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Editor's Letter



Someone close to my heart recently shared a very interesting quote with me: "If you don't make time for your wellness, you will be forced to take time for your illness."

At first, I felt a little slighted, as I've always thought of myself as healthy, without any serious medical conditions. But after some thought, I realized that "well" is not necessarily the opposite of "sick". It is a much broader term, encompassing physical

conditions (both visible and hidden), mental and emotional health, nutrition, lifestyles, habits, etc., and it goes as far as including connection to others and personal purpose. Furthermore, these aspects are all interconnected. Think of how losing one's job can affect us, well beyond the loss of income. Or how getting sick with the flu can affect our appetites, energy levels, and mobility, throwing other aspects of our health off track. How even one bad habit can have a massive impact over time. Wellness can be looked upon as being a circular staircase, with many landings and doors just steps away, waiting to be opened. This staircase can lead upward, to better days, or quickly spiral downwards. Too many people I've known have felt perfectly fine until a regretful diagnosis was delivered. Or, worse: they don't feel fine but avoid health check-ups as they are afraid of what they will be told, preferring to live in ignorant bliss.

So why was I reminded to make time for my wellness? I think it's because someone cares for me and chose to say something when I mentioned not getting enough sleep and feeling stressed. It's now up to me to figure out what I can do to start ascending the wellness staircase. I certainly hope that everyone will take a moment and consider the same. I invite you to peruse this month's articles and hope you will find some way to take your wellness to the next level and *Flourish*.

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Flourish

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Would You Like to Live to 100?

by Wendy Presant, RHNC, CFMP

Ask me if I'd like to live to 100 years old, and I'll reply: "Yes, but only if I can stay independent and a productive member of my community." Many Canadians end up not enjoying their last years due to chronic conditions. We think of such things as dementia and heart disease as a natural part of aging simply because these conditions and others are seen more in older people. There are, however, communities in the world where chronic disease is very low and people live long and healthy lives. These areas have been called "Blue Zones" by scientists.

The Blue Zone Difference

So, what are Blue Zones doing differently that we are missing out on here? I'll explain that in a minute. We used to think that we were only as healthy as our genes. Now we know this isn't true, because our genes only account for 20–25% of our risk for disease: this means 75–80% of the risk can be modified through lifestyle change. In the Blue Zones, habits, culture, and environment are the true predictors of the health and longevity of the population.

While that might be fine in those locations, here in Canada, most of us live in large urban centres. Is replicating that lifestyle here even possible?

The answer is yes. In fact, it's already being done. Named the "Blue Zone Project," this organization works to help communities incorporate Blue Zone concepts. Canada's first community is in Airdrie, Alberta.

Blue Zone locations have favourable conditions for aging, like a more agrarian way of life—with the exception of the newest Blue Zone designation, Singapore, a heavily industrialized city-state: It recently acquired its status due to governmental policy changes rather than an idyllic environment, a first in the history of Blue Zones.

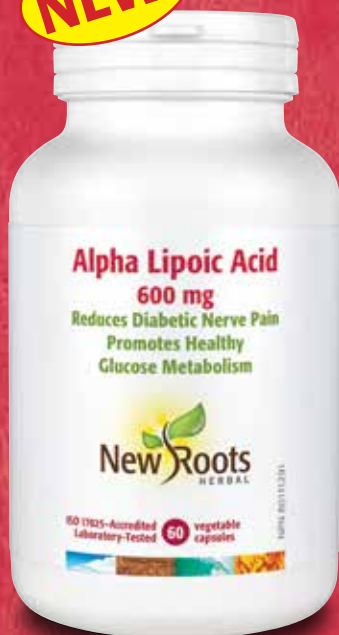
This is great news for other industrialized countries with large urban centres. Singapore has a rapidly aging population much like Canada but, unlike us, they developed an envious comprehensive plan to support their seniors, a plan which Canada might do well to emulate.





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Actions to Take to Live Longer

The Blue Zone data gives us tools to curate a lifestyle and environment to maximize longevity and reduce chronic disease. There are 9 characteristics describing the people in these areas, that lead to healthy longevity.

Naturally Active	Movement is built into daily life, not scheduled workouts
Purpose-Driven	A strong sense of personal purpose
Stress-Aware	Simple daily habits help reduce tension
Mindfully Nourished	Meals end when satisfied, not stuffed
Plant-Focused	Beans and whole plants are dietary staples
Moderately Indulging	A daily drink enjoyed socially and mindfully
Socially Connected	Regular involvement in community
Family-Oriented	Strong intergenerational bonds
Positively Motivated	Positive social networks to reinforce healthy habits

Here are my proposed longevity actions based in part on some of these characteristics. As you'll see, there are many ways you can leverage the learnings from the Blue Zones without ever leaving home!

Move Often

Small, frequent movements can have more impact than going to the gym. Use public transit. Housework, yard work, and playing with children and pets all count. Pace while speaking on the phone. Take frequent breaks from sitting.

Have Purpose and Goals

Find something that deeply excites you, that gets you out of bed in the morning. And keep in mind: purpose is just as important in retirement. Volunteering; raising a family; caring for aging parents; or taking on a new hobby, class, or job can all meet this goal.

Downshift

Enjoy ending your busy day with a relaxing activity such as a nap, a bath, or a stroll in nature. Spend time with family members and pets.

Adopt the 80% Rule

In the Blue Zones, people eat a smaller meal in the evening, leaving the table when about 80% full. Decreased caloric intake extends life and can ward off disease.

Stay Social

Most people who live long healthy lives are active participants in a faith group or their community, they live near family members, and have a life partner and close friends. Amazingly, even our gut microbiome can improve its diversity, simply by hanging around with other people!



Keep a Garden

The Singapore study showed that therapeutic horticulture cultivated a sense of purpose in the participants. It helped them maintain healthy sleep and their psychological health, and they showed improved cognitive functioning over time.

See Your Doctor Regularly

Stay on top of the screening tests recommended by your doctor. Ask for a vitamin D test. For optimal lifespan, check your waist-to-height ratio (it should be less than 0.5). A fitness app or a simple journal can be used to record your nutrition, exercise, sleep, and mood. I like the app *Cronometer*, which helps figure out any nutritional deficiencies. (Hint: The most common are protein, fibre, vitamin E, and magnesium.)

Leverage Technology

Take advantage of wearables such as a smartwatch or smart ring to monitor your health. They can be helpful for tracking activity, sleep, stress level, and more. They are available in a range of prices and come with a range of functions. If you are interested in even more health data to guide you, consider purchasing a genetic test online or ask a naturopathic doctor to test your gut microbiome.

Even if you don't currently live in a Blue Zone and are not yet part of a Blue Zone community project, adopting even a few of these measures can help you to live a healthy, long life. Reaching a healthy century of life has never before been so attainable!



Wendy Presant, RHNC, CFMP

With a background in nursing, naturopathic, and functional medicine, Wendy Presant is currently registered as a health-and-nutrition counsellor. She provides virtual coaching services to individuals looking to optimize their health.

naturalcoachathome.care

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Autumn Superfoods

by Felicia Assenza, HBSc, ND

With the arrival of autumn comes the bountiful harvest of nutritious foods. Let's dive into some health benefits of what's in season and talk about how to store some of this goodness over the winter.

Pumpkin, Spice, and Everything Nice

Pumpkin is one of autumn's front runners, and for good reason! The pumpkin flesh is high in vitamins like A, B, C, E, and K; in antioxidants like quercetin; and in minerals like magnesium. Pumpkin flesh can be simply enjoyed roasted or can be puréed for various sweet or savoury dishes. The pulp of the pumpkin is also high in vitamins and minerals and can be added to soups or smoothies. Add a little spice to your smoothie—like cinnamon, nutmeg, clove, and ginger—for a delicious and nutritious pumpkin-spice smoothie!

Pumpkin seeds are an excellent source of various proteins; healthy fats; and elements like zinc, selenium, magnesium, phosphorus, and potassium. These also taste great roasted or can be shelled and added to various dishes or smoothies.

Did you know the pumpkin skin is also edible and nutritious? The skin contains protein, healthy fats, fibre, potassium, and minerals like iron and magnesium. A great way to enjoy these benefits is to make pumpkin-peel chips in the air fryer or dehydrator.

Meet the Rest of the Winter Squash Family

Squash refers to the edible fruit of plants in the gourd family (Cucurbitaceae). These include acorn, spaghetti, delicata, kabocha, butternut, and pumpkin, to name a few. Squash is typically classified as summer or winter depending on its harvest time and storage life. With so many winter varieties available right now, there are endless ways to reap

the health benefits of these gourds, which have many overlapping health benefits and similar nutrients as pumpkin. What differs are their flavour profiles and how they can be enjoyed. The recipes are endless: Mashies, roasted, soups, and stews are among my favourites.



Rooting for Root Veggies

There's no mystery here: Root vegetables are those that grow underground. These include beets, turnips, potatoes, radishes, sweet potatoes, carrots, and parsnip. Did you know that even celery root (aka celeriac) is nutritious—and delicious? These root vegetables

can be enjoyed raw in salads or cooked in soups or stews. Celeriac makes a great mash and is one of my favourite Thanksgiving side dishes.

Root vegetables are rich in vitamins, minerals, and fibre. They also store well over winter in a cool, dark, damp place like a basement or root cellar, so you can enjoy their benefits all winter long without too much extra effort.

An Apple a Day Keeps the Doctor Away

There is some merit to the saying. This hydrating fall fruit supports the immune system, digestion, and the heart with all of its vitamin C, antioxidants, and fibre. In Canada, there are over 100 commercially grown apple varieties to choose from, and they can be eaten raw with minimal preparation. It's important to note, however, that apples are on the Environmental Working Group's Dirty Dozen list for pesticide content, so it is best to opt for organic and to wash the fruit before eating or cooking to avoid harmful pesticides.

Apples are another autumn superfood and, depending on the variety, some stay hard and crisp over the winter when stored in a cool, dark, dry place like the refrigerator. Others are particularly suited for juicing, baking, cooking, canning, or freezing.



Canning, Dehydrating, or Freezing for Winter Storage

Canning and freezing are both great options for having access to nutrient-dense foods throughout winter. Canning also has the added benefit of bringing a source of probiotics into your diet over the winter. If you are new to canning, it is important that you first learn about food safety and safe canning techniques. Find some trustworthy resources online, in books, or even from someone you know who has experience with safe canning methods.

From the superfoods we discussed today, puréed pumpkin, apple sauce, or apple cider are great options for a beginner canning project. All of these can also be frozen over the winter in airtight containers and thawed when ready to use. Another great idea is to make soups and stews in the fall and freeze them so that they are ready to go on cold winter nights!

Dehydrating is another simple and effective option: It removes moisture to extend shelf life while preserving nutrients and flavour. Apple slices, fruit leather, squash, or even root vegetables like carrots and beets can be dehydrated for snacks, soups, or baking. Store dried foods in airtight containers in a cool, dark place for best results.

Many of the vegetables we talked about today—like the squash, root vegetables, and apples—also naturally have a long shelf life if stored properly, making them available through the winter months.

There you have it! Some front-runner superfoods for the season. What is your favourite autumn superfood?



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Healthy Aging

Oxymoron or Opportunity?

Part 1

by Dale Drewery

In the words of the self-described pop punk band Bowling for Soup, “Getting Old Sucks (But Everybody’s Doing It)”.

While it’s nice to know we’re all in good company, getting old is probably not something most of us are looking forward to. The World Health Organization describes aging as “a gradual decrease in physical and mental capacity, a growing risk of disease and ultimately death.” So, that’s the bad news.

The good news is that by focusing on the anatomy of aging (i.e., the structural and functional changes that occur as we grow older), we can help preserve our existing health and better prepare for the challenges ahead.

Here are some of the changes to your physical body that you may encounter as you continue to age, and some tips for maintaining good anatomical health no matter the number of candles on your birthday cake.

Skeletal System

Ever seen the 1957 movie *The Incredible Shrinking Man*, where a man gradually shrinks to the size of a small insect after being enveloped by a strange fog? In real life, as we age, we typically lose about half an inch (1.27 cm) in height per decade after the age of 40, and by age 80, it’s not unusual to have lost more than two inches (5 cm).

This height loss often results from the compression of joints, spinal bones, and discs, as well as normal changes in posture. But height loss may also be attributed to osteoporosis, which is four times more common in women, particularly after menopause and the resulting decrease in estrogen levels.

To slow bone loss and reduce the risk of osteoporosis, ensure your diet contains an adequate amount of calcium, which can be found in dairy products—especially yogurt and kefir—as well as tofu, sardines, salmon, and leafy vegetables like collard greens and spinach. And if you think you’re falling short on your calcium intake, talk to your health-care practitioner about calcium supplements.

Vitamin D is also integral to maintaining bone density. Sources of vitamin D include fatty fish, tuna, eggs, and, of course, good old-fashioned sunshine. Come the winter months, however, and for those who spend more time indoors, a vitamin D supplement may be just what the doctor orders.

Joints and Muscles

As we age, our muscles tend to lose strength and endurance, and the cartilage within our joints wears down over time. Too often, the result is stiffness, pain, decreased mobility, and an increased risk of falls. Add low



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bone density to the equation, and a momentary loss of balance can lead to a life-changing fracture to the hip or spine. Here in Canada, the number of fall-related hospitalizations for those 65 and older rose by 47% between 2008 and 2019, and the mortality rates associated with falls among seniors rose 111% between 2001 and 2019.

Sarcopenia, the natural loss of muscle tissue as we age, reduces muscle strength and power. This causes a reduction of about 1% of muscle mass per year starting around age 30 and can triple after 60. Strength decreases at two to three times that rate.

Regular strength training can help older adults maintain bone and muscle mass, preserve mobility, and improve flexibility and balance. Aerobic exercise can improve cognitive function among older adults and help alleviate anxiety and depression—a nice bonus for all that hard work.

Cardiovascular System

Like most vital organs, your heart becomes less efficient as it ages, so there's a good chance you'll notice a gradual decline in your energy and endurance from one decade to the next. The most common change in the cardiovascular system is the stiffening of the arteries leading from the heart, causing it to work harder to pump blood to your organs and tissues.

These changes, which are exacerbated by smoking, being overweight, and inactivity, can result in high blood pressure. Known clinically as hypertension, it can lead to some serious complications, including heart attack, stroke, and kidney damage.

Exercise can, once again, have a significant and positive impact on blood pressure. As I write this article, an analysis of “daily steps and health outcomes in adults” has popped up in my inbox. Published by the medical journal *The Lancet Public Health*, the study finds that even moderate amounts of walking are associated with a lower risk of cardiovascular disease. People who walked 7,000 steps a day (approximately 4.8 km) had a 47% lower risk of death compared with those who walked 2,000 steps (1.4 km). Proof positive that every step in the right direction counts.

Digestive System

Wisdom is not the only thing that comes with age. For some, so do digestive issues. That's because, as you age, your digestive system slows down, which can ramp up gastrointestinal (GI) issues. They include gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD), diverticulosis, and something no one likes to talk about: constipation.

GERD is the most common upper GI disorder in older adults, though people of all ages can suffer from it. It occurs when acid from the stomach backs up into the oesophagus, resulting in heartburn and often accompanied by an unpleasant sour taste in the back of the mouth.



Diverticulosis, which affects about half of people age 60 and older, occurs when small pouches in the lining of the colon bulge out along weak spots in the intestinal wall. If the pouches become inflamed (diverticulitis), it can result in abdominal pain and a host of other uncomfortable symptoms.

And speaking of uncomfortable, 30 to 40% of people over the age of 65 cite constipation as a problem that can be exacerbated by several common medications, from calcium-channel blockers for high blood pressure to postoperative narcotic pain relievers.

Diet and lifestyle changes are the first line of treatment for all three of these digestive issues. The changes include increasing fibre and fluid intake, cutting back on processed foods, and, yup, getting regular exercise. It seems a small price to pay for a happier belly.

Look for Part II of the Healthy Aging series in the Winter issue, where we'll explore the impact of aging on the body's metabolism, immune, and nervous systems.



Dale Drewery

Dale Drewery is co-author of *BioDiet: The Scientifically Proven, Ketogenic Way to Lose Weight and Improve Your Health*. She is an award-winning journalist and writer with a keen interest in science and human health.

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Keeping Bones Strong as We Age

by Jill Northrup, ND



Bone building and breakdown is a continuous process that maintains the integrity of the skeleton and replaces damaged bone. Between 5 and 10% of the adult skeleton is replaced by the process of bone remodeling every year. Bone turnover rates are highest during periods of rapid growth, including puberty, and decline to their lowest around age 40. When bone breakdown exceeds new bone growth, this can lead to the development of osteopenia (low bone mineral density). If untreated, osteopenia can progress to osteoporosis, which increases the risk of fracture.

Women, Caucasians, and the elderly are at the greatest risk for osteoporosis. Postmenopausal women are particularly vulnerable due to the decline in bone-protective estrogen; for men, there is a more gradual age-related decline in new bone production. Secondary causes of osteoporosis include calcium and vitamin D deficiencies, various gastrointestinal and endocrine disorders such as celiac disease and hyperthyroidism, and certain medications including glucocorticoids and chemotherapeutics, amongst others.

Osteoporosis is a preventable and treatable disease that presents with no warning signs prior to a fracture, making maintaining bone health and preventative measures an important part of supporting healthy aging amongst adults.

Protein

Protein is an essential macronutrient for maintaining both the integrity of bone and muscle mass. A large study examining protein intake amongst postmenopausal women and the risk of hip fracture found that as protein intake increased, the risk of hip fracture is decreased. Overall muscle mass is also a key predictor of recovery following a fracture: Insufficient muscle mass contributes to poor postfracture outcomes and failure to return to function.

A systematic review and meta-analysis found that a higher protein intake (defined as greater than 90 g of protein daily, or 1.4 g of protein per kg of body weight per day), in comparison to a lower protein intake (less than 80 g of protein daily, or 0.8 g of protein per kg of body weight per day) is more protective for bone mineral density. Top sources of protein include:

Rank	Protein Source	Protein per 1 Cup (Cooked)
1	Chicken Breast (chopped)	≈ 38 g
2	Canned Tuna (in water)	≈ 39 g
3	Tempeh	≈ 31 g
4	Eggs (about 5 large)	≈ 30 g
5	Cottage Cheese (low-fat)	≈ 28 g
6	Tofu (firm)	≈ 20 g
7	Greek Yogurt (plain, nonfat)	≈ 20 g
8	Lentils (cooked)	≈ 18 g
9	Black Beans (cooked)	≈ 15 g
10	Quinoa (cooked)	≈ 8 g



The type of protein consumed does not seem to significantly impact bone mineral density (animal versus soy versus legume). However, protein intake is generally lower amongst vegetarians and vegans in comparison to omnivores, and therefore is an important dietary consideration for bone health amongst those following plant-based diets.

Vitamin D

Vitamin D has a wide range of physiological roles including immune and hormonal regulation, and it plays a crucial role in maintaining bone health. Vitamin D helps to regulate calcium balance by promoting the absorption of calcium from the gut and supporting the process of bone building and mineralization. A deficiency of vitamin D can cause the bones to soften and increase the risk of osteoporosis.

Higher serum levels of vitamin D have been associated with a reduced incidence of nonvertebral and hip fractures, while lower serum vitamin D levels have also been associated with reduced grip strength and muscle mass, two key features involved in the risk of falls. Supplementation with vitamin D₃ was found to improve strength and balance, thereby reducing the incidence of falls.

Deficiency is most common amongst those with low sunshine exposure, are obese, have increased skin pigmentation, or are older. Vitamin D deficiency is a global issue. To maintain optimal vitamin D status, supplementation is often required and is the easiest solution.

Exercise

Exercise is another crucial lifestyle factor for maintaining bone mineral density. The forces applied to bone during exercise can help to stimulate bone building. Although all types of physical activity can be beneficial for maintaining bone strength, impact and resistance training tend to offer greater bone mineral density (BMD) benefits in comparison to aerobic, low-impact activity. Strength training not only increases BMD but also improves muscle strength and balance, key factors involved in the risk of falls.

Natural Sources of Vitamin D

Source Type	Details		
Sunlight (UVB): Primary source	Vitamin D is synthesized in the skin through exposure to UVB rays without sunscreen.		
	Fair Skin: 10–15 minutes, 3–4× per week on face, arms, or legs exposed to midday sun (10 a.m. to 2 p.m.)	Medium Skin: 15–25 minutes, 3–4× per week; may need slightly longer exposure due to melanin levels	Dark Skin: ≥ 30–45 minutes, 3–4× per week; more melanin reduces vitamin D synthesis efficiency, therefore longer exposure is needed
Dietary Intake: Contributes a smaller portion	Fatty fish (salmon, sardines, mackerel, trout, tuna) are among the richest sources Egg yolks contain small but significant amounts Fortified dairy (milk, cheese, yogurt) is often enriched with vitamin D Fortified plant-based milks (soy, almond, oat)—check labels for added vitamin D Cod liver oil is a traditional, highly concentrated source Liver, such as beef liver, provides small amounts		

Current exercise recommendations for those with osteoporosis and osteopenia include:

Exercise Type	Frequency	Details
Resistance Training	2–3 times per week	3–10 movements targeting major muscle groups
Impact Exercises	≥ 3 times per week	Activities like jump rope to stimulate bone density



Calcium

As a key building block of bone, calcium is stored within the bone in the form of hydroxyapatite. Calcium balance within the body is in part maintained by serum vitamin D, as noted previously, but also by the parathyroid gland. When levels of calcium in the blood rise, calcium is shuttled into the bone; when blood calcium levels decline, calcium is released from the bone and into the bloodstream. To maintain bone health, calcium must be consumed in the diet.

Group	Recommended Daily Intake
Women (19–50 years)	1,000 mg
Pregnant or Lactating Women	1,000 mg
Men (19–70 years)	1,000 mg
Women (≥ 51 years)	1,200 mg
Men (≥ 71 years)	1,200 mg

Food sources of calcium include dairy products (milk, cheese, yogurt), calcium-fortified juices and nondairy plant-based milks, dark leafy green vegetables, almonds, edamame, and sardines.

Whenever possible, it is recommended to obtain the recommended calcium intake from food first, as high-dose calcium supplements have been associated with kidney stones and cardiovascular disease. If it is not possible to achieve sufficient calcium intake through diet alone, supplementation may be used as a top-up. However, even with a diagnosis of osteoporosis, it is not recommended to exceed an intake of 1,200 mg calcium daily, and it is also important to not exceed 500 mg at one time, as high dosages of calcium can impede calcium absorption.



Conclusion

Maintaining bone health is a lifelong commitment that hinges on the right balance of nutrients, regular physical activity, and lifestyle choices. By prioritizing adequate protein, vitamin D, and calcium, alongside resistance and impact-based exercise, individuals can support strong bones, reduce the risk of osteoporosis, and promote healthy aging. Prevention starts early, and even small, consistent efforts can lead to long-term skeletal strength and resilience.



Dr. Jill Northrup, ND

A Toronto-based naturopathic doctor with a passion for health and natural medicines, she values an evidence-based treatment approach and emphasizes patient education and preventative medicine in her practice.

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Truly Canadian

by Peter Wilkes
Founder and owner of
New Roots Herbal

Recently, the maple leaf and references to Canada seem to be popping up all over the place. We felt it was important for consumers to know what these really mean. According to the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) and the Competition Bureau, the official claims permitted for origin labelling are “Product of Canada” and “Made in Canada.”

Product of Canada

At least 98% of the total production costs must be Canadian. This includes ingredients, processing, and labour. While many herbs and functional foods can be grown locally, many specialized botanicals, vitamins, and minerals often come from outside Canada. That makes it difficult for most Natural Health Product (NHP) brands to consistently meet the 98% threshold.



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Several reputable NHP or supplement brands, including ours, fall under the “Made in Canada” designation. This requires that at least 51% of production costs, including labour and testing, are Canadian, and that the last substantial transformation—formulation, encapsulation, and bottling—happens here.



Beyond Packaging

Some companies lean on terms like “Bottled in Canada” or “Packaged in Canada.” While technically true, this accounts for only 5–10% of a product’s total value. This may occur with foreign-owned firms looking to compete with local manufacturers. This could also be the case with so-called Canadian companies that simply import finished bulk and place it into bottles once it arrives.

Bottling or packaging may add a little something to our economy, but it does not begin to compare to local production. Nor does it provide much assurance of safety or quality.



Our Standard: cGMP Certified

Not only are New Roots Herbal supplements “Made in Canada,” but they are also produced in a facility certified to current Good Manufacturing Practices (cGMP)—the highest international standard for natural health-product manufacturing. This confirms rigorous procedures are followed at every stage, including—but not limited to—cleanliness of production spaces, strict ingredient testing, batch-testing records, equipment precision and calibration, employee training and hygiene, cross-contamination prevention, and packaging integrity. Yearly inspections by independent auditors recertify all these production aspects, which may be taken for granted in facilities that are not certified. Certified cGMP facilities can truly guarantee consistency, safety, and the highest quality of natural products.



ISO 17025– Accredited Laboratory– Tested

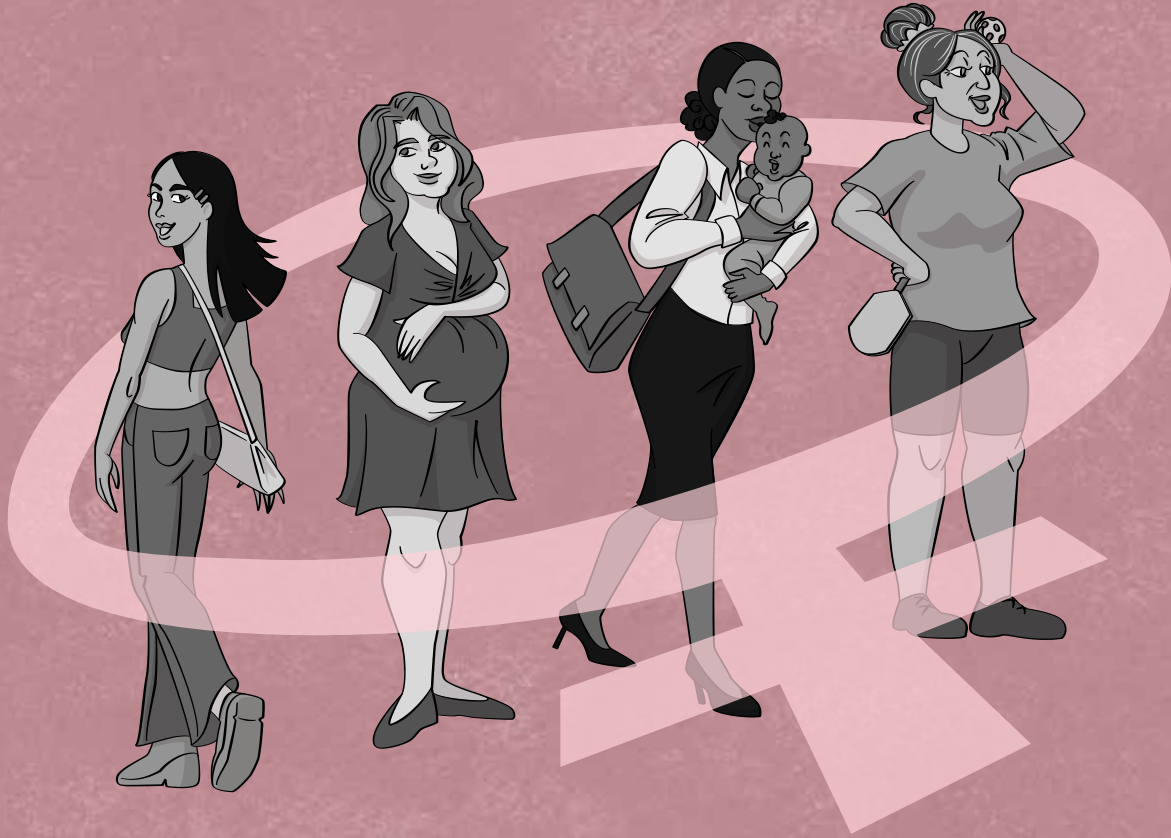
At New Roots Herbal, every product we produce undergoes meticulous regulatory oversight, quality assurance (QA), quality control (QC), and rigorous testing. We have a team of 6 regulatory specialists, and 19 QC and QA professionals. All our ingredients and finished products are tested in an independent ISO 17025–accredited laboratory, equipped with state-of-the-art equipment and staffed by skilled scientists. Products are tested for identity, purity, potency, contaminants, and more. This comprehensive testing is performed here in Canada and goes well beyond what’s commonly required in foreign facilities. It guarantees that all New Roots Herbal products meet label claims, without unexpected revelations.



The Bottom Line

When you see “Made in Canada” on our products, you have the assurance that you are buying local and supporting our economy, but also that you are getting the highest standard of quality. Backed by cGMP certification and rigorous testing, our products represent more than Canadian pride: They deliver uncompromising quality and safety for your peace of mind.

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Holidays Got Your Gut Down?

by Angela Wallace, MSc, RD



From Thanksgiving stuffing to holiday cookies and everything in between, the holidays can be a time that is filled with good company, joy, and an abundance of food. While indulging is part of the joy that comes with the holidays, all the rich meals, late nights, and extra treats can place added stress on the digestive system.

Some Reasons Why Your Gut Could Be Struggling This Season

- Eating richer meals
- Drinking more alcohol
- Overindulging in sugary treats and desserts
- Sleeping less
- Feeling stressed
- Irregular (or skipped) mealtimes

The combination of these factors can overload your digestive system. This can leave you feeling extra tired, bloated, and generally unwell. When your gut isn't balanced, it can also impact your mood and energy levels thanks to the gut-brain axis; that's the bidirectional communication between the central nervous system and the gut.

Six Ways You Can Support Your Gut Health This Holiday Season

1. Stick to a routine as often as possible

Eating regular meals (breakfast, lunch, and dinner) can help stabilize your blood sugar levels, providing your body with steady energy to tackle the holiday season.

Tip: Do NOT skip meals because you have events later in the day. Skipping meals can lead to overeating and often leads to intensified cravings for carbs and sweet foods.

2. Balance your plate

Aim for a mix of protein, healthy fats, and fibre (complex carbs and veggies) at each meal. The combination of these foods will:

- Help slow digestion
- Leave you feeling fuller longer
- Prevent blood sugar crashes

3. Stay hydrated

Water helps to break down food and moves things along your digestive tract. Aim for at least 1.5–2 L of water each day. Herbal teas can be part of your total fluid intake (more on herbal teas on page 25).

Tip: Start your day with 1–2 cups of water, before coffee or food.

4. Eat mindfully

Try to slow down, chew your food thoroughly, and eat with minimal distractions. If this isn't possible for the entire meal (because it often isn't), try to be mindful for even a few bites. Chewing well activates digestive enzymes in your saliva and works to help support digestion.

5. Keep moving

Regular activity can reduce stress, improve digestion, and keep your bowel movements regular. After lunch and dinner, walks are a great way to kickstart digestion.

6. Managing stress

Stress can slow digestion and lead to gut symptoms like bloating, cramping, constipation, or other changes in bowel movements. Although the holidays can be a joyful time, they can also be quite stressful. It's important to take time to support your mental wellbeing this holiday season; doing this will also support your digestive health, thanks again to our gut-brain axis. Try any of these:



- Breathe deeply
- Listen to music
- Journal your thoughts or what you're grateful for
- Be present with those you love
- Remind yourself that it's okay to say NO when you need a break

What to Do if You've Overdone It and Don't Feel Your Best

Firstly, don't worry, we've all been there! The holiday season is full of opportunities to overindulge. If your digestive system feels off-balance, here are some simple things you can do to support your digestion.

Don't try to undo what's already been done

Restricting meals the next day can lead to more cravings. Instead focus on going back to your usual eating routine, focus on adding fibre to your meals, and keeping hydrated.

Move your body

Light activity like walking, stretching, or yoga can help improve digestion, boost your mood, and reduce bloating. Something as simple as a 10-minute walk can make a big difference and leave you feeling a lot better.



Choose meals that are gentler on the gut

After a larger indulgent meal, try these foods:

- Broth-based soups
- Cooked vegetables and lean proteins (cooked veggies can be easier to digest)
- Smoothies with protein and greens
- Herbal teas like peppermint and ginger

Support your liver health

Your liver may be working overtime during the holiday season since you are likely exposed to more alcohol, sugar, and processed foods. You can support your liver's natural ability to detox by eating cruciferous vegetables like broccoli, cauliflower, Brussels sprouts, beets, and turmeric. Don't forget to drink lemon water and green tea.

Supplement and teas that can help

1. Probiotics

Probiotics can help with bloating, irregular bowel movements, postantibiotic use, and overall immune system support. They help replenish beneficial bacteria in the gut and support a balanced gut microbiota. The holidays are a time where your gut microbiota may be

off-balance because of the increased stress, sugar, and alcohol. If you don't already consume sufficient amounts of probiotic-rich foods—like yogurt, kefir, sauerkraut, kombucha, or kimchi—a probiotic supplement is your ideal option.

What to look for?

- Probiotic supplements that contain both *Lactobacillus* and *Bifidobacterium* strains
- 10–50 billion CFU
- Enteric coating helps protect probiotic strains from stomach acid, allowing more bacteria to reach the intestines alive.

2. Magnesium glycinate or citrate

Magnesium can be helpful for relieving constipation, tension, and digestive issues related to stress. It supports muscle relaxation, which can help reduce the burden on your nervous system and keep things moving along in your bowels.



Magnesium citrate may cause loose stools, so introduce it slowly, ideally in the evening when you are home. Do not exceed 200–400 mg.



3. Herbal teas

Tea	How it helps
Peppermint	Calms intestinal spasms Helpful for bloating and gas Avoid if you have reflux
Ginger	Warms and soothes Helpful for bloating, nausea, and sluggish digestion
Fennel	A great option for gas and reducing postmeal bloating
Chamomile	Gentle and calming Helpful for mild bloating and stress-related digestive issues
Lemonbalm or tulsi	Works to calm the nervous system (think gut-brain connection) May help soothe some mild indigestion that is related to stress

It's normal to indulge during the holiday season, but I encourage you to take time to practice mindfulness, to realize how certain habits and meals affected your gut, and how you felt afterwards. Over the holidays, continue to prioritize hydration, movement, balanced meals, and stress management. This will help keep your digestive system resilient during this busy and joyful time of year. Remember: it's not about getting this all perfect, it's about tuning in and listening to your body, giving yourself some grace, and supporting your body so that you can feel good and truly enjoy this holiday season.



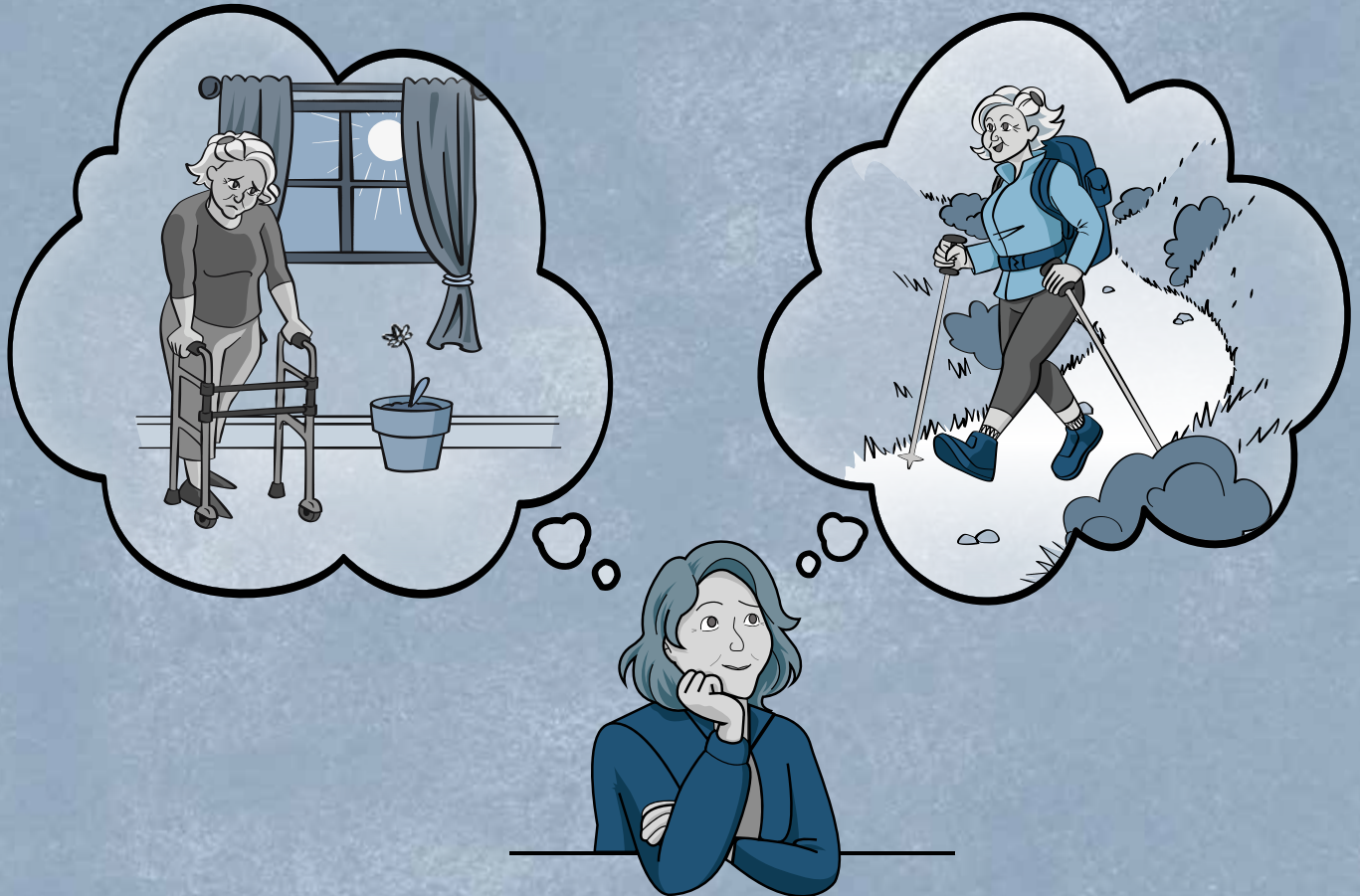
Angela Wallace, BSc, MSc, RDN

Angela is a registered dietitian, family food expert, and personal trainer with a passion for helping women and kids thrive through better nutrition. She specializes in weight management and digestive health.

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An Acronym Worth Exploring

by Colleen Hartwick, ND

In today's fast-paced, high-stress world, the conversation around antioxidants has become central to health and wellness. From skincare to heart health, these compounds are crucial for their ability to protect the body from the damaging effects of oxidative stress. Among the antioxidants our bodies rely on, one stands out as particularly powerful and essential: superoxide dismutase (SOD).

Superoxide dismutase isn't just another dietary antioxidant: It is a naturally occurring enzyme found in every living cell, where it plays a critical role in our body's first line of defense against free-radical damage. As with all enzymes, SOD depends on mineral cofactors—including zinc, manganese, nickel, iron, and copper—to carry out the conversion of superoxide, a highly reactive and harmful molecule, into less-damaging substances like oxygen and hydrogen peroxide. By inactivating superoxide, SOD protects cells from inflammation, DNA mutation, and premature aging.

While our bodies produce SOD naturally, levels decline with age, chronic stress, and environmental exposures. This gradual reduction has driven increased interest in SOD supplementation as a strategy to support long-term health and resilience.

Let's take a closer look at how SOD supports health across multiple biological systems.

Skin Aging and Cellular Protection

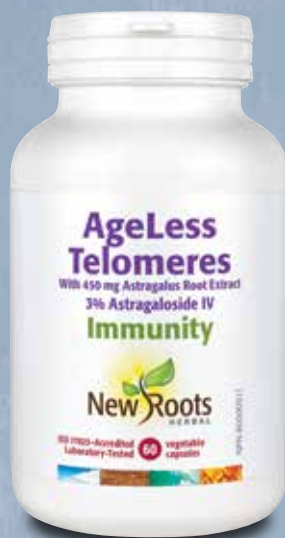
Skin aging is characterized by atrophy, wrinkle formation, and reduced tensile strength—largely due to cellular damage, structural breakdown, and degradation of the collagen-fibre network. Oxidative stress has emerged as a primary driver of these changes. In an animal study, SOD supplementation delayed skin aging in mice by promoting collagen production. More recently, another study, using a highly stable microbial form of superoxide dismutase (hsSOD), found that when SOD is properly stabilized, it can significantly reduce oxidative-stress markers in a mouse model of aging. These mice exhibited greater collagen fibre density and improved skin integrity.

Cardiovascular Health

The cardiovascular system is highly susceptible to oxidative stress, which plays a pivotal role in the development of heart disease. Low SOD activity has been associated with increased risk for stroke, hypertension, hypercholesterolemia, atherosclerosis, heart failure, and other cardiovascular conditions. By neutralizing reactive oxygen species (ROS), SOD helps maintain endothelial function and vascular integrity. Preclinical models have demonstrated that elevated SOD expression reduces oxidative stress and vascular inflammation, both key contributors to atherosclerosis. These protective effects suggest that SOD may help lower the risk of cardiovascular events by preserving healthy arterial function.



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Metabolic Health

Energy metabolism naturally generates oxidative byproducts, particularly during adenosine triphosphate (ATP) production from glucose and fatty acids. This oxidative burden is often amplified in metabolic disorders. In a study, obese mice fed a high-fat diet and supplemented with SOD experienced significant reductions in triglyceride levels, implying improved insulin sensitivity. Similarly, in a hamster model of diet-induced obesity, SOD supplementation led to decreased adiposity, better insulin responsiveness, and reduced oxidative damage. These findings underscore SOD's potential in supporting healthy metabolic function.

Gut Health and Inflammatory Bowel Conditions

The gastrointestinal tract is another area where oxidative stress exerts damaging effects. In a study involving chemically induced colitis (using TNBS and DSS), SOD-deficient animals suffered severe oxidative damage, compromised gut-barrier integrity, and weight loss. These animals also showed elevated levels of inflammatory immune cells such as macrophages, dendritic cells, and neutrophils. In contrast, oral SOD supplementation led to a significant reduction in inflammation, suggesting a protective role in gut health and a potential therapeutic approach for inflammatory bowel conditions.



Neuroprotection and Cognitive Health

Neurodegenerative diseases, including Alzheimer's disease, Parkinson's disease, and amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS), are closely linked to oxidative damage. Reduced SOD activity has been observed in the brains of Alzheimer's patients, and mutations in Cu/Zn-SOD cofactors are directly implicated in familial ALS. Enhancing SOD activity has shown promise in protecting neurons from oxidative injury, lowering hippocampal superoxide levels, and preserving memory function in animal studies. As well, the use of SOD mimetics has even demonstrated the ability to mitigate amyloid and tau buildup, interrupting the progression of cognitive decline.

Cancer-Defence Potential

Though still under investigation, SOD's role in cancer prevention is gaining interest. By neutralizing ROS, SOD helps reduce deoxyribonucleic acid (DNA) damage, inflammation, and chronic cellular stress—all of which are factors in tumour development. While more clinical evidence is needed, early research suggests that SOD could enhance cancer defence by bolstering the body's natural oxidative defences or supporting traditional therapies.

Why Oral SOD Frequently Falls Short

Despite its therapeutic potential, oral supplementation of SOD faces key limitations:

- **Gastric Degradation**
Standard SOD is rapidly broken down by stomach acid and digestive enzymes like pepsin.
- **Poor Absorption**
Due to its large size and polarity, SOD is poorly absorbed across the intestinal barrier.
- **Low Bioavailability**
Radiolabeled studies confirm that most oral SOD is excreted unchanged, with minimal systemic absorption.

As a result, unprotected forms of SOD—such as those in basic powders or capsules—are unlikely to deliver clinically meaningful benefits.



Enteric Coating: A Critical Innovation

To address these issues of poor oral availability of SOD, new formulations use enteric coatings—acid-resistant layers that bypass stomach degradation and release SOD in the small intestine. This innovation enhances stability, absorption, and potential activity.

Conclusion

Superoxide dismutase is one of the body's most vital antioxidants, offering potent protection against oxidative stress and related conditions such as neurodegenerative disease, cardiovascular dysfunction, chronic inflammation, aging, and even cancer. However, the benefits of SOD hinge on its ability to remain active through the digestive tract. Without protective delivery, oral SOD is rapidly degraded and rendered ineffective.

The future of SOD supplementation lies in advanced delivery systems—particularly enteric coatings and stabilized enzyme forms—that preserve enzymatic function until it reaches the intestines or inflamed tissues. Choosing scientifically validated, bioavailable SOD supplements—ideally with guidance from a qualified health-care practitioner—can unlock the full therapeutic potential of this remarkable antioxidant.



Dr. Colleen Hartwick, ND

Dr. Colleen Hartwick is a licensed naturopathic physician practising on North Vancouver Island, BC, with a special interest in trauma as it plays a role in disease. campbellrivernaturopathic.com

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The Uncool Supplements Nobody Talks about... *But Should!*

by Annick Moffatt, ND



In the world of supplements, we often gravitate toward familiar favourites like omega-3s, probiotics, and vitamin D—all nutrients that many people are commonly deficient in and that offer well-documented benefits. While these staples certainly deserve their place, there's a whole category of lesser-known vitamins and minerals that are just as essential and often overlooked. In fact, more people could benefit from these unsung nutrients than we might think. Let's shine a light on a few of these underrated heroes.

Zinc: The Unsung Hero of Everyday Health

Even though this supplement starts with the last letter of the alphabet, it definitely shouldn't finish last on your list of daily essentials. Zinc is one of the most important trace elements in human nutrition, playing a role in hundreds of physiological functions.

For men, zinc supports healthy testosterone metabolism and may help maintain normal testosterone levels, especially in cases of marginal deficiency. It may also contribute to male reproductive health, supporting sperm quality in terms of count, motility, and morphology.

Zinc is essential for a strong immune system, widely recognized for its role in the development and function of T cells, key players in your adaptive immune response. However, its influence extends beyond T cells. Zinc also supports the activity, survival, and regulation of monocytes, natural killer cells, B cells, and various T cell subsets. These immune cells work together to mount an effective defense against pathogens, and when zinc levels are insufficient, their function can be significantly impaired.

Mild deficiency may weaken both innate and adaptive immunity, while chronic deficiency can actually lead to increased inflammation, contributing to conditions like rheumatoid arthritis and other inflammatory disorders.

Beyond immunity, zinc also supports over 300 enzymes involved in key biological processes like DNA synthesis, gene expression, cell repair, and tissue regeneration, making it an essential mineral for total-body health.

Due to its abundance in the epidermis, the skin's outermost protective layer, zinc plays a vital role in maintaining skin integrity, and even mild deficiency has been associated with roughened skin and impaired wound healing. In fact, zinc deficiency has been consistently linked to delayed wound healing and compromised skin repair.

Beyond its dermatological benefits, zinc contributes to the maintenance of healthy connective tissue and supports cognitive function. It also plays a key role in the metabolism of carbohydrates, fats, and proteins, making it essential for energy production and overall wellness.



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Selenium: More Than Just an Antioxidant

Selenium is often recognized for its potent antioxidant properties, particularly through its role in increasing levels of glutathione peroxidase, a crucial enzyme that helps reduce lipid peroxidation. Lipid peroxidation occurs when fats in your cells are damaged by free radicals, unstable molecules generated by stress, pollution, poor diet, or aging. This type of cellular damage can weaken cell membranes, promote inflammation, and contribute to aging and chronic disease.

But selenium does far more than combat oxidative stress. It plays a vital role in thyroid hormone metabolism, specifically by supporting the conversion of thyroxine (T_4) into triiodothyronine (T_3), the active form of thyroid hormone that the body uses at the cellular level. This conversion is essential for maintaining a healthy metabolism. Hypothyroidism, a condition marked by underactive thyroid function, is often associated with lower levels of active T_3 , which can lead to symptoms such as fatigue, unexplained weight gain, sensitivity to cold, and sluggish metabolism.

Selenium, alongside iodine, may help support optimal thyroid function, particularly in individuals with low selenium status or those affected by autoimmune thyroid disorders such as Hashimoto's thyroiditis. Ensuring adequate intake of this mineral may help promote more efficient thyroid hormone activation and better metabolic balance.

Emerging research also highlights selenium's role in reproductive and hormonal health. In women with polycystic ovary syndrome (PCOS), selenium may help support hormonal balance and improve metabolic markers. In men, selenium is essential for sperm motility and morphology, and deficiency has been linked to reduced fertility. Ensuring adequate selenium intake may therefore be an important factor in supporting both male and female reproductive health.

Additionally, some studies have explored selenium's potential antiviral properties, particularly in the context of HPV and HIV, though more research is needed to fully understand its role in immune defense against these viruses.

Boron: Supporting Bone Strength and Hormonal Balance

Boron plays a dual role in maintaining bone health and regulating sex hormones; two systems that are deeply interconnected.

Research shows that boron is essential for osteogenesis, the formation of bone tissue. A deficiency can impair bone development and slow healing. Supplementation has been shown to reduce urinary loss of calcium and magnesium, improve their absorption, and enhance their incorporation into bone. These effects may be partly due to boron's ability to inhibit the breakdown of 17β -estradiol, a hormone critical for bone density. Boron also boosts levels of 25-hydroxyvitamin D₃, further supporting skeletal and hormonal health.

On the hormonal front, boron helps regulate estrogen and testosterone, particularly during life stages marked by hormonal shifts, such as menopause and andropause. Studies show boron can increase estradiol in women and free testosterone in men.



A key mechanism is boron's interaction with sex hormone-binding globulin (SHBG). This protein binds tightly to testosterone and estradiol, limiting their availability. Boron appears to reduce SHBG's binding affinity, resulting in higher levels of free, active hormones. This shift has been linked to improved energy, libido, mood, and cognitive function.

In men, boron also reduces inflammatory markers such as IL-6, CRP, and TNF- α , reinforcing its benefits for both hormonal and immune health.

Together, these actions position boron as a vital micronutrient for bone integrity, hormonal balance, and healthy aging.

While they may not have the spotlight, zinc, selenium, and boron are far from ordinary. These overlooked nutrients support everything from immune resilience and hormone balance to bone health and fertility. In a wellness world obsessed with trends, it's time to give these quiet powerhouses the attention they deserve. Sometimes, the most effective solutions aren't flashy: they're simply essential.



Annick Moffatt, ND

With more than 20 years of experience in the health domain, first in psychology, then as a naturopathic doctor, she brings a holistic approach to health problems.

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Savoury Egg and Quinoa Breakfast Bowl

I love a good bowl, and this one is perfect for my savoury breakfast lovers. It's also a great weeknight dinner option that is protein-packed and full of healthy fats and veggies.

Base Ingredient

- ½-¾ cup cooked quinoa (warm or cooled)

Topping Ingredients

- Sautéed spinach (1 cup fresh baby spinach, 1 tsp. olive oil, ¼ tsp. garlic powder, pinch of sea salt)
- Scrambled eggs (2 eggs, 1 tsp. butter, pinch of sea salt)
- ¼ avocado, sliced
- ¼ cup cherry tomatoes, chopped
- ¼ cup kimchi (optional, but a great gut-health food)
- 1 tbsp. crumbled feta (optional, for added flavour)

Optional Mayo Dressing Ingredients

- 1 tbsp. mayo
- 1 tsp. lemon juice
- ½ tsp. Dijon mustard
- Pinch of sea salt
- Optional spice: hot sauce to your liking

Instructions

Cook quinoa according to package directions and set aside.

Sauté the spinach. Add olive oil to a pan over medium heat. Add spinach, garlic powder, and a pinch of sea salt. Stir until wilted.

Remove the spinach from the pan and add butter. Crack 2 eggs, add a pinch of sea salt, and begin to mix. Cook until desired consistency.

Assemble the bowl. Start with the quinoa as your base, and add the eggs and other toppings.

Optional: Top your eggs with some crumbled feta and top the bowl with a mayo-based dressing.

Recipe Notes

Protein option: Add chicken, tofu, tempeh, or beans.

Instead of spinach, you can use arugula or kale (you can also keep it raw).

Swap quinoa for brown rice or cauliflower rice.

For extra crunch, add in some pumpkin seeds.



Angela Wallace, MSc, RD

A registered dietitian with the College of Dietitians of Ontario, personal trainer, and family-food expert who specializes in women and child nutrition and fitness, she loves helping families get healthy together.

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Simply Red Flatbread

Bright, nourishing, and naturally gluten-free, this Simply Red Flatbread is easy to make and endlessly versatile. Packed with lentils and a boost of fermented beets, it's the perfect base for all your favourite toppings, when regular bread isn't an option.

Ingredients

- 1 cup red lentils
- 1½ cups of water
- 1 tsp. New Roots Herbal Fermented Red Beet
- ¼ tsp. sea salt

Instructions

Combine ingredients in blender. Let it sit at room temperature for an hour or more.

Blend until uniform.

Cook on medium heat in a lightly oiled pan, as you would a crepe. Wait until bubbles appear on edges, then flip.

Add your choice of toppings or spread.

Recipe Notes

This recipe is easy to make and very inexpensive, so feel free to experiment with other ingredients for variety and individual preferences! Get your kids involved as well.

Alternatives: You may substitute Fermented Red Beet with:

- Fermented Turmeric;
- Fermented Ginger;
- or pump up the protein quotient with Beef Bone Broth Protein.

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Flourish Original Recipe



BioDiet Egg Muffins

This egg muffin recipe is not only delicious: it's also keto-friendly, high in protein, and even has some anti-inflammatory effects!

Ingredients

- 8 large eggs
- 1 cup shredded cheese (cheddar or other)
- ½ cup almond flour
- ¼ cup coconut flour
- ¼ cup heavy cream
- Two green onions (just the green part), finely chopped
- ½ tsp. herbes de Provence
- ½ tsp. turmeric

Instructions

Preheat oven at 350 °F (175 °C).

Mix all ingredients in a large bowl.

Spoon ¼ cup measure into a non-stick or well-greased muffin pan.

Sprinkle more shredded cheese on the tops before placing in the oven and bake for 25 minutes.

Let cool on a rack and keep in the fridge if not enjoyed warm.

Recipe Notes

Protein option: You can add some finely diced bacon or ham to make it even more savoury



Dr. David G. Harper, PhD

Dr. Harper is an Associate Professor of Kinesiology at the University of the Fraser Valley and was a Visiting Scientist at the BC Cancer Research Centre, Terry Fox Laboratory. He holds a PhD from the University of British Columbia and completed his postdoctoral fellowship in comparative physiology at the University of Cambridge.

biodiet.org

BioDiet

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Emphasis on Quality



At New Roots Herbal, all our testing is done in an ISO 17025–accredited laboratory, by a team of 16 scientists.

Each of our ingredients are tested for identity, purity, potency, and contaminants like heavy metals, pesticides, and much more. If the ingredients don't pass, they don't get used—**period!**



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Finished products go through a process of detection for unwanted metals

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AskGord



I've been taking collagen for about a month. My wrinkles are less visible, but my skin is sagging. Can elastin help?

Both proteins contribute to structure and support throughout the body, especially in the skin. Collagen provides firmness and resilience for the visible part of the skin's surface. Elastin, as its name implies, delivers elasticity which enables skin to stretch and return to its original shape. In the dermal layer, elastin fibres are arranged in overlapping, perpendicular layers, making them a foundational protein maintaining a healthy, youthful appearance.

Approximately 75% of the skin's dry weight is collagen, while elastin makes up just under 5%. With age, elastin production declines more sharply than that of collagen, leaving less "wiggle room" to maintain elasticity.

Look for a clinically researched collagen supplement featuring a minimum 6% third-party-validated elastin content. This combination can help reduce the appearance of deep wrinkles and strengthen skin elasticity, while delivering additional benefits for connective tissue throughout your body. Sometimes, you can judge a book by the cover.

I'm an active senior with chronic pain in my knees and hips. I'd like to reduce my dependence on over-the-counter anti-inflammatories. Can curcumin help?

Curcumin, the key compound in turmeric, can help manage arthritis and chronic joint pain by lowering inflammation in the body. The first generation of curcumin supplements often pairs curcumin with piperine, a compound from black pepper that boosts absorption. This option is widely available and effective; however, it may require larger doses to achieve the same therapeutic effect as newer formats, as larger doses can cause mild digestive upset in some people.

A newer option in Canada is curcuRouge®, produced through a proprietary process that transforms curcumin from its dense, natural solid form into an amorphous structure. This change increases surface area and improves its ability to dissolve and be absorbed, leading to higher blood levels of curcuminoids, the active compounds that help reduce inflammation. The result is a potent, well-absorbed form of curcumin that supports joint comfort, mobility, and active living, with a smaller dose.

From pain-free pickleball to enjoying active travel vacations, this new version of curcumin can be a difference maker for your quality of life.

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You have a question you would like answered about your health and supplements? Gord would be happy to answer them! We could even feature them in this page if others could benefit from the information.

Reach out to him at facebook.com/newrootsherbal or call 1 800 268-9486 ext. 237

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