cold weather sets in. [. . .]



Ginger - Anti-Inflammatory and Analgesic in Dysmenorrhea

Zingiber officinale, known commonly as ginger, has been widely recognized for its action as an anti-nausea remedy. However, traditional Chinese medicine has used ginger as an anti-inflammatory agent for musculoskeletal complaints for more than 2500 years. Ginger is classified as an herb of the [. . .]



Chilled Turmeric Coconut Nog

There's so much hustle and bustle around the holiday period. I hope you get to spend some time slowing down and enjoying gatherings with family, friends, and good food. Here is a healthy holiday drink that is delicious and easy to prepare on top of being vegan, paleo, and gluten free. Wishing you all a wonderful Christmas! [. . .]



Feast on Your Holiday Favourites with Digestive Enzymes

Discover how supplementing with digestive enzymes can help you cope with frequent holiday indulgences that can lead to gas, bloating, heartburn or upset stomach. A broad range of enzymes can make the difference between enjoying seasonal foods or having them "cramp" your style. [. . .]

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TOO MUCH TO ASK OF
MY MAGNESIUM?



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