

Do You Really Need That Surgery?

When Sharon checked into the hospital, her most pressing concern was how soon she'd be back on her feet. She was so busy with her church, volunteer work in her retirement community, and family and social activities that she just didn't have time to be laid up.

Surgery went well, but afterward she was confused and disoriented. Sharon and her family were assured this was a temporary side effect of surgery and she would soon return to her old self. She never did. A year later she still had trouble remembering names, forgot meetings, accidentally skipped meals, and often got lost. When the highway patrol pulled her over for driving her golf cart on the freeway, her sons knew it was time for mom to move to assisted living.

Last month, we discussed the scourge of polypharmacy, the excessive use of multiple prescription drugs. Now let's look at the dangers of inappropriate and unnecessary surgeries.

Overhyped, Underperforming

For trauma care, acute stroke, a ruptured appendix, and other medical emergencies, there's no better place to be than in a good American hospital under the care of a top-notch surgical team. Unfortunately, a disturbing number of elective surgeries are not the indispensable, lifesaving interventions they're cracked up to be.

Research reveals that a host of invasive procedures are all too often performed on patients who stand to

gain no real benefit—but are unavoidably exposed to the potential harms of hospitalization and surgery. Procedures that fall into this category include gastric bypass, heartburn surgery, implanted defibrillators, pacemakers, radical prostatectomy, double mastectomy, thyroidectomy, and Mohs surgery for skin cancer. But the following are the most often overused:

Heart Procedures

Solid scientific research dating back to the 1970s makes it clear that most patients who undergo coronary artery bypass surgery, angioplasty, and coronary artery stenting are no less likely to have a heart attack or die than those treated with medications. The majority of the 1.5 million people who have these procedures yearly have stable angina—or no symptoms at all—and do just fine with medications, supplements, exercise, diet changes, EECP (a natural “bypass”), and other noninvasive therapies.



Back Surgery

Multiple studies show that people with low back pain have similar outcomes with or without surgery, making the bulk of the 600,000 spinal fusions, laminectomies, etc., superfluous at best. A recent study found physical therapy to be as effective as surgery for painful spinal stenosis, and many Whitaker Wellness patients report long-term relief with prolotherapy and platelet-rich plasma. Flare-ups can also be curbed with

continued on page 3

Inside This Issue

• Surgery..... 1	• Lyme Disease 4	• Menopause..... 6
• Dear Reader..... 2	• Works for Me 5	• Success Story..... 7
• Tinea Versicolor, Berberine ... 4	• Natural Ant Repellant..... 5	• Wellness Medicine 8

Health & Healing

YOUR DEFINITIVE GUIDE TO WELLNESS MEDICINE

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*.

Dr. Julian Whitaker's Health & Healing® (ISSN 1057-9273) is published monthly by Healthy Directions, LLC, 6710-A Rockledge Dr., Ste 500, Bethesda, MD 20817, telephone 800-539-8219. Please write to us at **Dr. Julian Whitaker's Health & Healing**, PO Box 11, Montoursville, PA 17754, or call if you have a question concerning your subscription. Periodicals postage paid at Bethesda, MD and additional mailing offices. Postmaster: Send address changes to **Dr. Julian Whitaker's Health & Healing**, PO Box 11, Montoursville, PA 17754.

Author: Julian Whitaker, MD
Research Editor: Peggy Dace
Managing Editor: Larissa Long
Associate Research Editor: Ryann Smith Groseclose

© Copyright 2016, Healthy Directions, LLC. Photocopying, reproduction, or quotation strictly prohibited without written permission of the publisher. Subscription: \$69.99 per year. *Dr. Julian Whitaker's Health & Healing* is dedicated to providing timely, accurate information by drawing on Dr. Whitaker's expert opinion and experience. *Dr. Julian Whitaker's Health & Healing* cannot offer medical services; we encourage our readers to seek advice from competent medical professionals for their personal health needs. Dr. Whitaker will respond in the newsletter to questions of general interest.

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

Dear Reader,

Joan Rivers suffered a cardiac arrest and fatal brain damage during a procedure at an outpatient endoscopy facility. J sica Santill n died after receiving a heart/lung transplant from a patient with an incompatible blood type. Michael Jackson's death was caused by an overdose of drugs administered by his physician. Esmin Green died in an emergency room where she'd waited 24 hours without receiving medical attention.

Dana Carvey's heart surgeon bypassed the wrong artery. Dr. Charles Streit removed a patient's healthy kidney instead of the cancerous one. Dennis Quaid's newborn twins almost died after being given 1,000 times the appropriate dose of heparin. Erica Parks underwent a six-hour surgery to remove a sponge left in her abdomen during a previous operation.

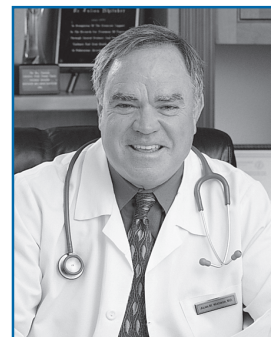
These well-publicized cases are clear-cut examples of medical error. But you may be surprised by how often mistakes made by doctors, nurses, and other medical personnel harm patients. Martin Makary, MD, from Johns Hopkins School of Medicine recently reviewed all the pertinent studies since 1999 and concluded that medical error is responsible for 251,454 fatalities per year, making it America's third leading cause of death after heart disease and cancer.

So why don't we hear more about this? Dr. Makary blames it on the way the government gathers health statistics. The same coding system used for medical billing is also used to track causes of death. There are no codes for misdiagnoses, surgical complications, inappropriate medications, or poor judgment. Therefore, the cause of death is always listed as an underlying condition, such as heart disease, cancer, or COPD—even if it was due to an avoidable mistake.

Transparency, defined as "the free flow of information that is open to the scrutiny of others," is sorely lacking in medicine today. Of course it's uncomfortable to admit errors, and the threat of lawsuits and public and professional censure makes it particularly hard for doctors and hospitals. However, if we don't acknowledge that something is broken, we can't fix it. And our current medical system, which kills more people than accidents, strokes, Alzheimer's, diabetes, and infections, needs serious attention.

Until the system gets its act together, the best way to protect yourself is to steer clear of unnecessary medical procedures and surgeries, as we discuss in the lead article.

Happy Independence Day,

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

Surgery (continued from page 1)

curcumin and other natural anti-inflammatories, topical painkillers and DMSO, chiropractic, acupuncture, and high-intensity laser treatment.

Knee Surgery

Arthroscopic surgery of the knee, which is performed 700,000 times per year, may be minimally invasive, but it's also minimally effective. Studies conducted in the US, Canada, and Finland found that sham surgery worked just as well! Joint replacement surgery is also under increasing scrutiny, as a 2014 study concluded that one-third of knee replacements may be inappropriate and unnecessary.

Hysterectomy

One in three American women will undergo hysterectomy by age 60, usually for benign conditions such as bleeding, fibroids, or endometriosis. These problems can often be treated conservatively, but a 2013 study revealed that nearly 40 percent of women were never offered other treatments prior to surgery. Cesarean sections are also overused and now account for 32 percent of all US births—two to three times the 10–15 percent rate experts consider medically necessary.

What Can Go Wrong?

The Institute of Medicine estimates that our country loses \$750 billion per year to fraud, inefficiencies, inflated prices and administrative costs, and other healthcare-related waste. But the biggest chunk of change goes toward unnecessary services, including inappropriate surgeries. Anyone who's had sticker shock from hospital bills knows surgery impacts personal finances as well. Medical bills are America's leading cause of bankruptcies!

Money's not the half of it. Hospitals and surgeries are risky business, and you could end up like Sharon, with more problems than you started with.

You could react poorly to anesthesia and medications or get the wrong drugs, doses, or combinations. You could end up with a bedsore (pressure ulcer), as 2.5 million patients do annually during prolonged hospital stays (and 60,000 die as a result).

You could develop blood clots. Risk of deep vein thrombosis and pulmonary embolism increases after surgery, especially orthopedic procedures. You could have postoperative cognitive dysfunction, which is particularly common after cardiac surgery. It usually resolves within days to weeks but, as in Sharon's case, is sometimes permanent.

You could come down with a hospital-acquired infection, which affect 1 in 25 patients on any given day and cause 75,000 deaths per year. Surgical site and catheter-related urinary tract infections are very common, and one in seven involve virulent antibiotic-resistant bacteria.

You could also be the victim of carelessness, incompetence, and human error. Most of the medical mistakes that kill 251,000 Americans annually (as discussed on page 2) occur in hospitals.

Doing Nothing

I'm not trying to scare you or suggest you forego all hospitalizations and procedures. Some are absolutely necessary. However, it's imperative to think and act critically when making decisions about surgery.

Dartmouth Medical School professor H. Gilbert Welch, MD, writes in his excellent new book *Less Medicine, More Health*: "When there is a problem, there is pressure to do something;

Prescribe a medicine. Order a test. Refer to a specialist. Admit to the hospital. Perform an operation. The pressure to do something reflects from a belief that action is preferable to inaction. But the reality is that the human body can heal and that all of our actions have unintended consequences. Thus, inaction can often be the preferred course."

If you're recommended to have surgery, the most important question you can ask might be: "What happens if I do nothing?"

References

- Makary MA, et al. Medical error—the third leading cause of death in the US. *BMJ*. 2016 May;353:i2139.
- Welch HG. *Less Medicine, More Health: 7 Assumptions That Drive Too Much Medical Care*. 2016. Beacon Press, Boston, MA.
- Inpatient surgery. *National Center for Health Statistics*. cdc.gov/nchs/fastats/inpatient-surgery.htm

My Recommendations

- ▶ For any invasive procedure, insist on supporting evidence about expected improvements, possible adverse effects, and treatment options—including doing nothing. And always get a second opinion.
- ▶ If surgery is necessary, research surgeons and hospitals. Experience counts, and some hospitals have better outcomes than others. Good places to start are Dartmouth Atlas of Health Care and *US News & World Report* Best Hospitals ratings, which are available online.
- ▶ For information on alternative treatments to surgery at Whitaker Wellness, call 800-488-1500.

Dear Dr. Whitaker

Q *My 19-year-old son gets pale spots on his back and chest. Although they don't itch, they are noticeable, especially during the summer when he is tanned. Are you familiar with this? — P.B., Houston, TX*

A Your son likely has tinea versicolor, a harmless fungal infection of the skin that is most common during the summer and in warm, humid climates. An easy and inexpensive solution to try is Selsun Blue dandruff shampoo (with selenium sulfide). Apply a small amount to the affected areas, add a little water to form a lather, and leave on the skin for 10 minutes before rinsing off completely. Repeat once a day for a week or so until the patches disappear. If this doesn't work, try over-the-counter topical antifungals.

Q *Is it okay to take berberine and metformin together? — Bill B., via phone call*

A Several clinical trials have compared the blood sugar-lowering effects of metformin and other oral diabetes drugs alone and in combination with berberine. In all cases the combos (drug plus berberine) had better results, and there were no safety issues such as severe hypoglycemia when taking them together. At Whitaker Wellness, however, we use berberine and other natural therapies alone. I just don't see the point of keeping people on drugs when this approach manages blood sugar so effectively. If you choose to use both, monitor your blood sugar levels closely to make

sure they don't fall too low. And consider talking to your doctor about discontinuing your medication.

Q *Have you ever researched OmegaXL? It's advertised on TV as help for swelling, inflammation, joint problems, etc. Taken from the pristine waters of New Zealand, it is supposed to be better than fish oil, which may have side effects from what I have heard. Perhaps it could be a great substitute for fish oil. I would like your opinion. — Marilyn, via email*

A This extract from green-lipped mussels may have some benefits, but being a replacement for fish oil is not one of them. The claim that it contains 22 times more omega-3s than fish oil just doesn't compute. According to consumerlab.com, each capsule contains just 11.2 mg of omega-3s (6.3 EPA/4.9 DHA). For general health, I recommend a minimum daily EPA/DHA intake of 900–1,000 mg—and even more for pain and inflammation. You're much better off taking a high-quality fish oil supplement.

As for inflammation and joint pain, there is some research on green-lipped mussel extract, including a few small studies of this particular product. In one of them, eight capsules per day improved symptoms of arthritis. We used green-lipped mussel extract (Lyprinol) in the clinic years ago but have found that curcumin, boswellia, and other natural anti-inflammatories as well as topical DMSO work better and are much less expensive. I don't like to be negative about any supplement, but the claims about this product are just over the top.

 Read more Q&As online at drwhitaker.com/featured-questions-and-answers. Send your own questions to drwhitakerquestions@drwhitaker.com.

From My Blog

Lyme Disease Treatment and Prevention

With summer in full swing, time spent hiking, picnicking, and playing outdoors is on the rise. So is the prevalence of blacklegged ticks (also known as deer ticks), the insects that spread Lyme disease. These critters are now found in nearly every state and almost half of all US counties. Ticks thrive in humid, moist, wooded, and grassy environments, so wear long sleeves and pants in these areas, perform “tick checks” when you return indoors, and watch for fever and rash, two common signs of infection. Immediate treatment with antibiotics is usually effective, but chronic Lyme disease is another story, and many patients suffer for years with misdiagnoses and ineffective therapies. If you're dealing with chronic Lyme disease—or symptoms that can't be explained or relieved—find a physician experienced in the diagnosis and treatment of chronic Lyme disease by visiting ilads.org or calling Whitaker Wellness at 800-488-1500.

 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 & Weight** *For several months, nighttime coughing caused by GERD severely disrupted my sleep. I saw two gastroenterologists and went on prescribed medication, which relieved my symptoms. However, I knew I didn't want to stay on these drugs longer than I had to. I tried every natural supplement I could think of. Finally, I decided to tweak my already good diet. I went on Whole30, a modified Paleo diet, eliminating all grains, dairy, sugar, and legumes. Within 10 days, my GERD symptoms were gone. After following this plan for a couple months, I lost around 12 pounds. I've since incorporated some healthy grains back in, as well as a little Greek yogurt. I am still symptom free and have not gained any weight back. I believe this way of eating changes our chemistry, normalizes our microbiome, and resets our systems in general. I couldn't be happier with the results. — V.W., via email*

► **Knee Pain** *I've had knee issues for what feels like forever, and Runovia is the only supplement that helps keep my pain under control. Just wanted*

to share in the hopes others can find relief as well.
— Lois T., Dyersville, Iowa

Runovia, a liquid hyaluronan supplement, gets rave reviews from our patients. If you have knee or joint pain, it's worth a shot. It's available from various online retailers or can be ordered by calling 800-810-6655.

► Heart Disease and Diabetes

Before I arrived at Whitaker Wellness, I was always tired and barely able to make it past 1:00 PM. I quit cardiac rehab because I was exhausted and unable to walk more than a block without chest pain. I was taking Lipitor, metformin, and Victoza to no avail. After treatment with HBOT, EECp, and other noninvasive treatments, I could walk two miles. My strength has come back, almost to the level it used to be. I am now involved with something from 7:00 AM until 8:00 PM almost every day. I feel rejuvenated!
— Jim G., Virginia

Congratulations on taking back your health, Jim! Our safe, natural approach to healing has stood the test of time—37 years and counting! To learn more, 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

Summertime is ant season, but instead of grabbing a chemical pesticide, mix equal parts water and vinegar in a spray bottle. Spray directly on ants and anthills as well as on ant trails, countertops, baseboards, etc., as a deterrent. This mixture is safe, nontoxic, and can double as a “green” household cleaner.



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

Monthly Health Quiz

Hydration Facts: True or False?

- A) We lose on average 10 cups of water daily from waste elimination, sweating, and breathing.
- B) Thirty percent of our water intake comes from food.
- C) Caffeine makes you urinate more and causes dehydration.
- D) Drinking water helps with weight control.

Answer:

A, B, and D are true. Contrary to popular belief, C is false. Caffeine may increase urination, but it's offset by the fluids in coffee, tea, etc., and doesn't cause dehydration. Two cups of water 30 minutes before meals has been shown to suppress appetite, plus cold water boosts metabolism.



Now Available at drwhitaker.com

- The Health Benefits of Cinnamon
- Separating Fish Oil Facts From Fallacies

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

Independence Day Quote

“I don't have to tell you how fragile this precious gift of freedom is. Every time we hear, watch, or read the news, we are reminded that liberty is a rare commodity in this world.”

— Ronald Reagan

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

Menopause: What Works/What Doesn't

Connie and I celebrate our wedding anniversary next month, and these past 19 years have been the happiest of my life. Connie is the most energetic, vivacious, and upbeat person I know. She's always on the go, and I could never lose her in a crowd because all I have to do is listen for her laugh.

Several months after we were married, however, I saw another side of her. She was up at all hours of the night and had little energy or motivation. She complained of brain fog and was uncharacteristically irritable, quick to anger, and depressed. I was actually concerned that she was having second thoughts about our marriage. So I went into doctor mode.

As it turned out, Connie, who was in her early 40s at the time, was going through perimenopause (peri- means around). I suggested that she start on bioidentical hormone replacement therapy (HRT), and within a couple of weeks, she was back to her usual bubbly self.

No Flash in the Pan

Eighty percent of American women experience moderate to severe mood swings, insomnia, hot flashes, night sweats, and other symptoms of menopause—and they're no flash in the pan.

A 2015 survey from the Study of Women's Health Across the Nation reported that more than half of women had frequent vasomotor symptoms (hot flashes and night sweats) that lasted an average of 4.5 years after their final menstrual period. Given that women usually begin noticing symptoms in their early to mid-40s and the average age of menopause is 51, we're talking years here. In this particular study, the total duration of symptoms averaged 7.4 years. In real life, 10–15 years isn't uncommon. I've had patients in their 70s who are still symptomatic!

Ladies, that's a long time to endure poor sleep, moodiness, and an off-kilter internal thermostat. The good news is the solution that worked for Connie has worked for millions of others. The bad news is that many women—and their doctors—are afraid of HRT.

Don't Be Afraid of Hormones...

Fear of HRT dates back to 2002, when the large government-sponsored Women's Health Initiative (WHI) clinical trial was stopped early because study participants who were taking hormone replacement drugs had an increased risk of heart disease and breast cancer. Follow-up reports also linked HRT with stroke, dementia, and more. Understandably, HRT usage plummeted.

Re-evaluation of study data, however, revealed that the dangers of HRT were blown way out proportion and that risks were generally confined to the older women in the study, who ranged in age from 50 to 79. Clinical guidelines now acknowledge that HRT is the most effective therapy for menopausal symptoms and that benefits outweigh the risks for women who start HRT before age 60, within 10 years of menopause, at the lowest doses, and for the shortest duration possible.

Yet lots of people continue to shy away from HRT, and most doctors dismiss it altogether for older women, including those who are miserable with symptoms. What they don't seem to understand is that not all hormones are created equal.

...As Long As They're Bioidentical

The drugs used in the WHI were Premarin (conjugated estrogen made from pregnant mares' urine) and Prempro (a combination of Premarin and progestin, a synthetic replacement for progesterone).

Why any woman or doctor would opt for horse estrogen and fake progesterone is beyond me. The only possible explanation is the influence of the pharmaceutical companies, which can't patent the natural stuff but make a bundle off their HRT drugs.

There are many disadvantages to Premarin and progestin. Oral estrogen (Premarin) is associated with an increased risk of blood clots and strokes; topical estradiol (the dominant form of estrogen) applied to the skin is not. Progestin increases risk of breast cancer; natural progesterone may actually be protective.

My Recommendations

- ▶ If you are experiencing hot flashes or other menopause symptoms, no matter what your age, talk to your doctor about bioidentical hormone replacement therapy.
- ▶ For a free consultation to determine if Whitaker Wellness can relieve your menopause symptoms, call 800-488-1500. A4M.com also has referrals for bioidentical hormone practitioners.

That's why the doctors at Whitaker Wellness prescribe only natural progesterone, which is a chemical twin of the hormone produced by the body, and bioidentical estradiol in creams, gels, or patches. We may also add a small amount of topical testosterone to perk up sex drive and mood. And by ordering from a compounding pharmacy, we can personalize doses and delivery forms for each woman.

The benefits of bioidentical HRT go beyond symptom relief. Estrogen, progesterone, and testosterone are active in tissues throughout the body, and declines in these hormones play a significant role in the degenerative changes associated with aging. Hundreds of studies, some with decades of follow-up, suggest that women on bioidentical HRT have lower rates of osteoporosis and heart, autoimmune, and neurodegenerative diseases.

What About Natural Therapies?

I imagine some of you were expecting me to recommend supplements and other natural therapies. Truth is, nothing comes close to working as well as HRT for hot flashes, vaginal dryness, mood changes, etc. That's not to say natural treatments don't help.

A 2016 study found that up to 20 acupuncture treatments in a six-month period reduced hot flashes by 37 percent compared to an increase of 6 percent

in a control group, and benefits endured over 12 months. Phytoestrogens, plant compounds with weak estrogenic effects that are abundant in soy, are credited with Japanese women's reduced frequency of hot flashes. Supplements containing soy isoflavones, black cohosh, and red clover have also been demonstrated to improve menopause symptoms.

Exercise, a Mediterranean diet, avoiding alcohol and caffeine, yoga, and meditation may help ease your way through the change of life, and menopause-related problems such as vaginal dryness, loss of libido, depression, anxiety, and bone loss can be treated with targeted natural therapies.

However, my number-one recommendation is bioidentical HRT. I am so confident of its efficacy and safety that my own wife has been on such a regimen for 18 years now. You know what they say: Happy wife, happy life. And she and I are both convinced that HRT has contributed greatly to her overall well-being.

References

Avis NE, et al. Acupuncture in Menopause (AIM) study: a pragmatic, randomized controlled trial. *Menopause*. 2016 Mar 18. [Epub ahead of print]

Avis NE, et al. Duration of menopausal vasomotor symptoms over the menopause transition. *JAMA Intern Med*. 2015;175(4):531-9.

Whitaker Wellness Success Story

No More Neuropathy!

"My job requires standing on concrete all day. The pain in my legs, caused by diabetic neuropathy, was so intense I would have to lean on a wall or chair to hold myself up and get some relief. Sometimes toward the end of the day, I would literally crawl from my station.

"I tried to relieve the pain with over-the-counter meds, which ultimately led to a bleeding ulcer. My doctor put me on gabapentin, a medication that's supposed to relieve nerve pain, but it didn't help. After increasing this drug to the highest possible dose, my doctor told me, 'Sorry, there's nothing else we can do.'

"That day at the doctor's office, I said, 'I've had it. Take the leg. I want you to amputate it and put an end to the pain once and for all.' He told me to go home and think about it and set up a consultation for later in the week to discuss proceeding with that option.

"That very afternoon, a pamphlet from Dr. Whitaker titled 'Begin Reversing Your Neuropathy Today' arrived in the mail. I called Whitaker Wellness right away, and within a week I was at the clinic.

"I was treated with infrared light, microcurrent therapy, acupuncture, reflexology, and alpha lipoic acid, fish oil, and other supplements recommended by my doctor. It was amazing. I stayed at the clinic for three weeks so I could get full treatment courses, and within that time I made so much progress. I don't have to lean on walls or chairs to support myself, and my walking distance has tripled! Since returning home, I have lost 32 pounds, and I feel like I have a new lease on life. And I still have my leg!" — *Daniel R.*

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

Innovations in Wellness Medicine

N-Acetyl Cysteine for Obsessive-Compulsive Behaviors

Many people have obsessive or compulsive tendencies such as biting their nails, overeating, or constantly checking their Facebook page. However, uncontrollable repetitive behaviors and full-blown obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD) can be debilitating and hard to treat. But that could be changing. Research suggests that N-acetyl cysteine (NAC), an inexpensive supplement, is a promising therapy.

A 2015 research review reported that taking supplemental NAC for an average of 12 weeks reduced the severity of OCD and related behaviors such as pathological hair pulling, skin picking, and nail biting. Another review study highlighted favorable evidence for NAC's use in additional psychiatric/neurological disorders, including autism, Alzheimer's, depression, cocaine and marijuana dependence, bipolar disorder, and schizophrenia. NAC is not a slam-dunk for any of these conditions, but it's a safe, natural supplement that's certainly worth trying. The suggested dose for OC behaviors is 2,000–3,000 mg per day. Look for it in stores or online, or order from the clinic by calling 800-810-6655.

Yoga for Health

What do downward dog, warrior, cat-cow, boat, cobra, and happy baby have in common? If you answer “poses or postures,” you're familiar with yoga. If not, maybe it's time you get to know it. In addition to yoga's well-known ability to promote relaxation, relieve stress, and increase strength and flexibility, research reveals that this 5,000-year-old practice confers multiple health benefits.

Yoga is a proven therapy for people suffering with anxiety, depression, post-traumatic stress syndrome, and addiction. Regular practice provides short- and long-term relief from chronic low back pain, carpal tunnel syndrome, and other musculoskeletal complaints. When patients with Parkinson's disease attended a yoga class twice a week for three months, they had less muscle rigidity, improved strength, and better quality of life. Yoga has even been shown to help control blood sugar in patients with type 2 diabetes. There are styles of yoga to fit most every level of health and fitness. Look for a yoga studio near you or find at-home videos in your library, on YouTube, or for purchase in stores and online. Myyogaworks.com offers hundreds of online videos for \$15/month with a free two-week trial.

Did You Know?

- The average cost of prescription drugs has doubled over the past seven years.
- Research links midday napping with lower blood pressure and better heart function.
- Diluted apple juice is superior to pricey rehydrating drinks like Pedialyte for kids with diarrhea.
- Studies suggest that rosemary essential oils and oral extracts boost memory.
- Weekly group singing sessions improve voice/respiratory impairment in people with Parkinson's.
- Chewing gum after surgery speeds return of bowel function and shortens hospital stays.
- Loud, fast-paced music is a proven distraction for drivers.
- A small baked potato contains 750 mg of potassium and 130 calories, compared to a banana's 420 mg and 110 calories.
- The germiest surfaces in your home are kitchen sponges and faucet handles.
- Synthroid is the most-prescribed drug in the US; 21.6 million scripts were written in 2015.

Health & Healing Resources

- **Renew Your Subscription** 800-539-8219 (M–F 9 AM–5 PM EST)
- **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:

- What Works for Atrial Fibrillation
- Screening Scams
- Benefits of Flaxseed
- Help for Hair Loss

 **Become a fan on Facebook at**
facebook.com/WhitakerMD

 **Follow me on Twitter at** twitter.com/WhitakerMD

 **Watch me on YouTube at**
youtube.com/user/drwhitakerinfo

