

Health & Healing®

YOUR DEFINITIVE GUIDE TO WELLNESS MEDICINE



JANUARY 2019 • VOL. 29, NO. 1

Prolonging Healthy Aging: Longevity Vitamins

Supplements have taken a beating of late. A study of vitamins and minerals for the prevention and treatment of cardiovascular disease led to erroneous but widely publicized news reports that nutritional supplements are worthless. A review of supplements spiked with drugs suggested the problem is widespread—even though adulteration is clearly limited to a small number of products by shady companies—virtually all of them marketed for sexual enhancement, weight loss, or muscle building.

That's why a new publication by Bruce Ames, PhD, is a breath of fresh air. Titled "Prolonging Healthy Aging: Longevity Vitamins and Proteins," it explains how vitamins, minerals, and other micronutrients are not only essential for our current health and well-being, but also have a strong influence on how rapidly and gracefully we age.



The Triage Theory

Humans require at least 30 vitamins and minerals plus a handful of other nutrients that are not produced by the body but must come from outside sources. These nutrients serve as cofactors or coenzymes—helper molecules, if you will—for the metabolic processes that sustain life. Magnesium, for example, is a cofactor for 500 enzymes, and zinc is required by 2,000 proteins. If you lack any one of these crucial nutrients, you will die.

All these micronutrients are present in food. However, if you eat a lousy diet, which most Americans do, your intake of these critical nutrients is low. So why aren't we sick most of the time? Because, Dr. Ames reports, the body has a built-in rationing system. It preferentially directs whatever micronutrients are available towards carrying out vital functions that keep us alive.

Unfortunately, this often leaves little left over for repair, regeneration, and other activities that ensure long-term health. So energy production and other functions necessary for short-term survival are preserved—at the expense of preventing DNA damage and maintaining tissue repair, thus accelerating diseases such as cancer, neurodegeneration, heart disease, osteoarthritis, and aging itself.

Vitamin K is good example, since it plays a key role in both survival (blood clotting) and longevity (keeping calcium deposits out of the arteries). You can easily see why your body would prioritize meager stores of vitamin K for activating clotting so you don't bleed to death, rather than producing enzymes that protect your arteries against developing atherosclerosis sometime in the future.

Dr. Ames calls this allocation of limited micronutrient resources triage theory, after the practice in hospitals, battlefields, and other emergency situations of prioritizing treatment based on the severity of patients' illness or injury. But there is an upside. By maintaining optimal nutritional status, your body

continued on page 3

Inside This Issue

- Prolonging Healthy Aging 1
- Dizziness, Swollen Feet 4
- Periodontal Disease 4
- Works for Me 5
- Natural MSG 5
- Monthly Health Quiz 5
- Which Diet Is Right for You? . . . 6
- Patient Success Story 7
- Did You Know? 8

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*.

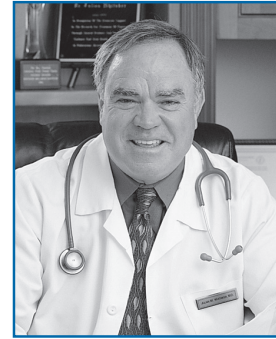
Dr. Julian Whitaker's Health & Healing® (ISSN 1057-9273) is published monthly by Healthy Directions, LLC, 6710-A Rockledge Dr., Ste 500, Bethesda, MD 20817, telephone 800-539-8219. Please write to us at *Dr. Julian Whitaker's Health & Healing*, PO Box 11, Montoursville, PA 17754, or call if you have 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

© 2019, 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.

Dear Reader,

After the hustle and bustle of the holidays, it's nice to get back into our normal routines. It's also a good time to look back on the previous year and make plans for the year ahead. At my house, New Year's resolutions are inescapable. My wife is a big one for setting goals and making plans. It's a family joke that, come January, if you see Connie approaching with her yellow pad, you'd better run and hide.



Julian Whitaker, MD
 America's Wellness Doctor

I've thought a lot about how to make resolutions stick, since my type of medicine involves helping patients make lifestyle changes. Desire and knowledge are not enough. Everyone wants healthier habits, and we all know this requires making better food choices and getting off our duffs. Serious illness and fear of death or disability spur some people to action, but nobody wants that.

Money can be a strong motivator. Some companies offer monetary rewards for meeting weight loss and exercise goals, and websites like healthywage.com let you "bet" on yourself—and make as much as \$10,000 if you achieve your goal.

Studies suggest that the thought of losing money is even more powerful. I've challenged patients to pledge a sum to a detested cause or candidate in the event they didn't follow through on a vow to, say, exercise three days a week. Years ago I pledged to make a significant donation to the Clinton legal defense fund if I didn't lose 20 pounds in two and a half months. I blabbed my plan in the newsletter, and the thought that I might have to admit failure helped me pull it off with days to spare—proving that peer pressure is also motivating.

I want to propose another approach. Instead of focusing on breaking bad habits or doing things you really don't want to do, let's adopt rituals. No, I'm not talking about religious rites, although that is the origin of the word. Thinking of desired behaviors as rituals gives them extra heft and gravity—and when you get down to it, few things are more important than taking care of your health.

Rituals require attention and engagement. They provide structure and meaning and add importance even to seemingly routine activities. Set aside specific times each day to exercise, eat healthy meals, and pray, meditate, or destress—focusing all the while on honoring your body, acknowledging the gift of life, and staying strong and healthy for your family and loved ones. These are rituals we should all embrace.

Happy New Year,

doesn't have to "choose" but can, in the case of vitamin K, for instance, maintain normal blood clotting and at the same time keep your arteries healthy.

Why Multis Matter

I first heard about triage theory when Dr. Ames spoke at a medical conference I attended about 12 years ago. I knew who he was—everyone who follows the medical literature does. A respected researcher and professor at the University of California Berkeley, recipient of many, many awards, and author of more than 550 scientific publications, he developed the Ames mutagenicity test, which is used to determine whether drugs, pesticides, and other compounds cause DNA mutations and may therefore be carcinogenic.

His lecture that day blew me away. This esteemed scientist, who was entrenched in academia and had only recently shifted his focus to nutrition, was vocally endorsing nutritional supplements! Citing government statistics on diet and nutrition—the majority of Americans did and still do have an inadequate dietary intake of one or more vitamins or minerals—he recommended that everyone take a daily multivitamin and mineral supplement as insurance against deficiencies.

Dr. Ames' most recent research, published in 2018 just before he turned 90 and bolstered by 148 scientific citations, takes the triage theory a step further. He proposes that most of the nutrients necessary for survival, such as magnesium, selenium, vitamins C, D, and K, and omega-3 fatty acids, are also required for healthy aging. They are so important that he refers to them collectively as "longevity vitamins" and maintains that deficiencies at any time in life result in cumulative damage that increases risk of chronic disease, premature aging, and shortened lifespan.

Additional Longevity Supplements

In addition to these basic nutrients, Dr. Ames discusses other compounds that engender both survival and longevity. He focuses on two "conditional vitamins," which unlike vitamins are made by the body but in amounts insufficient to optimize metabolism: choline, a substance necessary for DNA repair and brain health; and taurine, an amino acid that protects against heart disease, brain dysfunction, and diabetes.

He includes other dietary components that are not considered to be vitamins but have proven disease-prevention and age-delaying effects. Foremost among these are lutein, zeaxanthin, lycopene, alpha- and beta-carotene, astaxanthin, and beta-cryptoxanthin. Low intake of these carotenoids is

Longevity Vitamins

Vitamins*	Minerals*	Other Nutrients
Biotin	Calcium	Alpha/beta carotene
Choline	Chloride	Astaxanthin
Folic Acid	Chromium	Beta-cryptoxanthin
Riboflavin (B2)	Cobalt	Ergothioneine
Thiamine (B1)	Copper	Lutein
Niacin (B3)	Iodine	Lycopene
Pantothenate (B5)	Iron	Omega-3 EPA/DHA
Vitamin A	Manganese	PQQ
Vitamin B6	Magnesium	Queuine
Vitamin B12	Molybdenum	Taurine
Vitamin C	Phosphorus	Zeaxanthin
Vitamin D	Potassium	
Vitamin E	Selenium	
Vitamin K	Sodium	
	Sulfur	
	Zinc	

*Adequate levels of most of these vitamins and minerals are found in comprehensive multivitamins such as Forward.

associated with numerous age-related disorders such as macular degeneration, cognitive decline, cardiovascular disease, and metabolic syndrome. Another is pyrroloquinoline quinone (PQQ). Synthesized by bacteria in the soil and present in fruits and vegetables, PQQ is an exceptionally powerful and stable antioxidant with benefits for inflammation, neuroprotection, and mitochondrial health.

Dr. Ames also makes a case for two rather obscure compounds: ergothioneine, an amino acid in mushrooms and other foods that counters oxidative stress; and queuine, which has diverse protective mechanisms throughout the body. I confess don't know much about these two but will keep you posted as research develops.

A Simple Solution

Our increase in life expectancy over the past decades is an enormous achievement, but our "health span"—the number of years we're not just alive but healthy—could use some work. Living a long life, free of disease and disability, depends on a number of factors, some of which are beyond your control. However, as Dr. Ames concludes, "...in addition to keeping physically fit, the low-hanging fruit in prolonging a healthy aging lies in optimizing V/M [vitamin and mineral] intake."

References

- Ames BN. Prolonging healthy aging: Longevity vitamins and proteins. *Proc Natl Acad Sci USA*. 2018 Oct 23;115(43):10836–44. doi: 10.1073/pnas.1809045115.
- Ames BN. Low micronutrient intake may accelerate the degenerative diseases of aging through allocation of scarce micronutrients by triage. *Proc Natl Acad Sci USA*. 2006 Nov 21;103(47):17589–94.

Dear Dr. Whitaker

Q For the past few months, whenever I tilt my head back to look up, I feel slightly dizzy. Could it be blocking blood flow to my brain? I am worried about a stroke. — Patti H., Oklahoma

A This is most likely benign paroxysmal positional vertigo (BPPV), an inner ear disorder that is the most common cause of vertigo. BPPV is caused by calcium carbonate crystals trapped in one of the tiny semicircular canals in the inner ear that control balance. When you move your head up or down, roll over, or sit up, these crystals move around, which sends signals to the brain that can cause brief episodes of dizziness and unsteadiness. This is not a serious condition, and it generally goes away on its own. If it doesn't, your doctor can treat it with a simple and painless "particle repositioning maneuver." In fact, you can do this maneuver at home. For instructions, visit clevelandclinic.org and search for BPPV. If symptoms persist, consult your doctor.

Q I have "rediscovered" cottage cheese through my pregnant daughter-in-law. I had forgotten how tasty and healthy it is. One cup has 28 g of protein and is low in carbohydrates and calories. It is a fast and filling lunch or snack. My question is does it contain probiotics? I believe it is fermented, but I cannot find any information on this. — Jean D., via email

A Cottage cheese, which used to be a dieter's staple, has made a comeback with the

popularity of low-carb, high-protein regimens. Although most brands do not claim to have live and active cultures, some such as Nancy's, Good Culture, and Horizon do contain beneficial bacteria. Your health food store is likely to have other brands of cultured and probiotic cottage cheese as well. Read labels carefully to be sure.

Q Have you ever written about swollen ankles and feet? I seem to have this problem more often than not. I do try to avoid salt, but any other suggestions would be welcome. — Eleanor S., California

A Swollen feet and ankles are caused by retention of excess fluids that leak from the capillaries into surrounding tissues. This condition, called edema, can be due to excess sodium, so cutting back is a good idea, as is eating more potassium-rich plant foods to balance the effects of sodium. Compression stockings are very helpful, and frequent activity is also recommended, since sitting or standing for long periods is another risk factor. NSAIDs, calcium channel blockers, hormones, and a few other drugs can cause edema as well, so check your medication list. Suggested supplements include Pycnogenol and horse chestnut. Both of these botanicals have been shown to be as effective as compression stockings for reducing swelling in the extremities. Edema may be a symptom of congestive heart failure, kidney or liver disease, or damage to the lymph vessels or veins (chronic venous insufficiency). If you have other symptoms, see your doctor right away.



Read more at drwhitaker.com, and send your own questions to drwhitakerquestions@drwhitaker.com.

New Online: Get Serious About Gum Disease

Poor oral health can lead to much more than tooth decay. Periodontal (gum) disease can cause systemic inflammation and is linked with a higher risk of diabetes, heart disease, stroke, premature birth, and decline in cognitive function. A study published in the *Journal of the National Cancer Institute* last year found that, compared to people with healthy gums, those with severe periodontal disease had a 24 percent increased risk of developing lung and colorectal cancer.

Brushing twice a day, flossing daily, and professional cleanings one or two times a year may be inconvenient, but it beats the heck out of gum surgery, tissue/bone grafts, and tooth loss. In addition to good oral hygiene, several supplements, including essential fatty acids, lycopene, vitamins C and D, coenzyme Q10, and probiotic lozenges, have been shown to promote oral health. Chewing gum sweetened with xylitol, which positively alters the composition of bacteria in the mouth, is also helpful.

Prevention is especially important if you smoke, take a drug that causes dry mouth, or have diabetes. Periodontal disease is a common complication of diabetes, and individuals with poor glucose control tend to have more severe gum infections. To learn more, visit drwhitaker.com.



Works for Me...

- **Standing vs. Sitting** *I work at a computer, so I took the advice to avoid sitting for long stretches seriously. First, I started using an adjustable sit-stand desk. But I was standing so much that I eventually got rid of my office chair. I sit during meetings and at lunch but I spend most of my day standing. — Ben B., Texas*

Now that's commitment! "Sitting is the new smoking" may be an exaggeration, but prolonged sitting is linked with worse health outcomes. Benefits of standing desks—which are generally used for shorter stretches interspersed with sitting—include reduced back pain and fatigue and increased metabolism, focus, and muscle tone.

- **Alpha Lipoic Acid** *I started taking one tablet of alpha lipoic acid (ALAMax CR) a day as per doctor's instructions when I was 65 years old. That was 14 years ago, and my blood results for inflammation was normal-low last year. I have no heart trouble, arthritis, joint pain, or diseases caused by inflammation. One of the best supplements I take. — Betty M., California*

- **Foot Pain** *I have plantar fasciitis, which causes pretty severe foot pain. My podiatrist recommended freezing water bottles and rolling my feet on them for 10 minutes twice a day. It really helps! — Judi M., Florida*

- **Heart Disease** *Ten years ago, I visited your clinic. No problems were revealed. I was later pressured to see a cardiologist, who did an echocardiogram, nuclear stress test, and cardiac catheterization. I was then told I needed bypass surgery, even though I had never had any symptoms. I refused the surgery, got 37 pages of reports and test results, and sent them to the Whitaker Clinic. You called me personally to tell me I did not need surgery and suggested I go to the Lown Cardiovascular Group in Boston for a second opinion. They agreed I did not need surgery. I continued to work with no symptoms or problems and retired at 79½ years young! — M.W., North Carolina*

The well-respected Lown Group, founded by Nobel laureate Bernard Lown, MD, specializes in second opinions for bypass and other invasive procedures. To learn more, visit Lowngroup.org or call 617-732-1318.

Do you have a Health Tip to share? We'd love to hear it! Send it to worksforme@drwhitaker.com.

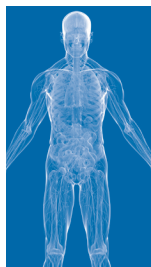
Health Hack: Natural MSG

Umami, the fifth taste, was identified in 1908 by a Japanese scientist who discovered that the amino acid glutamic acid was responsible for the savory flavor of meat, mushrooms, Parmesan cheese, tomatoes, and seaweed. He went on to harness that flavor in a product: monosodium glutamate (MSG). Although many people avoid MSG, research casts doubt on reports of serious toxicity. Nevertheless, MSG can cause headaches, palpitations, and other transient symptoms in sensitive individuals. For a natural option, try mushroom powder. Dehydrated shiitake, porcini, and other mushroom powders add umami oomph to your food and provide health benefits as well.

Monthly Health Quiz:

Wound Care: True or False

- Cuts and scrapes should be cleaned with alcohol or hydrogen peroxide.
- Airing out wounds helps them heal faster.
- Sugar or honey is an effective wound dressing.



Answer:

A and B are false. Wounds should be thoroughly cleaned with soap and water. They heal best when kept moist with antibacterial ointment and covered with bandages. C is true. Honey and sugar dressings inhibit bacterial growth and facilitate healing in diabetic ulcers, pressure sores, and other open wounds.

Now Available at drwhitaker.com

- [Beware of Unnecessary Surgery](#)
- [Natural Treatment for Glaucoma](#)

Visit drwhitaker.com and enter the article names into the search bar at the top. Click on the Content tab to find your results.

Notable Quote

“Twenty years from now you will be more disappointed by the things that you didn't do than by the ones you did do. So throw off the bowlines. Sail away from the safe harbor. Catch the trade winds in your sails. Explore. Dream. Discover.”

— H. Jackson Brown Jr., author of *P.S. I Love You*

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

Which Diet Is Right for You?

According to a 2018 survey, 36 percent of Americans are following a specific diet or food plan. Intermittent fasting is the most popular, followed by Paleo, gluten-free, low-carb, Mediterranean, Whole 30, high-protein, vegetarian/vegan, weight-loss, cleanse, DASH, and ketogenic/high-fat diets.

I am often asked which diet is most effective, and my answer is always the same: It's the one you can stick with. You can lose weight and improve markers of health on most any regimen. The downside is that once you go back to your usual way of eating, you're likely to backslide on weight and health gains.

Nevertheless, following a specific program is a great way to kickstart a diet makeover because it forces you to think about what you put in your mouth. Unlike the old days of calorie counting, most of today's diets emphasize quality over quantity—although definitions of quality vary wildly. For some, it's steak and bacon; for others, it's beans and grains. But they all have one thing in common: None of these diets endorses potato chips, Snickers, and Cokes, and all promote nutrient-rich vegetables, adequate protein, fats, and other high-quality foods.

Whatever diet you opt for, the trick is to maintain your focus on quality over the long term. That said, I want to tell you about the approaches that have worked best for my patients.

Carbohydrate Restriction

Because many of my patients—and more than 100 million others—have diabetes or prediabetes, I have been recommending carbohydrate restriction for decades. Excessive intake of carbohydrates, especially sugars and refined carbs, overwhelms the body, messes with blood sugar control and insulin sensitivity, and promotes food cravings.

Many popular diets involve varying degrees of carb cutting. The ultimate low-carb regimen is the ketogenic diet, which gets most of its calories from fat. In its purest form as a therapy for epilepsy, it limits carbs to 10–15 g per day—the amount in a small apple or about a dozen potato chips.

Keto programs for weight loss aren't this strict, but the idea is to reduce carbs to the point that the body has to use ketones, which are byproducts of fat metabolism, as an alternative energy source.

The Paleo diet also reduces carbs, as it allows only foods that were consumed by hunter-gatherers during the Paleolithic Age. Higher in protein than ketogenic diets, it is big on meat, poultry, and fish, as well as eggs, nuts, vegetables, fruits, and natural oils. The Paleo era ended prior to the rise of agriculture, so grains, dairy, legumes, and processed sugars, oils, and other foods are off limits.

Whole30 has dos and don'ts similar to the Paleo diet, but it is positioned as a 30-day elimination diet designed to “reset your relationship with food.” Elimination diets are a great way to identify allergens and other problematic foods. By going cold turkey on common culprits, then adding them slowly back in, you're able to pinpoint foods that don't agree with you. A number of my patients have permanently changed their diets based on their experience with Whole30—and have ongoing improvements in weight and overall health as a result. (See Joe's story on page 7.)

Diets aside, most everyone can benefit from reducing intake of fast-burning carbs such as bread, starchy vegetables, fruit juice, sodas, and sugary snacks and desserts.

Intermittent Fasting

The other approach I recommend isn't so much about what you eat but when you eat. Intermittent fasting involves eating only during specific hours of the day and abstaining from food altogether at other times. By limiting your food intake to particular times, you'll naturally eat less. And if you exercise during the fasting period, you'll rapidly exhaust your carbohydrate stores and your body will shift into fat-burning mode.

I wrote one of the first books about intermittent fasting, *The Mini-Fast Diet*, published in 2013. Now there are many variations, but I've found that the easiest schedule for most people is to simply skip breakfast and avoid eating until around noon.

Six months after Bruce started on this regimen, he had lost 15 pounds—and he's kept that weight off for nine years. He reports, “Intermittent fasting is not a diet; it's just what I do. I do not feel hungry in the mornings, and rather than pigging out in the evenings, which I did when I first started, I eat less overall. It has also made me much more conscious about food in general, and my diet is healthier now.”

Dear Dr. Whitaker,

About two years ago, I had an MRI scan of my knee. The tech, a young man named David, commented that I resembled his stepfather. I asked about him, and he told me his name is Julian Whitaker, he's a doctor, and he can reverse diabetes.

I thought, "Yeah, right." I had been diagnosed with diabetes two years before and really struggled to get my A1C under control. I kept going back to my doctor and trying different medications. At my last visit, he had said it was about time I went on insulin, which was really depressing.

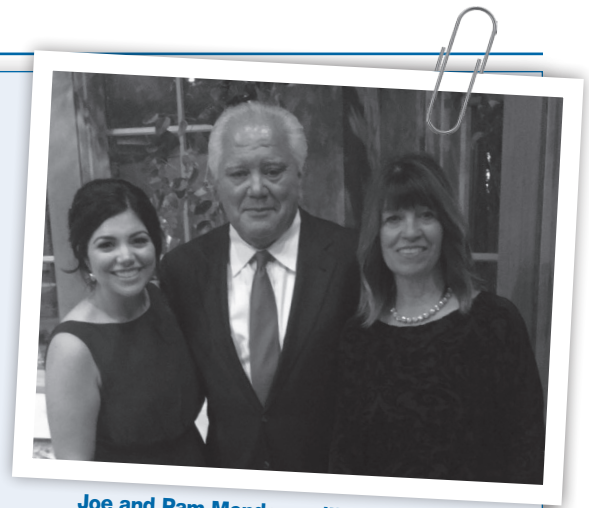
David encouraged me to look you up, so I checked out your clinic and scheduled an appointment. My wife Pam and I saw your nurse practitioner Kristi Erickson-Miller, who started me on berberine and other supplements, printed out food lists, and really got into exactly what I needed to do. Pam and I were impressed with the amount of time she spent with us, explaining how and why this would work. It was very different from other doctors, who spend their 15 allotted minutes and bump up meds. Kristi challenged, coached, and motivated me. From the minute we left the clinic, I was all in.

Pam ordered a book Kristi had recommended, *The Whole30*, which eliminates sugar, dairy, grains, and most processed foods. Such a dramatic change is definitely a mind game. You have to dig into it and really think about it, but this was clearly the right strategy for me. We were about four days away from a vacation, when we usually eat whatever we want, but I was determined to stay on the plan. I responded quickly with better blood sugar and a little weight loss, which encouraged me to stick with it. Pam did it with me. She didn't need it like I did, but she was more disciplined and that helped keep me going. I was also very dedicated to exercise and swam, walked, or did a Lifecycle class at gym for at least an hour almost every day.

Over the following year, I lost 45 pounds and got off my diabetes medications. (I am still taking berberine and vitamins.) My A1C, which was initially 9.4, is now 5.5. My primary care doctor said I was a "walking miracle." I believe it. I have been around a lot of people with diabetes who have lost legs or died. At age 66, I feel great, my sleep and energy are good, and I have a whole new wardrobe. I have gained some of the weight back since starting a new job and getting out of my routine, but I am getting back on on track.

It's a crazy story how I ran into your stepson—and ultimately an answer to a prayer. It changed my life. My diabetes has been reversed.

Joe Mendoza



Joe and Pam Mendoza with their daughter

Your Health Depends on It

In summary, there's no one diet that's best for everyone. Hundreds of clinical trials have demonstrated the benefits of a Mediterranean diet. My lean and mean colleague Mark has been vegan for more than 30 years, and family friend Erin had remarkable improvements in her health after going gluten free.

As you can see, a high-quality diet can encompass a range of personal likes and dislikes. Just don't forget the importance of diet. Your health depends on it.

Reference

International Food Information Council Foundation. 2018 Food & Health Survey. <https://www.foodinsight.org/2018-FHS-Report-FINAL.pdf>. Accessed 2018 Nov 4.

Innovations in Wellness Medicine

LDN for Chronic Pain and Inflammation

For tens of millions of people afflicted with fibromyalgia or autoimmune diseases, chronic pain is a constant companion—one that even NSAIDs, opioids, anticonvulsants, and other drugs can't chase away. That's why everyone suffering with any of these inflammatory disorders should know about low-dose naltrexone (LDN). Although naltrexone is generally used to treat opioid and alcohol addiction, when taken in very small doses (3–4.5 mg) at bedtime, it has potent pain-relieving, anti-inflammatory, and immune-modulating effects.

When I first began prescribing LDN, there wasn't much published research, but my clinical experience made me a believer. Since then, scores of studies and case histories have shown LDN to be a safe and effective treatment for fibromyalgia and autoimmune diseases such as MS, Crohn's, inflammatory bowel, and psoriasis. LDN is also used as an adjunct cancer therapy, with demonstrated improvements in quality of life and survival time for patients with lymphoma and cancer of the pancreas, lung, kidney, and brain. Given the scarcity of effective treatments for these difficult conditions, LDN is certainly worth a try. Learn more at LDNscience.org.

Curcumin and Turmeric for Brain Health

Long before turmeric and curcumin became popular supplements, I was interested in their anti-inflammatory effects. Since turmeric (the source of curcumin) is a common curry spice, I went on an Indian food binge. I also ate powdered turmeric by the spoonful, which was neither pleasant nor pretty, and I was thrilled when supplements came along. Concentrated, exceptionally bioavailable extracts such as Meriva and Longvida are now among my top supplement recommendations.

Curcumin is best known for relieving pain, but its brain benefits are getting more attention. In addition to countering neuroinflammation and oxidative stress—processes that contribute to Alzheimer's, Parkinson's, stroke, and depression—curcumin also encourages the synthesis of brain-derived neurotrophic factor (BDNF), a growth factor that stimulates brain plasticity and new connections between neurons. I'm not saying curcumin reverses dementia, but it does appear to protect against cognitive decline and may improve memory in healthy people. In a 2018 placebo-controlled study, mentally intact people ages 50–90 who took a curcumin supplement for 18 months had improvements in attention and memory, and reductions in amyloid and tau deposits in the brain. Extracts vary; take as directed.

Did You Know?

- In a recent survey, 36 percent of adults reported having sex at least once a week, a decrease from 45 percent in 2000.
- Women prone to bladder infections who drank an extra 1.5 liters of water per day had 48 percent fewer recurrent infections.
- Premiums for employer-provided family health insurance averaged \$19,616 last year; out-of-pocket deductibles also increased.
- Blue eyes are a relatively new trait, arising from a single genetic mutation that occurred 6,000–10,000 years ago.
- More than one in three 18-to-30-year olds live with their parents.
- Overweight/obese kids who took vitamin D reduced their BMI and body fat.
- A higher intake of vegetables and berries is linked with a lower risk and progression of Parkinson's disease.
- Snacks contribute about 500 calories (18–22% of daily total) to the average diet.
- The FDA is considering requiring labeling sesame as a food allergen.
- Coffee may make you feel more awake and alert after drinking alcohol but does not help sober you up.

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



Become a fan on Facebook at facebook.com/WhitakerMD



Follow Healthy Directions on Twitter at twitter.com/HealthyDir



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

Coming In Future Issues:

- Drugs That Should Be Deprescribed
- When Is the Best Time to Take Supplements?
- Why You Should Drink More Tea