

Flourish

HEALTHY BODY, MIND, AND SPIRIT

Type 3
Diabetes

*Turn Up
the Heat*

Boosting Women's Libido

12
**Healthy Habits
for 2026**

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Editor's Letter



Over the past few decades, many of my friends and family have been busy raising their children. Through both happy times and challenging days, sharing in their pains and accomplishments, watching them grow into young adults full of potential, has made us proud and brought us joy. But in the past few years, these roles have started evolving. Many of us now are faced with a change in responsibilities: helping care for our aging parents. And this stage of life will likely have a different ending.

We wish the very best for our parents, especially good health, which would allow them to live happily and independently into their golden years. But we also need to prepare for alternate scenarios. As we consider this, it's crucial for us to not only ensure that our parents have all they need to stay in the best health possible, but to do the same for ourselves. We need to nourish, so hopefully, everyone can flourish.

With that in mind, let's start 2026 with more positive steps. Our winter issue provides advice for basics like hydration, getting the sleep we need, and even improving women's libido. It provides more insights on healthy aging, including better building blocks for physical health, as well as proactive steps to protect our cognitive health. There is something for everyone, including 12 healthy habits you can start implementing a month at a time, for years of wellbeing. We hope you enjoy it!

Sophia Golanowski, BCom, MBA
Editor-in-Chief

Flourish

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Editor-in-Chief

Sophia Golanowski

Assistant Editor

Mélissa Thibodeau

Scientific Content Editor

Annick Moffatt

Graphic Designer

Cédric Primeau

Translation/Revision

Pierre Paquette • Cédric Primeau

Advertising Sales

Sophia Golanowski, BCom, MBA
1 800 268-9486 ext. 266
golanowskis@flourishbodyandmind.com

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Recipe Contributors

Angela Wallace

Ask Gord

Gordon Raza

Article Contributors



Angela Wallace, MSc, RD

A registered dietitian with the College of Dietitians of Ontario, personal trainer, and family-food expert.



Wendy Present, RHNC, CFMP

With a background in nursing and in naturopathic and functional medicine, she's currently registered as a health and nutrition counsellor.



Colleen Hartwick, ND

A licensed naturopathic physician practising on North Vancouver Island, BC, with a special interest in trauma.



Dale Drewery

Coauthor of *BioDiet: The Scientifically Proven, Ketogenic Way to Lose Weight and Improve Your Health*.



Felicia Assenza, HBSc, ND

A Hamilton-based naturopathic doctor whose goal in every patient visit is to share the knowledge and experiences that she gained on her own journey.



Kim Abog, ND

Dr. Kim Abog helps people thrive navigating their reproductive-health journey: periods, transitions, fertility, pregnancy, postpartum, and beyond.



Jill Northrup, ND

A Toronto-based naturopathic doctor passionate about evidence-based naturopathic holistic care.



Ludovic Brunel, ND

Practicing in Calgary, his approach has always been to improve health outcomes by relying on the best research available.



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Turn Up the Heat

Boosting Women's Libido

by Colleen Hartwick, ND

A healthy and satisfying sex life is an important aspect of overall wellbeing, yet millions of women worldwide experience fluctuations or reductions in sexual desire at some point in their lives. Studies suggest that approximately 30 to 50% of women report low libido or sexual dysfunction, making it a common but often unspoken challenge. Factors such as stress, hormonal changes, fatigue, relationship issues, and certain medical conditions can all contribute to diminished sexual desire.

While addressing the underlying causes is essential, many women seek natural ways to reignite their passion and improve their sexual vitality. Whether you're looking to boost desire, improve intimacy, or simply understand your options better, this article provides valuable insights into natural approaches to enhancing female libido. Let's explore five of the most effective herbs backed by research that can help you turn up the heat.

Maca

One of the most researched natural supplements for female libido is maca root. Emerging evidence suggests maca may offer significant benefits, particularly for postmenopausal women and those experiencing sexual dysfunction related to antidepressant use. In a 12-week clinical trial involving 45 women taking selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors (SSRIs) or serotonin norepinephrine reuptake inhibitors (SNRIs), those who consumed 3 g of maca daily experienced higher remission rates in sexual dysfunction compared to the placebo group. These improvements were most notable among postmenopausal women and were measured using validated tools such as the Arizona Sexual Experience Scale (ASEX) and the Massachusetts General Hospital Sexual Function Questionnaire. These findings highlight maca's potential to support sexual desire and satisfaction in specific populations.

Puncture Vine

Tribulus terrestris, commonly known as puncture vine, has been used for decades in both Indian and Chinese medicine for the treatment of illnesses such as kidney stones, digestive symptoms, hypertension, and sexual dysfunction. A randomized, double-blind, placebo-controlled study evaluated the effects of puncture vine on sexual function in 45 healthy postmenopausal women with diminished libido. Participants received either 750 mg/d of puncture vine or a placebo for 120 days. Participants completed validated sexual function questionnaires, including the Female Sexual Function Index (FSFI), while serum hormone levels were measured. Of the 36 women who completed the study, those in the puncture vine group showed significant improvements in sexual desire, arousal, pain, and orgasm compared with placebo, along with increased



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free and bioavailable testosterone, a key hormone in the modulation of sexual desire. These results suggest that puncture vine may support sexual function in postmenopausal women, potentially through modulation of testosterone levels.

Celery Seed

Celery (*Apium graveolens*) is widely used by traditional healers to treat conditions such as amenorrhea, rheumatism, and digestive disease. Additionally, traditional medicine manuscripts from several Middle Eastern countries highlight the libido-enhancing effect of celery seed. In a randomized, double-blinded clinical trial, 80 women, with an average age of 32–34 years, were assigned to receive either 500 mg of celery seed or placebo, three times a day, for 6 weeks. The FSFI questionnaire was used to evaluate women's sexual function before and after treatment. At the end of the six-week study, the improvements in the FSFI were significantly greater in celery seed-treated women than those receiving the placebo. The increase in total FSFI score is mainly attributed to improvements in sexual desire, vaginal lubrication, and sexual arousal with a reduction in pain, highlighting the ability of celery seed to support sexual function in women.



Ashwagandha

Ashwagandha, a well-known adaptogenic herb, is traditionally used to combat stress and anxiety—two major contributors to reduced sexual desire in women. Its ability to lower cortisol levels makes it a compelling option for supporting female sexual health. In several clinical trials, women who took 300 mg of standardized ashwagandha root extract twice daily experienced meaningful improvements in sexual desire, arousal, lubrication, orgasm, and overall satisfaction. These results measured using reliable tools such as the FSFI and the Female Sexual Distress Scale (FSDS), underscore ashwagandha's dual ability to enhance sexual function and alleviate stress-related barriers to intimacy.

Korean Red Ginseng

Rounding out the list is Korean red ginseng, a foundational herb in traditional Chinese medicine often referred to as the “King of Herbs.” Long associated with enhanced vitality and sexual health, Korean red ginseng has been studied for its aphrodisiac properties. In a placebo-controlled, double-blind, crossover study involving 32 menopausal women, participants took 3 g of Korean red ginseng extract daily. Results showed significant improvements in sexual arousal, as measured by the FSFI and the Global Assessment Questionnaire (GAQ). These findings suggest that Korean red ginseng may be a valuable natural option for supporting libido and overall sexual wellness, especially in menopausal women.



Pulling It All Together

A fulfilling sex life is an integral part of overall wellbeing; yet many women silently struggle with changes in desire caused by stress, hormonal shifts, emotional challenges, or health issues. Fortunately, increasing interest in natural health has led to greater awareness of safe, effective, and research-backed ways to support sexual vitality. Herbs like maca, celery seed, puncture vine, ashwagandha, and Korean red ginseng each offer unique benefits such as hormone regulation, mood enhancement, stress reduction, and increased energy. While no remedy is one-size-fits-all, these natural options empower women to explore their needs and reconnect with their sexual vitality in a holistic and personalized way. By listening to your body and working with a health-care practitioner, you can take confident steps toward a healthier, more passionate life—on your own terms.



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.

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12 Healthy Habits for 2026

by Ludovic Brunel, ND



Make yourself a priority this year. Good health comes down to simple, repeatable habits. Here is a list of 12 health habits that will make a real difference to how you feel and how you age. These 12 high-impact habits are backed by public-health authorities and clinical evidence. Each habit is explained with a brief “why it matters” and a practical tip to help you begin.

Eat a Balanced, Mostly Whole-Food Diet

A diet rich in vegetables, fruits, whole grains, legumes, nuts, and lean proteins lowers the risk of heart disease, diabetes, and many cancers; limit processed foods, added sugar, salt, and industrial *trans* fats. Start by filling half your plate with vegetables at one meal each day.

Move Regularly (Aim for 150 Minutes per Week)

Moderate aerobic activity plus two weekly strength sessions reduces mortality, preserves mobility, and improves mood. Choose to be active in your daily life: walk, take the stairs, park further away; or be creative and turn house work into a workout, plan family outings, join a team sport, dance, or skip. Find some activity you enjoy, and start with three sessions of 15 minutes per week, and increase progressively from there.

Prioritize Sleep (7–9 Hours for Most Adults)

Consistent adequate sleep supports memory, immune function, metabolic health, and emotional regulation. Keep a regular sleep schedule and wind down electronics an hour before bed.

Don't Smoke, and Avoid Second-Hand Smoke

Tobacco remains the leading preventable cause of disease and death. Quitting dramatically lowers the risk even if you've smoked for years. Ask your health-care practitioner about proven cessation-support options. Although the majority of patients quit cold turkey, smoking cessation aids—such as nicotine patches and quit-smoking medicine—can significantly increase your chances of successfully quitting. Other helpful strategies include building a support system, setting a quit date, avoiding your triggers, and listing your reasons to quit.





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Limit Alcohol Intake

Excessive or binge drinking increases cancer, liver disease and injury risk. If you drink, follow low-risk guidance: this means no more than 1 drink per day for women and 2 for men. Remember that any amount of alcohol consumption can have risks to your health, but these guidelines help you reduce the short- and long-term effects of alcohol use. Strive to incorporate alcohol-free days each week or limit alcohol to social activities.

See Your Health-Care Practitioner Yearly

Regular check-ups and screening blood tests can detect vitamin and mineral deficiencies, allowing you to take action. Regular health screening can also detect serious health issues earlier, giving you a better chance with treatments.

Build Strong Social Connections

Loneliness and isolation are linked to an increased mortality risk comparable to smoking. Strong relationships enhance immune function and resilience. Participate in groups with shared interests—such as local classes, volunteer projects, or community clubs—to build meaningful connections.



Look after Oral Health

Neglecting oral hygiene allows plaque to build up along the gumline, irritating the gums and creating tiny periodontal pockets with microscopic tears in the tissue. These small openings let bacteria slip into the bloodstream, where they can fuel inflammation, which has been linked to heart disease, stroke, diabetes, respiratory infections, and pregnancy-related complications. Brushing twice daily, flossing, and seeing your dentist regularly help keep the gums intact and reduce the bacterial load that drives this whole-body impact.

Manage Stress and Support Mental Health

This is so important but too often neglected. Modern life is stressful but daily practices such as brief mindfulness, regular physical activity, sleep hygiene, a healthy diet, and social connection reduce chronic stress and lower risk of anxiety and depression. If you are overwhelmed, seek professional help from a psychologist or counselor, especially if your emotions interfere with daily life. You can also look at self-help books on stress management, join peer-support groups, start journaling, meditate, or use mental-health apps.



Hydrate Sensibly

Adequate fluid intake supports cognition, digestion, and physical performance. As a starting point, it's recommended that women consume 2.7 L per day and men should consume 3.7 L—from all foods and drinks. Adjust according to levels of activity, heat, and health conditions. Sip regularly throughout the day and make sure that your urine remains clear or light in colour.

Practice Good Hygiene

Regular handwashing with soap and water for at least 20 seconds reduces spread of common infections and protects vulnerable people. Use alcohol-based hand sanitizer when soap isn't available.

Optimize Your Sun Exposure

During our Canadian winters, daylight is limited, and UVB levels are too low for meaningful vitamin D production; nevertheless, outdoor-light exposure remains essential for supporting mood and maintaining a healthy circadian rhythm. When the sun does appear, brief bare-skin exposure can help top up vitamin D. Year-round, longer periods outdoors still call for sensible sun safety—seeking shade when possible, wearing a hat and sunglasses, and using a mineral sunscreen when needed. Avoid indoor tanning, and rely on a vitamin D supplement to keep levels healthy through the darker months.

Chronic disease is now the leading cause of death and disability worldwide, but the path toward prevention starts with the everyday choices we make. Even small, steady shifts in your habits can create meaningful change over time. By prioritizing these core pillars of good health and committing to what's realistically within your reach, you can build momentum day by day and month by month. Stay consistent, stay mindful, and by the time 2026 comes to a close, these simple choices will have become a sustainable, second-nature wellness routine—one that supports long-term vitality and wellbeing.



Dr. Ludovic Brunel, ND

Dr. Brunel has 15+ years of experience as a naturopathic doctor and practices in Calgary. His approach has always been to improve health outcomes by relying on the best research available.

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Healthy Aging

Oxymoron or Opportunity?

Part 2

by Dale Drewery

In “Healthy Aging... Part I” (*Flourish*, autumn 2025), we considered the impact of aging on our joints, muscles, and skeletal system as well as the changes we could expect to our cardiovascular and digestive systems.

In this second part, we’ll focus on the metabolic and hormonal changes that occur as we get older, along with the effect aging has on our immune, endocrine, and nervous systems. We’ll also explore how even small lifestyle hacks can play a big part in maintaining health and independence in our sunset years.

System	What Changes with Age	Risks	Helpful Habits
Metabolism	Slows down	Weight gain, metabolic syndrome	Daily movement, balanced diet
Endocrine	Lower hormones (testosterone, GH, DHEA)	Sarcopenia, obesity, diabetes	Strength training, protein intake
Immune	Immunosenescence, inflammaging	Infections, cancer, weaker vaccine response	Sleep, stress management, vaccines
Nervous	Brain shrinkage, slower neuron signalling	Memory issues, dementia	Mental/physical activity, BP control

Metabolism

Remember when you were younger and there was always at least one person in your group of friends who could eat as much or as often as he or she wanted, do nary a stitch of exercise, and still stay as thin as a string bean?

There’s a good chance they had a higher metabolism than most, which means they converted what they ate (including junk food!) into energy more quickly than the rest of us. Eventually, though, everyone’s metabolism trends in the same direction—down. And since what our bodies don’t convert to energy, they store in our fat cells, the result is fat accumulation and weight gain.

Those additional pounds, combined with a habitual decline in physical activity as we age, eventually give rise to excess abdominal weight, high blood triglycerides, elevated blood-sugar levels, high blood pressure, and low HDL cholesterol. A person with three or more of these conditions meets the criteria for metabolic syndrome, which affects nearly half of Americans over the age of 60 and almost 40% of seniors in Canada. This cluster of conditions can, if unaddressed, significantly increase our risk of cardiovascular disease, including heart attacks, strokes, type 2 diabetes, and cancer.



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Endocrine System

As we get older, our endocrine system (the glands that secrete hormones) produces less testosterone, growth hormone, and dehydroepiandrosterone (DHEA). The outcome is a snowball of metabolic change.

The reduction in hormones, along with our habitual decrease in physical activity, results in lower daily energy expenditure, which in turn increases our risk for obesity and accelerates the normal loss of muscle mass that occurs with age. This combination of sarcopenia (loss of muscle mass and strength) and obesity can be devastating for older populations by making them vulnerable to falls and fractures and increasing their risk for developing diabetes, cardiovascular disease, and dementia.

Yikes, you say! So, here's the silver lining. Studies show that even small, everyday bursts of physical activity can significantly improve your chances of celebrating another birthday. And by burning more calories, you can help reduce excess weight, which in turn promotes a greater range of movement, builds strength, and allows you to further increase your activity levels. Another snowball effect—but this time, a healthy kind.



Immune System

As we age, the immune system, like our metabolism and endocrine system, goes through a process of breaking down faster than the rate at which our bodies can maintain it. This is called “immunosenescence,” a word made popular in the 1970s and derived from “immuno-,” relating to the immune system, and “senescence,” a process by which a cell ages and permanently stops dividing but does not die.

In fact, an accumulation of these dysfunctional cells, a decrease in production of new cells, and impaired communication between them are at the root of many of our unwelcome age-related changes. They include a greater susceptibility to infections like flu and pneumonia, an increased risk of developing cardiovascular and neurodegenerative diseases, a diminished response to vaccinations, and a greater likelihood of developing cancer.

Enter another relatively new addition to the medical lexicon: “inflammaging,” which means pretty much as it sounds. Coined in the year 2000, it describes the subtle, low-grade inflammation that is characteristic of getting older. But unlike the acute inflammation that can help repair damaged tissue or resolve an infection, inflammaging is chronic, which means it can last for months or even years. Also, because it’s systemic, this persistent and widespread complication can cause significant damage to cells and tissues throughout the body, including the cardiovascular system, kidneys, and brain.

So, what can we do to address some of these issues? The concept of boosting your immunity is an enticing one all right, but there is still so much we don’t know about how to effectively do that. What we do know is that lifestyle factors play an important role in modulating inflammation. Regular exercise has been shown to have long-term anti-inflammatory effects, while managing stress and getting adequate sleep can help to prevent the release of inflammatory stress hormones. And simple steps like washing your hands frequently and staying up to date on vaccines will help mitigate infections. It’s not surprising that much of this is stuff our parents told us way back when.



Nervous System

Our nervous system is like the command centre aboard the starship Enterprise. Made up of the brain, spinal cord, nerves, and sensory organs, the nervous system plays a role in almost everything we do. It directs us to breathe, see, eat, talk, and take out the trash. It regulates our thoughts and memories, senses our internal and external environment, controls our bodies’ movements, and regulates the endocrine system.

The nervous system consists of specialized cells called neurons that send messages, via nerves, back and forth from the brain throughout the body. As brain volume decreases with age, particularly in the frontal lobe and hippocampus (where memory and recall are processed), there are fewer connections between neurons, contributing to slower cognitive function.

As annoying as this mental slowdown can be, it’s very much a normal part of aging, and can encompass minor memory problems, trouble recalling words (nouns have become my Achilles heel), and more time and effort required to learn new things.

You can support your brain health as you get older and, at the same time, help prevent neurodegenerative diseases like Alzheimer’s by staying active physically and mentally; managing your weight and controlling your blood pressure; eating a healthy diet; moderating your alcohol consumption; and, if you’re a smoker, butting out for good. Perhaps the most important recommendation, though, is to enjoy life, whatever your age.

Look for Part III of Healthy Aging... in the spring issue of *Flourish*, where we’ll focus on the remarkable world of the sensory system and how to best protect these precious organs.

Healthy Aging Hacks

- ✓ Move daily (even short bursts)
- ✓ Eat nutrient-dense foods
- ✓ Prioritize sleep
- ✓ Manage stress
- ✓ Stay socially connected
- ✓ Keep vaccinations up to date



Dale Drewery

Dale Drewery is coauthor 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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Exploring the Essence of Elastin

by Kim Abog, ND

You may have heard of collagen while perusing your pharmacy or grocery store, or even from people who have tried it for its many benefits. It has become a widely popular supplement for many good reasons: Collagen supplementation can promote healthier skin, joint comfort, and antiaging benefits. Like other interventions, some people may experience improvements in their health while others may be left underwhelmed and not feel any differently. This is because collagen does not work alone. Beneath the skin surface lies a complex and remarkable team of structural proteins collectively known as the extracellular matrix (ECM), and part of the ECM is one of collagen's closest companions called elastin.

Elastin: The Unsung Partner

While collagen has justifiably earned its place as the skin's structural backbone, elastin is the crucial ingredient that gives connective tissues (i.e., skin, lungs,

blood vessels, and ligaments) its elasticity and resilience. Recognizing the unique dynamic between the two can help explain why results vary with supplementation and how to better support the resiliency of our connective tissues.

Elastin is a specialized highly elastic structural protein made primarily by fibroblasts and smooth-muscle cells. Collagen provides strength and structural support, while elastin provides stretch and recoil (think bounce and flexibility), which allows tissues to return to their original shape. Together, they give tissues like our skin, firmness, and flexibility.

There are other important differences in the metabolism of collagen and elastin. Our bodies can continually renew collagen production, but it slowly declines as we age. On the other hand, elastin fibres have a very low rate of turnover, so it is more vulnerable to damage from factors such as UV rays, pollution, smoking, and aging. The decline of both may explain why skin loses its suppleness and firmness over time.

Factors Affecting Elastin Integrity

Factor	Effect on Elastin	Tips to Consider
UV Exposure	Accelerates degradation (solar elastosis)	Daily sunscreen use
Pollution	Promotes oxidative stress	Antioxidant-rich skincare
Smoking	Reduces elastin synthesis	Avoid or quit smoking
Aging	Slows natural production	Maintain nutrient-rich diet
Nutrient Deficiency	Limits cross-linking and repair	Ensure intake of vitamin A, copper, and zinc
Collagen Loss	Weakens surrounding matrix	Combine collagen support with elastin care



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Elastin's Roles behind the Structural Scenes

Elastin provides the flexibility that allows skin and other tissues to stretch and return to their original shape (think of actions like smiling and frowning).

In the cardiovascular and respiratory systems, elastin similarly enables tissues to expand and contract efficiently without injury, and it reduces the workload on the heart and blood vessels.

Different but Complementary

There are at least 29 types of collagens known to science. Types I and III are the most abundant in the skin but also serve as structural support for muscle cells and play a significant role in heart function. Types I, II, and III are the most prevalent collagens overall; they coexist in the extracellular matrix (ECM). The ratio of collagen to elastin varies on the type of tissues. Elastin is generally more abundant in skin and blood vessels, while tendons and bones contain mostly collagen.

Can Supplementing Help?

Collagen supplementation can provide improvements in the health of skin, bones, etc. and in maintaining proper health of several important structures of the body (e.g., nails, cornea, and skin). Most collagen supplements that have been studied and used in practice are in hydrolysate, marine, bovine, or porcine form. These supplements also contain peptides or amino acids derived from collagen only, not elastin.



Collagen Type	Primary Function	Where It's Found in the Body	Common Dietary or Supplement Sources
Type I	Provides structure, strength, and firmness	Skin, bones, tendons, ligaments, cornea	Marine collagen, bovine hide, egg membrane, fish skin
Type II	Cushions joints and supports cartilage	Cartilage, eyes, intervertebral discs	Chicken cartilage, bone broth, collagen type II supplements
Type III	Supports elasticity in skin, muscles, and blood vessels	Skin, muscles, blood vessels, internal organs	Bovine collagen, fish collagen, organ meats
Type IV	Forms the basal membrane supporting cells	Layers between skin and organs, kidneys	Limited in diet; synthesized internally with vitamin C, zinc, and copper
Type V	Supports cell surfaces, hair, and placenta	Placenta, cornea, and hair matrix	Trace amounts in egg membrane, multitype collagen blends

Elastin supplementation or replacement is a significant biological challenge, as elastin fibres regenerate slowly and are large and difficult to absorb in functional form. Replenishing elastin seems to rely on promoting your body's own elastin synthesis and tropoelastin production through vitamin A derivatives, copper, and zinc. However, emerging evidence supports the benefits of orally consumed elastin peptides. In one study, 12 weeks of supplementation led to significant improvements in wrinkle depth and volume, along with increased hydration and reduced melanin levels, with no reported adverse effects. Another clinical trial, using a collagen drink enriched with elastin peptides, reported measurable improvements in skin hydration, elasticity, dermal collagen density, pore size, and multiple wrinkle parameters. Interestingly, even some collagen peptides may indirectly support elastin metabolism by stimulating

fibroblast activity. Topical products are also being explored. Peptides that mimic tropoelastin (recombinant human tropoelastin-based treatments), retinoids, and plant extracts such as that from *Centella asiatica* may aid elastin synthesis or slow elastin fibre degradation. Daily sun protection remains an effective strategy for preserving elastin, as chronic UV exposure alters collagen and accelerates elastin breakdown (think solar elastosis).

ECM – Easy Maintenance for Collagen and Elastin Health

Preserving and encouraging collagen and elastin health requires a well-rounded approach.

- Ensure you are consuming adequate protein intake and including nutrients like vitamins A and C, copper, and zinc to promote ECM integrity
- Consider topical support such as retinoids, peptides, and antioxidants that stimulate production of these structural proteins
- Daily sunscreen use prevents elastin degradation
- Be aware of environmental exposures, pollution, stress

Collagen supplementation also seems to be an accessible way to support structural concerns (e.g., skin, joints). The best results will always involve consideration for what truly is going on in the bigger picture. Just like elastin, do make it a point to offer yourself more flexibility in care options, and give yourself more credit for the resilience your body has shown amidst the health challenges you face.



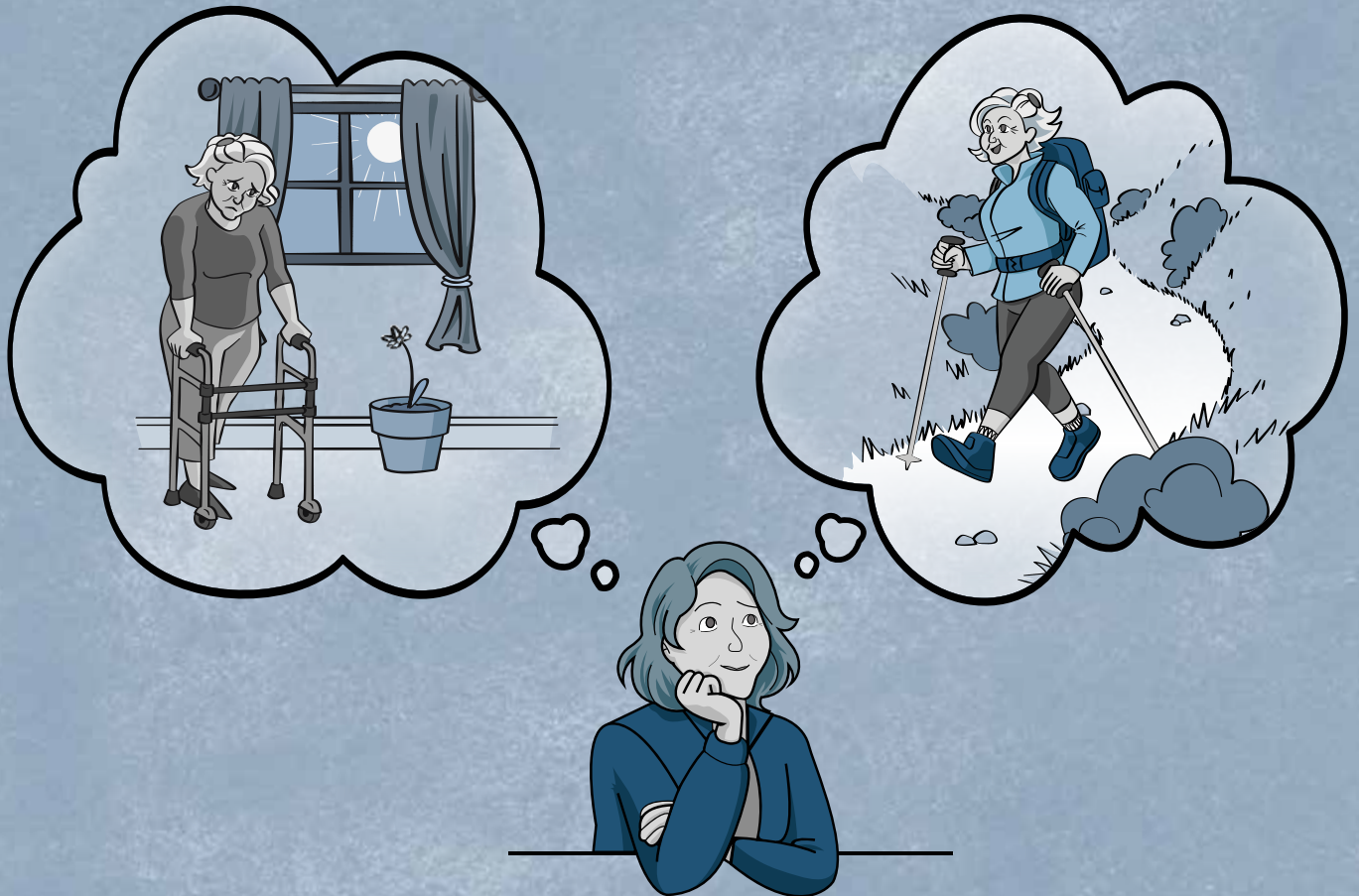
Dr. Kim Abog, ND

Dr. Kim Abog is a registered naturopathic doctor and doula based in Toronto, Ontario. She has a special interest in fertility and reproductive health. She helps people by facilitating health-management plans with them, connecting them to evidence-informed integrative health solutions, and helping them thrive.

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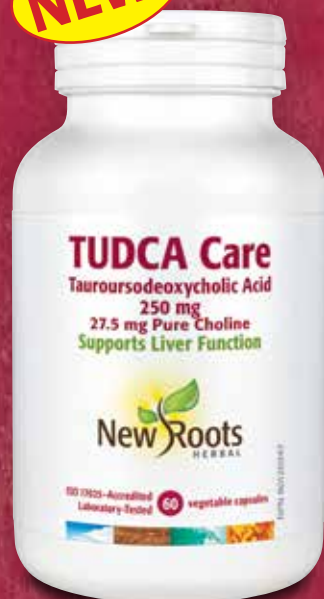
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Fun Fact #2: Did you know that muscle is metabolically active tissue? This means that the more muscle you maintain, the more calories your body will burn at rest. This makes it easier to maintain your weight as you age.



Practical Ways to Get More Protein into Your Daily Diet

Start Your Day with Protein. This simple strategy will help set you up for the rest of your day. It works to reduce cravings, keep you full longer, stabilize energy levels, and helps you hit your overall protein target for the day. You can achieve this by incorporating protein-rich foods to your breakfast. Consider foods like eggs, turkey bacon, cottage cheese, Greek yogurt, nut butters, and protein supplements like a protein powder. It's also perfectly acceptable to include high-protein foods that aren't typically consumed at breakfast: foods like chicken, turkey, fish, and legumes, for example.

Add at Least One Source of Protein to Every Meal. It's a good idea to aim for at least 20–30 g of protein at each meal. This helps ensure that you are getting enough protein. Research shows that spreading protein intake is best for optimizing muscle mass gains and recovery.



Try Adding One Protein “Add-on” to Each Meal. Think of this as your protein boost—an additional small source of protein that isn’t the main source of protein in your meal. For example, adding hemp seeds to your Greek yogurt, nut butter to your protein smoothie, or pumpkin seeds to your chicken salad bowl. It could also be as simple as adding collagen protein to your coffee, tea, or soup (any warm beverage).

Batch Cook 1–2 Protein Sources for the Week. This could be slow-cooked shredded chicken, roasted chicken, baked salmon, baked tofu, meatballs, etc. When you prep protein in advance, they can be used across meals in things like bowls, wraps, salads, soups, etc.



Add Protein to Your Snacks. You can also eat small amounts of protein throughout the day. Think of adding some of these to your snack roster: hard-boiled eggs, chia seeds (think chia pudding!), roasted or steamed edamame beans, roasted chickpeas, lentils or other legumes, Greek yogurt, cottage cheese, hummus, bean dips, and bone broth.

Getting enough protein in your diet can be a simple and effective way to support steady energy levels, muscle health, metabolism, and healthy aging. You can support your health daily by making small shifts to meals to include more protein. If you aren’t sure where to start, I suggest starting with breakfast. Beginning your day with 20–30 g of protein will set the tone for the rest of the day. When doing this consistently, you should see better energy levels, fewer cravings, and more balanced meals.

Fun Fact #3: Did you know that protein is the most satisfying macronutrient, meaning it helps keep you feeling full longer after you’ve finished your meal. In fact, research shows that eating a high-protein breakfast can help reduce your appetite later in the day (and this often means less afternoon sugar cravings too).



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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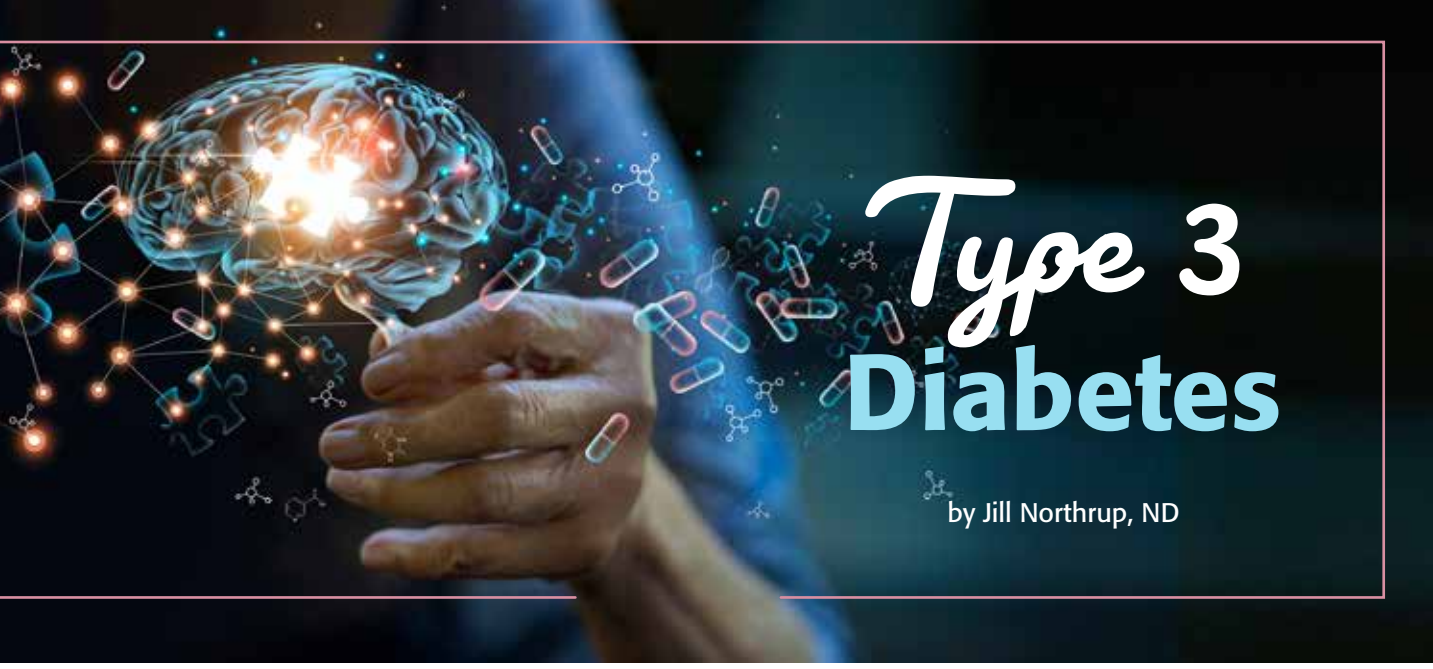


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Type 3 Diabetes

by Jill Northrup, ND

What is Type 3 Diabetes?

The term “type 3 diabetes” is becoming increasingly used when discussing Alzheimer’s disease (AD), due to research connecting insulin resistance and cognitive decline. As the most common form of dementia, Alzheimer’s disease is linked to the buildup of abnormal plaques and tangled proteins in the brain. These disrupt communication between neurons, impairing their function and eventually leading to the loss of brain cells. Presenting as impaired memory, cognitive decline, and behavioural changes, AD is primarily observed in older adults, with the disease incidence doubling every 5 years after age 65.

In addition to contributing to an increased risk of cardiovascular diseases, retinopathy, neuropathy, kidney disease, liver damage, and infections, diabetes also increases the risk of developing AD. The impaired glucose metabolism seen with diabetes can disrupt highly sensitive neuronal function. Peripheral insulin resistance, which is when the body’s muscles, fat, and liver stop responding properly to insulin, also reduce insulin signalling in the central nervous system. This disruption in the brain’s metabolism is seen by a decrease in energy-producing ATP molecules in the brain, with ATP production continuing to decline as the intensity of AD increases. Insulin resistance can also contribute to neuroinflammation and oxidative stress, in addition to impairing the processing and clearance of abnormal amyloid- β proteins, key pathophysiological components of AD.

Risk factors for developing AD include smoking, high blood pressure, physical inactivity, obesity, poor diet, excessive alcohol intake, depression, low levels of cognitive engagement, and traumatic brain injury. Genetics and gender also play a role in the development of the disease. Women are at a greater risk than men, partly because they typically live longer, experience changing estrogen levels, and are more likely to develop age-related frailty—a condition marked by reduced strength and resilience that increases vulnerability to health problems. Many genes have also been associated with the development of AD; however, it has been estimated that one third of AD worldwide is related to modifiable risk factors, such as previously mentioned physical inactivity, obesity, hypertension, and diabetes.

Lifestyle Factors

MIND Diet

The MIND diet encompasses components of both the Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension (DASH) diet and





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the Mediterranean diet, in that both include low sodium, plant-based foods, whole grains, regular olive oil consumption, and limited animal and high saturated-fat foods, with the addition of an abundance of green leafy vegetables and berries. Observational studies of over 900 healthy older adults adhering to a MIND style diet found a reduced risk of AD and a slower rate of cognitive decline. A diet rich in whole foods (including fruits and vegetables, whole grains, nuts, and legumes), and low in refined carbohydrates (such as white bread, pasta, and baked goods), like the MIND diet, is also consistently associated with a lower risk of diabetes.

Green leafy vegetables, a key component of this eating paradigm, may also help slow cognitive decline. They are rich in vitamins, minerals, and flavonoids—including folate, lutein, nitrate, phyloquinone, *alpha*-tocopherol, and kaempferol—nutrients whose intakes have each been found to be significantly associated with reduced rates of cognitive decline. Higher fish intake may also be protective against AD development. DHA, an omega-3 fatty acid found in fish, is a key membrane phospholipid in the brain. A higher intake of fatty fish, consumed more than once per week, has been correlated with a reduced risk of AD in comparison to those who do not incorporate fish into their diet.



Exercise

Physical exercise may also be a component of a holistic approach to managing AD. Older adults who incorporate physical activity into their lifestyle are more likely to maintain cognition through exercise's positive impact on cerebral blood flow, inflammation, and amyloid- β turnover. Multimodal exercise—encompassing strength, flexibility, aerobic, cognition, and agility/coordination-type activity—has been found to have positive effects on cognitive, functional, and behavioural outcomes amongst those with mild to moderate Alzheimer's. The cognitive benefits include improvements in sustained attention, visual memory, and frontal cognition.

Incorporating exercise may not only benefit those diagnosed with dementia, but also presymptomatic adults. The positive impacts of exercise on blood-sugar control are also abundant, including improving insulin sensitivity, lowering blood glucose, and maintaining a healthy body weight.

Other lifestyle habits beside physical activities, including smoking cessation and limiting alcohol consumption, can also be beneficial for reducing diabetes and AD risk.



Supplementation

Although no vitamin or supplement have been proven to prevent Alzheimer's disease, multivitamin supplementation amongst older adults has been shown to improve memory, as exhibited by improved immediate and longer-term memory recall, in comparison to adults taking placebo.

Vitamin deficiencies may also increase the risk of AD. Vitamin D plays an important role in neurotransmission, neuroprotection, and neuroplasticity, and deficiency is significantly associated with an increased risk of both AD and other forms of dementia. A vitamin D deficiency can also increase the risk of insulin resistance and, amongst diabetics, correcting a vitamin D deficiency helps improve blood sugar parameters.

Vitamin B₁₂ status is also an important consideration. Vitamin B₁₂ deficiency is a reversible cause of dementia, and significant improvements in cognition can be seen following B₁₂ supplementation.

Supplements targeted more specifically towards blood-sugar regulation may include berberine, a phytochemical with blood sugar-lowering effects which can also improve insulin resistance.

The Bottom Line

Alzheimer's disease, sometimes called "type 3 diabetes," is closely linked to how well your body manages insulin and blood sugar. Maintaining a healthy diet, staying active, incorporating the right supplements, and supporting balanced blood sugar, along with the guidance from your health-care practitioner, can all help lower the risk of developing Alzheimer's disease, now increasingly referred to as "type 3 diabetes."



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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Staying Hydrated through Winter

by Felicia Assenza, HBSc, ND

As the weather cools down, it may be more difficult to remember to stay hydrated. While there is often less water loss through sweating in the cooler months, water is still required for so many body functions, even in the winter. For example, with temperatures reaching below 0 °C in winter months, the air is much drier outdoors as well as indoors, where heating systems are running. This means we are getting less moisture from the air around us and needing to use the moisture from our own mucous membranes in our nose and lungs to moisten the air we are breathing. Luckily, there are so many great ways to stay hydrated even in the winter months!

Soups and Bone Broth

Soups are a great way to address hydration and nutrition in one meal. There are endless options for soups in winter months. Keep in mind that clearer soups with more water content would be more hydrating than pureed vegetable soups like pumpkin or butternut squash. That being said, both clear and pureed soups are wonderful ways to stay hydrated and nourished in winter months. If you are feeling adventurous, you could try making a bone-broth soup base to use in your soup recipes for some extra nutritional support, especially during cold-and-flu season. Did you know that bone broth contains amino acids like glutamine, histidine, and alanine? These can help support digestion and gut health, and they serve as an antioxidant supporting brain health and immune health.

Tea and Tisanes

In the colder months, you may find that you are craving warmth. A nice hot tea or tisane (herbal tea) can be a great way to satisfy that craving. Warming teas that have herbs like cinnamon, nutmeg, ginger, clove, or turmeric can be great for warming up during the cold months.

If you are someone who tends to run hot even in winter, you may want to go for teas that contain more cooling herbs like peppermint or dandelion.

Warm Lemon Water

Having warm lemon water first thing in the morning is a great way to rehydrate after a night of rest and a wonderful morning reminder to prioritize hydration throughout the day. The refreshing smell of lemon can help provide a little boost of energy first thing in the morning and be a good source of vitamin C and electrolytes in your water. To protect your tooth enamel with this slightly acidic drink (citric acid from the lemon), try drinking it with a straw.

Home Humidifier

We talked about the air being drier in the winter. A great way to keep the air moist—at least inside the



house—is to use a humidifier in winter months. You could even add essential oils for an extra lift during the winter. For example, you could add eucalyptus to help open airways and support the respiratory system. You could add lavender for a more calming scent. Many essential oils have also been shown to have some antimicrobial properties, which is nice to have around during cold-and-flu season. Be sure to double check that your humidifier is equipped for diffusing essential oils before adding them in.

How Do I Know if I'm Getting Enough Water?

The skin can be a helpful indicator of hydration status. If your skin is dry or flaky, that may be a sign to drink more water. Keeping your skin covered when going outside in cold, windy weather is a great way to help prevent dryness. A scarf around the nose and mouth can also help prevent mucous membranes from drying out in the cold wind.

Digestion and bowel movements can be another important indicator of hydration status. If you are finding your bowel movements are less regular, less smooth, or harder to pass during the winter months, this may be an indication to drink more water.

And, of course, there is urination. If you are noticing smaller amounts of urine or urine that is dark yellow, this may be an indication to drink more water.

Mood and energy can be another indicator of not getting enough water. If you are feeling more tired than usual, pay attention to how much water you are drinking and whether there are any of the other signs we talked about, like dry skin or constipation.

Keep in mind that the fluid needs of each individual are different and depend on several factors like activity level and weight. The best way to ensure you are getting enough water is to mindfully listen to your body for thirst cues. If you are noticing signs of not getting enough water but feel like you are drinking enough, it may be a good time to check in with your naturopathic doctor to better understand what your hydration needs are, whether added electrolyte support would be helpful, or to understand if something else is going on.



Dr. Felicia Assenza, HBSc, ND

A Hamilton-based naturopathic doctor whose goal in every patient visit is to share the knowledge and experiences that she gained on her own journey.
drfeliciaassenzand.com

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Big Thanks from CBAN

Canadian Biotechnology Action Network

New Roots Herbal is proud to support the many charitable organizations uplifted through our Choose to Care program.

The Canadian Biotechnology Action Network (CBAN) is one of them; their national work strengthens awareness around the future of food, farming, and environmental protection.

Bringing together farmer associations, environmental groups, and grassroots coalitions, CBAN researches, monitors, and educates Canadians on issues related to genetic engineering. Their efforts empower communities, promote food sovereignty, and encourage transparent, democratic decision-making on science and technology.

Here's a note we recently received from CBAN—a reminder of why supporting organizations that safeguard Canada's food systems and ecological integrity truly matters.

Thank you
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For supporting the non-GMO choice.

Thank you to everyone at New Roots Herbal for your support through your Choose to Care program.

We are a proud and grateful recipient of your important donations.

This year we were happy to help consumers get more information about genetically modified foods, and about food choices for a healthier plate and planet.

With your help, we are working to stop the introduction of unlabelled genetically modified fruits and vegetables in Canada.

Thank you for your commitment to protecting the environment and supporting a better food system!

Happy winter to everyone,

Lucy

Canadian Biotechnology Action Network



Training a Deeper Sleeper

by Wendy Presant, RHNC, CFMP

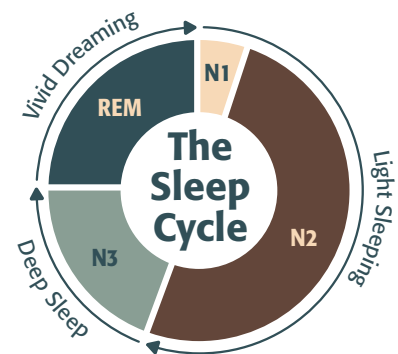
Once upon a time, I could fall asleep anywhere instantly and wake refreshed. Much more recently, not only was I tired, but I knew that my poor sleep was increasing the risk of developing a number of chronic diseases. I needed to figure this problem out and fix it. With that in mind, I bought an Oura ring.

Tracking sleep with a wearable would give me a way to record not just the length of my sleep, but also the sleep stages. I had also checked in with my doctor and had a sleep study which showed obstructive sleep apnea. I wanted to use my ring to run little “experiments” to see what I could do to improve my sleep.

Duration of Sleep

The first thing I noticed while tracking were my total hours of sleep. This matters, because the longer we are asleep, the more sleep cycles we generate. Each sleep cycle lasts 90 minutes or more, and a good sleep consists of 4 to 6 of these cycles. Each of our sleep cycles involves four sleep stages. The first three stages consist of nonrapid eye movement (NREM). N1 is the stage where you’re relaxing and falling asleep; in N2, you are sleeping lightly; in N3, you are deeply sleeping. Stage 4, also called rapid eye movement (REM) sleep, is where your brain activity picks up, almost like you’re awake but you’re not. REM sleep is known for the most vivid dreams.

Improving my N3 stage of sleep became my new goal. It has been found recently to be the most important stage of sleep for memory consolidation and learning. A decrease in deep sleep may correlate with increased dementia risk. REM or dreaming sleep also plays a role in memory.



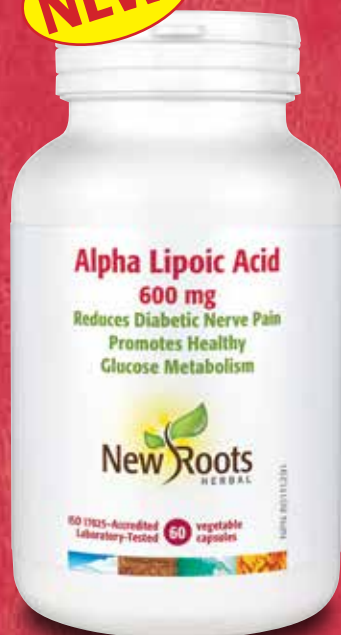
Deep Sleep

The second thing I noticed was that the deeper the sleep I got, the more rested and energetic I felt. Generally, my deep sleep is 45 to 75 minutes, or 10–20% of my total sleep, which is within the normal range for an adult. If I am closer to 45 minutes of deep sleep, I wake up feeling more tired and need a nap during the day. In humans, deep sleep is highest in a newborn and then decreases as we age, with some elderly people registering no deep sleep at all.



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The problem is that reduction in deep sleep not only correlates with an increased risk of dementia, but it can also increase the risk of other chronic conditions including obesity, colon cancer, diabetes, and even the common cold. I noticed that my longest deep-sleep stage occurs in the first cycle of the night. As the night progresses, my deep sleep stages shorten, and my REM sleep lengthens. Generally, my shorter deep sleep stages are due to my shorter total sleep nights.



Factors Impairing a Good Sleep

I can't prevent growing older, but there are other factors influencing my deep sleep that I can change. Our bodies' sleep-wake cycles sync to daylight and darkness. This means we are energized in the morning and feel sleepy at night. We also sleep best when we keep a regular bedtime and wake time. Sometimes we sabotage our own sleep, when we stay up later on the weekend and then sleep in. Even the changing seasons might affect us, since we tend to sleep longer in the winter in the northern hemisphere and wake up earlier in the summer in the southern hemisphere.

Older people may experience a few issues preventing a good night's sleep. There may be medical conditions that interfere with sleep such as depression, chronic pain, sleep apnea, or a need to get up to urinate during the night. A "circadian rhythm sleep-wake disorder" may also be more likely to affect an older person. This is an inability to fall asleep, stay asleep, or wake at the desired time and can be due, in part, to vision loss or cognitive changes. The decrease in melatonin that accompanies aging can also interfere with the sleep-wake cycle.



Simple Things You Can Do to Readjust Your Sleep Cycle

To improve my overall sleep and especially my deep sleep, I go for a morning walk in the sunshine. This boosts cortisol and suppresses my melatonin production from the night before. I have a full-spectrum light which I can turn on to simulate daylight if the weather is too cold to get outside. This type of bright-light therapy has even been shown to help people diagnosed with dementia to improve their sleep. Shutting off my device screens early in the evening stops their light from inhibiting the rise of melatonin, which helps me feel sleepy. I either don't use or I moderate alcohol, caffeine, nicotine, and certain medications which affect sleep.



Research has shown cognitive behavioural therapy for insomnia to be as effective as sleeping pills, without the side effects. Exercise, especially yoga and Pilates, are also highly beneficial in improving sleep quality. Once healthy sleep routines are in place, some natural supplements may also prove helpful. Run these by your health-care practitioner first, as they may interfere with certain health conditions or medications.

Natural Supplements Can Also Help

Supplementing melatonin can help shorten the time it takes to fall asleep and support the aging body. Magnesium has the benefit of significantly increasing deep sleep. Studies have shown that the herb valerian halved



the time it took for people to fall asleep, and in general people reported a sounder sleep taking it. L-Theanine also helps people to fall asleep more quickly.

GABA may have an effect on reducing stress, thus allowing the brain to wind down and reduce fatigue. In mice, combining L-theanine and GABA decreases the time it takes to fall asleep as well as increasing both deep sleep and dreaming sleep.

Conclusion

While the sleep quality I experienced once upon a time may never return, I take comfort in the fact that poor sleep does not have to be an inevitable part of my growing older—or yours. Tracking and understanding my sleep have been invaluable in helping me to figure out what I need to do to fix my sleep as I enter my senior years. Perhaps it can help you too.



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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Red Winter Salad

This recipe has been passed down through multiple generations in Poland, although other Eastern European countries have their own variations. It's known as a winter salad as the ingredients were available well into the winter months, having been preserved through fermentation or lasting well in cold rooms. As for the red part, anyone who ever cooked with beets will attest to their brilliant and penetrating colour. Handle with care, as it can stain surfaces and clothing. For the best taste and texture, prepare it the night before and store it in a glass jar in the fridge for up to a week. You may use the coarse grater attachment on a food processor to save time.

Ingredients

- 6–8 medium beets
- 6–8 fermented pickles
- 2–3 white onions
- 500 ml jar Sauerkraut (fermented white cabbage)
- ½ cup (divided) extra virgin olive oil
- 1 tbsp salt

Instructions

Wash fresh beets, remove stem stubs but do not peel, cut in halves; place on a roasting tray lined with parchment. Roast at 350 °F (175 °C) for 30 to 40 minutes, until tender. Let cool. Peel skins off if desired.

While beets are roasting, cube the onions. Measure 1 cup once chopped. Caramelize over low heat with half the oil and salt. Mix often. Once golden, set aside to cool, keeping all oil.

Squeeze excess brine from the sauerkraut. Cut into smaller strands and place into large mixing bowl.

Grate the pickles, measuring 2 cups once grated. Remove excess liquid and add to the bowl.

Grate the beets, measuring 3 cups once grated. Add to the bowl along with caramelized onions in their oil.

Add the remaining ¼ cup olive oil and mix until all ingredients are well distributed.

Enjoy!

Substitutions

Roasting helps beets retain their deep, vibrant colour, adding a richer appearance to your salad. You may use prepared beets (boiled) instead, but do not use those pickled in vinegar. The neutrality of the beets is needed to balance out the sauerkraut and pickles.

Whole fermented pickles, found in the fridge in a hazy brine, are healthier, but the recipe works with those pickled in vinegar as well. Avoid sliced ones. Do not use sweet pickles.

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Flourish Family Recipe



Slow-Cooker Chicken-Bone Broth

Transform simple ingredients into liquid gold with this slow-cooked chicken-bone broth, rich in flavour, deeply nourishing, and effortless to make. Strain, store, and enjoy this golden broth as a warm drink or a flavourful foundation for your favourite recipes this winter season!

Ingredients

- 1 whole chicken carcass (about 2 lb of bones)
- 1 carrot, peeled and chopped
- 1 yellow onion, quartered (or halved if you prefer to strain easily)
- 2 stalks celery, chopped
- 3 cloves garlic, halved
- 1–2 bay leaves
- 8 whole peppercorns
- 1 tbsp. apple cider vinegar
- 1 tsp. sea salt (adjust after cooking)
- 6–8 cups water (just enough to cover the bones)

Instructions

Place chicken bones into a slow cooker or large stock pot.

Add carrot, onion, celery, garlic, bay leaf, and peppercorns.

Pour in the vinegar, salt, and water.

Slow cooker: Cook on low setting for 8–12 hours.

Stovetop: Bring to a gentle simmer, then cover and cook on very low for ≥ 6 hours.

Strain the broth carefully into a heat-safe container.

Let cool 30 minutes. Skim any solidified fat from the top (save for cooking if desired).

Store or freeze.

Recipe Notes

You can refrigerate up to 4 days, freeze up to 3 months.



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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Vanilla Pomegranate Overnight Oats

A creamy and nourishing make-ahead breakfast packed with chia, oats, and a hint of vanilla, making this recipe perfect for busy mornings. Each spoonful offers a balance of sweetness, crunch, and refreshing pomegranate—a simple way to nourish your body and brighten your morning routine.

Ingredients

- ½ cup rolled oats
- ½ cup pomegranate seeds
- ¼ cup chia seeds
- 1 cup milk of choice
- 2 tsp. maple syrup
- ½ tsp. vanilla extract
- ¼ tsp. cinnamon

Instructions

In a bowl or jar, whisk together the milk, vanilla, cinnamon, and maple syrup.

Add the chia seeds and oats. Stir well so the seeds don't clump.

Cover and refrigerate overnight.

Top with pomegranate seeds before serving.

Optional: You can also add slivered almonds or any other nut or seed.

Recipe Notes

Store in an airtight container up to 4 days.

≈ 1 cup per serving.

For more flavour, add cardamom or a splash more vanilla, or top with toasted almonds.

More protein: Add 2 scoops of collagen, 1 scoop of protein powder, or serve over ½ cup of Greek yogurt.



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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AskGord



New Year's resolutions have never worked for me; do you have a suggestion which can help me shed a few extra pounds?

Start by supporting your liver—your body's central hub for detoxification and fat metabolism. Beyond cleansing, the liver helps regulate energy production and activates thyroid hormones that drive metabolic performance. When your liver is overburdened, fat metabolism can slow down, making weight goals harder to reach.

The good news? The liver has a remarkable ability to regenerate. Botanicals such as milk thistle (standardized for silymarin) and curcumin (providing 95% curcuminoids) have been scientifically studied for their antioxidant and protective benefits. A comprehensive liver-support formula combining these extracts can help optimize fat metabolism and energy balance—an excellent way to set the stage for a healthy weight-management journey.

I'm new to being a grandparent and find myself spending more time outdoors with our grandchild. Any suggestions for cold feet this winter?

Start with smart gear—wool socks, insulated waterproof boots, and movement breaks to keep blood flowing. For added support, a standardized *Ginkgo biloba* extract (24% flavone glycosides, 6% terpene lactones; 120–240 mg/day) helps support peripheral circulation and supports cognitive function/memory—a nice win for warm toes and a sharp mind. You can also consider grape seed extract as antioxidant support for vascular health, plus omega-3s for overall cardiovascular support. If one foot stays cold or you notice pain, colour changes, or numbness, check in with a health-care practitioner to rule out other causes.

With the right gear and circulation support, you'll be chasing sleds, not warmth!

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Content provided is for informational purposes only, and does not intend to substitute professional medical advice, diagnosis, or treatment.

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



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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We focus on safety and quality, so you don't need to.
Can other brands certify the same?

**Take a tour
of the lab**

