The search for cures to stop aging and restore youth spans all cultures and eras and has resulted in some truly bizarre practices: injecting and implanting the testicles of young animals; soaking in milk, wine, and mineral baths; drinking the blood and urine of young men and women; sleeping next to virgins; freezing decapitated heads in cryogenics labs; and taking all sorts of different pills and potions.

Big Pharma has joined the chase and actually has a promising candidate: rapamycin, a compound that lengthens the lifespan of animals by about 20 percent. Treated mice are more active and fit, have better cardiovascular and cognitive function, and are less prone to cancer, bone loss, and Alzheimer's disease.

Stem cell and gene therapies are also expanding the frontiers of anti-aging medicine. Futurist Ray Kurzweil predicts that advances in genetics and technology will allow us to transcend the “limitations of our biological bodies and brain” and live indefinitely—and at age 67, he’s hoping it will happen in his lifetime. Ray is a very smart guy and I admire his optimism, but I’m not holding my breath.

The human body is incredibly complex, and no single gene or physiological process controls the inevitable age-related slowdown and ultimate loss of physical and mental function.

The most we can hope for is to extend our healthspan—our years of robust health—and based on today’s scientific knowledge, the only way to do this is to embrace a healthy lifestyle.

Lifestyle Is the Best Medicine

If you want to live long and live well, you have to take an honest look at the things you do, or don’t do, day in and day out, and then make some changes.

You don’t need me to tell you that a steady diet of sugar, sodas, trans fats, excess salt and alcohol, packaged and processed snacks and desserts, and other junk food has adverse effects on healthspan. Whole, natural foods and a Mediterranean-style diet are your tickets to health. Foods proven to be particularly beneficial include berries, salmon, leafy greens, cruciferous vegetables, dark chocolate, lean protein, tea, coffee, nuts and seeds, fermented foods, and modest amounts of alcohol.

How much you eat may be as important as what you eat. Rapamycin, the promising anti-aging drug, mimics the effects of calorie restriction, which is the best-studied method of extending healthspan. Cutting back on food is a challenge for most of us, which is why I recommend intermittent fasting. In my book, The Mini-Fast Diet, I explain the merits and relative ease of simply skipping breakfast (and exercising in the morning) for weight loss and overall health.
Dear Reader,

When Jeralean Talley was born, William McKinley was president, and Queen Victoria ruled the far-flung British Empire. The US consisted of 45 states, and the South was still reeling from the after effects of the Civil War. There were 8,000 cars and 10 miles of paved roads in the entire country, and wages averaged 22 cents an hour. The Brooklyn Superbas were the reigning baseball champions, and Scott Joplin’s ragtime music was all the rage.

The year was 1899 and life expectancy was 47, but Jeralean has defied that expectation. She just turned 116, making her the world’s oldest and only living person whose life spans three centuries.

How do Jeralean and the 53,000 other Americans who are age 100 or older do it? And if these centenarians are living more than twice as long as expected, what’s next? With all the advances in medicine, shouldn’t the next generation live to 120, 150, or longer?

Not so fast. Modern medicine’s power to prolong life and push the longevity envelope is greatly exaggerated. Life expectancy today is 78.8 years, but when you factor in infant, maternal, and childhood mortality, the increase since 1899 isn’t so dramatic. People who lived through those perilous periods a century ago actually had a good chance of growing old.

Antibiotics and improvements in maternal, infant, and trauma care have saved millions of lives. But clean water, sanitation, and a steady supply of food have enabled even more to live to a comfortable old age. Furthermore, medicine has made few inroads in preventing or curing diabetes, heart disease, dementia, vision loss, osteoporosis, arthritis, cancer, and other chronic conditions that plague us in our later years.

Bottom line, living to 100 just isn’t in the cards for most of us. So let’s aim for something more realistic. Let’s focus on increasing our healthspan—the years of life that are free from disease and full of health and vitality. In the next few issues, I’ll update you on the latest longevity and aging research and outline some simple steps for maximizing your healthspan and making the most of your golden years. As Abraham Lincoln said, “And in the end, it is not the years in your life that count, it’s the life in your years.”

To your health,
For more health advice and solutions, visit drwhitaker.com

**Healthspan (continued from page 1)**

You do need to watch your weight. Although a couple of recent studies suggest that overweight and obese people live longer and are less likely to develop dementia, I wouldn’t recommend jumping on the “fat is healthy” bandwagon. Remember that these studies fly in the face of solid research linking excess weight to increased risk of diabetes, heart disease, cancer, arthritis, and other illnesses.

**Why Muscle Matters**

We start losing muscle in our 30s, and if we don’t do something about it, sarcopenia—serious loss of muscle mass and strength—sets in. Sarcopenia involves more than physical weakness. It also exacerbates obesity and insulin resistance, increases risk of fractures, and limits healthspan.

Exercise is your best defense. If you’re in reasonably good shape, a brisk walking program interspersed with short bursts of jogging or other high-intensity exercise is recommended. For those with limited mobility, even brief, light activity can make a difference. But everyone needs to do some strength training. Whether you use the machines at a gym, bands and hand weights at home, or work out using your own body weight (push-ups, sit-ups, squats, lunges, etc.), resistance training is imperative for maintaining strength, health, and independence.

Building muscle also requires proper nutritional support. Exercise actually tears down muscle tissue—that’s why you may experience soreness after a workout. This breakdown stimulates repair mechanisms that remodel and rebuild stronger muscles, and the primary nutrient involved in this process is protein.

**The Importance of Protein**

Nutritional guidelines call for an average daily protein intake of 46 g for women and 56 g for men. Unfortunately, the body’s ability to absorb dietary protein and build muscle declines with age. New research suggests that to maximize muscle synthesis, older people require higher amounts—75–90 g per day, or a 3.5–4 ounce serving of chicken, turkey, fish, etc., with every meal.

Amino acid and protein supplements/powders can also provide a needed boost. Leucine, a branched-chain essential amino acid, not only stimulates the production of muscle proteins but also helps slow the breakdown of muscle tissue. L-carnitine has been shown to improve strength, mobility, endurance, and cognitive function in older people. Both of these amino acids are being studied as treatments for sarcopenia.

Of the many types of protein available, I believe whey is the best. Rapidly digested and absorbed, milk-derived whey is a complete protein, meaning it provides all the essential amino acids. It is a particularly good source of not only leucine but also cysteine, an amino acid required for the synthesis of the important detoxifying antioxidant glutathione.

In addition, whey contains lactoferrin and other compounds that enhance immune function. Plus it’s been shown to be superior to other protein sources for increasing lean muscle mass when combined with resistance exercise.

**You Control Your Healthspan**

Other lifestyle factors associated with healthspan include sleep and stress management. At Whitaker Wellness, we test patients for sleep apnea—a commonly overlooked problem that can have serious repercussions—and teach them simple deep relaxation/meditation techniques for stress reduction.

Social relationships are also important. Marriage gives people, especially men, an edge, but extended family and friends also fit the bill. And all the studies of people who live long and happy lives emphasize the value of having meaning and purpose in life, whether it’s a gratifying job, volunteer work, care of loved ones, faith, hobbies, or other interests.

In summary, genetics do not control your destiny. Studies of twins suggest that genetics only account for 20–30 percent of the variations in health and longevity. The lifestyle program I’ve outlined—which also includes nutritional supplements, as we’ll discuss in upcoming issues—isn’t rocket science, but it does take discipline. Remember, only you can take control of your healthspan.

---

**My Recommendations**

- Starting today, commit to eating better, exercising more, managing your stress, addressing any sleep problems, and making other lifestyle changes that will increase your healthspan. If you need help, call or visit us at Whitaker Wellness (800-488-1500).

- Suggested daily doses of muscle-enhancing supplements are: whey protein 10–25 g, leucine 2 g, and L-carnitine 2–4 g. They may be taken before or right after a workout, or with meals.

---

---
Dear Dr. Whitaker

Q  I have suffered with stubborn insomnia for decades. I was reading Dr. Whitaker's Guide to Natural Healing and found the passage on nocturnal hypoglycemia. It gave me hope because I think I suffer from it. I wake up in the middle of the night and cannot go back to sleep. So I started eating an oat bran muffin before going to bed. It helped my sleep but on an irregular basis. Should I be eating other foods? — Monique C., via email

A  Both low-glycemic carbs like oatmeal and protein help keep blood sugar from dropping too low during the night. They also boost levels of serotonin and tryptophan, neurotransmitters that promote sleep. Feel free to experiment with other foods, keeping portions small and avoiding spicy, greasy foods and stimulants like caffeine. You might also consider foods that contain melatonin, such as cherries and walnuts. Another option is supplemental melatonin (1–3 mg at bedtime). If that doesn’t work, try Dilantin (100 mg). When I wake up during the night, I take a capsule and always get right back to sleep. Dilantin is safe, inexpensive, fast, and reliable, but it does require a prescription.

Q  I used to love liver but have not eaten it in years because I thought it stored toxins. Now I am hearing that it is very good for health. I would value your opinion on this. — B.A., Yucaipa, CA

A  Though the liver is a primary organ of detoxification, toxins are not actually stored there. On the contrary, liver is exceptionally nutritious, packed with vitamins A and B12 and abundant in phosphorus, copper, zinc, folic acid, and biotin. One caveat: Get your organ meats from grass-fed, pasture-raised animals whenever possible. They have higher levels of healthy fatty acids, more nutrients, and no antibiotics or pesticides.

Q  Do any of the natural products for erectile function really work? — B.F., Sun City, AZ

A  The best-studied ingredients for enhancing male sexual function are arginine, Pycnogenol, yohimbe, ginseng, maca, and horny goat weed (yes, that’s what it’s called). I have the most confidence in the first two because they both boost nitric oxide (NO), a signaling molecule that relaxes the blood vessels and promotes blood flow—and erections are all about blood flow. I’m particularly interested in a proprietary blend of arginine and Pycnogenol called Prelox because it’s backed by decent research and doesn’t make outrageous claims. (It’s available at drwhitaker.com or by calling 800-722-8008.)

That said, most men do pretty well with the prescription drugs Viagra, Cialis, and Levitra. In addition to their obvious benefits, Cialis has been shown to improve benign prostatic hyperplasia (BPH) symptoms, and a meta-analysis published last year found that all these drugs have positive effects on cardiovascular health. Men who are taking nitroglycerin or other nitrate drugs can’t take these medications, and some men notice unpleasant side effects. But for everyone else, I believe they’re the most effective option.

Top 5 Health Benefits of Avocados

Did you know that avocados are actually a fruit? More surprising, they fall into the category of berries because of their fleshy pulp and seed. However you slice it, avocados are brimming with health benefits. For starters, of the 22.5 grams of fat that a medium avocado contains, more than two-thirds is heart-healthy monounsaturated fat. They also have a fantastic potassium-to-sodium ratio—another boon for cardiovascular health. In addition, avocados contain 10 g of fiber and 3 g of protein, plus they are loaded with vitamins and other vital nutrients. Furthermore, new research shows that avocados may even play a role in lowering cholesterol. To learn more about the benefits of avocados and how you can incorporate more of these healthful foods into your diet, check out my blog.

Get the rest of the story—and share your opinion—by visiting my blog at “Connect with Dr. Whitaker” on drwhitaker.com.
**Works for Me…**

**Exercise** Trampolines are not just for kid’s entertainment. I bought a mini trampoline for my living room, and I jump on it every morning while catching my TV programs. It’s really handy, accessible, and very useful. It’s much more convenient than having to deal with the hassles of going to a gym or club to exercise every day—especially during an Iowa winter. I jump to clear out my lymph glands—allowing me breathe easier, especially when climbing stairs. Walking just doesn’t cut it. You have to jump! — Susan Jennings, Urbandale, IA

Having an exercise option right in your own living room means no excuses. Mini trampolines can be purchased online or in sporting goods stores. Great suggestion, Susan!

**Pain** Many issues ago, you wrote an article on a topical application of ketoprofen, an NSAID similar to ibuprofen. The article also said that ketoprofen was much more effective when spiked with DMSO. The problem with ketoprofen cream is that it is only available from compounding pharmacies and costs over $50 for a small jar. As an alternative, I grind ibuprofen pills to a powder in a blender and sift the powder. I then stir the powder into DMSO cream until the mixture starts to get pasty. I now have a powerful topical painkiller. It also relieves the twitching that I get in the arches of my feet. — Eldon Riehm, Placentia, CA

Thanks for sharing this creative and inexpensive solution. Look for DMSO in health food stores, online, or by calling 800-810-6655.

**Swimmer’s Ear** Whenever I get water in my ears from surfing or swimming, I use Auro-Dri, a drugstore brand of swimmer’s eardrops that contains 95 percent isopropyl alcohol. I haven’t tried it, but I have a feeling a few drops of rubbing alcohol would probably do the trick as well. — J.G., San Clemente, CA

When water repeatedly pools in the ears, it may lead to a bacterial infection in the outer ear canal. Drops like Auro-Dri clear trapped water and help prevent this common problem. Auro-Dri, Swim-Ear, and similar products are available in drugstores and online. And J.G. is correct: A few drops of rubbing alcohol will also work. If pain and discomfort persist, see your doctor.

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 cure a muscle cramp—or prevent one in the first place? Try a shot of pickle juice. With 20 times more sodium and eight times more potassium than traditional electrolyte drinks, weekend warriors and professional athletes alike swear by this salty remedy.

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

---

**Monthly Health Quiz**

**Men’s Health: True or False?**

A) Wearing hats contributes to hair loss.
B) Testosterone production peaks at age 18.
C) Prostate cancer is the most deadly type of cancer in men.
D) Erectile dysfunction affects one in 10 men.
E) Men think about sex every seven seconds.

**Answer:**

Only B is true. Hats do not cause hair loss, lung cancer is the most deadly cancer in men, prostate cancer is the most deadly cancer in men, erectile dysfunction affects nearly all men at some point in their lives, and though men do think about sex more often than women, 7,200 times per day would be a lot.

**Now Available at drwhitaker.com**

• 4 Tips for Healthier Summer Travel
• Natural Mosquito Repellents
• The Health Benefits of Gardening

Visit today for these articles and more in-depth wellness advice to help you achieve optimal health.

**Notable Quote**

“If I had known I was going to live this long, I would have taken better care of myself.”

— Mae West, American actress, 1893–1980

---

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

If you’re in your 40s or older, chances are your doctor has recommended a statin drug. Current guidelines decree that half of Americans in this age group—and 77 percent of those over 60—“need” cholesterol-lowering medication.

You have no symptoms or history of heart disease? You’re fit, active, and in excellent health? It doesn’t matter. Even if your cholesterol is low but you have diabetes, obesity, or other risk factors, you’ll walk out of the office with a prescription for Crestor, Lipitor, Zocor, or another statin.

It’s ludicrous! These medications are not the miracle drugs they’re made out to be. Yes, they slash LDL cholesterol levels, but so what? Contrary to the exaggerated claims made by drug companies and parroted by physicians, statins have minimal effects on risk of heart attacks and cardiovascular death.

Furthermore, as cardiologist Peter Langsjoen, MD, and colleagues explain in a provocative new publication, statins are cellular toxins that damage the mitochondria, impair cellular function—and promote the very diseases they’re supposed to prevent.

Statins Drain Your Batteries...

Statins work by blocking an enzyme required for the synthesis of cholesterol. But like all drugs that obstruct normal physiological function, there’s a lot of collateral damage.

Blocking this enzyme also suppresses the production of coenzyme Q10 (CoQ10). CoQ10 has two vital roles in the mitochondria of every cell in your body. First, it is necessary for the generation of ATP. By depleting CoQ10, statins impair the mitochondria’s ability to produce energy. CoQ10 is a potent free radical fighter as well, so these drugs also weaken your antioxidant defenses.

Sapping cellular energy and promoting mitochondrial damage is a recipe for disaster, and the first signs of toxicity often appear in the muscles. Pain, weakness, and fatigue affect an estimated one in five statin users, including subscriber T.C., who wrote, “A few months after I started taking Crestor, I noticed a sharp decline in aerobic fitness with intermittent dizziness/faintness when exercising. I decided to try stopping Crestor. Within days my symptoms improved, and now I feel fine and am fully recovered.”

…and Damage Your Heart

The heart muscle is particularly vulnerable. Heart failure occurs when the cardiac muscle cannot pump efficiently enough to keep up with the body’s demands. No wonder our epidemic of heart failure parallels the meteoric rise in statin use!

Although this obvious connection is often ignored, getting off the drugs and restoring CoQ10 levels should be the first-line treatment for everyone with heart failure. I’ve seen this work time and again. Whitaker Wellness patient Raymond Berg told me about his 87-year-old mother, who had been taking Lipitor for years and had developed such serious heart failure that she could hardly walk. “We got her off the statin and started her on CoQ10. Within a month, she was up at 6:00, cleaning the house, and moving furniture. She lived to be almost 96.”

Statins’ main claim to fame is reducing risk of heart attacks, but Dr. Langsjoen describes how they may do the exact opposite. In addition to mitochondrial toxicity, statins also suppress vitamin K2, a crucial vitamin that inhibits soft tissue calcification. Without adequate K2, calcium builds up in the arteries and promotes atherosclerosis, or hardening of the arteries—a leading cause of heart attacks, strokes, and vascular disease.

The damage doesn’t stop here. Statins adversely affect tissues and organs throughout body. Cataracts, liver damage, kidney disease, cancer, sexual dysfunction, depression, memory loss, amnesia, and dramatically increased risk of type 2 diabetes have been directly linked with statin use.

“Statistical Deception”

So why do physicians and patients buy into the statin charade? According to a scathing new analysis by Drs. Uffe Ravnskov and David Diamond, we are intentionally misled. “Statistical deception has...
magnified the unimpressive effects of statin treatment in the medical literature and in the media.”

The truth is hiding in plain sight—not in the news or in advertisements and commercials but in the actual clinical research. A close review of all the studies involving people with no history of a heart attack or stroke reveals that taking a statin drug every day for five years reduced risk of heart attack by an average of 1.6 percent and stroke by 0.3 percent. There was no statistically significant effect on deaths.

To put this into perspective, the number needed to treat (NNT) is 104. To prevent one heart attack, 104 people have to take a statin drug every day for five years. The other 103 get no benefits—but they are exposed to the drugs’ serious side effects. At least 1 in 10 have muscle damage and 1 in 50 develop diabetes. And no deaths are prevented.

Yet drug ads claim and doctors assure patients that statins reduce risk of heart attack and save lives. How can that be? The drug companies pull a fast one by using a statistic called relative risk reduction. All of a sudden, 1–2 percent reductions turn into 30–50 percent. It may be a legitimate stat, but the intent is anything but legit. It’s an obvious, provable lie used simply to sell more drugs.

The System Is Rigged

I know you’re thinking surely the FDA wouldn’t allow such dirty tricks, and if they did, doctors would tell us about it. I wish! But Big Pharma gets by with this diabolical strategy. Statins are the best-selling drugs of all time.

The authors conclude on an even darker note. “There is a great appeal to the public to take a pill that offers the promise of a longer life and to live heart attack free. The reality, however, is that statins actually produce only small beneficial effects on cardiovascular outcomes, and their adverse effects are far more substantial than is generally known. Nevertheless, if the pharmaceutical industry continues to expand its control over medical education, research, and the media, then five years from now most adults, as well as children with elevated cholesterol levels, will be on a statin.”

References


Whitaker Wellness Success Story

“I had a massive stroke in August 2012 and was in intensive care for six days. I was completely paralyzed on my right side and had trouble with my speech and memory. I couldn’t say what town I lived in, and when they asked me to name a green vegetable, I didn’t have a clue.

“Several weeks of rehab got me to the point where I was able to walk out of the place with the help of a cane, and by the time I finished speech therapy, I could carry on a conversation again. My brain still wasn’t working perfectly, and an MRI showed an area with lots of destroyed brain cells.

“I figured the only way I was going to get better was to take matters into my own hands, so I went to the Whitaker Wellness Institute where I was treated with EECP, hyperbaric oxygen, neurofeedback, acupuncture, and other therapies.

“I am now at the point where I can basically do everything I want to do. I hike, garden, do dishes, iron, and travel a lot. The only thing I would like to do but cannot is drive a car. But if I can’t, I can’t. My memory is still not completely there, but with neurofeedback I have made a lot of progress.

“I attribute my overall improvement to Whitaker Wellness. I cannot say which therapy has been most instrumental—they have all helped. After my stroke I was put on so many medications that I should have bought stock in the pharmaceutical industry. Now, thanks to the wonderful doctors, staff, and therapies at the clinic, I am only taking a medication to keep my blood pressure under control. I feel good and I keep on truckin’!”

— Elfi Berkowitz, Hayward, CA

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

Folic Acid Protects Against Heat Stroke

Summer is here and temperatures are rising. While we welcome the warmth, especially after this particularly harsh winter, hot weather can have a devastating downside. An estimated 660 Americans die every year from heat-related causes—and 70,000 people perished in a prolonged heat wave in Europe in 2003!

When you overheat, your body cools down by sweating and increasing blood flow to the skin, where heat is dispersed. That’s why some people turn red when they exercise or get really hot. This is simulated by nitric oxide (NO), which dilates the blood vessels and increases blood flow. Because NO production declines with age, older people are particularly vulnerable to overheating and heat-induced death. But supplemental folic acid may reduce that risk. In a placebo-controlled study, researchers from Penn State found that older people who took 5 mg of folic acid daily for six weeks had increased NO synthesis and blood delivery to the skin. This summer, stay cool, drink lots of water, and take a multi with at least 800 mcg of folic acid. For higher-dose folic acid supplements, call 800-810-6655.

Lithium for Mood, Memory, and More

It may surprise you to learn that lithium—used in high doses to treat bipolar disorder—is naturally present in groundwater. And studies from the US, Japan, Greece, and Austria have all come to similar conclusions: The higher the level of lithium in the water, the better off mentally and physically the local population appears to be. Areas with higher concentrations report lower suicide rates, decreases in violent crime, and reductions in mortality from all causes.

This trace mineral promotes brain cell growth, prevents neuronal damage, and shields the brain from excess levels of the excitatory neurotransmitter glutamate, which may overstimulate brain cells to the point of destruction. While no definitive human research exists to establish lithium as an Alzheimer’s prevention or cure, I wouldn’t be surprised to see this benefit unveiled in the future. The form we use at the clinic is lithium orotate, and the suggested dose is 10–20 mg per day, taken in divided doses. Look for low-dose lithium online or order from Whitaker Wellness by calling 800-810-6655.

Did You Know?

- Eating eggs along with leafy green vegetables dramatically increases absorption of lutein, zeaxanthin, and other carotenoids.
- Only 45 percent of Alzheimer’s patients are informed by their doctors of their diagnosis.
- Every day, 18 Americans die awaiting organ transplants; up to eight lives can be saved by one organ donor.
- Astaxanthin, the antioxidant that makes salmon pink, improves cognitive function in older people.
- Sixty percent of calories in foods purchased in grocery stores come from highly processed products.
- Taxpayers subsidize the US Postal Service to the tune of $18 billion per year.
- Borderline low testosterone raises risk of depression.
- Over half of medical schools provide no education on exercise.
- Treating gum disease, which affects 85 percent of patients with chronic kidney disease, reduces risk of heart attack.
- The advice to wait an hour after you eat before swimming is a myth with no scientific backing.

Health & Healing Resources

- Renew Your Subscription .................. 800-539-8219
- Buy Supplements .................. 800-722-8008 or drwhitaker.com
- Sign Up for My Free E-News ................. drwhitaker.com
- Make an Appointment at Whitaker Wellness ...... 800-488-1500 or whitakerwellness.com

Coming In Future Issues:

- Back Pain: What Works/What Doesn’t
- Health Benefits of Saunas
- Healthy Summertime Drinks

For more health advice and solutions, visit drwhitaker.com

Vol. 25, No. 6