

# Health & Healing<sup>®</sup>

YOUR DEFINITIVE GUIDE TO WELLNESS MEDICINE



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## Protect Your Arteries and Bones with Vitamin K

The Nobel Prizes are announced in October, and I'm always interested in the picks, especially in the field of medicine. There have been a few bloopers over the years, such as the 1949 Nobel, which went to the inventor of the now-discredited lobotomy as a treatment for mental illness.

Most of the winners, however, represent Alfred Nobel's goal of recognizing "those who...have conferred the greatest benefit to mankind." They include esteemed scientists honored for their discoveries of insulin, penicillin, the structure of DNA, and other breakthroughs that have saved millions of lives and changed the face of medicine.

Other Nobel laureates have been acknowledged for their discoveries of "growth-stimulating substances" (now known as vitamins) including vitamins C, B1, and K. Thanks to their research, deficiency diseases such as scurvy and beriberi are now rare, and over half of Americans take these vitamins daily—with one glaring exception.

Vitamin K often gets lost in the mix. There's not even an RDA for this essential nutrient, simply an "adequate intake" (AI) based on the average dietary intake (90 mcg for women and 120 mcg for men). Although this paltry amount is enough to ensure normal blood clotting, vitamin K is no one-trick pony. It also strengthens the bones, reduces arterial

calcification and stiffening, and protects against osteoporosis and cardiovascular disease.

### K Is for Coagulation

Vitamin K was discovered by Danish scientist Henrick Dam—winner of the 1942 Nobel Prize—who observed that chicks fed a fat-free diet developed hemorrhages and slow blood clotting. He went on to prove that there was some substance in fat required for coagulation, and because his initial research was published in a German medical journal, it was identified as *Koagulationsvitamin*, or vitamin K.

That substance turned out to be a group of fat-soluble vitamins with two main members: K1 and K2. K1 (phylloquinone) is found in leafy greens, broccoli, and other vegetables, and in small amounts in vegetable

oils. Vitamin K2 (menaquinone, further classified by subtypes MK-2 through MK-14) is present mostly in fermented foods but also in meat, eggs, and dairy. K2 is synthesized by bacteria in the gut as well, but little of it can be utilized by the body.

Vitamin K is required for the structural modification of an important domain of proteins called gamma-carboxyglutamate (Gla) proteins. In order to be activated and function properly, Gla proteins must first bind to calcium ions, and they can only do this in the presence of vitamin K. The best-studied Gla proteins are those that are involved in coagulation.

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# Health & Healing

YOUR DEFINITIVE GUIDE TO WELLNESS MEDICINE

**Julian Whitaker, MD**, practiced medicine for over 40 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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## Dear Reader,

School shootings, random terrorist attacks, rancorous politics, refugee crises, conflicts in the Middle East, new Ebola outbreaks in Africa... We live in dangerous and scary times, and things are going from bad to worse.

Or are they? In his book *Enlightenment Now: The Case for Reason, Science, Humanism, and Progress*, Harvard Professor Steven Pinker makes a persuasive, data-driven case that people all over the world are much better off than ever before.

Children born today can expect to live to age 71 (age 81 in developed countries), a 40–50 year increase since the turn of the last century. Maternal childbirth deaths, infant mortality, famine, and hunger are no longer the scourges they once were, and improvements in sanitation, antibiotics, and other healthcare advances have prevented billions of deaths from infectious diseases.

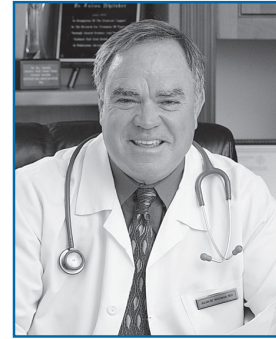
Compared to 100 years ago, we are nearly 100 percent less likely to be killed in an automobile accident or plane crash, and death by fires, falls, drowning, natural disasters, and pedestrian and work-related accidents are also way down. Homicide rates in the US have fallen from 8.5 to 5.3 per 100,000 over the past 30 years. Hate crimes, child abuse, domestic violence, and bullying have also declined, and terrorism isn't nearly the threat it is perceived to be.

Although wealth inequality may be rising, less than 10 percent of the world's population lives in extreme poverty, versus 37 percent in 1988. And poverty isn't what it used to be, at least in developed countries, where most poor people have access to food and housing, as well as cars, TVs, smartphones, etc.

Day-to-day life is much easier. A 40-hour workweek is the norm. Housework now requires an average of 15 hours a week, compared to 58 hours in 1900. It used to take 11.5 hours a week to do laundry; now it's an hour and a half. We have more leisure time than ever and more disposable income to spend. We're also smarter. Worldwide literacy rates now exceed 85 percent.

Critics have challenged the unabashed optimism of *Enlightenment Now*, but it provides a fresh and welcomed viewpoint in a world awash in pessimism and bad news. As Steven Pinker says, "And here is a shocker: The world has made spectacular progress in every single measure of human well-being. Here is a second shocker: Almost no one knows about it."

To your health,

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

Founder of the Whitaker Wellness Institute, Newport Beach, California

However, at least 10 additional vitamin K-dependent proteins have also been discovered.

## Beyond Coagulation

One of them is osteocalcin. Produced by bone-building cells called osteoblasts, osteocalcin helps direct calcium into the bones where it promotes mineralization. It should come as no surprise that a low vitamin K intake is linked with reduced bone mineral density and increased risk of fracture, or that supplementing with K strengthens bone and reduces fractures. In Japan, high-dose vitamin K2 (MK-4) is actually prescribed by doctors for the prevention and treatment of osteoporosis.

Osteocalcin may also play a role in type 2 diabetes. Recent research suggests that this Gla protein has hormone-like actions that signal the release of insulin in the pancreas and adiponectin in the fat cells, and small clinical trials suggest that supplemental vitamin K increases insulin sensitivity and glucose tolerance. I'll keep you posted as this research advances.

Matrix Gla protein (MGP) is another important vitamin K-dependent protein. MGP is synthesized in the walls of the blood vessels, but rather than encouraging calcium entry as osteocalcin does in the bones, it discourages calcium from being deposited in these soft tissues.

This is critical because excess calcium buildup results in calcification and stiffening of the arteries, which reduces their elasticity and responsiveness and is a risk factor for heart disease, stroke, and aortic valve stenosis.

Population studies link a robust dietary intake of vitamin K2 with reduced vascular calcification and cardiovascular risk. Supplements can help as well. Dutch researchers gave a group of postmenopausal women 180 mcg of vitamin K2 (MK-7) or placebo supplements daily for three years. Carotid artery stiffness was retested annually, and at the study's conclusion, the group taking vitamin K2 had a statistically significant decrease in arterial stiffness, while the placebo group had an increase.

## Greens, Cheese, and Supplements

Because leafy greens, broccoli, and fermented foods are the best dietary sources of vitamin K, it's easy to see why most Americans don't get optimal amounts of this important nutrient. But it doesn't take much to increase levels. A cup of chopped raw kale contains 472 mcg of vitamin K1, cooked spinach 888 mcg, and cooked broccoli 220 mcg.

We get considerably less K2 in foods, but it is more bioavailable and remains active in the body for longer periods. The most abundant source is natto, a fermented soybean product popular in Japan. Natto is an acquired taste—one that I haven't been able to acquire, try as I may.

Most of us do, however, like cheese, and researchers from Tufts University recently found that some types contain decent amounts of K2. The highest levels, in descending order, are in soft (brie, camembert), blue and gorgonzola, semi-soft (jack, gouda, Havarti), and hard (cheddar, parmesan) cheeses. Reduced fat and non-fermented processed cheeses have considerably less vitamin K. Cheese is no longer the nutritional no-no it once was, so feel free to eat a few

ounces a day—along with your kale and broccoli.

For extra protection, make vitamin K2 part of your daily supplement program. Some, though not all, multivitamins contain vitamin K, almost always the K1 form. Although K1 is essential for blood clotting, K2 is more active in the bones, blood vessels, and other tissues. Therefore, K2 is the better choice if you're concerned about skeletal and vascular health. And who isn't?

### My Recommendations

- ▶ Several types of vitamin K supplements are available and all are active, but I recommend vitamin K2 (MK-7). It is far more efficient at raising vitamin K blood levels than K1 and requires much lower dosing than K2 (MK-4). The suggested dosage is 100–200 mcg daily.
- ▶ Vitamin K supplements are very safe. However, if you are taking Coumadin (warfarin), you must talk to your doctor before taking this vitamin. It used to be considered off limits to patients on this drug, but more recent research suggests that small, carefully monitored doses protect against drug-induced calcification.

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## Dear Dr. Whitaker

**Q** *I have type 2 diabetes and would like to get away from prescription drugs. I just started taking Nutra-Support Diabetes supplements. Do you think this will help? — Sam S., via email*

**A** This product is more or less a multivitamin plus a little lutein and milk thistle, reasonable amounts of alpha lipoic acid (ALA) and fish oil, and a very small amount of vanadium. It is certainly a good start. However, due to the nutrient losses associated with diabetes—and to protect against vision loss, heart disease, and other common complications—I recommend higher levels of many of the ingredients in this supplement. For example, I would increase lutein to 20–40 mg, vitamin C to 1,000 mg, and magnesium to 500 mg. (Visit [drwhitaker.com](http://drwhitaker.com) for more specifics.) I also suggest adding berberine 500 mg three times a day, as I've found it to be the single most effective natural therapy for controlling blood sugar.

**Q** *Two of my acquaintances are singing the praises of the grapefruit diet. I remember a similar diet from years ago but thought it was a passing fad. One woman lost about five pounds in a week and the other eight pounds in two weeks. Do you have any experience with this new version? — Marie S., California*

**A** There are many variations of this diet, which has indeed been around for decades. One version discussed on the Dr. Oz Show, which promises a loss of half to one pound a day, requires

eating half a grapefruit before or with meals for seven days. It allows lots of vegetables, cuts out sugars and refined carbs, limits fat to one serving a day and protein to two four-ounce portions, and includes one cup of “ancient grains” like quinoa with dinner. Contrary to claims that grapefruit boosts fat burning, reduces appetite, and lowers blood sugar, the most likely reason it may work is because it's low in calories. The downside is that very low-calorie diets are unsustainable over the long run.

**Q** *You often recommend flaxseed for fiber but I do not recall any mention of Metamucil. I have been using Metamucil since my doctor recommended it ages ago, and it seems to work because I do not have constipation. Do you have something against Metamucil? Please comment on this in your newsletter. — Allison B., Michigan*

**A** Metamucil and other psyllium products are great fiber sources. They contain a similar amount of fiber as flax (about 3 g per tablespoon), and most of it is soluble fiber, which in addition to improving gut health and elimination, has positive effects on blood sugar and cholesterol. The main reason I prefer flaxseed is because it also contains other beneficial compounds such as lignans and omega-3s. But Metamucil, Benefiber (natural wheat dextrin), and other natural fiber products are perfectly fine. Make sure you drink lots of water with any type of supplemental fiber.

 Read more at [drwhitaker.com](http://drwhitaker.com), and send your own questions to [drwhitakerquestions@drwhitaker.com](mailto:drwhitakerquestions@drwhitaker.com).

## New Online: Diabetic Neuropathy

Neuropathy is one of the most common and troublesome complications of diabetes. Doctors may tell patients there's not much they can do besides prescribing drugs to reduce the pain, tingling, and numbness, but they're wrong. In a study published in 2018, researchers from Johns Hopkins reviewed all the randomized controlled clinical trials of non-drug treatments for diabetic neuropathy and concluded that a nutritional supplement was the most effective for pain relief: alpha lipoic acid.

Alpha lipoic acid, both IV and oral, is an approved treatment for diabetic neuropathy in Germany, yet this potent antioxidant is rarely recommended by doctors in the US. In my opinion, all patients with neuropathy should be taking this supplement. After reading about alpha lipoic acid in *Health & Healing*, Bill B. began taking the recommended dosage of 600 mg per day. After a few months, the sensation in his hands returned, and he no longer dropped things. The pain in his feet improved, and the left foot drop, which had interfered with his coordination, resolved. At his next follow-up, his doctor told him he'd never seen such an improvement. Visit [drwhitaker.com](http://drwhitaker.com) to learn more about diabetic neuropathy.



# Works for Me...

► **Immune Boost** *I do a lot of international business travel, and the changes in sleep, exposure to germs on planes, and disruption in my normal routine can really take a toll. Then I heard about a natural product called Antidote. (I get it at [LivePristineNutrition.com](http://LivePristineNutrition.com).) It contains shilajit, royal jelly, bee pollen, honey, medicinal mushrooms, and other unusual ingredients. It really works for me. My resistance and energy have improved and I never get sick — I.A., via email*

► **Back Pain** *I want to let you know how well OxyRub worked for me. I recently sold my house, which involved a lot of packing and heavy lifting. By day two, my lower back was feeling it. I started using OxyRub on my back three or four times a day. What a difference it made. I have never had much luck with pain creams, but I highly recommend this one. — Bruce B., California*

I second the endorsement. Look for OxyRub in GNC stores or on [drwhitaker.com](http://drwhitaker.com).



Do you have a Health Tip to share? We'd love to hear it! Send it to [worksforme@drwhitaker.com](mailto:worksforme@drwhitaker.com).

► **Heart Disease** *Last year I went for a pre-op exam for a cataract removal. A heart irregularity was found and I was sent to the hospital for a full exam, including a stress test. The doctor told my husband and me that I could "die tonight" and needed immediate bypass surgery. He kept insisting my life was in immediate danger. He so pressured us that we looked at each other, told the doctor we wanted another opinion, and walked out. We went to Whitaker Wellness a month later. When we arrived, I could not walk up stairs without stopping to catch my breath. But after one week of EECP and other treatments, I could climb three flights of stairs without stopping and walk from the hotel to the clinic and back. After completing my EECP course, I felt I could once again get back to farming. And that is exactly what happened. — H.S., Wisconsin*

EECP, which has been referred to as a natural bypass, is a noninvasive treatment that improves angina and exercise tolerance. And because it enhances the health of the arteries, benefits are lasting. To learn more and to locate an EECP treatment facility, visit [EECP.com](http://EECP.com).

## Health Hack: Food Safety Concerns

The American Academy of Pediatrics is calling for an urgent review and retesting of artificial colorings, nitrates/nitrites, and other additives and chemical residues in food. They are particularly concerned about chemicals used in plastic, metal, and paper containers that leach into foods and drinks and adversely affect hormone function, growth and development, and weight. This advice is aimed at children and pregnant women but should be heeded by everyone. Protect your family by eating fewer processed foods, opting for glass or stainless steel containers, and avoiding heating, microwaving, and washing plastics in the dishwasher.

## Monthly Health Quiz:

What is the most common noncontagious disease in the world?

Answer:

Although cardiovascular disease, cancer, and respiratory diseases are the most deadly, gum disease and tooth decay are the most common—and, yes, they are classified as diseases. According to the WHO, nearly 100 percent of adults have dental caries, 15–20 percent of middle-ages have severe periodontal disease, and 30 percent of people over age 65 have no natural teeth. Stats are better in developed countries, but poor oral health is still an issue. Interesting fact: These diseases are actually somewhat contagious, as oral bacteria can be spread by kissing.



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## Notable Quote

“The greatest mistake in the treatment of diseases is that there are physicians for the body and physicians for the soul, although the two cannot be separated.”

— Plato  
Greek Philosopher, 428–347 BC

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

# Anxiety and Depression: Could It Be Your Thyroid?

Nineteen percent of Americans have an anxiety disorder, and more than eight percent suffer with depression. One in 10 adults—and one in five older women—have some type of thyroid disease. Women are nearly twice as likely to suffer with anxiety and depression as men and eight times more likely to have a thyroid problem. Could there be a link?

Absolutely. New research suggests that low thyroid function is a common contributor to both anxiety and depression. Yet if routine thyroid tests are normal, physicians often fail to make the connection. As a result, millions of patients may be missing out on a therapy that not only boosts mood but also promotes weight loss, restores energy, and dramatically improves quality of life.

## Thyroid's Far-Reaching Effects

The thyroid gland, which lies at the base of the neck, produces two primary hormones: triiodothyronine (T3), the active form, and thyroxine (T4), which is converted in the body to T3. Because these hormones regulate metabolism and energy utilization, they have far-reaching effects.

Overproduction of thyroid hormones (hyperthyroidism) speeds things up and may cause rapid or irregular heartbeat, nervousness, anxiety, sweating, weight loss, and insomnia. Hyperthyroidism is a relatively rare but serious condition that can lead to heart, vision, and bone problems. It is usually treated with medications to shrink the gland or curb its activity, or with surgical removal.

An underactive thyroid (hypothyroidism), which is far more common and more easily treated, shifts things into low gear. Signs and symptoms include fatigue, lethargy, poor concentration, dry skin and hair, sensitivity to cold, constipation, elevated cholesterol, weight gain, and depression. Anxiety, however, is not typically associated with hypothyroidism.

## Strong Connections With Mood

Teja Wolfgang Grömer, MD, is a German psychiatrist and university lecturer who has treated hundreds of patients in his clinical practice. Several years ago, he noticed that more than half of his patients suffering with both anxiety and depression also tested positive for thyroid antibodies. The presence of these antibodies is indicative of autoimmune thyroiditis (also called Hashimoto's disease), which

attacks the thyroid gland, interferes with production of T3/T4, and is the underlying cause of most cases of hypothyroidism.

Intrigued, he assembled a team to review all the pertinent research on low thyroid function, anxiety, and depression and came up with 19 studies involving 36,174 participants. This meta-analysis, published in *JAMA Psychiatry* in June, revealed that people with autoimmune thyroiditis, Hashimoto's disease, or borderline or overt hypothyroidism were 3.5 times more likely to be depressed and 2.3 times more likely to suffer anxiety than people with normal thyroid function. In other words, "45.5 percent of depressive disorders and 29.8 percent of anxiety disorders are associated with this endocrine disease."

The connection was so striking that the researchers recommended that all patients with anxiety and depression have comprehensive thyroid testing, including thyroid antibodies.

## Underdiagnosed and Undertreated

Good advice. The standard blood test for thyroid function is TSH (thyroid stimulating hormone). When the pituitary gland in the brain senses a decrease in thyroid hormones, it releases TSH to stimulate the thyroid to make more hormones. Therefore, a high TSH level is indicative of low thyroid function.

TSH is a pretty good test, but it isn't the end-all. First, there's a lack of consensus, even among endocrinologists, as to what "normal" TSH levels should be. Second, it is not unusual to have a TSH within the reference range and still have low thyroid function. Nor is it unusual to have "subclinical" hypothyroidism (high-normal or mildly elevated TSH with a normal T4 level). That's why, if a patient exhibits depression, anxiety, or other symptoms of hypothyroidism, it's important to do more comprehensive testing such as total and free T3 and T4, and thyroid antibodies.

Unfortunately, many physicians blindly rely on TSH results and refuse to dig deeper. Consequently, hypothyroidism often goes undiagnosed and untreated. This is particularly true of women. Depression, anxiety, fatigue, weight gain, etc., are not unique to hypothyroidism. These same symptoms could also be attributed to a mood disorder, premenstrual syndrome, menopause, or simply aging. Many women endure years of suffering and inappropriate medications for a condition that is hiding in plain sight.

The most dramatic illustration I can think of is a case history by Alan Gaby, MD, author of the comprehensive textbook *Nutritional Medicine*. His patient was a 57-year-old woman who had lived in orphanages after her parents were killed in the Holocaust. Understandably depressed, she had worked with numerous physicians, psychologists, and counselors over a 38-year period with no improvements in her depression. Although her thyroid tests were in the normal range, Dr. Gaby suspected hypothyroidism and prescribed a trial of natural thyroid (see below). Within two weeks she was feeling better, and after three months she reported a “remarkable improvement” in depression, energy, and other symptoms, which was maintained over the next 10 years.

## Worth Checking Out

You can’t just throw psychiatric drugs at patients with thyroid-related depression and anxiety. Dr. Grömer, who is, after all, a psychiatrist, does recommend SSRI antidepressants and psychotherapy. But he also

emphasizes the importance of selenium, a mineral that has been shown to reduce thyroid antibody levels and improves mood and well-being—and, of course, thyroid replacement therapy.

Is thyroid dysfunction “the” cause of depression and anxiety? Of course not. Mental illness, chronic

disease, nutritional deficiencies, medication side effects, other hormone imbalances, not to mention the slings and arrows that life throws at us also affect our emotional state. But given the solid links between low thyroid function, depression, and anxiety, it is certainly worth checking out.

## My Recommendations

- ▶ If you are dealing with depression, anxiety, or other symptoms of hypothyroidism, ask your doctor for comprehensive thyroid testing (TSH, total and free T3 and T4, and thyroid antibodies). If results are suggestive of low thyroid function—even if your TSH is in the normal range—discuss a trial of thyroid replacement therapy, preferably with natural thyroid or a T3/T4 combination.
- ▶ All thyroid preparations require a prescription and close monitoring. For referrals to physicians well versed in natural thyroid replacement, contact [ACAM.org](http://ACAM.org) (800-532-3688) or [IFM.org](http://IFM.org).
- ▶ The suggested daily dose of selenium is 200 mcg. Other minerals that support thyroid function include iodine 150 mcg, magnesium 400–500 mg, and zinc 30 mg. If you don’t get these levels in your multivitamin, supplement accordingly. (If you take Forward, you’re covered.)

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## Synthroid vs. Natural Thyroid: “The Difference Between Night and Day”

Conventional physicians almost always prescribe Synthroid (levothyroxine) for hypothyroidism. Synthroid is a synthetic form of T4—it contains no T3 at all. The rationale is that because T4 is slowly converted to T3, it’s a safe and predictable way to increase T3.

I don’t buy it. Conversion of T4 to T3 isn’t always efficient. A large population study found that patients on Synthroid tended have lower T3:T4 ratios than healthy controls. They also had higher BMIs despite eating less, were less likely to be physically active, and were more likely to be on antidepressants, beta-blockers, and cholesterol-lowering statins. Some doctors add T3 (Cytomel) to the standard T4 treatment, but I’ve always preferred natural thyroid (Armour thyroid, Westhroid, Nature-Throid). Sourced from desiccated porcine thyroid, it naturally contains both T3 and T4.

Many people notice tremendous improvements with natural thyroid. When Joyce hit her early 50s, she started gaining weight, she was chronically fatigued, and for the first time in her life she felt depressed. Diagnosed with hypothyroidism, she was started on Synthroid. After two years of increasing weight gain, panic attacks, and worsening depression, she read about natural thyroid and asked her doctor to change her medication, which he reluctantly did. Joyce described it as “the difference between night and day.” Her mood lifted, her energy rebounded, and she was well on her way to her ideal weight.

If you feel you might benefit from a trial of natural thyroid and your doctor balks at prescribing it, I recommend that you find a more open-minded physician who will.



# Innovations in Wellness Medicine

## Green Tea/EGCG Extracts for Overall Health

Tea is the world's most popular beverage, second only to water. It's also one of the healthiest. Green tea in particular is renowned for its therapeutic benefits. Both as a beverage and concentrated in nutritional supplements, it has positive effects on the cardiovascular, nervous, and immune systems. Epigallocatechin-3-gallate (EGCG), theanine, and other green tea constituents have been shown to protect against cancer, lower blood pressure, improve anxiety, boost memory, and enhance weight loss.

Then why, a subscriber recently asked, has *Consumer Reports* put green tea extract on its list of 15 supplement ingredients to avoid? CR has been on a mission to discredit supplements for years, trotting out the tired old arguments that supplements are unregulated and that you can get all the nutrients you need from food. Their hit list is mostly uncommon ingredients that few would ever consider using, but the addition of green tea extract is truly perplexing. Of course you can take too much EGCG. You can also drink too much green tea—or water, for that matter. But the research clearly shows that daily doses up to 800 mg are safe and beneficial. CR should stick to reviewing appliances and cars.

## Meditation for Physical, Mental, Emotional Well-Being

Stress has a decidedly negative effect on our health and well-being. To that end, I have always tried to help my patients learn stress management techniques. For years, I taught a meditation/relaxation technique pioneered by Harvard professor Herbert Benson—and would occasionally get flak from people who believed meditation was some kind of Eastern religious practice. Today, meditation has gone mainstream. It is now taught in clinics and schools and practiced by people of all ages. Headspace, a smartphone app that talks you through breathing, focus, and other meditation techniques, boasts 30 million users!

In addition to reducing cortisol levels and promoting relaxation, meditation is a proven therapy for hypertension, irritable bowel syndrome, chronic pain, depression, and anxiety. Headspace has actually created a subsidiary that is working on getting FDA approval for “prescription meditation” programs that doctors could prescribe for various conditions. Personalized or group instruction, as well as Headspace, Calm, Insight Timer, and other free apps are great tools for getting started. You may find meditation challenging at first, but it gets easier and benefits accrue with time and practice.

## Did You Know?

- Opioids are no more effective than NSAIDs and acetaminophen for chronic back, hip, or knee pain.
- A compound in ginger slashes levels of sulfur compounds in the mouth that cause bad breath.
- More than 10,000 chemicals are used in food processing and packaging.
- Mozzarella is Americans' most-consumed cheese; most of it is eaten on pizza.
- Taking probiotics while on antibiotics reduces risk of *C. difficile* infections, which sicken 500,000 Americans and kill 29,000 annually.
- A recent study involving half a million people linked coffee (even 8+ cups per day) with reduced risk of death.
- Curcumin eye drops are being studied as a therapy for glaucoma.
- Taking fish oil and probiotics during pregnancy and breastfeeding reduce risk of eczema and food allergies in offspring.
- The first marijuana-derived drug has been approved for rare seizure disorders.
- Americans spend about 13% of their income on food, 44% of which is prepared or eaten outside the home.
- Lavender aromatherapy is a proven therapy for calming horses.

## Health & Healing Resources

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