



## Stress and Anxiety: What Works/What Doesn't

**T**errorist attacks, earthquakes and floods, racial unrest, a contentious presidential campaign, not to mention personal money, work, family, and medical issues are stressing us out—and it's taking a toll on our health and well-being.

Or is it? In a biological context, stress is simply the body's reaction to anything that is perceived as a threat or challenge. The sympathetic nervous system kicks into gear and signals the release of stress hormones (cortisol, adrenaline, and noradrenaline), which raise heart and respiration rate, increase muscle tension, mobilize blood sugar, and put us in a hyper-alert state that quickens reaction time and spurs us to action.

There's a misperception that stress is bad, but it's actually a protective mechanism. In addition to enhancing our chances of survival during times of danger, it also motivates us to act, perform better, and achieve our goals. As Hans Selye, the endocrinologist who coined the term stress nearly 70 years ago, said, "Man should not try to avoid stress any more than he would shun food, love, or exercise." He further explained, "It's not stress that kills us, it is our reaction to it."

### The Dark Side of Stress

Most of us can recall times in our lives when unrelenting stress got the best of us, when challenges turned into burdens with no end in sight. This is not good stress—it's distress.

The fight-or-flight response gets stuck on high alert, increasing risk of hypertension, palpitations, muscle tension, heartburn, digestion problems, headaches, insomnia, immune dysfunction, and

serious disease. It also causes mental and emotional disturbances. Stress is often described as feeling overwhelmed, burned out, exhausted, frustrated, and worried. But these are simply our responses to stress.

One of the most common effects of prolonged stress is chronic anxiety: negative thoughts, apprehensions, fears, and worries that occur in the absence of any real threat. Psychiatrists break anxiety disorders—which affect nearly one in five adults—into several discrete diagnoses, including separation or social anxiety, phobias, panic/panic attacks, agoraphobia, and generalized anxiety. However, they are all marked by excessive fear, anxiety, and related physical and behavioral changes.

### Therapeutic Approaches

Three classes of medications are prescribed for anxiety. Benzodiazepines (Valium, Xanax) may help reduce extreme anxiety and panic attacks, but they also cause drowsiness and confusion, and they're addictive. Beta-blockers (propranolol, atenolol) are often used for social anxiety, as they reduce symptoms in anxiety-provoking situations. Antidepressants are the most widely prescribed drugs for anxiety. However, a 2015 review found that the studies supporting SSRI antidepressants (Paxil, Zoloft) overestimated the drugs' effectiveness; in some cases, they worked no better than placebos. Furthermore, these drugs have a boatload of side effects.

Psychotherapy is another mainstay of conventional medicine, although, unfortunately, it often plays second fiddle to drugs. One popular type is cognitive behavioral therapy, which helps patients understand

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## 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*.

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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](http://drwhitaker.com).

Dear Reader,

Nancy Reagan urged us to “Just Say No” to drugs, Laura Bush promoted literacy and education, and Lady Bird Johnson led city and highway beautification efforts.

Michelle Obama's pet project is childhood obesity. One in three American children are overweight or obese, so her challenge to exercise and eat right is a worthy cause. Worthy as it may be, the PR campaigns, educational outreaches, public appearances, and legislation the First Lady's campaign spawned has cost taxpayers billions of dollars. And herein lies a terrible contradiction.

At the same time \$4.5 billion in federal funds is earmarked for improving nutrition standards in schools, access to healthy food and free lunches, and the like, far more money is being spent on farm subsidies that support the production of junk food.

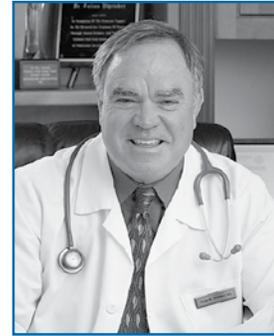
Most of the \$20 billion in crop subsidies doled out every year goes to large producers of “commodities” (corn, soybeans, wheat, rice, and cotton). The bulk of these crops are used either as feed for dairy cows and livestock or to produce refined carbohydrates, sweeteners, and oils that are used to make inexpensive processed foods that contribute to our obesity epidemic. Very little goes to small farmers who raise “specialty crops” like vegetables, fruits, and nuts.

Government surveys reveal that Americans' top sources of calories are grain-based desserts (cakes, cookies, granola bars, etc.), bread, sodas and energy/sports drinks, pizza, pasta, dairy desserts, alcohol, and Mexican, chicken, and beef dishes. With the exception of alcohol, all of these items are directly or indirectly on the crop subsidy gravy train.

CDC researchers published a study in August that looked at the health effects of eating foods derived from subsidized commodities. They found that an average of 56 percent of calories consumed by the 10,308 adults studied came from such foods—and the higher that percentage, the greater the odds of obesity and elevated blood sugar, LDL cholesterol, and C-reactive protein. They concluded, “Better alignment of agricultural and nutritional policies may potentially improve population health.”

I'm not suggesting that food subsidies are the sole contributor to our obesity crisis or that government policy can solve the problem—quite the contrary. But this obvious contradiction is pure insanity.

To your health,

**Julian Whitaker, MD**  
 America's Wellness Doctor

Director of the Whitaker Wellness Institute, Newport Beach, California

## Stress and Anxiety (continued from page 1)

and change negative thoughts that contribute to anxiety and modify behaviors in anxious situations.

We have good success at the clinic with acupuncture, which balances energy patterns in the mind and body, and neurofeedback, a type of biofeedback that helps normalize brainwave patterns associated with anxiety, depression, and other problems. After recently completing a course of neurofeedback, LeeAnn Blunt wrote, “The improvement is remarkable—literally no more anxiety attacks. My mind seems to be able to just let go.”

### Many Causes, Solutions

Anxiety has other origins besides chronic stress and personal history, and treatment obviously begins with identifying underlying causes. At Whitaker Wellness, we correct hormone imbalances that may contribute to anxiety with bio-identical hormone replacement therapy. We test for and treat heavy metal toxicity, which can cause serious mental and emotional problems. We review our patients’ medications and make adjustments as needed. We rule out sleep apnea and other sleep disorders, since poor sleep can make anyone feel frazzled. We may also test for food sensitivities such as gluten, which is linked with anxiety, brain fog, depression, and more.

Other dietary considerations include eliminating junk food and refined carbohydrates and eating more vegetables, healthy fats, lean protein, and “brain food” such as omega-3-rich salmon. Although coffee has many health benefits, it’s important to know your limits, as too much of this stimulant can make you anxious and shaky.

Dietary fiber and fermented foods are also recommended for their positive effects on the gut microbiome. New research underscores the significance of the gut-brain connection and intestinal bacteria’s influence on serotonin, a mood-regulating neurotransmitter. No wonder anxiety gives us

butterflies in the stomach! For further support, I recommend probiotic supplements.

Other supplements that are part of the clinic’s anxiety treatment protocol are listed below. I also want to give a nod to Dilantin. Best known as an anti-seizure drug, low-dose Dilantin (100 mg) stabilizes excessive electrical activity in the brain and rapidly

relieves anxiety, depression, poor concentration, and more.

### Supplements for Stress & Anxiety

- ▶ PharmaGABA: the best-absorbed form of GABA, an amino acid that acts as the brain’s primary calming neurotransmitter, 100 mg 1–3 times a day as needed
- ▶ L-theanine: a calming amino acid abundant in green tea, which promotes GABA activity, 200 mg 2–3 times a day
- ▶ Relora: a blend of two botanicals that reduces stress and anxiety by lowering cortisol levels, 250 mg twice a day
- ▶ Magnesium citrate: a mineral that relaxes the muscles and mind, 300–400 mg at bedtime or as needed
- ▶ Adaptogenic herbs: ashwagandha, ginseng, and rhodiola modulate the ill effects of stress, use as directed
- ▶ DHEA: a hormone that blunts the adverse actions of cortisol, 25 mg for women, 50 mg for men per day
- ▶ To order the supplements we use at the clinic, call 800-810-6655.

### The Art of Chilling Out

If you are dealing with anxiety, you’re under a lot of stress, or you just want to stay healthy, you need to learn how to relax and de-stress. Meditation, yoga, and relaxation and breathing exercises have proven benefits, and thousands of books, videos, websites, and classes can teach you the basics.

When you’re feeling tense and anxious, go outside. It doesn’t matter if you don’t feel like it—do it anyway. The change of scenery will do you a world of good. While you’re out, take a walk or run. Exercise increases levels of GABA, which calms brain activity, and other neurotransmitters that buffer the ill effects of stress.

I also recommend going on a media diet. Constant exposure to the graphic details of murders, terrorist attacks, wars, natural disasters, financial uncertainty, and government shenanigans can make anyone anxious and stressed. I’m not saying you should bury your head in the sand, but you don’t need to wallow in all that misery either.

Other stress- and anxiety-busting strategies include listening to music, watching funny videos, spending time with friends and family—anything you can do to focus on surrounding yourself with the positive. As Helen Keller once said, “Keep your face toward the sunshine and you cannot see a shadow.”

### Reference

Roest AM, et al. Reporting bias in clinical trials investigating the efficacy of second-generation antidepressants in the treatment of anxiety disorders: a report of 2 meta-analyses. *JAMA Psychiatry*. 2015 May;72(5):500–10.

## Dear Dr. Whitaker

**Q** My husband is taking berberine to lower his blood sugar. It's working well and we've noticed he's losing some weight. Is it possible berberine could be the reason?  
— A.C., via phone call

**A** Although this herbal supplement is best known for its positive effects on blood sugar, cholesterol, and triglycerides, berberine also promotes weight loss. In a 2016 clinical trial, participants with nonalcoholic fatty liver disease (NAFLD, which affects almost everyone with diabetes and/or obesity) who took 500 mg of berberine three times a day for 16 weeks lost an average of 6 percent of their body weight, 2 inches around the waist, and had significant improvements in blood sugar, lipids, and NAFLD. This is an especially welcome benefit because, with the exception of metformin, prescription diabetes medications cause weight gain.

**Q** Your recent piece on cancer screening did not mention hereditary predisposition to cancer of the prostate. My father had terminal prostate cancer and my brother had it but was successfully treated. I'm in excellent health (diet, exercise, supplements). Is it really prudent to drop screening PSA? — A.L., via email

**A** What I caution against are population-wide screenings of healthy people, which clearly result in unnecessary treatment. As I stated in the August 2016 article on screening, "If you have a personal or family history of certain diseases, screening is entirely appropriate." In your case, periodic PSA testing is recommended.

 Read more Q&As online at [drwhitaker.com/featured-questions-and-answers](http://drwhitaker.com/featured-questions-and-answers). Send your own questions to [drwhitakerquestions@drwhitaker.com](mailto:drwhitakerquestions@drwhitaker.com).

## From My Blog

### Say Goodbye to Gout

Once referred to as the "disease of kings," gout can be a royal pain. A form of arthritis caused by excesses of uric acid in the blood, gout attacks are marked by severe pain and inflammation in the joints, most often the big toes. A high intake of red meat and alcohol are well-known triggers, but recent research reveals that a decades-old diet designed to lower blood pressure may be the key to eliminating gout for good. Scientists reviewed data on the DASH diet, which focuses on plant foods, low-fat dairy, and reduced fat intake, and found that people who followed this diet for three months had reductions in uric acid levels similar to those achieved by drugs such as allopurinol that are used to treat gout. For more safe, effective solutions for gout, 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](http://drwhitaker.com).

**Q** My doctor put me on long-term antibiotics due to frequent urinary tract infections (UTIs). I'm hoping you can offer a more natural solution, as I'd like to stop taking the meds and clear these up once and for all. I know cranberry juice is supposed to help, but it's very acidic and makes my symptoms worse. Please help!  
— Linda E., via email

**A** Concentrated cranberry extract may help prevent recurring UTIs. Look for supplements containing Cran-Max and use as directed. For treatment of acute infections, I suggest trying D-mannose, a natural sugar that discourages bacteria from sticking to the bladder walls. At the first sign of symptoms, mix one teaspoon in water and drink every three to four waking hours; continue for three days. Because of your history of antibiotic use, I also recommend daily probiotics. Look for these supplements in stores or online, or call 800-810-6655 to order.

**Q** What are your thoughts on taking melatonin for cancer? The research sounds promising. Any recommendation as to how much would be beneficial?  
— J.R.T., via email

**A** In clinical trials of patients with cancer, 20 mg of melatonin taken at bedtime has shown the following benefits: reduced negative side effects of chemotherapy, tumor regression, and improved survival rates. If I had cancer, I'd certainly add 20 mg of this antioxidant powerhouse to my daily supplement protocol.



# Works for Me...

► **Pain** After you wrote about cetyl myristoleate (CMO) for relief of pain and arthritis, I ordered CetylPure by Natrol, which contains 220 mg of CMO. Almost immediately I lost 60–70 percent of the severe back and muscle pain I had for 42 years. And the relief was permanent. I have given CMO to several friends and their pain went away too. Before I learned about this supplement, I spent a minor fortune on therapies to try to get relief. CMO has tremendously helped my life and others who were in constant pain. — Paul L., via email

Several subscribers have sung the praises of CMO over the years. Look for it in stores, online, or at the clinic (800-810-6655), and use as directed.

► **Cholesterol** Years ago, my cholesterol was 341 and my doctor prescribed Lipitor. I knew the damaging effects of statin drugs and informed him I was not going to take it. He was quite alarmed. But I changed my diet, took 1,200 mg red yeast rice and 2,000 mg omega-3s, and exercised at least 20 minutes daily. In six weeks, my cholesterol was

141. It's been 18 years, my cholesterol stays in the 135–200 range, and I have never taken a statin drug. When I told my doctor what I did, he was in disbelief and said he should start prescribing this to his patients. (Fat chance.) — G.T., Las Vegas, NV

Another great example of the power of natural therapies. The usual dosage of red yeast rice is 600 mg twice a day, along with 100–200 mg of coenzyme Q10.

► **Wound Healing** For the last 10 years or so, my mom has been treated for wounds on her leg and ankle. We took your article on sugar dressings to the doctor and he said we could try it since nothing else was helping. Well, slowly but surely we began to see improvements. The home health nurses are so excited each day they come to see the progress. Even with the remarkable healing, the doctor wants to change to something else. I told him, "Why would we when this is working?" We are sticking with sugar! — Diane J., via Facebook

Sugar dressings are a remarkable treatment for wounds of all kinds. For my full protocol, visit [drwhitaker.com](http://drwhitaker.com).

🔗 Have a Health Tip to share? Send it to [worksforme@drwhitaker.com](mailto:worksforme@drwhitaker.com). Read more tips at [drwhitaker.com/works-for-me](http://drwhitaker.com/works-for-me).

## f Healing Tip

You're supposed to brush your teeth after meals, right? Actually, it's best to wait 30 minutes after eating or drinking—especially if your food or beverage is acidic—before brushing to prevent breakdown and erosion of tooth enamel, which is weakened by acids.

🔗 Like my Facebook page at [facebook.com/WhitakerMD](https://facebook.com/WhitakerMD) to receive daily healing tips and join the conversation.

## Monthly Health Quiz

Thyroid disease affects 20 million Americans. Which of the following are signs of a thyroid disorder?

- A) Fatigue, weakness, sensitivity to cold
- B) Weak or brittle nails, thinning hair
- C) Rapid heart rate, excess sweating, frequent bowel movements
- D) Weight loss



**Answer:** A and B are signs of hypothyroidism (low thyroid function). C and D are symptoms of hyperthyroidism (overactive thyroid). If you suspect you may have a thyroid disorder, talk to your doctor about thyroid hormone testing and ask about Armour and other natural thyroid replacement, if warranted.

## Now Available at [drwhitaker.com](http://drwhitaker.com)

- Adverse Effects of Stress on the Body
- How Legumes Help Lower Blood Sugar
- Beware of Liver Disease

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

## Notable Quote

“Though the doctors treated him, let his blood, and gave him medications to drink, he nevertheless recovered.”

— Leo Tolstoy, *War and Peace*

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

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# The Problem With Sugar

Do you have a sweet tooth? Blame it on your genes. Humans are hardwired to love sugar.

A craving for sweet foods was once a survival advantage. Sugar is a concentrated source of carbohydrates that can be burned for energy or converted into fat and stored for future energy needs when food is unavailable.

Today's overabundance of enticing sweet foods and drinks, however, makes this natural craving a disadvantage—and a significant contributor to obesity and other health problems.

It's unreasonable to advise you to never eat sweets. This goes against our most basic instincts and takes some of the fun out of life. However, I do want to emphasize the downside of eating too much sugar and offer a few tips for taming a voracious sweet tooth.

## Increases Appetite and Weight

Excessive calories from any source can cause weight gain, but sugar has a special talent for packing on the pounds. The taste of sugar stimulates the release of dopamine, a neurotransmitter involved in the brain's pleasure/reward/motivation pathways, which are also triggered by alcohol, nicotine, heroin, and other opioids. Simply put, it motivates us to actively seek more, which is why many researchers believe sugar is potentially addictive.

As sugar is digested and glucose enters the bloodstream, it signals the release of insulin, which moves glucose into the cells where it is converted into energy.

Drinking a Coke, which contains about 10 teaspoons of sugar, is like mainlining glucose. It rapidly drives up blood glucose, followed by a massive surge of insulin that may drive levels too low (hypoglycemia), leaving you tired, cranky, and ravenously hungry. So you reach for a sweet snack to take off the edge, and the cycle is reinforced.

After energy needs are met, all that extra glucose is stored in the liver and muscles in the form of glycogen—or converted into fatty acids and socked away in fat cells on your hips, belly, and elsewhere.

## Fructose and Metabolic Syndrome

But glucose is only half of the story. Most dietary sugars—not only high-fructose corn syrup but also sucrose and “healthy” honey, raw sugar cane juice, fruit sugar, agave, etc.—are composed of varying but roughly equal ratios of glucose and fructose.

The human body simply cannot handle the enormous amounts of fructose in today's processed foods and drinks.

Fructose is broken down in the liver, where it is converted into fatty acids, glucose, and lactate. Excessive intake raises levels of triglycerides, LDL cholesterol, and uric acid. It causes weight gain, particularly in the abdominal area—the most harmful fat deposition—and is a leading cause of nonalcoholic fatty liver disease, which goes hand in hand with obesity and can progress to severe liver damage.

Another serious complication of eating too much fructose—and all sugars and

starches, for that matter—is insulin resistance. Insulin resistance occurs when the cells become insensitive to insulin's effects and take up less glucose. The pancreas responds by churning out more and more insulin, resulting in high levels of both insulin and blood glucose.

Insulin resistance is associated with a cluster of conditions, collectively called metabolic syndrome, that include abdominal obesity, high triglycerides, hypertension, low HDL cholesterol, and elevated blood glucose. Metabolic syndrome, which affects one in three adults, obviously increases risk of diabetes and heart disease. But it is also closely linked with dementia, Alzheimer's, and cancer of the digestive and reproductive organs. This alone should be enough to make you rethink your sugar habit.

### What About Sugar Substitutes?

Among the many downsides of Splenda, NutraSweet, Equal, Sweet'N Low, and other artificial sweeteners are growing concerns that rather than helping with weight loss, these chemical concoctions (especially diet sodas) increase risk of weight gain, abdominal obesity, and metabolic syndrome.

Their sweet taste lights up the brain's dopamine pathways, teases your appetite, and makes you vulnerable to overeating. Furthermore, artificial sweeteners alter the gut microbiome, promoting the growth of bacteria that are more efficient at extracting energy from food and turning it into fat. Natural sweeteners like stevia and xylitol are your best bet.

## How to Kick the Habit

The ultimate solution may be to stop eating sweets, but what's the fun in that? My advice is to cut out the usual culprits and save your indulgences for the good stuff—a couple squares of dark chocolate, a slice of birthday cake, or an occasional special dessert.

Stop drinking sodas (regular and diet), fruit juice, and sweetened drinks, and learn to like iced tea, sparkling water, and plain old water. Read labels carefully and avoid products with lots of added sugars—just don't buy them!

Find a natural sweetener you like, such as stevia or xylitol, and use it in moderation. Keep some healthy snacks on hand that will satisfy your hunger when cravings do arise, such as nuts and seeds, raw vegetables, hard-boiled eggs, and string cheese. A little fruit is fine, too. It's loaded with nutrients, and the sugars are bound up in fiber, which slows their absorption. Cutting back on bread, chips, and other starchy foods also reduces carbohydrate cravings.

People joke about stress eating, but it's a real deal. Unmanaged stress results in chronically elevated levels of cortisol, which revs up appetite, especially for comfort foods high in sugar and fat. Medical conditions associated with sugar cravings include eating disorders, diabetes, *Candida* (yeast)

overgrowth, hormone imbalances, anxiety, depression, and seasonal affective disorder (winter blues). Treating these conditions, preferably with natural therapies, helps reduce hunger for sweets.

Micronutrient deficiencies may also play a role—yet another reason to take a good daily multivitamin. Some people claim that supplemental chromium (600–1,000 mcg per day) and glutamine (1–3 g every few hours as needed) help curb sugar cravings. Although there's not much supporting evidence, these nutrients have multiple benefits and are worth a try.

## Rapid Results

I can't deny that breaking the sugar habit can be challenging, but the payoff is tremendous—and quick. In a 2016 study, the sugar intake of obese children and teenagers with metabolic syndrome was reduced from an average of 28 percent of total calories to 10 percent, while overall caloric intake remained constant. After just nine days, diastolic blood pressure fell by an average of 4.3 percent, LDL cholesterol by 12.5 percent, triglycerides by 46 percent, and fasting insulin by 53 percent. Now that's sweet!

## Reference

Lustig RH, et al. Isocaloric fructose restriction and metabolic improvement in children with obesity and metabolic syndrome. *Obesity (Silver Spring)*. 2016 Feb;24(2):453–60.

## Whitaker Wellness Success Story

### “Good Health Is a Passion That Allows Me to Live Life to Its Fullest”

Dot Bardarson is a renowned artist from Seward, Alaska, where she has lived since 1970. A longtime *Health & Healing* subscriber, Dot comes to the clinic for “tune-ups” every other year. Here are her comments after her most recent visit:

*Maintaining good health has been sort of a hobby for me, a passion that gives me lots of energy and allows me to enjoy life to the fullest. When health is compromised, life isn't as much fun. I work at being healthy, but the years take their toll, and I like to nip things in the bud.*

*After I was identified as having heavy metals in my otherwise healthy body, it was recommended that I have chelation therapy, which would require a two and a half hour drive each way to Anchorage. I thought, why not fly to Whitaker Wellness where I could stay for a week and attack any health issues aggressively without having to drive back and forth. Staying in a hotel with the other patients, eating very nutritious food, and hearing lectures every day hastened the decision.*

*I appreciate the extensive blood work I get at Whitaker Wellness and the clear analysis. I appreciate the hour-long sessions with my doctor and the creative ideas for improvement. I appreciate being invited to record these sessions (so I can review them later), as well as the phone consultations after I return home. What mainstream doctor does that?*

*The newsletter has been my guiding light for as long as it has been available. I've learned so much! I've also done five Whitaker Wellness weeks over the years and have brought friends. I always come back healthier than before, with a stronger resolve to eat well and not slack off on exercise. I'm only 83 now, and I plan on living well into my 90s.*

**To make an appointment at the Whitaker Wellness Institute, call 800-488-1500 or visit [whitakerwellness.com](http://whitakerwellness.com).**



*Dot Bardarson, an accomplished artist and Whitaker Wellness patient*

# Innovations in Wellness Medicine

## N-Acetylcysteine for Flu Prevention

Flu season is around the corner, and it's time to get prepared. But rather than lining up for a flu shot, I suggest you pick up a couple of bottles of N-acetylcysteine (NAC). A tried-and-true therapy for respiratory diseases, NAC thins the mucus that clogs up the airways. It also boosts glutathione levels and has antiviral activity—which led Italian researchers to conduct a double-blind, placebo-controlled clinical trial to see if NAC could stave off the flu.

They enrolled 262 men and women, most of them over age 65, suffering with a variety of chronic illnesses, and therefore at increased risk of influenza. Participants were divided into two groups and given either placebo tablets or 600 mg of NAC twice a day for six months. During that time, similar numbers in both groups were infected with the flu virus. However, just 25 percent of the people taking NAC developed flu symptoms, compared to 79 percent of those taking a placebo. This study is a golden oldie, but NAC still provides potent flu prevention. The suggested dose is 600 mg twice a day during the fall and winter.

## Joint, Bone, and Cardiovascular Health

Boron doesn't get much attention, but a recent scientific review, aptly titled "Nothing Boring About Boron," suggests that's about to change. This trace mineral, which is found in nuts, fruits, and vegetables, boosts magnesium and calcium absorption, reduces inflammation, raises levels of glutathione and other antioxidants, and enhances the body's utilization of vitamin D, estrogen, and testosterone.

Best known for its role in preventing bone loss, supplemental boron boasts multiple benefits. In a 2015 clinical trial, volunteers who took calcium fructoborate, which is identical to the form of boron in fruit, for 30 days had a 31 percent average reduction in C-reactive protein (a marker of inflammation and vascular disease) and a 29 percent decrease in IL-1beta (a key mediator of cartilage degradation). Boron has also been shown to relieve joint pain, enhance wound healing, and protect against cancer. Suggested dosages are 112–222 mg of calcium fructoborate or 3–5 mg of regular boron daily.

## Did You Know?

- Animal studies suggest that cinnamon boosts memory and enhances learning.
- Canadian guidelines no longer recommend colonoscopy as a primary screening.
- The world's tallest people are Dutch men, who average 6', and Latvian women, 5'7".
- Kids who sucked their thumbs or bit their nails are less likely to be sensitive to common allergens later in life.
- Ashwagandha supplements boost testosterone levels and sperm count.
- A study found that an hour of walking or other exercise negates the health risks of sitting most of the day.
- People studying a foreign language who listened to vocabulary words during sleep learned faster and had better recall.
- A quarter of adults have at least one sugar-sweetened drink daily.
- One in four patients on opioids for chronic pain develop a "substance use disorder."
- A long-term study found that people who read books lived an average of two years longer than nonreaders or those who just read magazines and newspapers.

## Health & Healing Resources

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## Coming In Future Issues:

- Viral Infections: What Works
- The Pros and Cons of Salt
- Light Your Way to Pain Relief



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