Health& Healing VOUR DEFINITIVE GUIDE TO WELLNESS MEDICINE

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Hypertension: What Works/What Doesn't

sk any doctor or patient about hypertension, and you'll get the same answer: It raises risk of heart attacks, strokes, and premature death, and lowering blood pressure saves lives.

What if I told you that for most of the 70 million Americans labeled hypertensive, high blood pressure is not a problem. That the risks of mild hypertension, the type that affects the majority of patients, are overblown. That tens of millions are overmedicated with side effect—ridden drugs that do more harm than good. That the \$32 billion we spend every year treating mild hypertension is a waste. Let's take a closer look.

Mild Hypertension Is Not a Killer

It's widely believed that hypertension is a silent killer that sets us up for strokes and heart attacks and knocks about five years off life expectancy. Although this may be true for patients who have very high blood pressure and/or existing cardiovascular disease, diabetes, or kidney disease, the picture is considerably different for mild hypertension, which is defined under current guidelines as 140–159/90–99.

Scientific data published in top medical journals over the past three years make it clear that mild hypertension does not confer these risks. For example, reevaluation of data from the renowned Framingham Heart Study shows that deaths related to hypertension barely budge until systolic blood pressure reaches 175 and mortality rates climb significantly only above 185.

In other words, malignant hypertension is a killer. Uncomplicated mild hypertension is not.

Sixty percent of hypertensive Americans fall into the mild category. Nevertheless, more than half of them are treated with medications. That's the real tragedy.

Treatment Harms Patients

There is no convincing scientific evidence that treating basically healthy patients with mild hypertension provides any benefits. In a groundbreaking 2012 study, researchers reviewed all the clinical trials in the medical literature comparing drug treatment of mild hypertension with placebo or no treatment. They found no differences in heart attacks, strokes, and deaths between treated and untreated individuals. But they did find that the drugs caused a lot of misery. Side effects were so common and severe that 9 percent of the study participants dropped out.

Twenty-two years ago in Health & Healing, I wrote:

The current use of drugs to lower high blood pressure, in my opinion, is insane. Thiazide diuretics deplete supplies of potassium and magnesium, thereby increasing the risk of a heart attack and cardiac arrhythmias. Betablockers are notorious for causing impotence, fatigue, and depression. Calcium channel blockers weaken the heart and can damage the liver. This mayhem by drugs is incomprehensible because high blood pressure in the overwhelming majority of cases can be successfully treated with diet and other lifestyle changes.

Since then, nothing has changed. It has actually gotten worse, as more drugs have been introduced and more side effects uncovered. Physicians today are so focused on numbers that if blood pressure can't be controlled with one drug, they prescribe two, three, or continued on page 3

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Health & Healing

Julian Whitaker, MD, has practiced medicine for over 35 years, after receiving degrees from Dartmouth College and Emory University. Dr. Whitaker has long been an advocate of living a healthy life. Dr. Whitaker is compensated on the sales of the supplements he formulates with Healthy Directions, LLC. He is not compensated for other companies' products that he recommends in this newsletter. He is the author of 14 health books including: The Mini-Fast Diet, The Whitaker Wellness Weight Loss Program, Reversing Hypertension, Shed 10 Years in 10 Weeks, The Pain Relief Breakthrough, Reversing Heart Disease, Reversing Diabetes, and Dr. Whitaker's Guide to Natural 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,

October 1 is D-Day for ICD-10, the 10th revision of the International Classification of Diseases, which is the worldwide standard for medical diagnoses. Unfortunately, it's a dark day for Americans, as the forced adoption of this complex coding system will inevitably result in more expensive, less efficient, and poorer quality health care.

ICD is a collection of diagnostic codes designated by the World Health Organization for reporting and tracking



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global disease trends in order to facilitate research, disease prevention, and healthcare management. This latest version consists of 68,000 codes—a five-fold increase over ICD-9—and they're detailed to a fault. For example, rather than a handful of codes for a knee sprain or strain, the new system includes scores of codes denoting the precise area on the knee and the type, severity, mode, and location of injury. There are also codes for everything from "burn due to water-skis on fire" and "struck by turtle" to "hurt at the opera" and "sucked into jet engine." Seriously.

The complexity of ICD-10 and the addition of 55,000 new codes, which will be required by insurance companies, Medicare, and Medicaid, are an onerous burden. Such detail, in my opinion, severely hampers good judgment on the part of the physician and will change the practice of medicine—and not for the better.

For physicians, ICD-10 means higher administrative and operating costs and declining reimbursements. It also bodes poorly for patients, as the extra documentation drives up costs and cuts into the time physicians can spend with patients. Some experts predict that ICD-10 will increase doctors' paperwork time by 15 percent or more. Taxpayers are taking a hit as well due to the billions spent on updating Medicare and Medicaid management systems and increased administrative expenses.

The ICD-10 implementation date was pushed back a year ago by an act of Congress, and legislation has been introduced calling for a transition or grace period and other changes. The only real solution, however, is to return ICD to its original purpose as a research tool and develop a simple, logical billing system that will benefit physicians, insurers, and patients alike. That's not likely to happen, so brace yourself for ever-increasing premiums, higher medical bills, and worse care. My advice is don't get sick! Get serious about preventive strategies and stay as healthy as you can so you don't get caught up in our increasingly dysfunctional health care system.

To your health,

Hypertension (continued from page 1)

more. Even on multiple medications, only 50 percent of patients are able to achieve the elusive, arbitrary goal of "normal" blood pressure.

A Safer, Saner Approach

Antihypertensive medications are America's number-one drug category in prescription volume,

blood pressure follow-up is the primary reason for doctor visits among adults, and an estimated 30 percent of our public health expenditures go toward treating mild hypertension.

We would all be better served by shifting the focus to natural therapies that have been proven to not only lower blood pressure but, unlike antihypertensive drugs, also improve multiple aspects of health.

Regular aerobic and resistance exercise, which reduces systolic blood pressure as effectively as many medications, rejuvenates every system in your body. Losing as little as 10 pounds or 5 percent of your total weight provides significant all-around benefits. Relaxation techniques, meditation, yoga, acupuncture, and neurofeedback reduce the effects of stress on blood pressure, health, and quality of life.

Cutting out high-glycemic sugars and starches lowers blood sugar, lipids, insulin resistance, and other aspects of metabolic syndrome as well as blood pressure. Beets, leafy greens, and other nitrate-rich foods boost synthesis of nitric oxide (NO), which dilates and protects the arteries. Adequate protein and fiber are important, as is countering the effects of sodium with increased potassium. This can be achieved by eating more vegetables, drinking Low-Sodium V8 Juice, and substituting regular salt with "Whitaker Salt" (three parts Morton's Salt Substitute/potassium chloride to one part regular salt).

Drug-Free Therapies

Magnesium has powerful effects on blood pressure because it relaxes and reduces pressure on the arteries; that 75-80 percent of Americans fail to get the

RDA of magnesium is a likely contributor to our high rates of hypertension. Coenzyme Q10 has positive effects on blood pressure and the entire cardiovascular system. Beet juice (dehydrated or fresh), potassium nitrate, Pycnogenol, grape seed extract, and amla boost NO production. We also have good success at Whitaker Wellness with reishi mushrooms and Balance3, a mixture of Chinese herbs.

My Recommendations Lifestyle factors for blood pressure support and overall health include

diet changes, weight loss, exercise, and stress reduction.

- Recommended supplements, taken in divided doses: magnesium 500-1,000 mg, coenzyme Q10 100-300 mg, omega-3s 4-6 g, Balance3 1-4 tablets, reishi mushrooms 1,200 mg, Pycnogenol 50-100 mg, grape seed extract 75-150 mg, amla 500 mg, and potassium nitrate 600 mg or beet juice 1-2 cups fresh or dehydrated. To order. call 800-810-6655.
- If you have moderate to severe hypertension or existing cardiovascular disease, diabetes, or kidney disease, you need to get serious about controlling your blood pressure. Nevertheless, I encourage you to give this natural approach a try. To set up a free consultation to learn about treatment at Whitaker Wellness, call 800-488-1500.

EECP, which we use at the clinic primarily for coronary artery disease and heart failure, predictably lowers blood pressure. Researchers recently reported that 40 treatments reduced blood pressure by an average of 25/7.5 in hypertensive patients.

We also test for sleep apnea. Jackie M., a patient from Texas, wrote, "I came to Whitaker Wellness to address my hypertension. To my surprise, I was diagnosed with sleep apnea and was educated on the fact that it was playing a large role in my high blood pressure. Now that I'm using my APAP machine every night, my blood pressure has lowered by 20 points and I'm feeling great!"

Time to Change Direction

Dated, mistaken beliefs about mild hypertension have turned millions of healthy people into patients subjected to a lifetime of medication. Doctors must start telling their patients

the truth: There's little to be gained from treating mild hypertension, and drug therapy is associated with serious side effects. I suspect that if patients were empowered with this knowledge, the health of our nation would dramatically improve.

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Dear Dr. Whitaker

Do you have any suggestions for adult acne? My daughter, who is in her 30s, is dealing with far worse acne than she ever had as an adolescent. Antibiotics didn't help, and because of her age, Accutane is not an option. — A.M., Madison, WI

Diet plays a key role in acne, so I suggest cutting out sugars, starches, refined carbohydrates, and dairy products. They cause spikes in insulin and other hormones, which stimulate oil production, inflammation, and breakouts. Recommended supplements include zinc (50 mg per day), niacinamide (500 mg three times daily), and a multivitamin. Due to their antimicrobial and antifungal properties, extra-virgin coconut oil and tea tree oil applied topically are helpful, as is a daily dose of sunshine. SophytoPRO's Skin Restore System is a high-quality organic skin care line for acne that consists of a cleanser, moisturizer, and antioxidant/anti-inflammatory serum. (To order, call 800-810-6655.) I also recommend checking hormone levels, as imbalances can contribute to acne.

I am an avid reader, and a few years ago I started reading books on my iPad, mostly at bedtime. However, I've heard that this can interfere with sleep. What are your thoughts? — P.L., via phone call

Kindles, iPads, smartphones, and other devices (including your TV and computer) emit blue wavelengths of light that disrupt the release of melatonin, the "sleep hormone." A 2015 study suggests that evening use of these light-emitting devices adversely affects sleep, circadian rhythms, and morning alertness. The best suggestion is to stop using your "gadgets" two hours before bedtime, read on a device that isn't backlit, or use the black background/white text option. There's also an app called f.lux that blocks blue light on some devices and can be downloaded for free. Finally, I recommend 15–40 mg of lutein daily, which protects against the harmful effects of blue light in the eyes.

My 10-year-old grandson has ADHD and is taking Adderall. He was off the drug during the summer and did just fine. Now that school is underway, his parents have him on it again. I am concerned but as a grandparent, I try to keep quiet. Do you have any "subtle" suggestions? — Ann M., via email

You're right to be concerned. One in seven boys aged 3–17 has been diagnosed with ADHD and many are medicated with dangerous, addictive stimulant drugs. I encourage you to talk to his parents about safe, natural alternatives. Getting a handle on diet, discipline, and sleep issues can make a big difference. Omega-3 fatty acids are also beneficial, and many parents swear by Pedi-Active, a supplement that contains nutrients targeted toward active children. Additionally, small doses of the prescription drug Dilantin smooth out electrical activity in the brain. I've seen Dilantin quickly normalize disruptive thought patterns and behaviors in both children and adults. Finally, neurofeedback is a well-studied therapy that "retrains" brainwayes and calms down erratic behavior. For neurofeedback treatment at Whitaker Wellness, call 800-488-1500.



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From My Blog

Eat Spicy Foods, Live Longer

Forget the fountain of youth. If you want to live longer, you need to turn up the heat. Chinese researchers recently published the results of a clinical trial involving nearly 500,000 people, ages 30-79. Across the board, an inverse relationship was noted between the amount of spicy foods consumed and the risk of dying. Men and women who ate peppers and other hot foods six or seven days a week had a 14 percent reduced risk of death compared to those who indulged less than once a week. The health benefits of such foods are likely due to capsaicin, the compound that gives chili peppers their heat. Capsaicin consumption has also been linked to increased metabolism, improvements in circulation, and, when used topically, pain relief. To learn more about the benefits of spicy foods and capsaicin in general, visit 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...

► **GERD** When I came to Whitaker Wellness, I was on medications for acid reflux (GERD) and hypertension, and my goal was to get off of those drugs. My acid reflux was so bad it would wake me up in the middle of the night and cause me to feel like I was choking and could not breathe. When I told my doctor at your clinic I had too much stomach acid, he said that like most beoble over age 60, I probably didn't have enough. He explained that Nexium and similar pills shut acid production down and cause side effects. So I started taking digestive enzymes and other recommended supplements, and now I can eat anything. — Frank Wade, TX

Fantastic! To order the enzymes and other supplements we use at the clinic to treat GERD, call 800-810-6655.

► **Shingles** The last serious health battle I fought was with shingles. I took liposomal vitamin C 1,000 mg every hour while awake and had one intravenous drip containing vitamin C. I never missed a day of work and was fine in less than 10

days. I had no lingering nerve pain or side effects. — Elaine Randazzo, SC

Studies support the efficacy of IV vitamin C for shingles, and although there is very little research on liposomal C, I'm glad to hear it helped. Liposomes enhance absorption and, in the case of vitamin C, allow for higher doses without gastrointestinal upset.

▶ COPD I developed COPD due to secondhand smoke and dust exposure where I worked. I have used inhalers to no avail and was hospitalized several times. Then I read about using a nebulizer with glutathione in Health & Healing. Oh, what a relief it is to no longer have this incessant cough! I have asked several health professionals about this and they're unfamiliar with it. I have not needed to use the nebulizer for nearly a year except for a slight cold that triggered the cough. But glutathione brought relief again. — H.J., MI

It's a shame more doctors don't know about inhaled glutathione for lung diseases. To learn more about this treatment, which requires a prescription, visit drwhitaker.com. For treatment at Whitaker Wellness, call 800-488-1500.

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



Healing Tip

Prolonged sitting is bad for your health, but here's an easy antidote: Take a quick two-minute walk every hour. In a recent study, sedentary people who regularly took short strolls reduced their risk of premature death by about 33 percent compared to those who remained seated most of the day.



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

Monthly Health Quiz

Spit it Out: True or False

- A) You produce 2-3 cups of saliva per day.
- B) More than 300 drugs can cause xerostomia (dry mouth).
- C) Without saliva, you wouldn't be able to taste food.
- D) The breakdown of starches and fats begins with enzymes in saliva.
- E) Drug and alcohol use, hormone levels, and some diseases can be detected by saliva tests.



actually produces 4-6 cups of saliva daily. A is false and the rest are true. Believe it or not, the average person



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Notable Ouote

You are what you repeatedly do. Excellence is not an event, it is a habit.

Aristotle

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

Bioidentical Hormones: Safe and Effective

My Recommendations

Opt only for bioidentical hormones.

to and within three months of start-

Blood tests should be done prior

ing treatment so adjustments can

be made to keep hormone levels

adult. (Lab tests for men should

often converts to estrogen, which

can cause problems that must be

and DHEA are not recommended

for anyone with breast, prostate, or

other hormone-mediated cancers.

Except for DHEA, HRT requires

a prescription. To locate a physi-

cian experienced in bioidentical

ment at Whitaker Wellness, call

800-488-1500.

hormones, visit acam.org or world-

health.net. To schedule an appoint-

addressed.) Testosterone, estrogen,

include estradiol: testosterone

within the range of a healthy young

I have been prescribing hormone replacement therapy (HRT) for 30 years, and during that time, I've seen its reputation rise and fall. Female HRT took a hit in 2002, when the Women's Health Initiative uncovered the dangers of Premarin and Provera. A similar scenario played out more recently with testosterone after seriously flawed studies broadcasted links with cardiovascular disease.

Throughout all these ups and downs, I've maintained confidence in HRT because the only hormones I've ever recommended are bioidentical, which are indistinguishable from those produced in the human body. Today, HRT is making a comeback as current research confirms the safety and efficacy of bioidentical hormones, and conventional physicians are finally coming around.

At Whitaker Wellness, we prescribe individualized doses of bioidentical hormones to treat specific conditions, such as estrogen for menopausal symptoms, progesterone for autoimmune diseases, and testosterone for heart failure. However, we also prescribe HRT for older men

and women—not to reverse aging but to improve healthspan and quality of life by restoring levels of key hormones that decline with age.

Testosterone Benefits Older Men

For men, many of the unpleasant aspects of aging, including reductions in muscle mass, sexual desire and function, and energy, are directly related to drops in testosterone. I can tell you from personal experience that bioidentical testosterone replacement, which I've been using off and on for several vears, makes a noticeable difference in these areas. It also reduces risk of osteoporosis, sarcopenia, anemia, and heart disease—yes, heart disease.

Three years after the media circus that scared men into believing testosterone caused heart disease, new research reveals that it's actually protective. In an August 2015 study involving 83,000 men with initially low testosterone, researchers found that, compared to untreated men, those whose hormone levels were restored to the normal range with HRT had dramatic reductions in risk of death (56 percent), heart attack (24 percent), and stroke (36 percent). This study underscores both the safety of testosterone HRT and

> the importance of follow-up and testing to make sure levels are in the optimal range.

Fears of prostate cancer have also given testosterone replacement a bad rap, but this too has been disproven. A large study published in June bolsters earlier findings that testosterone therapy does not increase risk of high-grade prostate cancer. Men with prostate cancer should steer clear because testosterone can fuel existing tumors, but for everyone else this concern should be laid to rest.

Women are more acutely aware of the effects of hormones, especially those who are hit hard with hot flashes, mood swings, sleep disturbances, and

other symptoms of menopause. HRT significantly enhances quality of life during this time, and shortterm use is a common recommendation.

This strategy, however, ignores longer-lasting consequences of age-related hormone declines, like bone loss, vaginal dryness, skin aging, and sarcopenia. Granted, the studies on female HRT show some risks, especially when started later in life. But the risks of stroke, blood clots, heart disease, and breast cancer in the Women's Health Initiative were associated with Premarin and Provera. What else would you expect from horse hormones and synthetic progesterone?

The female HRT protocols at Whitaker Wellness consist of transdermal bioidentical estradiol (the dominant form of estrogen) and oral natural progesterone. Topical estrogen has a much better safety profile than oral. Bypassing the GI track significantly minimizes the risk of blood clots, adverse

Misconceptions About Female HRT

effects on lipids and blood pressure—and thus cardiovascular concerns. In fact, transdermal estradiol appears to improve endothelial function in older women with heart disease.

Regarding breast cancer, the culprit is not estrogen but progestin (Provera). Study participants who took estrogen alone had no increased risk of cancer. Progestins have a long list of negative effects, while natural progesterone has demonstrated benefits for sleep, bone health, and blood pressure and does not increase risk of blood clots or breast cancer.

Testosterone is also an important hormone in women, and small doses of topical testosterone are often added to enhance mood, energy, and libido.

Other "Anti-Aging" Hormones

Drops in DHEA levels are also associated with a number of age-related disorders. Often called a "prohormone" because it is converted in the body into estrogen and testosterone, DHEA's importance increases after hormone production in the ovaries and testicles peters out. Supplemental DHEA has been shown to improve strength, muscle mass, bone density, mood, sense of well-being, and sexual function—and it has an excellent safety profile. Although there are theoretical concerns regarding hormone-dependent cancers, the only established adverse effects are mild acne and facial hair in women, which can be reversed with lower dosing.

Growth hormone has been pegged as the ultimate anti-aging hormone since 1990, when Daniel Rudman, MD, reported that treating older men

reduced body fat and increased lean body mass, bone density, and skin thickness to a degree "equivalent in magnitude to the changes incurred during 10 to 20 years of aging." Subsequent studies have also demonstrated improvements in cognitive function. There are some adverse effects, including carpal tunnel syndrome, fluid retention, and insulin resistance. And because growth hormone has to be injected and costs \$600–800 a month, I recommend it primarily for frail elderly patients.

Thyroid hormones also decline with age. I recommend that everyone have their levels checked periodically and supplement with natural thyroid, if indicated.

Should You Use HRT?

HRT is not a cure-all, nor is it for everyone, but consider this. Doctors don't hesitate to prescribe drugs for osteoporosis, mood disorders, sexual problems, heart disease, and a long list of other conditions that increase with age. If bioidentical HRT—which is much safer and more effective than most medications—can ameliorate some of these problems, why not give it a try?

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Whitaker Wellness Success Story

"I've Turned the Clock Back!"

"After losing my husband seven years ago, my health began to decline. I saw myself slipping away. I felt weaker, exercise and even walking up steps was difficult, and my everyday activities were minimized. Everything was going in the wrong direction.

"Two years ago, I decided that since I am not getting any younger, I had better figure out how this body works and how to make it healthier. So I came to Whitaker Wellness for the Back to Health Program. I had blood work done, discovered my hormones were very low, and started on HRT. (Back home in Iowa, they think even bioidentical hormones are bad.)

"The therapies I did at the clinic plus exercising, taking supplements, eating right, and sleeping better have given me a feeling of vitality that I had been missing. Since then, I have seen such success: a 40-pound weight loss, blood tests in the healthy range, more strength and energy, and better sleep. I've turned the clock back maybe 10 or 20 years. Everything is functioning properly.



Susan Jennings

"A lot of people are skeptical about alternative medicine, but it's mainstream medicine that is not trustworthy. At Whitaker Wellness, people are getting their health and their lives back." — Susan Jennings, lowa

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

Innovations in Wellness Medicine

Boswellia for Pain and Inflammation

We're all familiar with the Biblical history of frankincense, a fragrant resin that is used in religious rituals to this day. But you may not know about its medicinal properties. Frankincense comes from the sap of boswellia trees, and extracts of one species in particular, *Boswellia serrata*, have powerful anti-inflammatory properties. Boswellic acids block the activity of 5-lipoxygenase (5-LOX), an enzyme that stimulates the release of inflammatory chemicals called leukotrienes. Leukotrienes not only cause pain and inflammation in the joints but also damage cells lining the blood vessels, digestive tract, and other organs.

I've been intrigued by boswellia's potential for decades but also aware of its notoriously poor absorption. A new extract called Après-Flex, however, has resolved the absorption issue. In clinical trials involving patients with joint pain, benefits were noted in as little five days, and after a month there was a 40 percent average improvement in pain and stiffness. The suggested dose is 100 mg per day. Look for AprèsFlex boswellia extract online or in health food stores, and let me know how it works for you.

Chamomile Tea for Overall Health

For centuries, chamomile has been relied upon to alleviate stomach upset, sleeplessness, and anxiety. In recent years, even more health benefits of this herb have been unearthed. Chamomile has potent antioxidant, antimicrobial, and anti-inflammatory properties, and preliminary research suggests potential benefits for PMS, diabetic complications, and high cholesterol.

A study published earlier this year revealed that regular consumption of chamomile tea is also linked with increased longevity. Researchers tracked chamomile tea use in 1,700 older Mexican-Americans over a seven-year timespan. The women in that group who regularly drank chamomile tea were 29 percent less likely to die during those seven years than the non-tea drinkers. Benefits were much less robust in men, likely because the women were more compliant with regular tea consumption and more prone to using herbal remedies. Even if these other health benefits don't pan out, a nice cup of chamomile tea before bed will aid in digestion and ease you into a peaceful slumber.

Did You Know?

- Loud music slows drivers' reaction time.
- Three to five cups of coffee a day is linked with a 21 percent reduced risk of cardiovascular disease.
- Emergency room visits for earaches, sore throats, etc., cost 4–5 times more than urgent care centers.
- We forget 90 percent of our dreams within 10 minutes, if we remember them at all.
- Half of patients don't take their medications as prescribed.
- The number of doctors in independent practices has declined from 62 percent in 2008 to 35 percent in 2013.
- Probiotics applied vaginally curb yeast overgrowth and reduce recurrent infections.
- Animal studies show exercise slows tumor growth and enhances chemotherapy.
- Making one pound of honey requires the collective efforts of about 60,000 bees.
- Smoking increases risk of death from infections, breast/prostate cancer, and digestive, liver, and kidney diseases.
- The most popular Halloween candy is Reese's peanut butter cups.

Health & Healing Resources

- Buy Supplements. 800-722-8008 or drwhitaker.com
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