

Self-Awareness: The Cornerstone of Prevention

I've always believed that one of the principal keys to maintaining health is self-awareness. The human body is constantly monitoring and adapting to even the subtlest changes in its environment. If we take the time and develop the ability to listen



Dr. David Williams

to our bodies, we can very often identify problems at an early stage and take corrective action before something becomes serious.

Self-awareness is one of the cornerstones of true prevention.

Unfortunately, most people don't practice self-awareness and only start paying attention after a problem becomes more serious. Many

believe that doctors are responsible for keeping us healthy. And drug use, even before a problem arises, has become the new definition of prevention. It's a bizarre concept that would have been hard to accept just a couple of decades ago.

You know your body better than anyone else (or at least you should). Your body gives you feedback every day on the effects triggered by your lifestyle and habits. No other species has the degree of awareness that humans are capable of experiencing.

But instead of realizing the importance of that self-awareness, our focus has shifted. The current mindset seems to be that more interaction with doctors and reliance on pharmaceuticals and medical technology are the keys to maintaining health and reaching maximum lifespan. This is evident when you consider 40 percent of people aged 60 and older are taking more than five prescription medications, and 18 percent take 10 or more.

It's also evident that, as a society, our overall health picture looks pretty dismal. We spend the highest amount on health care of all high-income countries in the world, yet we have the worst outcomes. Out of 34 countries, we

rank 26th when it comes to life expectancy. We're the fattest, we die younger, and we have the highest rate of asthma and some of the highest incidences of infant mortality, heart disease, and diabetes. Overall, we don't get particularly good treatment for most diseases, which really isn't that surprising.

As I've said numerous times in the past, accurately diagnosing health problems is becoming a lost art in the medical field. Part of the problem stems from patients not being aware of what's happening in their bodies. This forces doctors to rely primarily on a rudimentary examination and the conclusions of technicians in the lab or X-ray department. Veterinarians are highly trained to diagnose under these circumstances, but most other doctors aren't. It's no wonder most people wind up with an overflowing bag of various drugs after a couple of visits to the doctor.

Practice Self-Awareness

If you really want to improve your health and prevent many common health problems, you need to pay close attention to the subtle signs your body is sending you.

Much like the various gauges in a car, we have real-time signs and

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You will observe with concern how long a useful truth may be known, and exist, before it is generally received and practiced on.

— BENJAMIN FRANKLIN

symptoms that can often tell us what's happening "under the hood."

It may be necessary to keep a journal, at least temporarily until you're able to see certain patterns and recognize signs that you need to act upon.

First, start to take note of the things that seem to fill you with energy and make you feel stronger. When you feel your best, recall what foods you've eaten in the last 24 hours, how much water you've taken in, how well you've slept, any cravings you might have had, the degree of stress you were under and how you handled it, the amount of exercise or activity you performed, and so on.

Compare what you learn to those times when you don't feel your best or have experienced a headache, bowel issues, fatigue, a short temper, depression, etc.

You will start to see patterns. For example, in my case, when I have unresolved stress I begin to experience increasing tightness and tension between my shoulder blades. If it continues and I don't deal with the stress or get a massage or chiropractic adjustment, I begin to experience flu-like symptoms and can become sick for two or three days. It's an established pattern and a warning sign that I now heed.

It's important to determine your personal signs that indicate you are pushing yourself too hard.

If you have any health problems, compare the 24 hours prior to experiencing symptoms to times when you aren't having those issues. This can help determine triggers for headaches, arthritis flare-ups, areas of isolated pain, diarrhea or constipation, and many other concerns. Sometimes it can be something as simple as an allergic reaction to a certain food that triggers a headache the next day.

Other situations might be more complicated to figure out. For example, years ago I had a female patient who performed clerical work at the courthouse. Her job involved a great deal of typing. Every day around 11:00 AM she would get heart palpitations and such severe pain in her forearm that she wouldn't be able to type for a couple of hours. Even on days she didn't work, the identical symptoms presented themselves during the same time period.

She had been to several doctors and the first one had sent her to physical therapy to reduce any inflammation from the typing. After that didn't work, two other doctors wanted to start her on medication to treat the heart palpitations and arrhythmias (irregular heartbeat) and put her in the hospital for

additional testing. That's when she came to me for help and advice.

I did an exam and took her history. Self-awareness wasn't one of her strong points and she couldn't provide many details.

Chi energy travels the same direction through the 12 meridians of the acupuncture system in a very orderly fashion. (It's called the horary cycle.) It just so happens that between 11:00 AM and 1:00 PM, the heart meridian (pericardium) peaks in energy. She was having severe pain at a specific point, PC4.

Knowing this, I went back and questioned her further. Reluctantly, she then told me she was taking water pills (diuretics) that a friend had given her to help her lose weight. The diuretics were working to remove fluid, but in the process they depleted minerals and caused the palpitations.

Once she stopped using them and starting taking a mineral supplement, all returned to normal. She probably could have figured this out on her own if she had been self-aware enough to make the connection between the pills and the onset of palpitations.

It's important to not just look at foods, habits, and the other factors that cause problems, but also those that make you feel good. While you want to avoid things that weaken

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Dr. Williams works with Healthy Directions, LLC to develop his unique formulations that supply many of the hard-to-find nutrients he recommends. Dr. Williams is compensated on the sales of these nutritional supplements and health products, which allows him to continue devoting his life to worldwide research and the development of innovative, effective health solutions.

NEWS TO USE *from around the world***Fresh Lime for Smoking Cessation**

NAKHON NAYOK, THAILAND—Researchers at Srinakharinwirot University discovered that fresh lime is almost as effective as nicotine gum for smoking cessation.

Regular smokers ages 18 and older who were willing to quit were included in this study. A total of 47 participants received fresh lime and 53 received nicotine gum for a period of 12 weeks. Smokers were excluded if they were using other smoking cessation aids, were allergic to citrus, or had dental problems. To confirm abstinence, carbon monoxide was routinely checked in the participants' exhaled breath.

At week four, abstinence among those using the fresh lime was lower compared to those on nicotine gum (38.3 percent vs. 58.5 percent). However, by week 12, there was no

significant difference between the two groups. (*J Med Assoc Thai* 12;95(Suppl 12):S576–82)

Participants in the lime group were instructed to suck on a piece of lime and then chew the lime skin anytime they felt the craving for cigarettes, as often as they needed. To prepare the lime, they were told to cut the lime into quarters and then cut each quarter into four smaller pieces. The pieces were wrapped in plastic wrap and placed in the refrigerator to keep them fresh.

Nicotine gum is an effective tool that has helped many smokers quit. For some, though, it just becomes an expensive new habit. Limes are readily available and inexpensive compared to nicotine gum.

The downside to chewing limes is obviously the acid, which over time can erode tooth enamel. Obviously, chewing on lime is something that should

only be done for a short period of time to help with smoking cessation. It shouldn't become a substitute habit.

To minimize any dental issues that could arise due to the acidity of the limes, don't allow the limes to stay in contact with your teeth for long periods of time.

One of the best ways to neutralize the acid is to rinse your mouth with water immediately after chewing the lime and follow that by eating a small piece of cheese. Cheese quickly raises the pH level in the mouth and increases saliva production, which further neutralizes acids.

If no cheese is available, xylitol-sweetened or sugar-free gum can be chewed. Chewing gum increases saliva production, which is the mouth's natural method of maintaining proper pH.

you and rob you of energy, you also want to understand what strengthens you and fills you with energy.

Additionally, don't ignore cravings. They are very often the initial sign that your body needs something to continue functioning properly. While cravings aren't a justification for indulging your every food whim, they are often a great opportunity to give your body the nutrients it may be lacking. I've

personally found this to be true on many occasions.

In fact, a couple of months ago I began craving raw carrots. I didn't crave the little peeled, pre-packaged, tasteless "baby carrots" (which are just a clever way of saying "imperfect-looking regular carrots"). I wanted the big, unpeeled, organic ones. I started eating a couple of carrots with my lunch each day. I often also ate one first

thing in the morning while packing my son's lunch.

I'm not exactly sure why my body "needs" carrots right now. I'm still analyzing that. However, I do know that since I've added them to my diet, I have more energy, clearer thinking, more consistent bowel movements, and less skin dryness. This isn't too surprising, considering what we now know about carrots. Even if you're not craving them, you

still might want to consider including carrots in your own diet.

Speaking of Carrots...

Plants have developed various compounds that help them survive in their different environments.

Being a root vegetable that grows in the ground, carrots need protection from both fungi and bacteria in the soil. As such, carrots produce many of their own powerful fungicides and bacteriostats (substances that prevent the multiplying of bacteria without destroying them). These fungicides and bacteriostats act as beneficial, natural antiseptics and antibiotics in the human intestinal tract. This benefit alone might be a lifesaver in light of the increasing number of food poisonings we hear about every few months.

Certain forms of bacteria called gram-negative bacteria contain endotoxins as part of their cell wall structure. Some of these endotoxins leak constantly from bacteria, and larger amounts are released into the body when they are destroyed by cells in our immune system. Endotoxins are responsible for triggering many of the disease processes we experience from pathogenic bacterial infections.

There are many serious diseases associated with gram-negative bacteria and their endotoxins. One of these we hear about frequently is *Salmonella typhimurium*, which is associated with food poisoning and causes systemic infections and typhoid fever in humans. Another is *Escherichia coli*, more commonly referred to as *E. coli*. Other forms of gram-negative bacteria

cause whooping cough, meningitis, gonorrhea, and cholera.

Many of these bacterial endotoxins are released in the large intestine, where they are absorbed into the bloodstream and travel throughout the body. This is one area where carrots really help. As the fibers of the carrot move through the large intestine, they have been shown to attach themselves not only to bacterial endotoxins but also to pathogenic bacteria and carry them out of the body.

It's interesting (to me anyway) that antibiotics don't inactivate endotoxins. Although they kill bacteria, the endotoxins they carry are not destroyed. Rather, they are released as the bacteria die. This is often experienced as a healing crisis (i.e., when everything seems to get worse just before it gets better).

Some of the toxic effects of endotoxins can include nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, fever, muscle aches, and even organ failure. The same types of events frequently occur using natural antibiotic compounds. However, many natural compounds have the extra benefit of possessing detoxifying capabilities as well.

In addition to toxic symptoms, endotoxins have been linked to increased rates of obesity, high triglyceride levels, heart disease, insulin resistance, diabetes, liver disease, and many other serious conditions. Taking a closer look at the research, we may need to

change the old adage to "a carrot a day keeps the doctor away."

Carrots and Hormones

Raw carrots provide an added bonus when it comes to regulating hormones.

For years, I've been talking about the increasing amount of environmental exposure to chemical xenoestrogens—endocrine disrupters that have estrogen-like effects throughout the body.

In women, xenoestrogens can lead to estrogen dominance, which results in all sorts of hormonal issues and has been directly linked to migraine headaches, endometriosis, early-onset puberty, miscarriages, and breast cancer, just to name a few concerns.

In men, these estrogenic compounds contribute to prostate and testicular cancers, infertility, erectile dysfunction, and breast enlargement and other feminine characteristics. In both sexes, environmental xenoestrogens lead to obesity and diabetes.

Under ideal circumstances, excess levels of both natural estrogen and estrogen-mimicking chemicals are broken down by the liver and removed from the body. But rarely are circumstances ideal. We now have such large amounts of these chemicals in our food and water supply, household cleaning and skincare products, building materials, and insecticides that the liver's detoxification ability can get overwhelmed. When this occurs, the body stores these chemicals in fat cells, then eventually releases them back into the body.

The situation is further complicated when 1) the liver is congested

from dealing with other toxins stemming from a poor diet or chronic health issues like constipation, poor digestion, or impaired circulation, and 2) bowel permeability issues like Crohn's disease and irritable bowel syndrome allow the xenoestrogens to pass through the intestinal walls back into the body to wreak havoc instead of being excreted in the stool.

Carrots have the unique ability to lock on to excess estrogen and xenoestrogens and carry them out of the body. Raw carrots have been shown to improve the progesterone to estrogen ratio and help promote proper hormone balance. (Many women suffering from premenstrual symptoms such as migraine headaches can find a great deal of relief, if not complete relief, simply by consuming a couple of grated raw carrots each day.)

At the same time, carrots help to optimize the bacterial flora in the gut, strengthening the intestinal cell lining and reducing permeability or "leaky gut syndrome," a condition where bacteria, excess estrogen, or toxins leak back into the bloodstream.

Carrots and Cholesterol

Studies have also demonstrated that eating raw carrots can lower cholesterol levels. One study found that 200 grams (roughly three medium carrots) eaten at breakfast each day for three weeks reduced serum cholesterol by 11 percent and increased fecal bile acid and fat excretion by 50 percent.

An animal study found that after three weeks of carrot consumption, liver triglycerides were reduced by 40 percent, cholesterol levels in the liver were lowered 44

percent, and fecal steroid excretion increased by 30 percent compared to animals on the control diet that didn't include carrots.

There is also evidence to suggest that carrot juice may afford some liver protection against the detrimental effects of high fructose corn syrup. Adding carrot juice to the diet of animals fed fructose attenuated several inflammatory compounds known to trigger the progression of numerous metabolic diseases like insulin resistance, type 2 diabetes, and non-alcoholic fatty liver disease. (*Am J Clin Nutr* 1979 Sep;32(9):1889-92) (*Eur J Nutr* 2003 Oct;42(5):254-61) (*J Sci Food Agric* 2016 Jul 15 doi 10.1002/jsfa.7906) (*Prev Nutr Food Sci* 2016 Sep;21(3):171-80)

Beta-Carotene and Lung Cancer

Besides some early studies in the 1970s, carrots really didn't get much attention within most medical circles until researchers in the 1980s linked certain forms of cancer, particularly lung cancer, to low levels of beta-carotene.

Our bodies convert beta-carotene into a usable vitamin A. Researchers found that although low blood levels of vitamin A weren't tied to higher lung cancer risk, low beta-carotene levels were. Since most lung cancers form as a result of smoking, smokers and ex-smokers have been the focus of most of the research in this area.

I remember reading early studies where researchers referred to beta-carotene as a "morning-after pill" for lung cancer. In other words, it didn't just help prevent cancer, but it could also be taken after exposure to carcinogens and it could

still help block the formation of cancerous tumors.

Smokers with the lowest levels of beta-carotene were shown to have four times the risk of developing cancer compared to those with the highest levels. And among ex-smokers who hadn't smoked for two to 10 years, those with lowest beta-carotene levels had five and a half times the risk of developing cancer compared to those with the highest levels.

Hopefully no one will read this and think beta-carotene is a magic pill that will allow them to smoke safely. It won't. But it's definitely something every former smoker should supplement.

In addition to taking beta-carotene in supplement form (such as in your multivitamin), I think raw carrots are the way to go for ex-smokers. Researchers found that one single carrot a day provided the necessary amount of beta-carotene needed to help protect ex-smokers from developing lung cancer.

I also strongly believe that many times it's the combination of various compounds found in foods and herbs that add to their healing properties. That's why you'll find whole herbs right along with herbal extracts in my daily multivitamin/mineral supplement.

Getting the Most Benefit Out of Carrots

There are numerous varieties and colors of carrots, and hundreds of different carotenoid pigments that work synergistically in carrots. While the orange full-length carrots contain the most beta-carotene, purple carrots contain more anthocyanin, yellow carrots contain

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Alternatives MAILBOX

Asthma Solutions

Question: I have never had breathing problems, but recently I began to experience asthma symptoms in my 40s. I thought asthma started in childhood. The problem is intermittent and not severe at this point. I'd like to resolve it naturally before having to resort to inhalers. Can you suggest anything?

— Claire R., Woodridge, IL

Answer: Asthma is a problem that has been confounding researchers for the past few decades. The condition often starts in childhood but now it seems to affect all age groups. Asthma rates worldwide are continuing to rise by a staggering 50 percent every decade.

Asthma is another in a growing list of health problems that modern medicine says can't be cured but only controlled or managed. Managing asthma has become a cash cow for the pharmaceutical industry.

There are numerous factors that can cause your body to overreact to an allergen or asthma trigger. Without the opportunity to personally evaluate you, it would be difficult to know exactly what factors are involved in your particular situation. However, there are some specific areas that are very often the underlying cause.

In one sense, asthma is an overreaction of the immune system. And I strongly suspect the increase we're seeing in asthma cases is largely due to imbalanced/weakened immune systems. Several studies have shown that the incidence of asthma among children who play in the dirt and live around farm animals is far lower than those kids raised in pristine, germ-free environments. This is because early exposure to a wide variety of microbes helps build strong immunity.

With asthma, you have an exaggerated inflammatory reaction to an allergen that wouldn't normally occur in a healthy individual. The standard treatment these days is an inhaled corticosteroid to suppress

the exaggerated response of an over-reactive immune system. But there are other options.

Glutathione

In the past I've talked about the importance of the amino acid glutathione. Glutathione has been referred to as the body's master antioxidant. It is essential for proper immune function in the respiratory system. It modulates and limits tissue inflammation in the lungs. (*Int J Gen Med* 2011 Jan;4:105–13)
(*Free Radic Biol Med* 2000 May;28(9):1405–20)

Glutathione levels can become depleted with chronic unresolved stress, an inflammatory diet (i.e., one high in inflammatory omega-6 fatty acids and deficient in anti-inflammatory omega-3 fatty acids), and various drugs. These facts help explain why stress will often trigger asthma attacks and why including more omega-3 fatty acids like fish oil and chia seeds can help stop asthma.

On the drug front, both aspirin and acetaminophen deplete glutathione. Aspirin use exploded when it became popular as a way to prevent heart attacks, and use of acetaminophen and other pain relievers increased in the older population in an effort to treat arthritis and other problems. Since these have become two of the most widely used drugs throughout the world in the past several decades, it's really no surprise that we're seeing an increase in asthma. (*PLoS One* 2012;7(4):e36325)
(*Int J Biochem Cell Biol* 2005 Aug;37(8):1727–37)

One of the first things I suggest is to increase your glutathione levels. You can start by decreasing or eliminating use of these drugs, including more omega-3 fatty acids in your diet, and reducing stress. Stress depletes the adrenal glands, which are responsible for releasing the hormone epinephrine. Epinephrine relaxes the airways and improves breathing. It may be that you need nutritional adrenal support, which I've covered in many of my past newsletter issues.

You can also boost glutathione levels by drinking raw cow or goat milk, consuming cruciferous vegetables and bone broth, and my favorite method: using un-denatured whey protein powder daily.

Taking the modified form of the amino acid cysteine called N-acetyl cysteine (NAC) is another easy way to increase glutathione levels. NAC is converted in the body to cysteine and then to glutathione.

Between 500–600 mg a day has been shown to raise glutathione levels.

Vitamin D

It's also important to get enough vitamin D, which research shows can be helpful in minimizing asthma attacks for people of all ages, but most especially in children. Adults should take 4,000 IU per day, and children (ages 6–15) 1,200 IU per day.

Boswellia serrata

Boswellia serrata is a tree that grows in the Middle East, Africa, and India. I learned about it years ago while traveling and studying Ayurvedic medicine in India, long before it was easily available in the US.

Boswellia extract, also known as frankincense, is made from the gum or resin that seeps from the tree when it is cut. The extract has been used for centuries in Ayurvedic medicine to treat joint pain.

In one study, Boswellia extract containing 65 percent Boswellic acids (300 mg twice daily) was given to asthma patients ages 18–75 for a period of six weeks. Seventy percent of those showed significant improvement, with the elimination of symptoms

and reduction in the number of attacks. This study illustrates the beneficial effects that Ayurvedic physicians have been seeing in their patients over centuries of use. (*Eur J Med Res* 1998 Nov 17;3(11):511–4) (*Phytomedicine* 2010 Sep;17(11):862–7)

Yamoa

Yamoa comes from the gum or resin of another tree, the *Funtumia elastica* rubber tree that grows in Africa. Research has shown that the resin exhibits both anti-inflammatory and immune-boosting capabilities.

Yamoa can be purchased least expensively online from Amazon, or it can be ordered directly from the manufacturer in London (yamoapowder.com).

Improvement in asthma symptoms can usually be seen within a week to 10 days of using this product. Many people find that within a month, their asthma or hay fever problems are pretty much history. In more stubborn cases, it could take two or three months to experience complete relief.

I hope these natural asthma solutions help you breathe a little easier, Claire. Please write back in a few months after trying them and let me know.

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xanthophylls, and red carrots contain lycopene.

Interestingly, eating raw carrots isn't the best way to get the most beta-carotene. Researchers studying beta-carotene developed a mechanical stomach that replicates the actions of our own stomach and found that you only get about 5 percent of the beta-carotene in carrots by chewing. But if the carrot is first boiled and then chewed, you get 60 percent of its beta-carotene. (I would boil the carrots whole and then cut them so you don't lose as much of the protein and soluble carbohydrates in the water.) If a carrot is boiled then juiced or blended, you stand to absorb up to 90 percent of its beta-carotene. Overall, the beta-carotene in

carrots is best absorbed when the carrots have been cooked.

Even so, I prefer eating most of my carrots raw with the skin on. The various phytochemicals or pigments don't penetrate very deeply past the skin of the carrot. Peeling carrots can remove many of these beneficial phytochemicals. This may be because, in order to maximize their protective effects, these compounds need to be in close contact with the soil. Also, since I get most of my beta-carotene by taking my daily supplements, I'm more interested in getting the natural fungicides and bacteriostats to combat endotoxins.

Although I'm a proponent of juicing and doing so with carrots will

provide you with beta-carotene, it's important to keep in mind that you lose the fiber necessary for the removal of excess hormones and the substrate so beneficial to the good bacteria in your gut.

If you haven't already been eating raw carrots on a regular basis, it may take a few days for your digestive tract to become accustomed to doing so. The good news, however, is that most people begin to experience the benefits in just a few days.

I can't tell you how many patients I've seen who've had problems such as constipation, headaches, allergies, bloating, and PMS disappear by adding raw carrots to their daily regimen. Carrots aren't

a cure-all, but they can help take your health to a higher level when combined with a healthy lifestyle.

Prevent the “Colorful” Side Effects

You should also know that the beta-carotene from carrots is itself not toxic. However, the conversion of beta-carotene to vitamin A takes place in the liver. If you have an underactive thyroid (which is very common these days), adequate conversion may not take place and beta-carotene will build up in the body. The yellow pigment will accumulate in the skin, known as carotenemia. The characteristic yellow skin tint is also one of the telltale signs of hypothyroidism.

If you start eating a couple of carrots a day and notice that you’re starting to look like an Oompa Loompa, your thyroid might need a little help. I’ve even seen this happen in individuals with normal thyroid function when they get carried away with carrot juice. Fortunately, the tinting effect is temporary and their skin gradually returned to normal when they cut back or eliminate their intake of carrot juice.

Some people incorrectly refer to this skin coloring as jaundice. Jaundice is due to high bilirubin levels and you find the yellow pigment in the oral cavities and the whites of the eye. That doesn’t occur with carotenemia.

If you find it difficult to munch on a whole carrot, you can grate carrots and add them to a salad. You can also find lots of excellent grated carrot recipes online. Some of the best raw carrot dishes I’ve had were in India. Not only do they

routinely serve spicy grated carrot salads, they also serve carrot stir-fry, which is delicious.

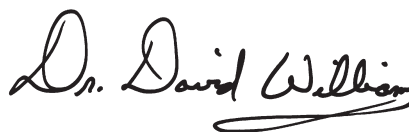
If you have a garden and wish to grow your own carrots, you might want to try some different varieties. The variety of heritage and rare carrot seeds is amazing. The colors range from snow white and solar yellow to atomic red and cosmic purple. Some good sites to visit and find these seeds include seedsavers.org, rareseeds.com, and sustainableseedco.com.

One final tidbit: Bugs Bunny is probably the only “wild wabbit” that eats carrots. The main diet of wild rabbits consists of plant stems and leaves. They don’t dig for food, but they’re more than happy to lop off the green tops of your carrots and other plants.

Also interesting to note (at the risk of providing too much information), rabbits, just like dogs and pigs, are coprophagic. They will eat their own droppings to improve their intestinal flora and recover any undigested nutrients. (And I thought *I* was fully dedicated to improving my intestinal flora.)

* * * * *

Here’s to a happy and healthy 2017. I look forward to continuing our health journey together this year and for many years to come.



This Month Online



Visit my website at drwilliams.com, where you’ll find information and recommendations for many of your top health conditions, including:

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- *Eucalyptus for Sinuses*
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