# Health&Healing VOUR DEFINITIVE GUIDE TO WELLNESS MEDICINE

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# Lyme Disease: What Works/What Doesn't

Intil two years ago, Debra Rae was always on the go. She worked full time, was involved with her family's activities, and enjoyed hiking, snowboarding, Zumba, and mountain biking. Then her health began spiraling downhill.

"Within months, I went from active and healthy to feeling old and frail. My migrating symptoms included stabbing and shooting pain, numbness and tingling, stiffness and spasms, memory and attention difficulties, loss of balance and vertigo, vision problems and sensitivity to light and sound, gastrointestinal and bladder issues, shortness of breath and heart palpitations, skin rashes and night sweats, lack of energy, and more. In short, I was a wreck.

"I saw five doctors, including a neurologist, a rheumatologist, and an orthopedic specialist, and endured physical therapy for 12 weeks. I received about 50 pages of test results from X-rays, MRIs, and EMGs to blood and urine tests to rule out vitamin deficiency, heavy metal toxicity, hepatitis, lupus, rheumatoid arthritis, thyroid issues,

and brain and spinal damage. No one was able to give me a diagnosis. My life was in shambles. I wasn't able to do any of the activities I loved doing. I couldn't even wear shoes because the pain was so bad.



Debra Rae racing her mountain bike before she became sick with Lyme disease. "I can't wait to ride again. I am looking forward to being back on my bike soon!"

"Then I went to Whitaker Wellness. My physician immediately suspected Lyme disease, even though I could not remember ever having a tick bite. My tests came back positive, and he started me on antibiotics along with supplements and IV therapies to boost my immune system and reduce symptoms.

"Diagnosing Lyme disease and guiding me on the path to health has dramatically changed my quality of life. The pain is much better, and I can now wear shoes. My thinking is clearer, and I am reading again. I have more energy, and I am able to do chores, walk the dog, and take my son to soccer practice. We are going to Utah soon, and I am planning on snow-boarding, which I haven't been able to do for a very long time."

#### Beyond the Obvious

Everybody knows about Lyme disease. It's an infection transmitted by deer ticks in wooded areas of the Northeastern US that causes a red bulls-eye rash and flu-like symptoms and is treated with antibiotics, right?

Yes and no. Lyme disease is caused by a bacterial infection,

Borrelia burgdorferi, although many patients are also infected by other tick-borne pathogens that may cause even more problems. Infected ticks are not limited to the Northeast but are found throughout

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# Health & Healing

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Remember, you can read current and past issues of Health & Healing when you create or access your account at drwhitaker.com.

# Dear Reader,

Guess what the top-selling drug in the United States is? It's not, as I assumed, one of the wildly popular and pricey statins or stomach acid medications. The top-grossing medication—with sales exceeding \$7 billion in 2014—is Abilify, an antipsychotic drug.

How in the world could a powerful, mind-altering drug originally approved to treat serious mental illnesses like schizophrenia (which affects just 1 percent of the population) become America's bestseller?



Julian Whitaker, MD America's Wellness Doctor Director of the Whitaker Wellness Institute, Newport Beach, California

For starters, Abilify costs around \$800 for a month's supply of 30 tablets. In addition, the FDA has broadened approved uses to include bipolar disorder and children with schizophrenia, bipolar, and autism. But the real coup came in 2007, when the FDA gave Abilify the stamp of approval as an "add-on treatment for adults with depression when an antidepressant alone is not enough."

Now there's a market for you. Ten percent of Americans—and a guarter of women in their 40s and 50s—take antidepressants. Once TV, Internet, and print ads began urging them, "Ask your doctor about the option of adding Abilify," and claiming it "may help with unresolved depressive symptoms as early as 1–2 weeks," sales took off. Growth has also been spurred by physicians who are increasingly prescribing this drug for unapproved uses such as anxiety, insomnia, ADHD, eating disorders, substance abuse, post-traumatic stress disorder, and dementia.

This is nuts! The fact that a drug for a severe mental illness like psychosis (loss of contact with reality, e.g., hallucinations and delusions) could weasel its way through FDA regulatory channels into the medicine cabinets of millions of Americans is a travesty.

Abilify is not a "booster drug" to make antidepressants work better. It's an exceptionally potent medication that alters brain function and comes with a long list of serious side effects: agitation, aggression, movement disorders, weight gain, elevated blood sugar and lipids, and black-box warnings of increased risk of suicidal thoughts in young people and death in elderly patients with dementia.

Because Abilify's patent expires next year, its reign as our country's most profitable drug will soon end. But the charade of expanding the reach of dangerous, unproven antipsychotics won't stop, and may actually increase as less expensive generics step in.

Be careful out there. This is just another example of a seriously broken medical system caught in the maw of Big Pharma.

To your health,

#### Lyme Disease (continued from page 1)

the US. More than 300,000 Americans are infected every year—10 times more than previously believed.

Only 50 percent of individuals infected with Lyme report the characteristic bulls-eye rash, and a similar number don't recall a tick bite at all. Symptoms can run the gamut from transitory fever and achiness to

severe, enduring, and debilitating pain and dysfunction affecting systems throughout the body.

The usual treatment is a two-to four-week course of antibiotics, which may be effective, especially if the infection is diagnosed and treated right away. However, as many as 40 percent of patients end up with lots of chronic problems—Debra is a textbook case—and consult multiple doctors and suffer for years before getting a proper diagnosis.

Misdiagnoses, unfortunately, are all too common. Patients may be told they have autoimmune disorders, chronic fatigue, fibromyalgia, Parkinson's, even hypochondria or other psycho-

logical problems. As a result, they may be treated with intensive, expensive drugs that have no chance of helping and actually make them worse.

## Lyme Wars

The truth is, Lyme disease is in many ways a mystery. Conventional diagnostic lab tests are notoriously unreliable, and huge schisms exist in the medical community about how it should be treated.

In one corner of the "Lyme wars" is the large and influential Infectious Diseases Society of America, which contends that chronic, long-term Lyme infection doesn't even exist. In the other corner are physicians who are willing to use more sophisticated testing and treat their patients with alternative therapies such as IV nutrients, hyperbaric oxygen, immune-boosting supplements, and/or longer and varying antibiotic regimens.

Unfortunately, insurance companies often refuse to pay for "experimental" tests and treatments, and innovative doctors who treat Lyme disease are sometimes shunned or harassed by their conventional colleagues and medical boards.

Controversial or not, when a patient like Debra comes to Whitaker Wellness with a slew of symptoms or a diagnosis of Lyme disease, we're going to do our best to get the bottom of it and find a solution.

#### "A New Lease on Life"

We use cutting-edge lab tests to look for various strains of *Borrelia* and other infectious agents

and follow the latest antibiotic protocols for targeting specific bacteria. We treat patients with intravenous therapies, such as glutathione, minerals, and vitamins, including vitamin C, which has direct antimicrobial activity. Because Borrelia thrives in a low-oxygen environment, hyperbaric oxygen therapy, which saturates the system with oxygen, is another good treatment. Medicinal herbs and nutritional supplements that support the body's ability to fight infection, and low-dose naltrexone. a proven immune enhancer, are also cornerstones of our Lyme disease treatment program.

Chronic Lyme disease is a serious and stubborn condition, and there's no simple solution that works for everyone. However, a personalized regimen of appropriate antibiotics, IV therapies, hyperbaric oxygen, and targeted immune boosters can get

patients on the road back to health.

**My Recommendations** 

The International Lyme and Associated Diseases Society's website, ilads.org, is a good source of information and can guide you to experienced physicians. To learn more about treatment at Whitaker Wellness, call 800-488-1500 or visit whitakerwellness.com.

Finally, we address our patients' pain and diverse symptoms with the safe, effective therapies Whitaker Wellness is known for: neurofeedback for cognitive problems, EECP for vascular issues, and high-intensity laser, acupuncture, and PRP for pain, to mention a few.

It's high time physicians and insurance companies pull their heads out of the sand and help, rather than hinder patients by acknowledging chronic Lyme disease for what it is: a very real and difficult condition that cannot be cured overnight.

After more than two years of misdiagnoses and inappropriate treatment, Debra can tell you there is hope for chronic Lyme disease. "Although it is a slow recovery, I am finally headed in the right direction. Every day, I get back a little piece of my former self, and I will be forever grateful for a new lease on life."

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# **Dear Dr. Whitaker**

Is there a way to remove facial hair and not have it return so quickly? I put hair removal cream on one day and the next day it is growing back again. It is very frustrating and a lot of work keeping it up. I would really appreciate it if you could recommend a solution. — Anonymous

As you know, depilatory creams and lotions (which dissolve the hair), tweezing, and waxing are short-term solutions, although tweezing and waxing may make the hair grow back more slowly over time. There is a prescription cream, Vaniqa, but I have no clinical experience with it and it doesn't get great reviews.

Your best bet for long-term hair removal is laser treatments or electrolysis. Though they're pricey and require several sessions, killing hair follicles at the roots is the only way to ensure that regrowth will not occur. Many women have this distressing problem, and it tends to worsen with age and hormonal changes. If any of you readers have other solutions that work for you, let me know.

I have been taking berberine for two weeks now and my morning glucose reading has gone from 178-198 down to 101. I have read that berberine is for "short-term" use, but there is no mention of exactly what that means or what happens if it is taken longer. Berberine is the only thing that has gotten my numbers down without side effects. I don't want to give it up, but I

need to know if taking it long term can cause any health problems. Thanks. — Cheryl L., via email

Glad to hear berberine is working so well for you. Keep it up! The only possible explanation I can think of for a reference to short-term use is that the clinical trials on berberine lasted a few months—but so do the bulk of studies on most other supplements and many drugs. Rest assured that berberine is safe and well tolerated. Many of my patients have been taking 500 mg two or three times a day for several years and continue to get good results.

I have been eating egg whites only for years. Now I am hearing that yolks and other sources of dietary cholesterol are not a problem, but there's still a lot of conflicting information. Can you clarify? — B.B., San Francisco, CA

Great question, and good timing with Easter upon us. Eggs and cholesterol in general have been unfairly vilified for the past 50 years, but a government panel recently acknowledged that dietary cholesterol has little effect on cholesterol levels or heart health.

For years I've given most of my patients the thumbs-up on six or seven whole eggs a week (and all the egg whites they can eat). Eggs are a good source of protein, choline, B vitamins, lutein, and zeaxanthin—and a far better breakfast choice than cereal, toast, juice, and other high-carbohydrate foods.



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# From My Blog

## Household Uses for Alka-Seltzer

Since 1931, Alka-Seltzer has been a household name when it comes to relieving indigestion, heartburn, and perhaps the occasional hangover. Although this fizzing wonder is best known for soothing upset stomachs and other minor aches and pains, you may want to keep a box around the house for non-health-related uses as well. Turns out the citric acid, sodium bicarbonate, and effervescent action of a few Alka-Seltzer tablets helps to remove stubborn stains, unclog drains, deodorize your refrigerator, clean your jewelry, descale your coffee pot, leave your toilet fresh and sparkling, and more. You can even use it to entertain yourself—or the young people in your life - by building rockets, catching fish, and even making lava lamps. Learn more about the many uses of Alka-Seltzer (and get detailed instructions) on my blog.



Get the rest of the story—and share your opinion—by visiting my blog at "Connect with Dr. Whitaker" on drwhitaker.com.

Blog

# **Works for Me...**

▶ Frozen Shoulder I suffered with pain and lack of movement due to a frozen shoulder for months. After just one treatment of platelet-rich plasma (PRP) therapy, the discomfort in my left shoulder completely dissipated and movement was restored. I couldn't be happier! — Alice M., via phone call

Our patients at Whitaker Wellness have had remarkable improvements in pain and range of motion with PRP therapy. To learn more, call 800-488-1500 or visit whitakerwellness.com.

▶ **Drug Savings** A few months ago, I saw a specialist for a severe flare-up of back pain, and he gave me two samples of Duexis. It helped tremendously, so I asked for a prescription. When I went to pick it up, I was shocked at the cost: more than \$1,400 for a month's supply (90 tablets)! The pharmacist told that me this drug is simply a combination of 800 mg of ibuprofen and 26.6 mg of famotidine (generic Pepcid). So I got a bottle of 500, 200-mg tablets of ibuprofen for \$10 and 170, 20-mg tablets of famotidine for \$15 and saved myself more than \$1,375.

That's incredible! The moral of this story is to always ask the pharmacist about alternatives to pricey prescription drugs. Better yet, look into drug-free options.

▶ Wrist Pain After spending two long days in the kitchen getting ready for a big crowd for the holidays, I developed pain in my left wrist from lifting heavy pots and pans, peeling and chopping a fridge full of vegetables, etc. I rubbed OxyRub into my wrist and hand several times a day for two days. What a difference—no more pain!

— P.L., Newport Beach, CA

OxyRub, a topical preparation of menthol and a proprietary oxygenated essential oil, often provides quick relief for sprains, strains, bumps, and sore muscles. To learn more or to order, visit drwhitaker.com or call 800-722-8008.

▶ Dental Health I just returned from the dentist with a perfect score of oral health. My secret? An electronic toothbrush. I rarely floss but my dentist even admitted that Sonicare and similar devices are pretty much as effective. Great news if you're a lazy flosser. — M.G., via email

A Have a Health Tip to share? Send it to worksforme@drwhitaker.com. Read more tips at drwhitaker.com/works-for-me.



# **Healing Tip**

Want to kick a food craving? New research shows that tapping on your forehead or ear with your index finger for 30 seconds is often enough to curb cravings. Scientists aren't sure why this distraction technique works, but it's worth a shot next time you are faced with temptation.



Like my Facebook page at facebook.com/WhitakerMD to receive daily healing tips and join the conversation.

## **Monthly Health Quiz**

— Max M., Irvine, CA

Airborne Allergies: Fact or Fiction?

- A) Forty million Americans suffer with some type of indoor/outdoor allergy.
- B) Though symptoms can be managed, there's no cure for airborne allergies.
- C) Allergies are inherited.

#### Answer:

cure. And if one/both parents have allergies, there's 30/70 percent chance a child will too.

All true. Avoiding allergy triggers, using saline nasal sprays or rinses to wash out irritants, and trying natural antihistamine products such as Natural D-Hist can certainly help symptoms, but there's no known



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#### **Notable Quote**

Success is getting what you want. Happiness is wanting what you get.

Dale Carnegie, author/motivational speaker

No computer? Mail your question or health tip to Health & Healing, 6710-A Rockledge Dr., Ste. 500, Bethesda, MD 20817.

# Diabetes: Lower Blood Sugar—But at What Cost?

Just when it seems things couldn't get much worse, government statistics reveal that one in 10 US adults, and one in four age 65 and over, now have diabetes. And that's not the worst of it. Recent research from the Yale School of Medicine confirms that the treatment many of them are receiving, especially in the older age group, is excessive, inappropriate, and risky.

Ask anyone, doctors or patients, about the goal of diabetes management, and the answer will probably be to lower blood sugar. They're wrong. The primary treatment goal should always be to optimize patients' health and stave off complications.

Unfortunately, in chronic conditions that require long-term management, such as diabetes, hypertension, and heart disease, hitting arbitrary targets set by "expert panels"— which almost always requires aggressive regimens of dangerous drugs—has replaced good medicine and common sense.

#### Myopic Focus...

You may have heard that "tight control" (A1c less than 6.5–7 percent) might reduce risk of complications of the eyes, nerves, and kidneys. But did you know it increases risk of the most serious complications, fatal and nonfatal heart attacks and strokes? An arm of the landmark Action to Control

Cardiovascular Risk in Diabetes (ACCORD) Trial had to be stopped early because of excessive deaths in the group aiming for the tightest control.

The culprit, of course, is the drugs. Most patients with newly diagnosed diabetes are started on metformin, but additional medications are usually added over time. Among the most popular are sulfonylureas (glipizide and glyburide) and injected insulin, which is used by a surprisingly large percentage of people with type 2 diabetes.

The Yale study focused on a common and dangerous side effect of insulin and sulfonylureas: hypoglycemia (low blood sugar). Hypoglycemia is a serious threat that causes confusion, dizziness, falls

and accidents, cardiovascular disease, coma, and increased risk of death, and it's particularly prevalent among older people. A quarter of the adverse drug events that result in emergency hospitalization of people over age 65 are due to hypoglycemia caused by oral and injected diabetes drugs.

Nevertheless, overuse of intensive drug regimens to achieve tight control is rampant in older patients. The Yale researchers reported that in their study population, two-thirds of the people with diabetes age 65 and older had A1c levels of less than 7 percent—and half of these were treated with insulin or sulfonyl-

ureas. They concluded, "Although the harms of intensive treatment likely exceed the benefits...a substantial proportion of older adults with diabetes were potentially overtreated."

**My Recommendations** 

- Exercise regularly (including a brisk 10-minute walk after each meal), cut out sugars and starches, eat more vegetables and lean protein, and lose weight.
- Lower blood sugar with berberine 1,500 mg, chromium 400 mcg, and vanadyl sulfate 100 mg per day, taken in divided doses with meals.
- Start with a good multivitamin to replace lost nutrients. Additional vitamins and minerals are recommended for extra protection. For suggested doses, visit drwhitaker.com.
- Learn more about diabetes treatment at the Whitaker Wellness Institute by calling 800-488-1500 or visiting whitakerwellness.com.

#### ...Is Harming Patients

This is what I've been saying for 35 years. Diabetes drugs are bad news—and hypoglycemia is just one of their many dangers. Sulfonylureas have a black-box label warning that they increase risk of cardiovascular disease and death. Avandia and Actos are linked with heart failure and heart attacks. And most diabetes medications, and insulin in particular, are notorious for causing fat storage and weight gain, which further worsen blood sugar control and set

patients up for a host of health problems.

We've treated thousands of patients with type 2 diabetes at Whitaker Wellness, and the first thing we do is stop their oral medications and insulin. Although this is unheard of in conventional medicine—and disconcerting for most patients, who've been told they would be on these meds for life—it works. It may take a little time, but with diet changes, exercise, and supplements such as berberine, vanadyl sulfate, and chromium, blood sugar control is as good as or better than with drugs and insulin. (See Kent Moore's story on page 7.)

This approach is also much safer and more convenient than pills, shots, and constant monitoring—and

conventional doctors would realize it if they put their prescription pads away, worked with their patients to adopt lifestyle changes, and got over their ill-informed bias against nutritional supplements. Which brings me to another important point.

#### Undertreatment of Nutrient Losses

Overtreatment with drugs is just one side of the coin; the other side is undertreatment of a critical factor in diabetes and its complications: nutrient losses. Even modestly high levels of blood sugar overwhelm the kidneys' ability to reabsorb glucose, so it spills out in the urine. Every physician knows that increased urination is a characteristic of diabetes, but they miss the obvious fact that glucose isn't the only thing excreted in the urine. Water-soluble nutrients are also lost.

Individuals with diabetes tend to have low levels of key antioxidants, electrolytes, and other vitamins and minerals, and this contributes to their many health challenges. Replacing lost nutrients with supplements leads to better outcomes—and ignoring them, as most doctors do, sets patients up for a world of hurt.

For example, much of the damage to the blood vessels, nerves, kidneys, and other organs is due to oxidative stress, which is magnified by antioxidant

vitamin and mineral losses. Boosting levels of vitamin E with supplements has been found to protect against diabetic kidney and eye damage, and vitamin C is associated with better blood sugar and lipids. Supplementing with zinc, beta-carotene, and other carotenoids helps stave off vision problems, and studies dating back decades reveal clear associations between magnesium deficiencies and degree of diabetic retinopathy. Chromium enhances blood sugar control, alpha lipoic acid and B-complex vitamins improve symptoms of diabetic neuropathy, and vitamin D reduces risk of vascular complications.

If you have diabetes, get serious about weight loss, exercise, diet, and a nutritional supplement regimen. These therapies are far more likely to protect against complications and improve your health and quality of life than trying to achieve tight blood sugar control with dangerous drugs.

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# Whitaker Wellness Success Story: "Life Is Good"

When Kent Moore came to the clinic in 2013, his blood sugar was raging out of control, he couldn't stop gaining weight, and he was suffering with neuropathy, hypertension, kidney disease, and other complications of type 2 diabetes—despite being on 220 units of insulin and multiple oral drugs. His latest update is a testimony to the power of drug-free therapies.

"It has been 18 months since I waddled through the door at the Whitaker Wellness Institute at 341 pounds. I stepped on the scale this morning at 214 pounds. My blood sugars are lower and more consistent than I was ever able to maintain while on insulin.

"My energy level is far better than it has been in years, which is a good thing since we recently purchased two new 'The Little Gym' locations in North Austin.

"I now have a three-year-old at home and a gym full of kids every day at work. It is nice being able to sit cross-legged on the floor and teach classes. That is one of the little but important things I could not have done a year ago.

"It has been so busy with the gyms that I have not even tried to diet, but the weight still slowly drops. I only step on the scale once a week, and every week I expect to see the weight going up but it doesn't. I know the supplements are

a big part of it, but equally important are the lifestyle changes we have made as a family. We eat at home much more than we used to, and we have learned how to cook healthy.

"I have become more and more frustrated with the medical establishment. The majority of the doctors I have seen over the last decade wanted to medicate me without otherwise treating me. It is so frustrating.

"The program I started at Whitaker Wellness—getting off insulin and other drugs and on a healthenhancing program—was a lifeboat

for me. For the first time in many years, my health is not an anchor preventing me from living life to the fullest."



Sarah, Emily, and Kent Moore at one of their "Little Gym" locations

To make an appointment at the Whitaker Wellness Institute, call 800-488-1500 or visit whitakerwellness.com.

## **Innovations in Wellness Medicine**

## Tomato Juice for Metabolic Syndrome

I've been touting the cardiovascular benefits of low-sodium tomato juice for more than a decade. Loaded with potassium, vitamin C, magnesium, and other healthful nutrients, it's one of my top recommendations for lowering blood pressure naturally. It's also a rich source of lycopene, a carotenoid known for its free-radical scavenging properties. Now, research reveals that tomato juice may also be a boon for people with inflammation, insulin resistance, and cholesterol imbalances—hallmark symptoms of metabolic syndrome.

Volunteers with metabolic syndrome were asked to drink a glass of tomato juice four times a week for two months. When they were retested, there was a 45 percent average improvement in insulin sensitivity, significant decreases in markers of inflammation and LDL cholesterol, and a slight increase in protective HDL cholesterol. One caveat: Regular tomato juice contains far too much sodium so stick with low-salt varieties. (Low-Sodium V8 is my favorite.) I recommend 8–12 ounces daily. If you want to punch up the flavor, add a dash of no-salt seasoning or Nu-Salt or Morton's Salt Substitute.

## Phosphatidylserine for ADHD and Memory

Phosphatidylserine (PS) is a naturally occurring phospholipid that plays an integral role in building neurons and supporting optimal brain function as well as modulating cortisol levels and improving markers of chronic stress. It's also a well-studied supplement shown to improve memory, mood, and concentration in adults—and a terrific natural treatment for ADHD in children. In a 2014 randomized, double-blind study, Japanese researchers divided kids ages 4–14 with untreated ADHD into two groups and gave them either 200 mg of PS daily or a placebo. Reevaluation after two months revealed marked improvements in impulsivity, inattention, and short-term auditory memory in the children who had taken PS. No significant changes were noted in the placebo group.

The study dose of 200 mg per day is beneficial not only for kids with ADHD but also for adults with attention, memory, or cognitive concerns. PS is available in health food stores and online. A good and tasty option for kids—or anyone who has problems with pills—is Jarrow's PS100 Gummies, available from drwhitaker.com or by calling 800-722-8008.

## **Did You Know?**

- Drinking 3–4 cups of coffee per day reduces melanoma risk by 10–20 percent.
- Starbucks is now offering coconut milk as an option to dairy and soy milk.
- High sodium intake is associated with increased exacerbation of MS symptoms.
- The FDA has approved a smartphone app that continuously monitors blood sugar.
- Nine in 10 adults fail to get the RDA of vitamin E.
- More than 400,000 hysterectomies are performed in the US every year, and the majority are unnecessary.
- It's not unusual for apples to be in cold storage for several months to a year.
- An analysis of 37 studies reveals that yoga is as effective as aerobic exercise for reducing risk of cardiovascular disease.
- New parents lose more than 1,000 hours of sleep during their baby's first year.
- Elevated cortisol may be as significant a risk factor for diabetes and heart disease as hypertension and abdominal obesity.
- Extended use of opioid painkillers increases risk of erectile dysfunction.

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