

Flourish

HEALTHY BODY, MIND, AND SPIRIT

Triple-A
COVID-19
Defense

**Student Stress, Anxiety,
and Depression 101**

Sadly, Attendance
Is Growing...

What Is
an Allergy?

Naturopathic
Perspectives

Special Promotions Inside!

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Editor's Letter



Spring is definitely in the air, and our current issue reflects it. Canadians are notorious for peeling off winter layers with the first whisper of a songbird or the sight of a crocus peaking through the snow-drenched soil. With this in mind, we've got articles with a focus on looking great from within. We feature the benefits of biotin for great-looking hair, skin, and nails, along with a discussion of collagen for a youthful look, healthy bones, and gut health, to name a few. With the spring air comes the return of airborne allergens, along with a multidimensional approach to coping with allergies naturally.

A fresh take on a new industry buzzword, sleep hygiene, will delve into several alternate strategies to improve slumber. Other articles touch on the brain-gut connection, stress, and fertility.

On a more serious note, we have some recommendations on how to navigate our new reality given the presence of the SARS-CoV-2 virus (COVID-19 disease) and what we can do to make life better.

Keep the comments coming! Until summer, the best of health to you all.

Sophia Golanowski, BCom, MBA
Editor-in-Chief

Flourish

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Feedback from Last Issue

Eye Health, Macular Degeneration, and Cataracts

The article about eye health was interesting. Glad to see you don't have to accept macular degeneration as being simply age-related.

It is encouraging indeed! Addressing health concerns definitely begins with a healthy diet and active lifestyle; however, it's great to know supplements containing naturally sourced plant compounds such as lutein and zeaxanthin can help protect your eyesight.

Nutritive Sweeteners:

*Xylitol and
Erythritol*

Your article on xylitol and erythritol definitely helped me understand the difference between them. Does their source material matter?

Good question! Each is a distinct compound with specific properties. The original source material has no bearing on the finished product. For instance, xylitol was first discovered in birch bark; yet, is commercially produced from non-GMO corn in a more efficient, less wasteful, and cost-effective manner.

We always like to hear from you...

We appreciate your feedback; let us know if you have any questions about the articles we publish.

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Biotin

Hair, Skin, and Nails

by Dr. Philip Rouchotas, MSc, ND
and Dr. Heidi Fritz, MA, ND

Biotin is a water-soluble essential nutrient associated with the B-vitamin family and functions as an essential cofactor involved in metabolic reactions of the cell. There are five known biotin-dependent enzymes (carboxylases) that are involved in the metabolism of glucose, amino acids, fatty acids, and cholesterol. Symptoms of frank biotin deficiency include hair loss, dermatitis, and skin rash, including a characteristic scaly red rash around the eyes, nose, mouth, and genital area, as well as neurologic dysfunction.

Deficiency

Biotin is found in many food sources, but is particularly rich in egg yolk, liver, and yeast. The adequate intake (AI) for adults is 30 mcg, but 35 mcg for breast-feeding women. Risk factors for biotin deficiency include:

- Prolonged consumption of raw egg white (prevents biotin absorption);
- Total intravenous nutrition devoid of biotin;
- Smoking (increased biotin catabolism);
- Liver disease (decreased biotinidase activity); and
- Anticonvulsant use (depletes biotin).

Finally, some research suggests that a number of women may be prone to developing marginal biotin deficiency during normal pregnancy. One pilot study evaluated levels of the biotin-dependent enzyme propionyl-CoA carboxylase (PCC) in lymphocytes of pregnant women. Decreased activity of this enzyme indicated biotin deficiency. In a cross-sectional study, 18 of 22 pregnant women were assessed as having decreased PCC

activity. Similarly, in another pilot study, 4 of 4 pregnant women with decreased PCC activity were treated with a daily dose of 300 mcg of biotin daily for two weeks; biotin supplementation increased the women's PCC activity by a mean of 95%, suggesting that "marginal biotin deficiency is common in normal human gestation." Moreover, biotin deficiency is linked to birth defects such as cleft palate and defects of fetal bone growth. Another study found that breast-feeding women excreted "76% more... of the biotin catabolite bisnorbiotin, indicating that lactation accelerates biotin turnover and loss."

Evidence

Skin, Hair, and Nails

Biotin has been used for improving the health of hair, skin, and nails for decades. Biotin has been used as a single agent for improving the



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health of fingernails, dosed at 2.5 mg daily for several months. In one study, out of the 45 patients that could be evaluated, 41 (91%) showed a “definite improvement with firmer and harder fingernails after an average treatment of 5.5 ± 2.3 months.” In another study, electron microscopy was used to evaluate fingernail brittleness, and this measure showed “less fingernail splitting and a 25% increase in the thickness of the nail plate in patients supplemented with biotin for 6 to 15 months.” Biotin has also been used as part of a complex formula used to treat acne.

Finally, a pilot study found that biotin supplementation decreased dermatitis (skin rash) due to treatment with a specific class of cancer medications called epidermal growth factor receptor (EGFR), tyrosine kinase inhibitors (TKIs): gefitinib and erlotinib. In all the patients, biotin reduced the drug-induced skin rash; notably, in two patients in whom the drug had been discontinued due to the skin rash being so intolerable, the administration of biotin allowed for long-term gefitinib or erlotinib treatment.

In children with hair loss due to anticonvulsant medications, supplementation with 10 mg of biotin daily for three months was found to reverse the hair loss. It is possible that biotin may be relevant for postpartum hair loss given the proposed prevalence of deficiency during pregnancy; however, there is a lack of data evaluating this outcome.

Neurological Health

A novel area of biotin research is its potential impact on the progression of multiple sclerosis (MS). A randomized, double-blind, placebo-controlled trial of 154 patients with progressive MS and evidence of disease worsening within the previous two years were given 300 mg of biotin daily or placebo for 12 months, followed by biotin therapy for both groups for 12 more months. A total of 13 biotin treated patients (12.6%) achieved the primary endpoint of a measure of improvement in disability at month 9 (and confirmed at month 12), compared to none of the placebo-treated patients. Biotin treatment also reduced disability score progression and improved the clinical impression of change compared with placebo. Biotin was well tolerated. Similar results were obtained in an earlier pilot study by the same group.

In conclusion, biotin appears to have a high safety profile, with up to 300 mg/d for two years reportedly well tolerated. Biotin may be an important nutrient in pregnancy and postpartum/breast-feeding. A modest amount of evidence suggests utility for improving the health of hair, skin, and nails in various populations. An exciting new area of research is the use of high-dose biotin in MS. Individuals should consult with a health-care practitioner to determine whether biotin is appropriate for them.

Visit our blog for the full article including references:
newrootsherbal.com/en/blog



Collagen

What Is It and What Are the Health Benefits?

by Dr. Mallory Murray, ND



What Is Collagen?

Collagen peptides have seemingly appeared out of nowhere. They are being advertised on social media, can be found on the covers of magazines... even my hairdresser has been talking about how she adds collagen peptides to her smoothies! But what are collagen peptides? Why is everyone adding this powder to their coffee, smoothies, or breakfast oatmeal bowl? And the real question is: Should you be adding collagen peptides to your diet as well?

Collagen is a structural protein that acts like a “glue” inside our bodies, in turn holding your body together. It provides integrity and elasticity, working to help our bodies function optimally and reducing the risk of injury. Collagen is found in abundance in our bodies and makes up over a third of the proteins that we are composed of.

There are four main types that are found everywhere from our skin to our joints, right down to the lining inside our arteries.

As we age, we begin to lose some of the collagen in our bodies. This is what accounts for the loss of elasticity in our skin, resulting in the sagging and wrinkles that so many of us are paying good money to mask with cosmetic procedures. It also plays a vital role in the laxity of our joints as we age, resulting in injuries occurring easier and more pain felt throughout our bodies. Collagen loss in our arterial lining plays a role in the decreased blood flow that the aging body experiences. Oxidative stress is another way that collagen can be damaged in your body. This can be due to things like smoking, excessive sun exposure, poor diet, and heavy alcohol use.

Collagen peptides, also known as hydrolyzed collagen, is a powdered form of collagen that has undergone the process of hydrolysis, which breaks the collagen down into smaller, more easily absorbable molecules.

Health Benefits

Bone Health

Collagen has been shown to help maintain the structural integrity of our joints, bones, and cartilage. As we age, so do these components in our bodies, making us more susceptible to injury. A study published in 2016 found that collagen supplementation in the diet improved symptoms in patients with moderate to severe osteoarthritis in the knee.

A study conducted in 2008 looked at the effects of dietary collagen supplementation in athletes who were at high risk for joint pain and deterioration. The results showed that the athletes who supplemented

with collagen had reduced pain and potentially a lower risk for joint deterioration later in life.

Gut Health

The amino acids play an interesting role in digestive health that we still have a lot to learn about. We do know that a large portion of our immune function resides in our digestive tract and relies on our digestive health, so a healthy digestive tract supports a healthy immune system.

A study published in 2017 supports the idea that people with inflammatory bowel disease—including IBS, Crohn’s disease, and ulcerative colitis—are absorbing lower levels of amino acids than they need. Supplementing with collagen can potentially improve the symptoms of inflammation, oxidative stress, and cell death.

Skin Elasticity

We know that as we age, our bodies begin to show signs of it, including wrinkles and decreased elasticity. Eating a clean, nutrient-dense diet and avoiding oxidative stressors, such as sun and smoking, can help reduce the external effects of aging. However, incorporating collagen peptides into your diet can also help reduce skin wrinkles that appear as you age, and can help strengthen the dermal matrix to prevent further collagen loss.



Cardiovascular Health

Excessive collagen loss, combined with poor collagen synthesis, can weaken plaque in the arteries. This can make the plaque more prone to breaking off and potentially blocking major arteries, resulting in atherosclerosis and heart disease. Maintaining healthy levels of collagen in the body can keep the arteries clear and supple, allowing for healthy blood flow throughout the body.



Where Can You Get Collagen?

Bone Broth. Bone broth is basically chicken soup on steroids. The basis of bone broth is that you boil down bone and connective tissue in order to extract the nutrients, including the infamous collagen, but also things like iron, essential B vitamins, zinc, and fatty acids. Bone broth can be made with veggies and herbs as well to not only enhance the flavour but also contribute to the nutrient profile. Great recipes for making homemade bone broth can be found online. If you prefer to purchase premade bone broth, be sure to purchase quality broth derived from healthy animals in order to ensure the maximum nutrient profile.

Eggs, specifically the whites, are rich in glycine and proline, two of the major constituents of collagen. Getting adequate amounts of these amino acids

will help your body produce collagen efficiently. That being said, egg yolks contain a great nutritional profile, so don't pass up on the yolk every time just because it's not where the majority of the collagen lies. Consider adding eggs into your oatmeal, making a frittata for the week, or enjoying them hard-boiled as easy ways to get in adequate egg intake.

Salmon Skin. So many nutrients can be found in the skin of animals, salmon included. It is commonly consumed in other cultures and, if prepared correctly, salmon skin can be just as delicious as the rest of the fish. Marinate your salmon in equal parts maple syrup and soy sauce with a few minced garlic cloves and some black pepper for at least 30 minutes before cooking to ensure a good flavour.



Collagen Peptide Powder. This is the latest craze all over the internet, and for a good reason. It's an easy way to get collagen without having to do any real cooking or meal prepping. Collagen peptide powder is virtually tasteless and can be added into whatever is on your menu for the day. Throw a scoop in a smoothie or your bowl of oatmeal, sprinkle it in your morning cup of coffee if you don't have time for breakfast, or add a few scoops into the batter of your baked goods.

Other Dietary Considerations. Eating a well-balanced, nutrient-dense diet will help counteract the oxidative stress in your body, therefore reducing the breakdown of your collagen. Keeping your sugar intake to a minimum will help avoid the inflammation and damage that can occur to your collagen. Rich protein sources, whether they are plant- or animal-based, will help provide your body with the amino acids needed to increase your collagen. Also, foods rich in essential nutrients and micronutrients will help stimulate your body's collagen production.

Consider taking some time to see where you are able to reduce exposure to things that are causing oxidative stress in your body. In addition, think about how you can increase your collagen intake. Your body will thank you later.



Dr. Mallory Murray, ND

She utilizes the most noninvasive treatments possible while helping achieve the most optimal state of health. Focusing on nutrition, lifestyle changes, and botanical supplements, she treats the whole family.

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Student Stress, Anxiety, and Depression 101

Sadly, Attendance Is Growing...

by Dr. Christina Bjorndal, ND

College: It's sometimes called "the best time in your life." You have new people, new situations, a huge variety of extracurricular activities to choose from... all while learning about yourself and the world. It is a time full of potential.

But it's not always all that nostalgic, like the feel-good movies about young adult students portray it. In recent years, the cultural perspective of college has been shifting to begin to open up to the difficult side of young-adult student life, including the increasingly common mental health struggles that go with it.

Untold personal and social pressures can wreak havoc on one's self-esteem. It's a time of experimentation, individuation, growth, and risks. It's also a time of stress and expectations for growing into a self-sufficient adult—for many, complete with learning "adulthood" habits like self-care, self-regulation, and self-reliance. For some, it's a time of loneliness, isolation, or avoidance.

Because of all this, it is a period of increased risk for mental health concerns. Rates of college-student mental-health issues are rising at alarming rates, with the number one and number two issues being depression and anxiety.

The good news is that there are ways to prevent or help improve mood and anxiety struggles as you complete your studies. Below are five of the most common causes of depression in college, with ways to help yourself improve your mental and overall health.

Poor Eating Habits

One of the most common things to happen is that diet habits change. Either out of convenience, unfamiliarity with cooking, stress, or 24/7 access to cafeteria food and take-out, many college students see an initial shift towards a less healthy diet. In pop culture, this is known as putting on the "freshman 15," a common phenomena of weight gain in freshman year due to unhealthy diet choices.

Unfortunately, this can also increase one's vulnerability to struggling with depression. High-carb, high-sugar, highly processed meals with low nutrient density and few



vitamins increase inflammation in the brain while also depriving the body of the building blocks needed to create “feel-good” neurotransmitters, like serotonin and dopamine. Inflammatory foods, artificial colours, and flavours—along with substances like alcohol, nicotine, and caffeine—can contribute to changes in concentration and a rise in anxiety.

Simply choosing healthy meals with anti-inflammatory properties that provide good amounts of protein, healthy fats, and vegetables goes a long way to preventing mood issues and mitigating stress and anxiety.

One of the best diets to follow is called “The Essential Diet: Eating for Mental Health,” created specifically to teach brain-healthy eating habits to those who want to support their mental health. The basics are lots of fresh vegetables; the right amount of protein and good fats; selective whole-grain carbohydrates; and low sugar, caffeine, and alcohol—all prepared with minimal processing and eaten at appropriate times (i.e. not skipping meals or eating on irregular schedules).



Lack of Exercise

Similar to why many college students adopt poor eating habits, exercise can also be neglected. With new demands on time and attention, it can be easy to let exercise habits fall away in favour of class, socializing, or other more exciting events.

The best motivation to continue (or to start) exercising is in the research: Recent studies show that regular aerobic and strength-training exercise are as effective at treating depression as antidepressants—without the negative weight, mood, and sexual side effects (in fact, exercise benefits all three). Exercise also helps to reduce stress hormones and improve sleep, both very important factors in mental wellness.

It's even more beneficial for your mental health when you exercise with others and when you do it outside. That's all the more reason to join a recreational sports team or movement group. It doesn't matter whether it's zumba dancing or speed walking—getting out there benefits your brain. Even simply walking in the sunshine between classes can lift your mood.



Irregular Sleep Rhythms

This is a very common cause of mood and anxiety issued in college, maybe even the number one cause. Even if you're eating well and exercising, if your sleep is disrupted or sacrificed regularly enough, it has a huge impact on mental health. Not just the day after—sleep deprivation has been shown to increase stress levels for days after a particularly disrupted sleep.

The body's rhythm of sleeping and waking hormones is called the circadian rhythm. Major and even minor disruptions in the sleep-wake cycle have been linked to metabolic, hormonal, and mental health issues including depression and anxiety. So, protecting your sleep is in fact one of the best ways to protect your mental health.

It doesn't always have to mean missing out—just making sure you get 7–8 hours of good quality sleep most nights is a good goal to aim for. Good quality means little waking during the night and waking feeling rested.

To help your circadian rhythm, sleep hygiene is the name of the game. Sleep hygiene is a set of practices to help your body “turn down the energy” at the end of the day to ensure a restful good quality sleep. Its main points are:

- Not looking at screens for one hour before bed;
- Establishing a regular relaxing bedtime routine;
- Making sure that the sleep environment is pleasant, dark, and peaceful;
- Limiting daytime naps;
- Avoiding caffeine and nicotine close to bedtime, maybe even after 12 p.m.;
- Exercising during the day;
- Not eating within three hours of bedtime; and
- Ensuring adequate exposure to natural light during the day.



Stress

Some stress may be an inevitable part of the college experience, but its negative consequences don't have to be.

Stress hormones, like cortisol and norepinephrine, are released when the body perceives something as being threatening, scary, or too much to handle. The body is essentially mobilizing energy and resources to get us away from the threat. This is a good evolutionary survival technique, but the only problem is that your body can't tell the difference between being stressed about running away from a tiger and being stressed about a final exam.

Having a large amount of stress or sustained stress for a long period of time can lead to a stress response that mobilizes the “fight-or-flight” response in the body for too long. This lasting response contributes to a decreased immune system, disrupted blood sugar levels, poor digestion, low energy, anxiety, and depression.

Therefore, reducing stress is at the core of preventing or healing many conditions, certainly not least of which are mood and anxiety. One of the most effective ways to reduce daily stress is to build in self-regulation

moments into your routine. Take short breathing breaks to stimulate the vagus nerve to help switch your body from the sympathetic (fight-or-flight) to the parasympathetic (rest-and-digest) modes of operation. Other activities like yoga, mindful meditation, and tai chi are very helpful for reducing cortisol. And finally, aerobic and strength-training exercises and proper sleep go a long way to reduce daytime stress hormones.

The key is to find a regular activity you can do for yourself and really only for yourself. So much stress can come from feeling like we always need to be productive. Finding a self-care routine for the sole purpose of maintaining your mental health can make a big difference in your day-to-day stress level.

Relationships

College is a time of meeting and making new friends. It can be enticing to follow the crowd and fit in, in order to have a sense of belonging. But it's also a time of immense self-discovery, influenced by the things on which we choose to spend our time and attention. There's a saying that “you are the combination of the five people you spend the most time with.” Especially in college, it is important to seek out influences that build you up instead of fill you with self-doubt, jealousy, longing, and anxiety.



Here are a few (brutally honest) pointers about how to feed your mental health through healthy relationships at college:

- Don't hang out with people that don't make you feel good, alive, or excited;
- Find five people that you feel inspired by (not jealous of);
- Don't hang out with people who make you feel bad about being yourself;
- Find two people you could call on during any emergency;
- Spend time with people you want to be like, whose habits you would want to adopt;
- Don't spend time with people who drain your energy; and
- Be courageous enough to be disliked by some people (that's OK, as long as you're being your best self. You can't please everyone).

Of course, the **most important** relationship you have is the relationship with yourself. You spend 100% of your day with your own thoughts, so taking care of self-talk is one of the most caring things we can do for ourselves. If you know that you speak harshly to yourself or judge yourself, learning to introduce self-compassion and self-acceptance is the first step along the path to self-love.

Working with your thoughts is the bedrock for being able to take action on the other four points in this article. If you can come from a place of wanting to help yourself, you will find endlessly more motivation to exercise, reduce stress, eat right, and sleep well than if you are trying to punish yourself, change your body, or run away from something.



Student mental health is on the radar for a lot of colleges now because so many students are struggling. Seek out a counseling session to talk about stressors and concerns you have. College is an exciting time and there are ways to support yourself in order to experience it with a full, open heart and resilience against mood and anxiety issues.

For more information about working with your mental health in a natural way, read *Beyond the Label: 10 Steps to Improve Your Mental Health with Naturopathic Medicine*.



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According to a variety of surveys of people of many age categories, supplementation with a multivitamin and multimineral formula reduces the risks of viral infections; significantly reduces stress, mood swings, physical fatigue, and anxiety; and increases vigilance and daily performance in general.

In the "Mood Sciences" category, an honourable mention is given to B-complex vitamins for their positive effects on mental health. Feeling exhausted, burnt-out, broken? Take a multi or a B-complex vitamin!



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The Brain-Gut Connection

Resetting and Rebalancing

by Dr. Krysten DeSouza, ND



Naturopathic doctors are holistic practitioners and see the body with all its connections. We believe the basis of all disease and illness begins in the gastrointestinal tract and the organs of detoxification. After all, if the entire tube from your mouth to your rear end is considered the outside of your body, the only way you have access to the food you eat is through the processes of digestion and absorption.

If you are experiencing bloating, gas, heartburn, constipation, or diarrhea, your body is not functioning as efficiently as possible. These are warning signs that something is off; either the digestive process has been compromised, or the wrong bacteria have taken up residence there—or both. These signs are often ignored or begin to be considered “normal.” Many people go about their day thinking their symptoms are linked to something they ate. Often, this could be true. However, it likely also has to do with an imbalance in gut bacteria.

70% of Your Immune System Lives in Your Gut

The bacteria in our gut should be given much more credit than we allow them. They are an important part of our digestive system, but an even more important part of our immune system. There is a delicate balance of good and bad bacteria living within us. The good ones fight for us and protect us. The bad ones ferment foods and release gas. They create digestive inflammation and ultimately result in disease. These bad bacteria are introduced through the foods we eat, the places we travel, the medications we take, etc. Every day, we come in contact with bad bacteria, but as long as we have enough of the good ones, we are able to fight them off. When our immune systems become weak, the bad bacteria start to outnumber the good ones—and we’ve got ourselves a problem.

Your Second “Brain” Is in Your Gut

If you have ever felt the sensation of “butterflies in the stomach” before a presentation, you are already aware of the brain-gut connection. The nerves that originate in our brain travel through our spinal cord to every corner of the body. When our brain interprets a stressful situation, that same stress signal fires through every nerve, and the entire body responds. During your presentation, this may show up as an urgent need to run to the washroom. Your palms may become sweaty and start to shake. All the while, your heart



is pounding in your chest, and you are convinced the audience can tell how nervous you are. These thoughts act as a positive feedback loop, enforcing and escalating the physical side of the stress response. Your brain is stressed, and your gut knows it.

Outside of presentations, many experience a generalized form of anxiety that exists all day. Anticipation for a stressful workday can present itself as bloating, diarrhea, nausea, and lack of appetite in the morning. Anxiety before bed can include a racing mind and physical restlessness, despite feeling exhausted. In these situations, the nervous system is on overdrive. Your mind has interpreted a dangerous situation, and your nervous system is poised and ready to run.

The same thing happens when we feel depressed. We may have negative thoughts in our brain, but our bodies experience fatigue, low motivation, pain, lack of appetite, and insomnia. It's not just in your head: It's in your whole body.

The Brain Can Influence the Gut, and the Gut Can Influence the Brain

Let's talk food: Food is our fuel, and we are only capable of doing what our dietary fuel allows. When we eat poorly, we provide our bodies with inflammatory compounds instead of nutritious vitamins. These inflammatory compounds travel through our bloodstream and can build up in any part of the body. After one large and unhealthy meal, we won't notice much. But if this poor dietary habit becomes a regular occurrence, inflammatory compounds can overwhelm our ability to clear them out. They begin interfering with regular processes and can show up in very interesting ways. Inflammation in the muscles and joints can appear as arthritis, stiffness, and pain. On the surface of the skin, inflammation looks like eczema and acne. Around the digestive tract, bloating and gas become the norm. But when these inflammatory compounds overload into the brain, we can experience brain fog, poor concentration, anxiety, and depression.

Resetting Brain and Gut Communication

Remove

Your body knows what to do; it just needs a bit of help to get started. In order to reestablish communication between the brain and gut, we first must begin by cleaning out the bad bacteria and resetting the balance of good and bad. Pharmaceutical antibiotics can be very harsh on the system and kill both good as well as bad bacteria. They specifically kill only bacteria and can be helpful in very severe cases of intestinal bacterial overgrowth. Yeast is a fungus that can grow anywhere in the body and is usually kept under control by our bacteria. After antibiotic use, we lose our ability to control the yeast, and it tends to overgrow. Natural antimicrobials are a better option in this case, as they will gently eradicate bad bacteria as well as yeast.

In the meantime, we must address diet and identify foods that are contributing to inflammation. You may consider yourself a healthy eater, but your immune system ultimately makes the decision as to what is

right for you. Remember that food sensitivities are different from food allergies: An allergy may present itself immediately, whereas a sensitivity will create a delayed reaction that is hard to link back to what you ate. An elimination diet or food-sensitivity test can be very helpful in determining where to begin.

Reset

The process of digestion is a series of reactions that take place like a domino effect. When we see or smell food, we begin to salivate. This stimulates the production of stomach acid, which gets our stomach grumbling and increases our appetite. As soon as we start eating, a specific profile of digestive enzymes is released in response to the amount of carb, fat, and protein in the meal. When we eat too quickly or don't chew our food well, these signals get confused and happen all out of sequence. We can end up with bloating, heartburn, burping, and stomach cramping.



Rebalance

Once we have cleaned out unwanted organisms from the gut, we can now begin to rebuild it.

“Probiotics are helpful, but the quality of the probiotic will depend on its variation and inclusion of specific strains of bacteria.”

Probiotics are not the only solution, however: Amino acids, antioxidants, anti-inflammatories, and vitamins all play a large role in reestablishing the ecosystem.



Rethink

To reset brain-gut communication, we cannot be successful until we acknowledge the power of the mind. Arguably, this is the most important step—and easily the most challenging. We cannot change our stresses, but we can change our perception of them. We hold the power to determine how much we let our stresses affect us and impact our health. When we let our minds get the better of us, we create anxiety, lose sleep, and make poor decisions.

Becoming aware of negative self-talk and the physical symptoms associated with stress can alert us to how often this process takes place. Only then can we begin to create change and allow our bodies to heal in a top-down approach.



Dr. Krysten DeSouza, ND

Krysten is a Mississauga naturopathic doctor, with a special interest in anxiety disorders and mental health. She believes in power of the mind-body connection and that managing mental health should take a whole-body approach.

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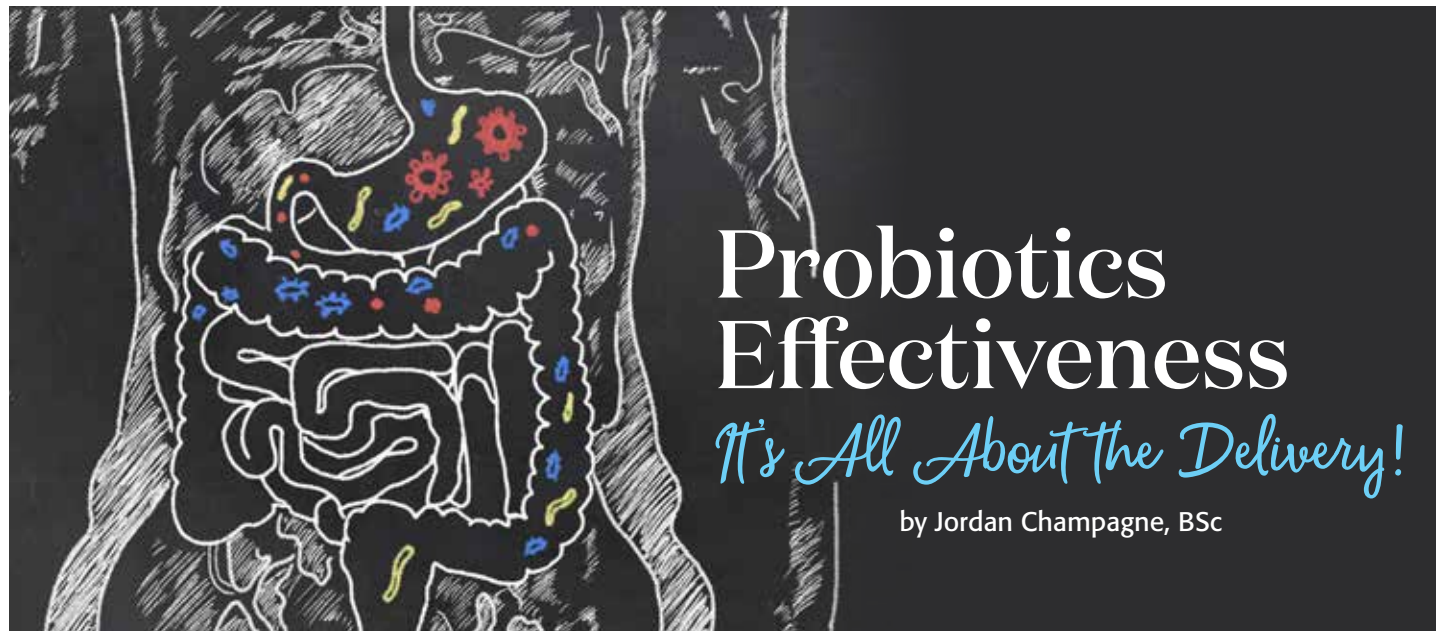
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The Trillions We Already Have

Our intestines play host to trillions of bacteria. Their tasks, which include digestion, immune-system modulation, and vitamin synthesis, are critical to general health.

There are two prominent groups of probiotic bacteria that inhabit a healthy gut: *Lactobacillus* and *Bifidobacterium*. *Lactobacillus* species, which keep potentially harmful bacteria such as a *E. coli* in check, are the main inhabitants of the small intestine. *Bifidobacterium* strains, which can ease symptoms associated with irritable bowel syndrome (IBS), are the predominant species to look for in a healthy colon (large intestine). These *Bifidobacterium* species are resident strains that embed within the mucosal lining and replicate, a term referred to as colony-forming. Probiotic labels often show “CFU,” meaning colony-forming units. To form colonies, these probiotics need to arrive alive and healthy.

Enteric coating has been shown to protect many delicate strains, especially *Bifidobacterium*, which are decimated when exposed to stomach acids.



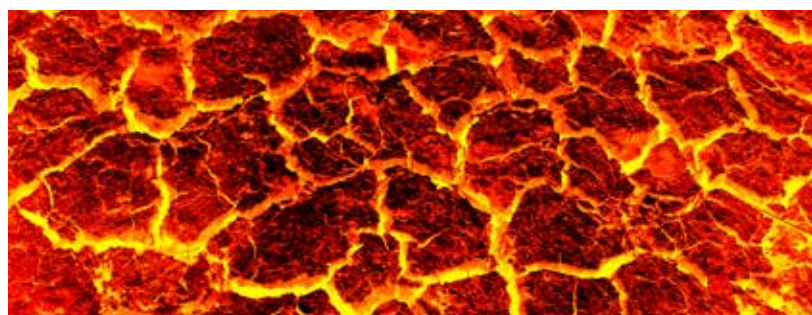
Probiotics Effectiveness

It's All About the Delivery!

by Jordan Champagne, BSc

Let's begin with the definition of probiotics; according to the International Scientific Association for Probiotics and Prebiotics (ISAPP), probiotics are **"Live microorganisms that, when administered in adequate amounts, confer a health benefit to the host."** The key word here is **"live"**!

Probiotic cells are commonly referred to as colony-forming units (CFUs). Only **live cells** can reproduce within the intestines to deliver on the promise of their scientifically researched benefits. It makes you wonder: How can you be certain that all the CFUs in your probiotic survive the harsh acids located in your stomach? Imagine walking into a battleground covered in pools of battery acid, where everything you touch is designed to liquify and decimate... How can probiotics possibly make it to your intestines alive?



Safe Passage Is Possible

Probiotics need to be protected from these harsh stomach acids, and there is a clinically proven method to do so. It is, in fact, **the only scientifically proven method**: Put them into a capsule, and then apply enteric coating.

What Exactly Is Enteric Coating?

Enteric coating is a dual process featuring a water-based, naturally sourced coating applied with sophisticated spray-drying technology. The process is not only time-consuming, but very costly, which could explain why so few companies actually use this procedure.



Capsules are made of two halves: The smaller half fits into the larger half. The joint of the capsule is the first point of weakness. Imagine getting into a submarine where the welder did not fully seal every joint. Water enters as air escapes—we know how this story ends.

So How Does Enteric Coating Resolve This?

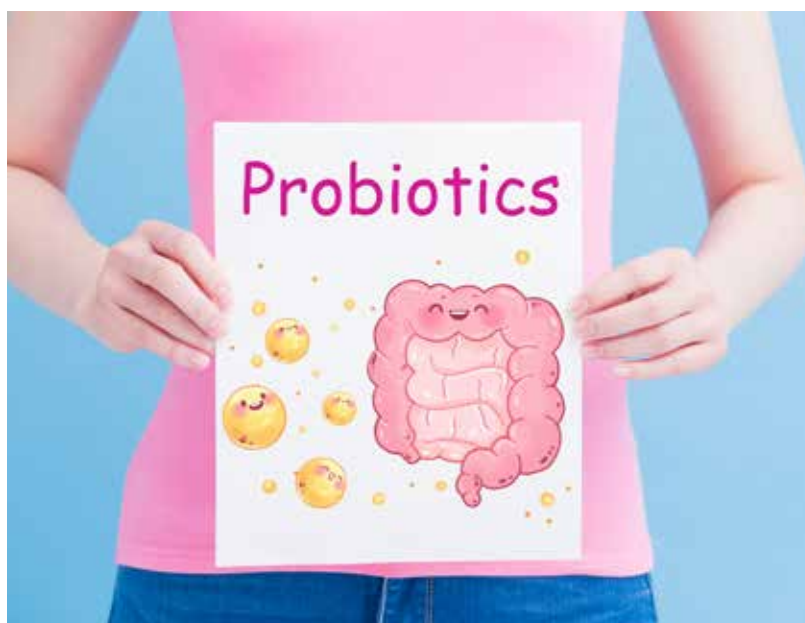
The first step in the process is the application of a subcoat which fully seals the joint of the capsule.



The next step takes care of the other obvious weakness: The integrity of the actual vegetable capsule. Capsules are made predominantly of either animal or fish gelatin, or vegetable cellulose—not plastic! They are designed to disintegrate. In the second step of the enteric-coating process, capsules are repeatedly sprinkled with hundreds of thousands of natural pH-formulated microscopic particles. These particles first bind to the capsule, layer upon layer, for hours, forming the protective enteric coating.



The hybrid action of this coating is brilliant. Even though it is composed of 100% natural ingredients (mostly of fatty acids and plant fibres), the multitude of microscopic layers bound together protects the capsule from harsh stomach acids. But that's not all: The pH composition of these microparticles allows the coating to selectively release its contents only once it reaches the less acidic, safe environment of the intestines. It's like having an impenetrable armoured tank that will only open its hatch once it senses the exterior environment is safe to exit into.



Scientifically Proven Survival, Delivery, and Release of LIVE Probiotics

The protective power of enteric coating has been proven in numerous clinical studies, performed with protocols set forth by the United States Pharmacopoeia (USP) convention. These are the most advanced and respected standards, selected by more than 140 countries worldwide, in both natural-product communities and pharmaceutical companies. In these studies, probiotics in enteric-coated capsules survived the onslaught of harsh stomach acids. Label-stated amounts of CFUs were active and healthy when released into the friendly environment of the intestines, ready to work on improving your health.

Shouldn't All Probiotics Be Enteric-Coated?

That would make sense. Reputable probiotic manufacturers are using this method to assure you get the benefits you expect. But, as stated, it's a time-consuming process, and it's significantly more expensive. Sadly, many companies don't think your health is worth the added expense.

Don't Delay... Get the Full Benefits!

Delayed-release capsules do not provide the same protection as enteric coating. Delayed-release capsules allow destructive stomach acids to enter the capsule through the unprotected joint in less than 30 minutes. The result? Harsh stomach acids immediately start killing off the delicate probiotics—they don't stand a chance!

If you're paying for a probiotic with a label claim stating 50 billion live CFUs, shouldn't you get the actual health benefits promised? And don't you want them arriving alive and healthy so they can work for you? Only enteric-coated capsules deliver on the promise.

You've made the choice to take a probiotic to improve your health. Choose one that will allow you to get all the benefits promised... Choose enteric-coated!



Getting Ds?



Getting Cs?



Getting Bs?

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by Guillaume Landry, Naturopath

COVID-19 (the disease caused by the SARS-CoV-2 coronavirus) is a hot topic in the news and has created a lot of anxiety due to the rapid change in infection rates and mortality. And the numbers keep changing.

Our approach to managing this high degree of uncertainty is to focus on what we can control; we call it the “Triple-A Defense.”

1. Awareness 2. Avoidance 3. Action

Awareness

COVID-19 is an illness caused by a coronavirus. These viruses are common and are typically associated with mild illness, similar to the common cold. Most patients with COVID-19 have experienced mild to severe respiratory illness. Symptoms can include fever, cough, and shortness of breath. Symptoms may appear 2–14 days after exposure.

Coronaviruses are spread from an infected person through:

- Respiratory droplets from a cough or sneeze;
- Close personal contact, such as touching or shaking hands; and
- Touching something with the virus on it, then touching your eyes, nose, or mouth before washing your hands.



There is no vaccine or treatment to prevent coronaviruses. The good news is that most people with common coronavirus illness will recover on their own.

In the most severe cases, people with the virus can develop difficulty breathing and may ultimately experience organ failure. Sadly, some cases are fatal. Given its recency, it is difficult to estimate how fatal the virus is. On March 3, 2020, world health officials stated that globally, the mortality rate for those infected with COVID-19 is 3.4%, higher than previous estimates of about 2%. This is higher in older populations and people with weak immune systems. To give a perspective, according to the CDC, on average over the last 10 years, seasonal flu strains kill about 0.1% of people who become infected.

Avoidance

Top 10 Recommendations to Take Care of Your Health and Protect Your Loved Ones



Wash your hands frequently. Regularly and thoroughly clean your hands with an alcohol-based hand rub or wash them with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. This kills viruses that may be on your hands.



Clean regular items that touch your hands and face. Use an alcohol cleaning wipe to clean your cell phone and TV remote.



Practice respiratory hygiene. This means covering your mouth and nose with your bent elbow or tissue when you cough or sneeze. Dispose of the used tissue immediately.



Avoid touching eyes, nose, and mouth. Hands touch many surfaces and can pick up viruses. Once contaminated, hands can transfer the virus to your eyes, nose, or mouth.



Sanitize your hands after touching money or using ATMs.



Avoid heavily crowded areas and maintain at least 1 metre between yourself and anyone who is coughing or sneezing.



Avoid shaking hands. Hands are an effective carrier of respiratory viruses. Switch to a fist bump instead of a handshake.



Avoid touching public handrails, elevator buttons, and shopping-cart handles with your bare hands. If you must use them, remember to sanitize or wash your hands afterwards.



Avoid travel to high-risk countries.



Blowing out birthday cake candles is not a good idea.

Two great sites to keep updated of the COVID-19 developments are:

- <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/2019-novel-coronavirus-infection.html>
- <https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019>

Action

COVID-19 is dangerous for people with a compromised immune system. Maintaining good health and a healthy immune system is always a good idea. Eating a well-balanced diet, getting plenty of sleep, staying physically active, and keeping stress levels in check can help do so. If you require additional support, these natural products can help.

- **Build your immune system with vitamin D.** It plays a crucial role in activating T cells, the first line of defense of the immune system.



- **Strengthen your immune response with probiotics.** Your intestinal flora is linked to the production of T lymphocytes. A multistrain probiotic can effectively strengthen the intestinal flora. The key is to release live active probiotics into the small intestine. Only refrigerated probiotics protected by an enteric coating can effectively do this.
- **Stop infections with green tea.** Green tea has been reported to provide various health benefits against numerous diseases and has antiviral effects.



- **Strengthen your immune system with therapeutic mushrooms.** They produce various molecules which act on viruses.



- **Optimize your immune response with vitamin C.** Studies indicate that vitamin C may alleviate or prevent infections caused by bacteria, viruses, and protozoa. It also optimizes the action of therapeutic mushrooms and quercetin.



- **Use quercetin for the maintenance of good health.** This antioxidant is strongly supported by research in Canada and China as reported by *MacLean's*, *CBC*, and *Radio-Canada*.
- **Maintain a healthy immune system with astragalus.** It is used in herbal medicine. It has many purported health benefits, including immune-boosting, antiaging, and anti-inflammatory, and it is used to treat the effects of common cold.



Conclusion

If you have fever, cough, and difficulty breathing, seek medical care immediately. Calling in advance may allow your health-care provider to quickly direct you to the right health facility. Wearing a medical mask will help stop you from spreading viruses and other infections.

Stay home if you feel unwell. Follow the directions of your local health authority.

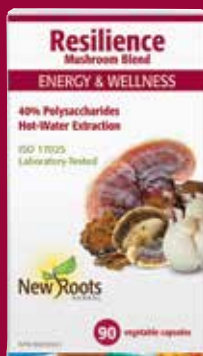
Get empowered, minimize your risk, implement your own “Triple-A Defense.”



Fight free radicals



Build up your barrier



Feel the resistance

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What Is *an Allergy?*

Naturopathic Perspectives

by Dr. Priscilla Tang, ND

Spring has finally arrived, and with it have come lots of sunshine, birds coming out to play—and, unfortunately, also a lot of sneezing, runny noses, and congestion. For allergy sufferers, this time of the year can be both a blessing and a curse. While the most effective way to deal with your allergies is to prepare your body 2–3 months **before** “allergy season,” there are still ways you can help reduce symptoms.

In order to understand some of my recommendations below, you must first understand what an allergic reaction is. Simply put, it is an immunoglobulin E (IgE) immune response that leads to the release of histamine (a protein), which causes the swelling and congestion that is associated with an allergic reaction. However, histamine is not inherently a bad thing; it has systemic effects and is released from storage in times of injury, infection, allergy, or an inflammatory reaction. It helps our tissues become more permeable to allow nutrients to get where they need to be to aid in healing. It also helps signal our bodies when it is in a dangerous environment; for example, it causes constriction of our lungs to prevent inhalation of toxic fumes. It is only when the body is unable to clear histamine—or that it is present in excessive amounts—that it becomes problematic. Histamine can cause other systemic concerns such as pain that is not relieved by pain killers, brain fog (e.g. difficulty thinking), and diarrhea.

A naturopathic approach to allergies involves taking this knowledge and then helping the entire body either mitigate or reduce this histamine reaction. The following list includes considerations to help combat allergies.

Decrease High- Histamine Foods

Yes, histamine can be found in foods! “Histamine intolerance” describes a condition where there is an overload or increased sensitivity to histamines, either due to genetics, consumption, or risk factors such as impaired gut lining, kidney and/or liver issues, and chronic stress. Common symptoms of histamine intolerance include bloating, diarrhea, abdominal pain, and fullness after meals, as well as less common symptoms such as dizziness, skin rashes, headaches, and nasal congestion.

Regardless of whether you have this condition or not, you help decrease the load on your body when you are mindful of high-histamine-containing foods, or foods that increase the release of histamine. Examples include nightshade vegetables (eggplant,

potato, tomato, bell peppers, etc), fermented foods and drinks (yes, I'm sorry, this also includes wine), artificial colours and preservatives, foods with viable yeast (such as sourdough bread), and even certain fruits such as pineapple, bananas, strawberries, and citrus fruits (these all seem unfair considering picnic season is also here...).



Support Your Liver

The liver is one of our most crucial organs, as it acts like a gateway which processes toxins, chemicals, and hormones before they are broken down, absorbed, and/or used by our bodies. Often times, due to our environment, stress, as well as poor lifestyle and dietary habits, the liver becomes overburdened, becomes unable to deal with any extra “activity,” and can contribute to an easily triggered histamine response. How do we help decrease that burden? Eat a whole-foods diet, as many vitamins (such as vitamin B6) are required for detox pathways. Decrease the amount of packaged foods you consume to decrease the amount of chemicals to process. Include more bitter foods in your diet, such as bitter melon, dandelion greens, arugula, and kale to help with bile production (which helps you to digest your food more effectively). Drink dandelion tea, a root herb that has been shown to help with liver function. And, last but not least, increase consumption of cruciferous vegetables like cauliflower, kale, broccoli, Brussels sprouts, etc.

Get Moving and Get Sweating

Open up those pores and allow your lymphatic system to flow! The lymphatic system is often an overlooked aspect of health; however, it is important to help remove waste products from the body and is also a crucial “highway” for immune cells to get where they need to be. Congestion can put additional burden on your liver, impair your immune response, and have your body feeling heavy and sluggish. Whether this be through a sauna, walking, playing sports, swimming, or dancing (my personal favourite), giving your lymphatic system consistent opportunity to breathe helps this system work efficiently and decreases congestion in the body. Often times, consistently tight muscles contribute to decrease lymphatic flow, so incorporating a yoga routine into your weekly activity can help as well.

Heal Your Gut

A phenomenon termed “leaky gut” (or increased intestinal permeability) is something increasing in our North American society today, due to chronic stress, high consumption of refined sugars and simple carbohydrates, poor sleep, impaired digestion, and (especially) continued consumption of food sensitivities. In “leaky gut,” the lining of your digestive tract is compromised, allowing food particles to end up in the bloodstream (where no food should be), and your body then mounts an immune response to those particles (because it is foreign matter that shouldn't be there).



Identifying and eliminating food sensitivities decreases inflammation in your gut and overall body, and it gives an opportunity for your gut to heal. Dairy is a big food sensitivity that is both common and very inflammatory to allergy sufferers. It is also considered a “damp” food in traditional Chinese medicine, which are absolute no-gos for allergies. Naturopathic doctors are able to run a blood test for food-sensitivity testing to identify the foods you should be eliminating. They also use supplements and herbs—such as probiotics, glutamine, aloe, and slippery elm—to help repair your gut lining and decrease your risk of further immune concerns.

Address Your Risk Factors

(Autoimmune Diseases and Stress in Particular)

As previously mentioned, allergies are an immune response. In autoimmune diseases, the immune system is, simply put, “overactive,” which can tie into the increased susceptibility to allergies for autoimmune diseases such as Hashimoto’s (underactive thyroid), rheumatoid arthritis, lupus, type I diabetes, and celiac disease. Research has found that there are indeed common pathways between autoimmune diseases and allergies. Naturopathic doctors use herbs, supplements, and acupuncture—on top of lifestyle and dietary modifications—to treat autoimmune conditions. As noted multiple times, chronic stress can have a damaging impact on your health, be it the way your body processes histamine, how your liver functions, or even on the integrity of your gut lining. Stress management is an integral part of any treatment plan.



Take Anti-inflammatory and/or Antihistamine Supplements

I always say that supplements are **supplementary** to any treatment plan, and that no magic pill will work without changes to lifestyle and diet. There is, however, plenty of research around certain supplements for many conditions, and it is often necessary to take supplements to work in synergy with the lifestyle and diet changes we make. Quercetin is an excellent example of a supplement that has both anti-inflammatory and antihistamine effects, and is shown to be effective for allergy symptoms. Curcumin is a favourite anti-inflammatory supplement of mine that also helps with liver function.

It is very common to ask “How much should I take?” or “Which brand should I buy?” The quality and dose of your supplement is important and should be determined on an individual basis by a naturopathic doctor. This is because of the immense variability you see in the health-food stores, and due to the fact that not all the information you would need is on supplement labels. Curcumin is a prime example of where a professional recommendation is necessary, as it is a supplement that is inherently poorly absorbed in the body, and bottles can be priced from \$20 to \$100+. It can be easy to grab one of the cheaper options, not knowing that the quality varies significantly from different products, and that there is a reason why some are more expensive than others. At the same time, more expensive isn’t necessarily better.

This is why it’s important to have a professional with experience using natural health products to help navigate through your supplements. You may be thinking “Well, why not just take an antihistamine pharmaceutical (such as Reactine®) if histamine is the problem?” In some cases, yes, you have to do what you have to do. However, antihistamines only block the binding site of histamine; they do not help the body eliminate excess histamine nor do they reduce the sensitivity to histamines. While it may be a good temporary solution, it also creates a dependence on antihistamines, as the root of the problem is not being dealt with.

Other treatments to help with allergy symptoms and overall balance in the body are acupuncture and cupping. These are effective at decreasing congestion, increasing blood flow, and helping to realign the body back into a state of health. Between four and eight treatments are usually recommended, in conjunction with lifestyle and dietary changes.

Note that the prior information is meant to be educational and used as a general guideline. Please consult a health-care practitioner before starting any treatment regime.



Dr. Priscilla Tang, ND

A graduate of the Canadian College of Naturopathic Medicine (CCNM) in North York, where she completed a

4-year Doctor of Naturopathy program.
drtangnd.com

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Adios allergies



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Sleep Hygiene

Naturopathic Perspectives

by Dr. Conan Jones, ND



What is Sleep Hygiene?

Something everyone has in common is the need for sleep. We spend about one third of our lives sleeping. Since we all need sleep, we all have different strategies and techniques in order to ensure a restful night's sleep. Sleep hygiene is the set of habits one does in order to try to sleep well on a consistent basis. Millions of individuals suffer from sleep disturbances, including insomnia, which affects 20% of the population. Insomnia is difficulty with falling or staying asleep. The causes of insomnia are often difficult and frustrating to determine.

People use a variety of tools to try to get more sleep, including medication therapy. Many individuals desperately want to sleep and will almost resort to whatever means necessary to get sleep. Medications typically have unwanted and unexpected side effects, from dizziness and daytime drowsiness to weakness and stomach pain, and tend to only be effective for the short term. These side effects lead individuals to seek alternative therapies and remedies as sleep aids. Let's further discuss some alternative tips and strategies for improved sleep.

Alternative Strategies for Improved Sleep

Our bodies need sleep in order to grow, rejuvenate, make hormones, repair damaged tissues, grow muscle, and restore memories. With sleep being so crucial, yet so hard to obtain for so many individuals, a vacuum for seeking alternative strategies for improving sleep has been created. Each individual will find a different quantity and combination of strategies that works best. What works for one person may not work for another person.

A multitude of alternative strategies have been utilized to help with improving sleep. These strategies range from old wives' tales to scientifically proven treatments.

Typical alternative sleep-aid strategies include relaxation techniques, exercise, nutrition and supplementation, environment adjustment, and habits and rituals.

Relaxation Techniques

Doesn't just reading the word "relaxation" make you feel more relaxed? The power of the mind is amazing, especially in the world of sleep hygiene. Relaxation techniques aim to relax the mind and body while reducing tension and stopping sleep-disturbing thought processes. Four common relaxation techniques include biofeedback, imagery, deep-muscle relaxation, and autogenic training (AT).

Biofeedback involves using a biofeedback machine at the doctor's office or at home. Electrodes are attached to the individual to measure heart rate, muscle tension, and brain activity. The purpose of monitoring is to see how different thoughts or movements

affect how your body tenses and relaxes. You are training your body to recognize and react accordingly to different sensations with a biofeedback loop.

Imagery is a mental practice of visualizing peaceful and calming images and scenes in order to help relax the body for a restful night's sleep. With imagery, you can learn to control your breathing and empower yourself to imagine having a good night's rest. Imagery is also used as a strategy for coping with pain.

Deep-muscle relaxation, or progressive muscle relaxation, is a progressive series of tensing and relaxing different muscle groups in the body. The process of contracting a variety of muscle groups causes the muscles to fatigue as well, which helps to induce sleep.

Autogenic training (AT) involves specialized training in a series of courses. Individuals who use AT are able to exhibit greater control of relaxing certain muscle groups, including breathing and pulse control, with higher levels of training.



body to stay awake. Exercise is a great tool in the sleep-aid toolbox, as long as it is done earlier in the day.

Nutrition and Supplementation

Did you know a proper diet is helpful for getting a restful night's sleep? Just as timing of exercise is important for optimal sleep, the timing of eating and drinking is just as important. You should try to finish dinner several hours before bedtime and stay hydrated enough to not wake up thirsty or wake up needing to use the restroom. A light snack, cup of chamomile tea, or a warm glass of milk, which contains sleep-inducing tryptophan, may also help with relaxation prior to bed.

Exercise

Using exercise as an ally in the fight for more sleep should not come as a huge surprise. Exercise has been shown to help people fall asleep and sleep more soundly. The timing during the day when you exercise is very important for proper sleep hygiene. Exercise should happen during the day and be avoided at nighttime, especially four hours up until bedtime.

Endorphins are released during exercise, which are great for boosting your mood but cause excitement and can keep individuals awake. Your core-body temperature and secretion of cortisol also increase during exercise, which can signal your

Avoiding certain stimulants—such as spicy foods, nicotine, caffeine, and alcohol—about four to six hours prior to bedtime helps improve sleep quality. Certain medications and pain relievers may also need to be avoided prior to bedtime, along with the urge to eat a heavy meal.



A variety of herbal supplements have been utilized as alternative sleep aids. The most commonly known one is melatonin, which is typically released in the brain about four hours prior to feeling sleepy or when light is naturally reduced. This signaling can become confused with the light from screens and homes. Melatonin supplements are available over the counter. Tart cherry juice has been shown to help with melatonin production and supporting healthy sleep cycles.

Magnesium is a very vital mineral for brain and heart health in addition to providing relaxing effects on smooth muscle. It also helps with melatonin production and increases levels of the calming substance *gamma*-aminobutyric acid (GABA). Insufficient levels have been linked with poor sleep

quality. The modern food supply is deficient in magnesium due to soil depletion. Magnesium supplementation is essential and also should be timed right, preferably about one hour before bedtime for optimal effects.

Many herbs and flowers have been noted to help with sleep, such as valerian root, lavender, chamomile, and passion flower. Other vitamins, minerals, and amino acids that have been found to contribute to healthy sleep patterns include glycine, tryptophan, *Ginkgo biloba*, and L-theanine. Consult your health-care practitioner before starting a new supplement regimen in order to prevent any potential interactions with other medications and/or supplements you may currently be taking.

Environment Adjustment

Everyone has a different preference as far as sleep temperature; however, extremes in hot or cold are not conducive to good sleep. Also, make sure your bedroom is dark and quiet, as light and noise interfere with sleep. Make your environment comfortable for your needs. Keep as many pillows and blankets as you'd like, or wear a sleep mask or earplugs if necessary. Please make sure to keep people and pets around who are conducive to a restful environment. One final tip for good sleep hygiene is to put away the television, computer, and smartphone screens. Your bed should be saved for two activities: sleep and sex.

Habits and Rituals

Everyone has a different series of habits and rituals necessary for sleep. A nice warm bath prior to bedtime can be relaxing. If you are having difficulty falling asleep, try to sleep only when you are actually sleepy. Also, try not to be a clock-watcher. A sleep journal can help you to write down any feelings or issues so you can process them and alleviate your mind.

Naps are great for catching up on missed sleep. The timing of naps should be short, such as 20 minutes or less, and occur before the afternoon. You may throw off your sleep-wake cycle if you nap for too long or at the wrong time. Try to keep your sleep times consistent as patterns are easier to naturally follow.

In conclusion, finding the right sleep hygiene regimen for yourself will involve some trial and error. Consult your health-care practitioner in order to find what works best for you if you are having difficulty with sleeping.



Dr. Conan Jones, ND

Cofounder of the Peninsula Natural Health clinic in Poquoson, Virginia. He aims to bridge the gap in the modern world of medicine. His goal is to care for the whole person: mind, body, and soul.

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She can't wait to have a baby



He can't wait to have a baby



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A photograph of a young couple with long hair, smiling and embracing each other outdoors. The woman is wearing a brown leather jacket, and the man is wearing a dark blue shirt. They are looking down at something in their hands, possibly a book or a phone.

Preparing for Conception

Naturopathic Perspectives

by Dr. Sarah Zadek, ND

Thinking of conceiving? You may have heard about the “100 days”—the time it takes for an egg to mature. For men, it takes about 80 days for sperm to mature. During this time of development and maturation, a woman’s follicles and a man’s sperm are extremely vulnerable to DNA damage from exposure to toxins, systemic or chronic inflammation, and nutrient deficiencies. This means that for many who are ready to or are thinking of conceiving in the not-so-far future, the health of their eggs and sperm can be greatly impacted before they are even released, either during ovulation or ejaculation. This is the window that we need to take advantage of, to increase the health of our eggs and sperm to increase the odds of a viable and healthy egg and fertilization.

Although we place a lot of importance on women for fertility, sperm health, measured by proper morphology (shape) and motility (the ability to move and swim properly), directly relates to male health. If sperm are dysfunctional, if there are fragments in DNA or abnormal head or tail shapes, there’s a small likelihood that sperm is going to make it to the egg, let alone fertilize it.

Planning for a healthy pregnancy therefore actually starts before conception and needs to include both partners. The health of a mother who nourishes a fetus is critical, but so is the health of the partner whose sperm—and therefore DNA—will be incorporated into making an embryo.

The point isn’t to scare couples but to empower them. There are many things that you can do for your health that will affect that of your eggs and sperm.

Take a High-Quality Prenatal Vitamin and Vitamin D

Multiple nutrients and vitamins are essential for reproductive health, including several B vitamins, vitamin D, and folic acid. Speak to your naturopathic doctor for recommendations. Not all prenatal multivitamins are made equally. There are many products available that contain cheaper, synthetic forms of vitamins, as well as formulas that include multiple fillers and artificial food dyes. Most importantly is getting 1 mg of folic acid, which we find is optimal in the methylated or naturally occurring form, 5-methyltetrahydrofolate (5-MTHF).

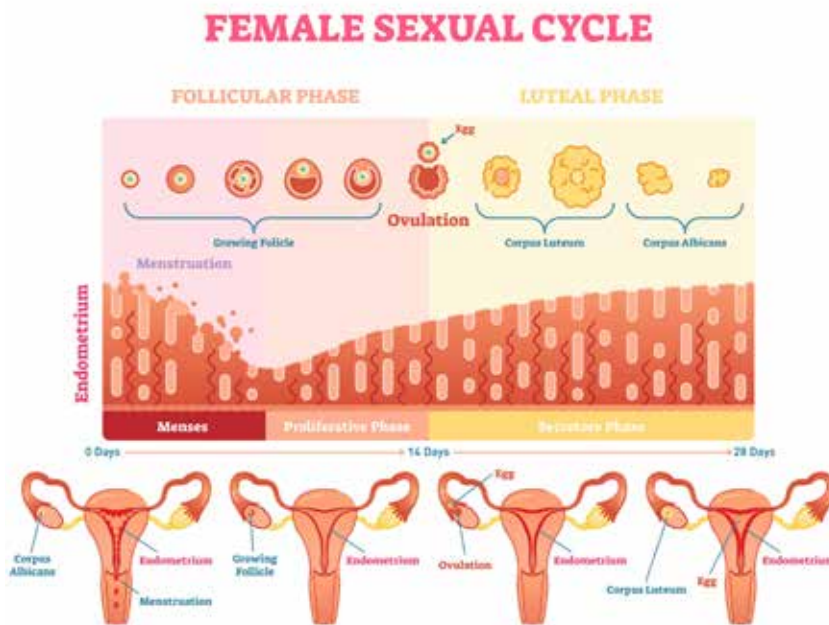
5-MTHF has its advantages over “plain old” folic acid. It’s better absorbed in the gastrointestinal tract and is bioavailable, even in a person with genetic SNPs or

“snips” for the folic acid enzyme MTHFR. Additionally, using this form reduces the risk of masking the symptoms of a B12 deficiency, making it a superior form of folic acid.

Vitamin D is a major modulator of steroidal sex hormones. Now, in winter, most of us in North America are deficient in vitamin D. Having optimal levels can lead to better odds of embryo implantation and clinical pregnancy. This is especially important in endometriosis and any women who has experienced recurring pregnancy loss.

Understand Your Cycles and Track Your Ovulation

Using tools like fertility awareness methods can help identify your fertile window. While textbooks say that a women should ovulate on day 14 of her cycle, many women actually ovulate sooner or later than that. Therefore, if you’re only engaging in intercourse around day 14, you might be completely missing your fertile window.



Be mindful and track your cervical fluid and discharge quality. It can also be helpful to track your basal body temperature each morning to find out when you’re ovulating.

Eat Organic When Possible, and Eat a Variety of Fruits and Vegetables

Nutrition is key! Consuming nutrients via a healthy diet and a prenatal vitamin plays a significant role in overall health. The focus should be on including more vegetables and one or two servings of fruit per day. Whole, complex carbohydrates are also important for hormone regulation and digestion (elimination).

High-quality protein and healthy-fat consumption is also essential. Fast food, fried foods, refined sugars, and sweeteners such as corn syrup should be avoided. The goal is to protect your reproductive cells while providing the building blocks and cofactors the body needs to run properly and efficiently. We can influence this by promoting anti-inflammatory pathways and in providing antioxidants to scavenge the free radicals that can cause DNA fragmentation.

Remember: You’re going to want to nourish your body with proper nutrition during pregnancy anyway, so why not start now?

Avoid Alcohol

One study showed that women consuming 25 g of alcohol (about one 8 oz glass of wine) daily had a decrease in embryo quality. 70% of the embryos analyzed from women consuming alcoholic beverages regularly showed deviations in the degree of DNA fragmentation (10–25%), symmetry, and division pace.

Of the embryos analyzed, only 15% of those from women who consumed alcohol were classified as “class A” embryos, meaning they had the highest reproductive potential. By comparison, in those women who did not consume alcohol, 42% of the embryos were identified as “class A.”



Alcohol consumption can negatively impact male reproduction as well. Alcohol has been shown to affect sperm morphology and motility (their shape and ability to move) and can lead to low testosterone levels.

Limiting or eliminating alcohol consumption may lead to the production of higher-quality embryos and may increase the odds of success when using advanced reproductive techniques (ART) such as in vitro fertilization (IVF).

Avoid Exposure to Household and Environmental Toxins, and Improve Your Body's Ability to Detoxify and Eliminate Waste

Detoxification pathways in the liver are metabolically demanding. This means that nutrients from diet and supplements are used in multiple reactions in our cells. One report from a study called “Toxic Nation: A report on pollution in Canadians” revealed that human volunteers had measurable levels of 41 different carcinogens, 27 hormone disruptors, 21 respiratory toxins, and 52 reproductive and developmental toxins. This included organophosphate insecticides, organochlorine pesticides, and volatile organic compounds (VOCs).

We know that we have daily exposure to these substances. For the most part, our bodies can detoxify and excrete many of them, often either through urine, stool, and/or sweat.

In ensuring proper detoxification, we must manage three different major aspects:

- **Reduce exposure to toxins:** Microwaving food in plastic containers, BPAs (which can also be found in the lining of canned food), fragrances/parfum and parabens (found in beauty and body care products), car exhaust fumes, cigarette smoke, air fresheners, and even many household cleaning products.
- **Obtain adequate nutrition and take vitamins and mineral supplements as prescribed.** These compounds are our cofactors for detoxification pathways.
- **Maintain regular elimination:** Drink about 2 litres of water per day, and urinate. I’ve had many patients claim they don’t drink enough water because it’s inconvenient to visit the bathroom so often. Go to the toilet! Your body is supposed to filter and eliminate. While you’re thinking about it, make sure you’re having regular, daily bowel movements.



Get Adequate Sleep and Manage Stress

At least 7.5 hours per night are required for overall health. Stress management also plays a role in this, for many people are “tired but wired” or feeling restless in the evening or before bed. Sleep and stress management will help promote repair mechanisms in the body, restoring body and brain tissue, regulating your body temperature, and inducing key genes to turn on and off for optimal health. Stress can also negatively impact our sex hormones, leading to lower levels of progesterone, estrogen, and luteinizing hormone as well as to higher odds of anovulation (not ovulating in a menstrual cycle).



Exercise or Participate in Some Form of Regular Physical Activity, and Work to Obtain Your Healthiest Body Composition

By following the recommendations above, consuming adequate amounts of protein daily and engaging in regular physical activity, you may already find yourself with a healthy body composition. Ideally, women want to have between about 18–25% body fat. Outside of those ranges, we commonly see hormonal disorders such as anovulation, irregular periods, amenorrhea, and other sequelae such as miscarriage.

Pregnancy can be taxing on a woman's body physically. In addition to nourishing and housing her growing fetus, her body then must give birth, when the structures within the pelvis undergo dramatic changes. Strengthening the body is an important aspect of preparing for conception, but also for pregnancy and labour.

Strength-training is a great way to build muscle; however, even just going for a daily brisk walk for 20–30 minutes will greatly help circulation while elevating the heart rate to help improve endurance.

Yoga can be incorporated for strengthening and improving posture, but also for practicing physical exertion while focusing on the breath. Being able to breathe through physical discomfort and muscle contractions is a great tool for practicing how to cope with the demands of labour. As a bonus, yoga is great for helping reduce feelings of stress!

For those who are not physically fit or are just getting into an exercise regimen, it's best to start off slow and focus on proper body mechanics. For at-home workouts, have a mirror in the room so you can watch

your form. Most gyms and yoga studios include floor-length mirrors in the space so that you can watch your alignment and movements. Beginners and those with past injuries should consult with a doctor or physiotherapist before starting any new workout program.

Ask Your Partner to Join You on Your Preconception Health Journey

Both partners play major roles in a couple's fertility. Sperm are vulnerable to DNA damage, just as a women's oocytes are. Sperm also need proper nutrients such as selenium and zinc for proper development and motility. Going through these healthy changes together is also a wonderful way to bond and to feel good about your health together. Go for walks with your partner, cook together, and support each other mentally and emotionally through this exciting stage in your lives.



Dr. Sarah Zadek, ND

A licensed naturopathic doctor in Ontario, who graduated from the Canadian College of Naturopathic Medicine in Toronto.
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*Visit our blog for the full article including references:
newrootsherbal.com/en/blog*



Safe and Healthy Laundry Products *Biodegradable and Hypoallergenic*



Grandma's Garden is an Ontario-based family business, founded in 2010. Their aim is to provide safe and healthy laundry products, free of harmful chemicals. Grandma's Garden Laundry Soap features true soap and lists all of its ingredients. These Wool Dryer Balls are the best alternative to toxic dryer sheets. They can be pleasantly scented with Dryer Freshness, pure essential oil blends. The tumbling effect of these balls in the dryer softens clothes and, because they are wool, they eliminate static. They also absorb three times their weight in moisture, reducing dry time and saving power. Distributed across Canada, ask for Grandma's Garden in your favourite shop. www.grandmasgardenltd.ca

Thank
you
from cban

New Roots Herbal is privileged to work with many charitable organizations by means of its *Choose to Care* program. We recently received a thank-you note from the Canadian Biotechnology Action Network (CBAN), accompanied by their latest educational pamphlet. Developed to inform consumers on what genetic modification really is, “Why Their Food Choices Matter,” and how everyone can make a difference, CBAN is working to make all our lives better!

Choose to Care continues to grow and donated in excess of \$124,000 to designated charities in 2019. The process couldn't be easier: When consumers purchase any New Roots Herbal product, part of the purchase supports *Choose to Care*. It's that easy.

Thank you!

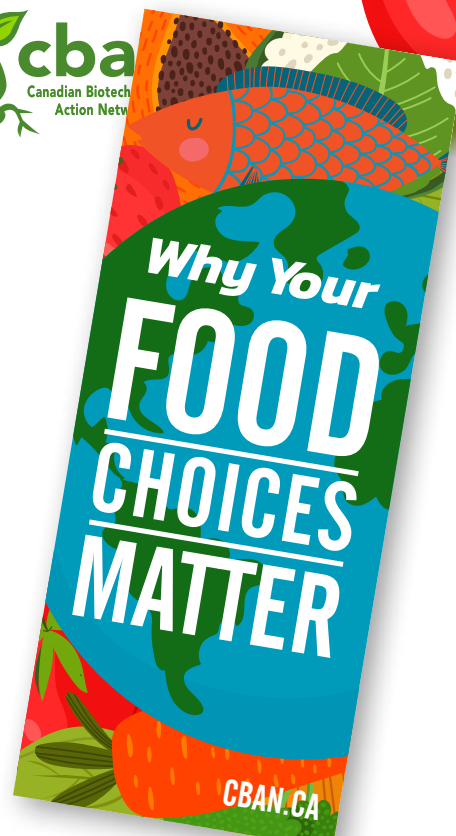
Dear Nicole, Neil, Peter and
everyone at New Roots Herbal,
Thank you so very much for your
continued support through your
Choose to Care program.
Your support is so important to us
and really helps us in critical ways.
Enclosed are a few copies of the
education pamphlets we are sending
around the country. Many farmers and
health food stores are asking for them.
Best regards, Lucy.

What You Can Do

When you buy food, you play an important role in determining the future of our food system and its impact on people and the planet.

Even just a few choices can make a difference. Here are some options:

- » **Choose Organic Food.** Regularly choosing one or more certified organic products supports farmers who are committed to a high standard of care for our environment.
- » **Eat with the season.** Find out which fruits and vegetables are in season in your area and prioritize eating those foods at their freshest.
- » **Shop at your local farmers' market.** Choose to be a regular customer to help local farms thrive.
- » **Join a Community Shared Agriculture program (CSA).** Look for local farmers who run CSAs. In exchange for money upfront, you will receive weekly produce all season long. You help a farmer put seeds in the ground and share some of the risks of farming.
- » **Find your local food products in stores.** Many provincial governments have created local food brands to help you find locally grown and locally made products.
- » **Shop at your independent food store.** Independent stores are often vital to the support of family farms, local products, and small food businesses in your community.



Fermented Beet Dip

Ingredients

- 1 can chickpeas
- 2 tbsp. nutritional yeast
- $\frac{2}{3}$ cup water
- 1 tbsp. New Roots Herbal's Fermented Red Beet
- $\frac{1}{2}$ lemon
- Sea salt, to taste
- $\frac{2}{3}$ garlic clove
- 4 tbsp. balsamic vinegar

Instructions

Whip it up in a blender and voilà!



Megan Luder, CNP

A Certified Nutritional Practitioner who is passionate about creating and educating on the health benefits of nutrient-dense whole food!

Golden Lemonade

Ingredients

- 2 Golden Delicious apples
- 1 tsp. New Roots Herbal's Fermented Turmeric
- 1 organic lemon

Instructions

Juice the apple and lemon. Blend with Fermented Turmeric.

To serve cold, pour it over ice. To serve hot, heat on stovetop or in microwave.

Garnish with orange slice and mint leaves. Enjoy!



Sharon Solis

Sharon is a nutritional advisor and health-product consultant in the Waterloo region.

Instagram: @matchalava2018



Breakfast Cookies

Breakfast on the go is something quite common in our house due to the time we leave for work in the morning. I have therefore given myself a challenge: Come up with several nutritious and easy-to-make recipes that would ensure we eat breakfast even when we don't have much time to do so. These breakfast cookies are exactly that! I tend to put them in a box, along with a small container of peanut butter and simply put it all in my work bag. I can then enjoy them at my leisure while working.

On top of being very quick to make, they can be made gluten-free and can be modified to your personal liking. For instance, I sometimes decide to use almond butter and add a few slices of apple on top. Give them a try!

Ingredients

- 3 bananas, ripened and mashed
- 1½ cups rolled oats
- ½ cup coconut or almond flour
- 3 tbsp. maple syrup
- 1 tbsp. coconut oil, melted
- 1 tsp. maca powder
- 1 tsp. New Roots Herbal Fermented Ginger powder
- Peanut butter, for topping
- Cocoa powder, for topping

Instructions

Preheat oven at 350 °F (175 °C) and line a tray with parchment paper.

In a bowl, combine all the ingredients except the peanut butter and cocoa powder. Using your hands, shape the mixture into 10 medium size biscuits (do not flatten too much) and place on the baking tray. Bake for 15–18 minutes, until they're slightly golden on top. Remove from oven and let cool.

Once cooled, top with peanut butter (you can also use chocolate spread or jam) and add a little bit of cocoa powder. You can keep them in the refrigerator for 4–5 days.

Gives 10 cookies.



Kate D. Bunting

British-Canadian healthy-living and food blogger at "Kate & Zest," vegan, world traveller... and pretty fancy.
kateandzest.com

Silky Smooth Chawanmushi

Japanese Steamed Savoury Custard

Ingredients for Egg Mixture

- 2 large eggs (about 100 ml)
- 270 ml dashi
- 3 rounded tbsp. of New Roots Herbal Beef Bone Broth Protein
- 1 tsp. Japanese soy sauce
- 1 tsp. sake
- 1 tsp. mirin
- ½ tsp. salt

Ingredients for Chawanmushi

- 4 shrimps, deveined
- 50 g chicken thighs, cut into bite-size pieces
- 2 shiitake mushrooms, sliced
- 2 tsp. Japanese soy sauce
- 2 tsp. sake
- Green onions, 1-inch slices
- Fresh coriander leaves (optional)
- Paper-thin lemon rind (optional)

Instructions

Prepare shrimp and chicken by marinating in a bowl with soy sauce and sake; set aside. In a large bowl, whisk together egg-mixture ingredients. Strain the egg mixture through a metal sieve to ensure a smooth custard.

Divide the chicken and shrimp evenly between 4 heatproof cups or ramekins. Pour the egg mixture over each cup. Do not pour more than ¾ full. Top with mushrooms, green onion, and garnish ingredients of your choice. If you have lids for your ramekins, use them or cover tightly with aluminum foil.

Steamer Method: Place cups into a steamer with water at full boil, then reduce to medium-low. Steam over low heat for 15–20 minutes. If your heat is too high, the custard will puff up and collapse. Do not remove the lid during steaming. Steam until barely congealed, meaning the custard jiggles and the surface bounces back when lightly pressed with a spoon.

Oven Steam Method: Preheat your oven to 325 °F (163 °C). Set ramekins inside a 9 × 13-inch baking dish and place it in the oven. Pour enough boiling water into the baking dish to come halfway up the sides of the ramekins and bake the custards until set, but still slightly loose in the center (about 30 minutes). Carefully remove the baking dish from the oven, slowly lift the ramekins from the water bath, and transfer to a rack. Let the custards slightly cool before serving.

Serves 4.



Tammy-Lynn McNabb, RHNC

A Registered Holistic Nutrition Counselor and television host/producer of *Health Wellness & Lifestyle TV*. She believes that eating healthy shouldn't be difficult and should never compromise taste.





Super Stacked Chocolate Nut and Seed Bars

Ingredients

- 1½ cups sugar-free chocolate chips (dark or milk)
- 1 cup of your favourite keto nut or seed butter
- ½ cup of sugar-free syrup
- ¼ cup of pumpkin seed protein powder
- ¼ cup of coconut oil, solid
- 2¾ cups of any combination of your favourite keto nuts and seeds that work for you. I used the following combination:
 - ½ cup sliced almonds
 - ½ cup of chopped hazelnuts
 - ½ cup unsweetened coconut
 - ½ cup pumpkin seeds
 - ¼ walnuts
 - ¼ cup sunflower seeds
 - ¼ cup of hemp seeds

Super Powders for Additional Health Benefits

- 2 tbsp. lupine seed powder (optional)
- 2 tbsp. Coconut MCT Powder (optional—Your body can use medium-chain triglycerides as an instant source of energy, making it unnecessary to store fat for this purpose)

Instructions

Line an 8 × 8 inch baking dish with parchment paper.

In the microwave or on the stove top, combine chocolate chips, nut butter, sugar-free syrup, and coconut oil. Heat until melted and combine ingredients.

Add pumpkin seed powder, nuts, seeds, and mix until combined. Pour into the baking dish and spread evenly. Refrigerate until firm.

Sprinkle with hemp seeds or roasted flaxseeds.

Store in fridge for 7–10 days, or you can also freeze them.

Makes 16 bars.



Tammy-Lynn McNabb, RHNC

A Registered Holistic Nutrition Counselor and television host/producer of *Health Wellness & Lifestyle TV*. She believes that eating healthy shouldn't be difficult and should never compromise taste.



Just a spoonful of stevia



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ISO 17025
Accredited Laboratory

PROUDLY



To ensure these products are right for your health condition, always read and follow label directions.

AskGord



The spread of the coronavirus has me worried. I am constantly reminding my family to wash their hands and avoid crowded areas, but it's very difficult. Any suggestions for natural health products that can help support our immune systems?

You're not alone; we've received plenty of questions on this! When you consider that a cure for the common cold still hasn't been found, keeping your immune system strong to elude viruses is a great strategy. There are some daily habits we can adopt to better protect ourselves, including avoiding public handrails and switching from handshakes to fist bumps. There are also some natural products that can help support your immune system.

Due to the large number of inquiries on this topic, we created a detailed guide: *Triple-A COVID-19 Defense*, located on pages 23–25. We invite you to pull out this spread and keep in on your fridge or workplace bulletin board as a reminder. For a digital copy you can share, go to newrootsherbal.com/manage-flu

My naturopath recommended I take a broad-spectrum probiotic. Some probiotics are refrigerated, while others are stocked at room temperature. Can you explain why?

Good question: All probiotic products are not created equal.

Simply put, probiotics have better survival rates when refrigerated. There is no science behind “shelf-stable” probiotics other than adding probiotics at time of production to hopefully meet their label claim at expiration. The problem is that many of the highly therapeutic *Bifidobacterium* strains, the ones responsible for populating the large intestine, are temperature-sensitive. According to the *Journal of Applied Microbiology*, survival rates of these delicate strains can plunge to as little as 0 to 6% within a month. This translates to a product that will likely fall well short of its broad-spectrum benefits upon consumption.

You're paying for live, active, whole cells when choosing a probiotic; refrigeration is critical to ensure your probiotic lives up to expectations.

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

Flourish

Blog Preview

Visit our blog to
subscribe to our
newsletter!

For more articles on health, lifestyle, and wellness—add to that delicious recipes!—all in a more dynamic and accessible format, visit our blog in the upcoming weeks at flourishbodyandmind.com



Got Seven Days and Several Minutes?

This four-ingredient carrot-and-cabbage probiotic sauerkraut is shared by Theresa Nicassio. This one takes you from cave to condo; it's a throwback recipe from our early human ancestors.



Tips for Less Stress this Spring

Visit our blog space for *Healthy Habits to Relieve Everyday Stress*. Discover ways to unplug, unwind, improve your nutrition, and get the sleep you require to stay sound of body and mind.



Cozy Oatmeal

We'll share a generational oatmeal recipe passed down to our contributor Angela Wallace from her grandmother. It's got all the naturally occurring fibre, vitamins, and nutrients to energize your day.



Thank You for Sharing!

Thanks to all the readers that participated in our winter survey.

The winner of our selection of exotic oils from New Roots Herbal is Gail L. of Vancouver, BC.

For our spring edition, participants in our survey will qualify for a chance to win a 450 g bottle of organic Pumpkin Seed Protein powder.

Visit flourishbodyandmind.com/feedback and complete the survey before May 31, 2020, to be entered or call us at 1 800 268-9486 and ask to speak with Gord.

Hope to hear from you!



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Premium Probiotics That Deliver

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- Guaranteed 100% label claim of live, active cells delivered to the intestines ·
- Scientifically researched for condition-specific needs ·