

the art of  
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NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2015

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# Make It Personal



“Your ability to stick to any diet, fitness routine, doctor’s recommendation, meditation schedule or any other new route on your road to wellness depends heavily on your own needs, desires and preferences.”

**Your health is very personal.** Your ability to stick to any diet, fitness routine, doctor’s recommendation, meditation schedule or any other new route on your road to wellness depends heavily on your own needs, desires and preferences. Likes and dislikes are personal opinions: no two people are exactly alike, so no two journeys to wellness will be identical. What works for you may not work for your spouse. And that’s okay!

Although much of your health is based in science, the way you apply scientific knowledge to your own life is truly an art form. Being an art form, it is also highly subject to personal likes, dislikes and desires. No two people will share the same idea of exactly what a healthy life entails. There will be many similarities that revolve around the scientific aspects.

It’s a scientific fact that regular physical activity is good for your body. But applying that fact to your life is an art. Consequently, you and your spouse may disagree on which exercise fits best into your respective lives, but you will both benefit from whichever activity you personally choose to do.

The key to successfully applying the science of health to your life is to make it a personal art form. Choose the healthy foods you enjoy, not the foods your friend enjoys. Choose the activities you like, not the activities you feel you are told to like.

Do you know what works best for you? Do you know which activities are best suited to keep you motivated day after day? Do you know what healthy foods you enjoy the most? Do you know which positive-minded friends’ personalities are most compatible with your own personality? Paint the picture of your healthy life with the things, people, experiences, foods and activities that you enjoy.

Personal tastes, money, amount of free time, friends, family, age, health – the factors that influence how we practice our art are many and varied. I encourage all of you to develop your own Art of Growing Young. Take the science we know and apply it to your own life in the best way possible. By making your own art, you will be much more successful in all areas of your life, because when we are healthy and happy, there is no limit to what we can accomplish.

*Dwight L. McKee M.D.*

## Blackberries

Fight the effects of aging with delicious blackberries. In a recent study, blackberries were shown to help improve short-term memory. And that's not all. The same berries appeared to spur motor skills like balance and coordination. Memory, balance and coordination all tend to decrease with age if we don't proactively take care of our health.



## Prostate health

Researchers at Harvard University may have just found another good reason to sleep your way to better health: prostate health. The study, which looked at the sleeping habits of men, found a link between the sleep hormone melatonin and prostate health. The seven-year study found that men with higher levels of melatonin in their bodies had a significantly decreased risk of developing prostate problems. The same men reported sleeping better than those with lower melatonin levels. This is just the latest of many studies linking good sleeping habits to healthy bodies.



## Eating less

Eat less by eating with friends. A 2015 study at the University of New South Wales found that when your dinner companion eats less, you are more likely to eat less as well. This beneficial result is due to a psychological phenomenon known as "social modeling" and illustrates the importance of relying on friends on our road to wellness.



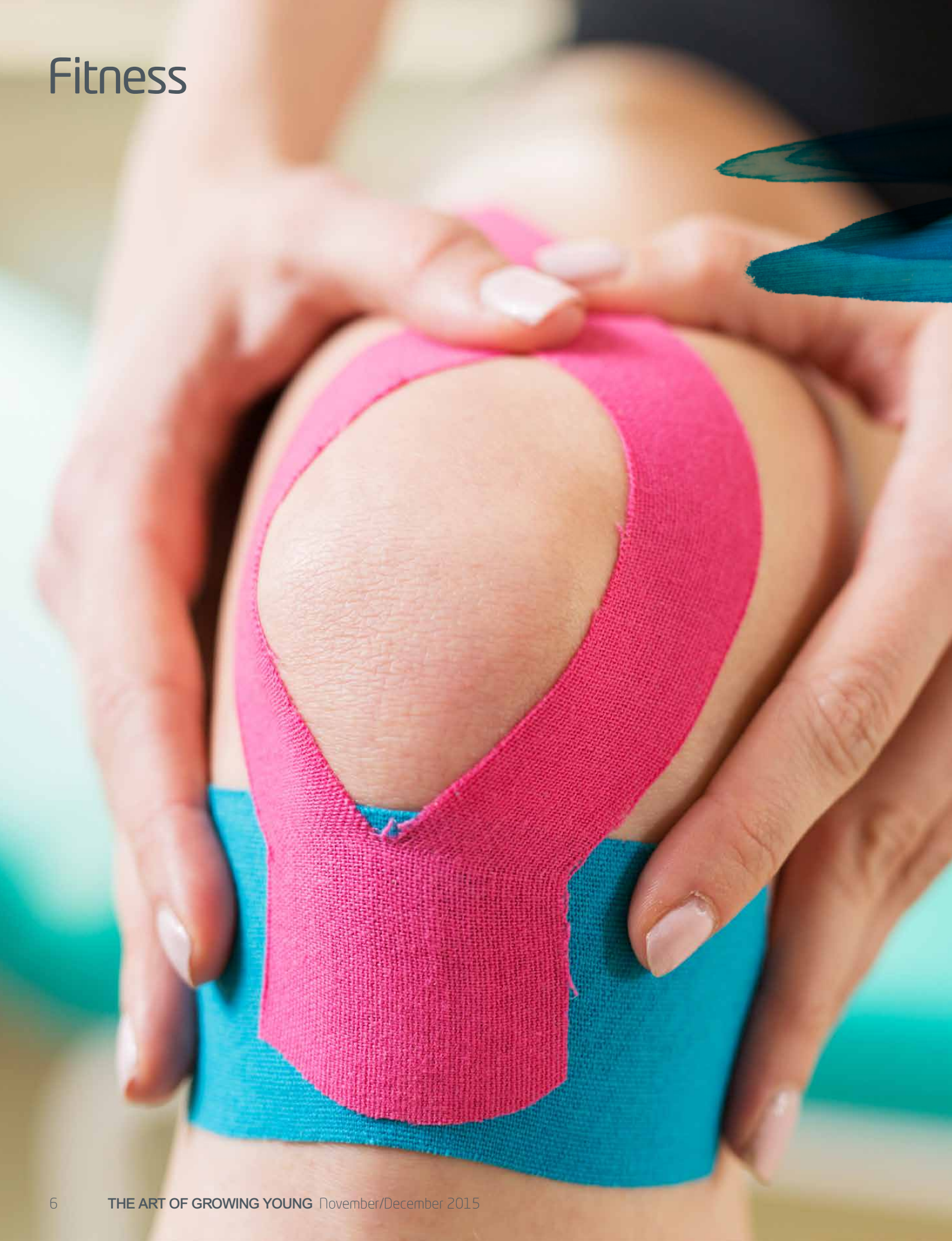
## Watching TV

Avoid health problems by turning off the television. The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics states that women who watch seven or more hours per week are more likely to develop health risk factors such as diabetes, hypertension or high cholesterol than are those who skip all that TV watching.

## Grocery shopping

We all know that grocery shopping on an empty stomach can lead to carts filled with impulse buys and junk food. Now, thanks to a study at Cornell University, we know that eating a healthy snack instead of junk food before shopping is beneficial to not only your body but also your shopping cart. The study showed that when people ate an apple before shopping, they purchased 25 percent more fruits and vegetables than did people who ate a cookie before shopping.





# Holistic Approaches to Fitness Injuries

**From sprained ankles and pulled muscles to torn ligaments and broken bones, at some point nearly everyone who engages in physical activities will suffer some sort of injury.** With a wide range of injuries comes a wide range of possible treatments, spanning from ancient practices to cutting-edge modern technology. With all the possibilities, you may be wondering, “What is right for me?”

Some injuries absolutely require modern medicine and surgery. But other injuries might not. In these cases, a holistic approach may save you time and money. Integrative medicine styles utilize a wide range of health care options, which may include some of the long-standing traditional medical systems, such as Ayurveda and Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM), alongside newer models, such as osteopathy and modern medicine. Integrative medicine includes nutritional management, botanical medicine, physiotherapy, chiropractic, acupuncture, visualization and much more.

Integrative medicine is intrinsically collaborative because it involves the use of multiple therapies and healing systems for which practitioners have studied specialized techniques. Moreover, every individual involved will agree that collaboration across the entire team is an important factor in success. A good example of integrative medicine is visiting your primary care physician because of back pain and then accepting a referral to a chiropractor for treatment. The chiropractor may also choose to include massage or acupuncture as part of your holistic treatment plan.

Acupuncture is a healing art that has been in use for thousands of years. Acupuncture involves inserting extremely thin needles in a person's skin to stimulate specific points in the body. Eastern practices use these points to tap into energy that flows through the body.

What does modern medicine say about acupuncture? Decades ago, the World Health Organization reported that acupuncture can decrease pain associated with running injuries. Consequently, runners may find relief through acupuncture when they suffer from iliotibial band (ITB) syndrome, runner's knee, plantar fasciitis, tight hamstrings, and strains and muscle micro-tears.

If your fitness injury is muscle related, you may find applied kinesiology or myoreflex helpful. These noninvasive techniques use muscle strength testing to discover imbalances and dysfunction within muscles and joints. Understanding these underlying issues can help other practitioners better perform their jobs.

Chiropractic care is one of the best-known and frequently used alternative modalities. Using different chiropractic techniques and spinal manipulations, a licensed chiropractor will try to treat not just the injury but also the underlying causes and, of course, the painful symptoms.

A study published in the *British Journal of Sports Medicine* found that management of a chronic sports injury by an interdisciplinary team led to increased confidence and fitness.

Confidence can be a key factor in returning to activity after suffering a sports-related injury. If confidence in a person's own ability is lost, he or she may give up on the sport

without ever even trying. Therefore, some people may benefit from adding visualization or meditation exercises to their rehabilitation plan. These kinds of integrative medicine techniques can help prevent fears of re-injury or in-game failure from becoming unmanageable.

Choosing to utilize an integrative style of health care generally means working closely alongside a caregiver who places heavy emphasis on the importance of caring and compassion, often extending far beyond good bedside manner. This emphasis can tend to make integrative treatments especially appealing to people dealing with a painful chronic illness for which there is no cure, only management. Sessions often take longer than with a doctor who practices modern conventional medicine, which often further creates a trusted, comforting relationship.

These are just a few of the many possibilities for looking at your fitness-related injury in a holistic way. Deciding to utilize integrative medicine requires you to engage your doctor in an open conversation about how you can combine the best aspects of each method into one plan designed to treat not just the body but the mind and spirit as well. ●

# Feature Article





# Dispelling Common Food Myths

**Nutrition is a complex topic full of not only science-based information but, unfortunately, also lots of myths.** Some of these develop when new discoveries are made faster than people can adopt the results into a healthy lifestyle. As time goes on, the new information will spread and the myth will go away. However, other myths are not as innocent and are much harder to remove from the public consciousness. These myths may come about from marketing departments trying to cash in on the latest fad diet or self-created nutrient/ingredient myths circulated for the benefit of a single company, and then they become generally accepted even though they are not true. Read on to discover some of the biggest and most important myths in the world of nutrition and wellness.

## **CARBOHYDRATES SHOULD BE AVOIDED AT ALL COSTS**

Critics have been especially tough on bread lately, as carbohydrates have become the latest nutritional no-no. As with the other nutritional myths on this list, it's time to reexamine what we think we know about carbs.

Complex carbohydrates are usually rich in fiber, which is both satisfying and health promoting. Complex carbohydrates are commonly found in whole plant foods, which means they are also high in vitamin and mineral content. Due to their "complex" nature, these starches take longer for the body to digest, making them longer-lasting sources of energy.

The bottom line is that as long as you don't overindulge in carbohydrates or exclude other food groups, starches are not inherently harmful to your body. Some people may be sensitive to wheat, but the gluten isn't necessarily to blame, as other foods may also be causing the problem. Nevertheless, gluten sensitivity (beyond celiac disease) is real, and some people are carbohydrate sensitive whereas others are not. A great deal depends on both genetics and lifestyle. High levels of physical activity generally allow more intake of carbohydrates.

## **ALL FAT IS BAD FOR YOU**

It's a common misconception that all fats are the same and that they should all be avoided no matter what their source. And while it's true that some fats should be avoided (man-made trans fats, for example), others are ones the human body requires.

Because of the no-fat/low-fat trend, many people are simply not getting enough healthy fats, and it shows in our waistlines, mood and overall health. It is true that many people consume too much fat – particularly oxidized fat from deep-fried food – but some fats have an undeserved reputation for being "bad." Part of the problem is that people tend to lump all fats together in one category, but not all fats are the same. Good fats help you stay healthy.

Even some fats that have been labeled as bad have an important role to play in a healthy lifestyle. Saturated fats, such as those found in full-fat dairy and meat, are unhealthy only if you are not doing enough physical work to burn them off.

These fats are an excellent fuel source and used to be a vital part of the diet in an era when many people worked physically hard every day, toiling in the fields; carrying water; chopping wood; and generally obtaining

adequate food, water and shelter on a daily basis. In a modern setting, some people do still benefit from a higher-fat diet, although now they are usually dedicated athletes or people who are active in cold climates.

Many people still believe fat in the diet will always lead to heart disease or cardiovascular disease. For healthy, active people, this just isn't true. In fact, going overboard with low-fat diets that completely shun fat may be detrimental to your overall health.

## **RED MEAT CONTRIBUTES TO CANCER**

The truth is that many lifestyle choices can contribute to cancer, but meat isn't one that you need to worry about. There are some compounds (polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons [PAHs], for example) found in certain smoked and grilled meats that have been shown to damage the genome, which is an early step toward potentially developing cancer. But the truth is that many other lifestyle choices that can contribute to cancer deserve more attention.

Like fat, red meat has been demonized by the dieting culture. However, also like fat, red meat can be an important part of a healthy diet, especially if it's from exclusively grass-/forage-fed animals, both domesticated

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and wild. Protein is a nutrient that contains amino acids, the most basic building blocks of muscle tissue. Without the amino acids found in protein, your workout would be far less effective. There are few vegetarian options that can compare with the protein content of meat. However, some people thrive on a diet that comprises exclusively plant-based proteins, whereas others require some meat for optimal function.

If you avoid tobacco products, engage in regular physical activity and eat a diet rich in fresh fruits and vegetables, eating a moderate amount of grass-fed red meat does not need to be a concern for most healthy people.

## **EGGS ARE UNHEALTHY BECAUSE OF THEIR CHOLESTEROL CONTENT**

Eggs – in particular, their yolks – contain cholesterol, but, believe it or not, that’s a good thing. Far less cholesterol in food ends up as cholesterol in your bloodstream than what was once believed. Moreover, dietary cholesterol has been shown to prompt the body to produce high-density cholesterol. There are two types of cholesterol: high-density lipoprotein (HDL) and low-density lipoprotein (LDL). HDL cholesterol decreases the risk of cardiovascular disease, and LDL increases risk. Researchers believe that oxidized LDL initiates the process of atherosclerosis, which leads to heart disease.

There is plenty of scientific proof that eggs are not bad for you. One Harvard study of almost 120,000 people found no association between eggs and heart disease, except in people with diabetes.

If that isn’t enough to convince you that eggs are not as unhealthy as we’ve been told, yolks are also rich sources of protein and other nutrients, including carotenoids such as alpha and beta carotenes, lutein, and zeaxanthin, which are all important to healthy eye function.

## **VITAMINS IN SUPPLEMENTS ARE NOT AS GOOD AS VITAMINS IN FOOD**

This is a broad statement that has been disproved several times. In most cases of food source and supplement source nutrition, the real question comes down to which source is more bioavailable.

The word “bioavailability” describes the ease with which a nutrient is absorbed into the body after it is ingested. Whether you are consuming vitamins, minerals, enzymes, herbs or even supplements, the more bioavailable the nutrient is, the quicker it will be able to provide your body with nutritional support.

One nutrient that is more bioavailable as a supplement than in its food-based form is vitamin K. This is because in plants, vitamin K is tightly bound to membranes, making it harder for the body to absorb.

It’s clear that the blanket statement “vitamins in supplements are not as good as vitamins in food” is not true, especially if the vitamins in supplements are bioidentical to those in food. Some vitamins, such as vitamin E, have “left-” and “right-handed” (mirror-image) forms. The body uses only the right-handed (denoted “d”) form, but synthetic vitamin E is a mixture of right- and left-handed forms (denoted “dl-alpha-tocopherol”). To ensure your body is receiving all the nutritional support it needs, the best advice is to eat a diet rich in fresh fruits and vegetables while supplementing any nutritional areas that you don’t think are being covered by your diet with bioidentical nutrients.

## **THE ONLY WAY TO LOSE WEIGHT IS TO DIET**

For most people who take an active interest in their health, adopting a commonsense attitude toward diet is all that is required to lose excess weight. Common sense dictates that most of your meals include fresh fruits and vegetables and be made from whole foods rather than refined and highly processed ones.

Whole foods – like the fresh fruits and vegetables in the produce section – are in their natural state and have not been processed or refined. These are by far the best options for a healthy diet. Examples of whole foods are organically grown fruits and vegetables; unrefined, organic whole grains; and small, wild-caught fish.

Strict limitations and too many rules about what is and isn’t allowed on your dinner plate can become so restrictive that we throw our hands up and quit. We tend to give up even faster when the one food we often crave is also the biggest no-no on the list. Common sense dictates that you can eat that one less-than-healthy food if you do so in moderation and enjoy it as an occasional treat rather than an everyday staple. ●



# Healthy Fasting

**Fasting for health reasons dates back to at least 400 BCE, when Hippocrates wrote of the benefits of abstaining from food and consuming a sparse diet for some occasions.** Does this advice from the “Father of Medicine” still make sense?

While fasting may be an ancient practice, modern studies have suggested that occasional fasting can be good for us. Let's examine what modern medicine has to say on the subject and learn the truth about the potential benefits and what can go wrong if you don't do it right.

Fasts can range from completely abstaining from food to limiting diets to consuming liquids only. The latter two types are often used for detoxification purposes. The body has natural, built-in processes for removing or neutralizing accumulated toxins. People who choose to fast for detoxification reasons believe that it reduces the amount of toxins brought into the body from contaminated foods while increasing the rate at which the body removes accumulated toxins.

Fasting with limited food or no food can help with weight control. When consumed, food becomes energy that the body uses for countless processes. From automatic processes such as breathing to complex and demanding activities such as triathlons, all the energy required to sustain us comes from the food we eat.

Reducing the amount consumed reduces the amount of energy your body has access to. When this happens, the body turns to energy reserves in the form of body fat. Converting stored fat into energy causes weight/fat loss.

Fasting can trigger rapid weight loss but must be done carefully and only for short periods of time. For someone who regularly overeats, a fast may actually help restore a stomach to its normal size. Many people who fast report they feel satisfied by less food after fasting. One must beware of bingeing after a fast. Extreme hunger can result in overeating, which can offset any good that was done during the fast.

The most popular reasons people fast are weight loss and detoxification, but studies have shown there may be even more benefits. In 2014, one study found evidence that engaging in a water-only fast once a week may help reduce the risk of developing diabetes for certain people who are otherwise at high risk.

A recent, unrelated study supports the belief that fasting can be good for the immune system. The University of Southern California study found that fasts lasting between two and four days may help “reboot” the immune system by helping clear out old immune cells and regenerate new ones.

Despite evidence showing the benefits of occasional and careful fasting, some people still think the practice is dangerous. Many nutritionists believe that fasting for just a few days will not hurt most healthy people so long as the fasting person takes care to stay hydrated. Completely abstaining from

all food and water can be dangerous, especially for long periods.

Relatively short periods of fasting may be beneficial, but don't forget that your body requires the vitamins, minerals and other nutrients found in food. Without these critical nutrients, you cannot truly be healthy.

Some people should never fast, including diabetics, women who are pregnant and anyone with a chronic disease, to name a few. If you are considering a fast, it is a good idea to consult your doctor first. Your doctor can also help you find a registered dietitian who will be able to help you craft the perfect healthy fasting plan for your needs. ●

# Nutrition





# Pumpkin

**A staple of fall and winter table decorations, pumpkins are as delicious as they are nutritious.** Despite their high nutritional content, pumpkins are still not that popular in kitchens. However, there are endless options for turning the bright orange squash into healthy, delicious meals – pumpkin soup, pumpkin ravioli, pumpkin risotto and, of course, pumpkin pie.

Like other nuts and seeds, pumpkin seeds are naturally rich in phytosterols – plant-based chemicals shown in studies to reduce LDL, or “bad,” cholesterol. Pumpkin seeds are also rich in the amino acid tryptophan, which has been shown to be important in producing mood-boosting serotonin. Snacking on a handful of roasted pumpkin seeds may help keep you healthy and happy. Pumpkin seeds also contain very high levels of manganese, magnesium and phosphorous and high levels of iron and copper.

Pumpkins in the kitchen may be extra important during the winter months, according to some research. Pumpkins are rich in vitamin C, which boosts the immune system in multiple ways. Since the lack of sunlight that comes with winter contributes to cold and flu season, foods such as pumpkins that are rich in vitamin C may help keep your immune system functioning when it's needed the most.

The distinctive bright orange color of pumpkins is due to their high content of free-radical-fighting carotenoids such as beta carotene. In a recent study of more than 4,000 participants, researchers studying brain health found that naturally derived beta carotene supplements could confer significant cognitive benefits. The results

showed natural beta carotene may be a useful tool in preventing oxidative stress that otherwise contributes to brain aging.

Research conducted at East China Normal University suggests that chemicals in pumpkin extract may be helpful to diabetic and prediabetic people, because these chemicals may help promote the regeneration of damaged pancreatic cells, which could help raise blood insulin levels.

Pumpkin seed oil, widely used in Central and Eastern Europe, has its own uses. Because of its robust flavor, pumpkin seed oil is often used sparingly in combination with other oils. But it comes packed with essential fatty acids that are particularly beneficial to prostate health in men and uterine health in women. A dash of pumpkin seed oil in your breakfast smoothie is a quick and easy way to give your breakfast-on-the-go a nutritional boost.

Pumpkins are also wonderful sources of fiber, making them great for digestive health. They also contain several important minerals as well as vitamins A, C and K.

In addition to their nutritional content, pumpkins can be found practically everywhere, and they are incredibly versatile in

the kitchen, making them an easy-to-add nutritional boost to any meal. A cup of cooked, mashed pumpkin contains more than 200 percent of the recommended daily intake of vitamin A (as pro-vitamin A carotenoids, which are made into vitamin A only when body stores of preformed vitamin A run low) and can be added to soups and sauces for a quick nutritional boost that aids vision.

Pumpkins are native to the Western Hemisphere, but they can be grown all over the world. The only continent where pumpkins are not grown is Antarctica. Even though pumpkins are so prevalent, recipes using them are often thought of as being somewhat exotic because many people are used to using pumpkins more for decoration than as an ingredient. The next time you are looking to give your body and your taste buds a nutritious boost, try adding pumpkin to your dinner plate. ●

# Feature Article







# Insulin Index

**The way in which your body uses food for energy can be compared to the way a fire uses fuel to burn.** If you use fast-burning fuel such as paper or gasoline, the fire will burn very bright for a very short period before going out – it might even burn out completely before you have a chance to add more fuel. However, if you use a slower-burning fuel source such as coal, the fire will burn at a steady rate for a much longer period. You will also have ample time to add more of the slow-burning fuel before the fire finally goes out.

The body works in a similar way. Some foods will supply a quick burst of energy that rapidly gives way to a lull, leaving you more tired and hungrier than you were before. Foods that have this effect are full of sugar, quite often from refined carbohydrates. These foods don't create a lasting feeling of fullness either. You'll be hungry again long before mealtime if you rely on them.

On the other hand, foods that take longer to digest tend to satisfy hunger and maintain steadier blood sugar levels for longer periods of time, which correlates to longer-lasting and steadier energy. You'll be more likely to make it without having to snack between meals with these foods too.

You've probably heard of the glycemic index as a way to measure the rate at which this process happens. While this index is important and useful, it gives you only part of the information you may need.

The Insulin Index is similar to the glycemic index but has a few key differences. Instead of relying on blood glucose levels, like the glycemic index does, the Insulin Index is based on blood insulin levels. This measure may be more useful for some people because certain foods (lean meats and proteins, for example) can cause an insulin response despite the fact that they contain no carbohydrates. Other foods can cause a disproportionate insulin response relative to their carbohydrate load.

A landmark study performed at the University of Sydney in Australia and published in the *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition* found that even though glycemic index and Insulin Index scores were highly correlated most of the time, protein-rich foods, as well as bakery products – treats that tend to contain high levels of fat and refined carbohydrates – elicit disproportionately high insulin responses compared with their glycemic

responses. The chart below provides a few examples of where the glycemic and Insulin Indexes are similar and different:

Food	Glycemic Index	Insulin Index
Oatmeal	60	40
Cornflakes	76	75
Wholemeal bread	97	96
Cake	56	82
Beef	21	51
Fish	28	59
Lentils	62	58
Bananas	79	81

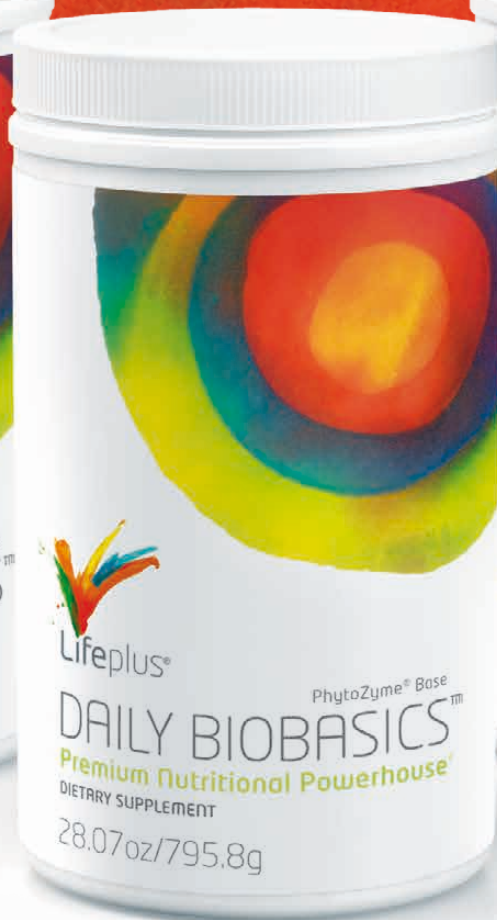
Because the Insulin Index more accurately depicts how a food will affect insulin levels in the blood, it may be particularly useful to diabetics and anyone who is concerned about developing diabetes.

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Food supplements should not be used as a substitute for a varied diet.



In a healthy adult, the body is exceptionally well suited to regulate glucose, and levels in the blood fluctuate only slightly throughout the day. Blood sugar is generally lowest in the morning, before breakfast, and peaks shortly after eating meals.

For some people, problems arise when the body loses its ability to regulate blood sugar. Too much or too little glucose in the blood can result in problems. Hypoglycemia, or low blood sugar, occurs when there is not enough glucose in the blood. When this happens, most people experience a subtle drop in cognitive function. Headache, fatigue, nausea, shakiness and sweating are all also symptoms of low blood sugar. People who experience hypoglycemia may find it beneficial to consult the Insulin Index.

You can find long lists of foods ranked by their Insulin Index ratings online. However, if you don't have immediate access to such a chart, one easy way to gauge a food's Insulin Index value is to look at its color in terms of brown foods versus white foods. Whole wheat flour has a much lower Insulin Index value than refined white flour. Therefore, whole wheat pastas, breads and cereals will all generally have lower Insulin Index values than their white counterparts. The same is true for rice. Your body metabolizes brown rice at a much slower rate than white rice.

However, some commercial "brown" breads are treated with enzymes to soften their crusts. These enzymes can make starches

easier to digest, thereby raising these products' Insulin Index value.

The Insulin Index value of a given food is dependent on several factors. Different starches are digested at different speeds. Don't forget that foods such as meats and bakery products might have a higher value than you would expect. When in doubt, remember this one basic principle: The more refined a food is, the higher its Insulin Index value will probably be.

**“Whole wheat flour has a much lower Insulin Index value than refined white flour. Therefore, whole wheat pastas, breads and cereals will all generally have lower Insulin Index values than their white counterparts.”**

Since many of the foods that have very high Insulin Index values are processed and refined convenience foods, low Insulin Index foods tend to be more natural and nutritious – and therefore healthier. They tend to be foods in their natural form or close to it.

It's nearly impossible and often just not practical to completely avoid high Insulin Index foods. But if the majority of foods you consume have low Insulin Index values, you probably will find they help you

manage weight and sustain energy while avoiding the modern convenience foods that contribute to health problems.

Processed convenience foods with very high Insulin Index values are one of the root causes of an epidemic of fatigue, diabetes, obesity and heart disease. So the next time you are deciding whether to snack on a candy bar or a bag of carrot sticks, remember that the choice you make now will affect more than just how you feel for the next few hours. ●

# Herbs & Supplements





# A New View on Caffeine

**Is caffeine a safe pick-me-up or a dangerous indulgence?** The health effects of caffeine have received a lot of attention lately, as both sides of the debate can point to research that supports their opinions. Is caffeine safe or not? The truth may be somewhere in the middle.

Many experts agree that, yes, caffeine in excess is no good for you, but in moderation it does have positive effects.

As a natural stimulant, caffeine affects the central nervous system, increasing energy, awareness and coordination. It is because of this property that drinks containing caffeine – coffee especially – have become a staple of the modern office staff. People use it to jump-start their morning and maintain energy throughout the day. Many workers embrace it for the edge they feel it gives them. According to *The Caffeine Advantage*, a book by Bennett Alan Weinberg and Bonnie K. Bealer, that edge is very real. Drinking coffee in the workplace can actually be very beneficial, as it can improve the ability to think clearly, increase short-term memory and help maintain concentration.

Multiple studies have shown caffeine may also help protect your brain cells, thereby helping protect against some diseases, such as Parkinson's.

Caffeine is also a common additive to headache medications because it has been shown to both relieve headaches and increase the effectiveness of other pain-relieving medicines. This is due to caffeine's ability to cause blood vessels to constrict. It also helps the body absorb headache medicines more rapidly. Caffeine can increase the effectiveness of both over-the-

counter and prescription medications by up to 40 percent.

That's not all. Coffee may stimulate the gallbladder, which can help reduce the risk of gallstones. Coffee has been shown to reduce inflammation and may help protect against certain heart-related illnesses. A recent study showed that people treated with adjuvant (preventive) chemotherapy for colon cancer that had spread to their lymph nodes (stage III) had half the risk of relapse if they drank four or more cups of coffee a day (defined as 80–90 mg of caffeine per cup).

Caffeine comes packaged in a variety of ways – from the standard cup of coffee or tea to super-charged energy drinks to a multitude of other beverages and candies. It can even be found as an ingredient in soaps that promise to help you wake up faster.

Many people use caffeine to jump-start their mornings. But drinking too much, especially later in the day, can cause sleep problems at night. Caffeine affects the brain in ways similar to amphetamines or cocaine. It prevents the body from slowing nerve cell activity in preparation for sleep. If that's not enough, the increased neuron firing in the brain caused by caffeine can lead to a chain reaction ending with the body's increasing adrenaline production. No wonder it's so

hard to sleep after a late evening cup of coffee! Many people develop tolerance to caffeine with long-term exposure, and can drink a cup of coffee just before bed with little or no effect on their sleep, but a person who rarely drinks coffee would be kept up for hours, even all night, with a cup of coffee just before bed.

Before you buy a bigger coffeepot, remember that more doesn't necessarily mean better. Increasing the amount of caffeine you consume won't amplify the effects. In fact, too much caffeine may leave you feeling jumpy and jittery. As with most things in life, moderation is key.

Another problem with overindulging on coffee and tea is that too much caffeine can lead to dehydration because caffeine is a natural diuretic.

According to the world-renowned Mayo Clinic, caffeine consumption should be limited to under 300 mg per day. Depending on your drink of choice – coffee, tea, energy drinks – that still allows for at least one caffeinated drink with your breakfast in the morning. ●

# Family Health



# Children and Social Media

**Children are exposed to computers, technology and social media in ways we adults never were.** From an early age, babies learn how to “swipe” their parents’ phone screens to find the apps they want to play. And their screen exposure only grows from there.

At just two years of age, more than 90 percent of all children in America already have an online history. At five, 50 percent of children regularly spend time staring at computer and tablet screens. As they get older, kids spend more and more time playing video games, texting, surfing the internet and interacting on social media sites. Teenagers send an average of 3,400 text messages every month! That’s a lot of time spent looking at a screen.

One of the reasons screen time rates are so high among children and teens is because their brains have not yet fully matured. A limited capacity for self-regulation combined with susceptibility to peer pressure creates a certain amount of risk that parents should pay attention to.

Too much screen time has been linked to stress, anxiety and depression. Some research even shows that attention spans may be decreasing as exposure to excessively stimulating and fast-paced digital media increases.

And, of course, when your child is looking at a computer screen, she is not being physically active, which leads to increased risk of obesity. However, obesity is far from the only physical danger that can occur with too much time spent engaging in social media.

Lately, some health professionals have reported seeing an increase in headaches, back pain and neck pain, which they believe is linked to poor posture – in other words, spending hours hunched over a laptop or smartphone can be detrimental to your back and neck health.

According to the Canadian Chiropractic Association, every inch your head moves

forward creates an extra 10 pounds of stress on your neck. When kids study or play on computers for hours, looking at the screen creates an unnatural angle for the head and neck.

Typing term papers has been linked to low back pain, neck pain and even arm dysfunction due to too much time sitting forward, staring at a screen and typing with bad posture. Hunching forward can also strain muscles in the back and compress nerves, veins and arteries, all of which can cause even more discomfort.

Computers and smartphones may be incredibly powerful tools and sources of entertainment, but wasting time on them can be too easy, especially for kids. To the dismay of parents all over the world, many kids fall into the social media trap and suffer from it. However, there are a few tips and tricks to help limit screen time and encourage healthy physical activity.

If your children (or you!) have been living a sedentary lifestyle parked in front of computers, remember that it is never too late to change. Old habits can be broken, and once you make the decision to improve your health and engage in physical fitness and activities, you will be on the road to a healthier and happier life.

Set limits on the amount of time children are allowed to be in front of screens of all kinds. Then encourage free play among younger children. Smaller children love to have the opportunity to play games that involve movement, dance, walking, running, kicking and jumping. If given the choice to sit still or run around, small kids who are naturally full of energy will make the right choice on their own.

Although many organized sports activities are for school-age children, some programs are designed for younger kids. Doctors are encouraging children as young as six to join a team or enroll in a class that will teach them physical fitness skills and social interaction.

Unstructured play is also highly beneficial to children. There is emerging evidence that Attention Deficit Disorder, an increasing epidemic in American and European schools over the past two decades, may be related to inadequate play opportunities. When the public schools in Finland instituted a policy of 15 minutes of unstructured playtime for every hour of classroom time, the number of prescriptions of stimulants to children to improve attention in school dropped to near zero. Play is one of the fundamental emotional drives in all mammals, and humans are no exception. Stimulant medications also inhibit the play drive.

Encourage family active time. As a parent, find a time that fits everyone’s schedule and start a family activity that involves exercise and fitness. This doesn’t mean that you have to take the family on a 20-mile hike, but you can do some fun activities, such as biking, playing baseball, swimming or some other type of outdoor play. Ask everyone to name their favorite activity, and take turns so that everyone has an opportunity to participate.

Monitoring social media habits is a relatively new parental role. And it is just as important as the other caretaking roles parents have been engaged in for centuries. Knowing your children’s social media habits and website preferences will help protect their mental and physical health. ●





# A Man's Guide to Healthy Eating

**Traditionally masculine meals are full of heavy, meaty foods.** When men cook, they often end up piling their plates with steaks, sausages, burgers, cheeses, potatoes and similar foods. And all too often there isn't a leafy green vegetable to be seen. Every one of those foods can be part of a healthy diet when eaten in moderation, but too much of them will leave any man feeling sluggish and overweight.

If you think about the old saying "You are what you eat," would you rather feel like a stuffed sausage or a lean cut of beef?

Probably no food is more quintessentially masculine than meat – fried pork chops, thick steaks, hefty sausages. Meat can be a healthy addition to any diet as long as it is a grass-fed, lean cut and eaten in moderation. In fact, lean cuts of meat are excellent sources of protein, which is needed for building and repairing muscle – what's more masculine than lean muscle mass?

Protein can also help in weight control because when the body digests protein, it triggers the release of chemicals that signal feelings of fullness. In addition to its protein content, beef is also a good source of vitamin B, iron and zinc. However, the foods that animals raised for meat are given determine the fatty acid profile of the meat. Animals that are exclusively grass fed (and not grain "finished") have a healthy ratio of omega-3 to omega-6 fatty acids, while those fed grains have a strong imbalance toward omega-6 fatty acids. Long-term consumption of a high omega-6 to omega-3 fatty acid ratio can lead to chronic inflammation.

Remember that one serving of protein (chicken, fish, steak, pork, etc.) is about the size of a standard deck of playing cards. That means your dinner plate should have a piece of meat about the size of a deck

of playing cards on it. The rest of the plate should be covered with fruits, vegetables and grains.

In general, a man can eat as much meat as he wants as long as he lives a lifestyle that will utilize all the fat and calories he consumes. An Olympic swimmer can eat a high-fat diet and consume thousands of calories every day while still being fully healthy. On the other hand, if the average man tries to eat a similar diet, he will quickly pack on many unwanted pounds of excess fat.

If you are not an Olympic-level athlete, other meats, such as buffalo, beefalo, lamb and venison, are good alternatives, as they are often less fatty than farm-raised beef, and they are more likely to have been raised on grass rather than grain. Their tastes are quite similar to beef, and they are just as versatile in the kitchen – from burgers to steaks and everything in between.

If meat is the ultimate man food, there is no manlier way to prepare it than on the grill over an open flame. Grilling can cause carcinogenic compounds to form in the food. However, recent research has shown marinating meat before grilling can help prevent these cancer-forming compounds from developing during the cooking process. Researchers currently theorize that this protective effect is due to the high antioxidant

capacity of the herbs and spices used in marinades. By adding a little extra flavor to your meat, you can also help prevent the carcinogens from forming. For optimal results in flavor and protection, marinate your meat for at least one hour before cooking it.

The muscle-building amino acids found in protein are also available in plant-based foods. Quinoa is a grain originally from the Andes Mountains that is packed with muscle-building power. It has a light, mild flavor – making it ideal for guys who dislike other whole grains. It's also quite versatile. It can make a great side dish, replacing rice or beans, or it can be the basis of a hearty breakfast, taking the place of oatmeal. Plus, it's gluten free.

A breakfast that any man will benefit from is Greek yogurt with berries. The yogurt contains protein (which we already know helps build and maintain muscle mass), and the berries contain a host of nutrients that nourish and protect your body.

No matter what meal you are creating, small adjustments and common sense in your diet can help you lose weight, reduce your chances of getting many long-term diseases and feel healthier all around. ●

# Family Health



# Benefits of Socializing with People of All Ages

**People of all generations have a tendency to socialize with people that are around the same age.** On the one hand, this makes sense, as people near your own age tend to be in similar life circumstances. On the other, socializing only with people your age may be limiting.

Ongoing connections between older and younger generations might benefit everyone involved. Multigenerational friendships help older adults stave off feelings of loneliness and depression. At the same time, younger friends will benefit from older people's experiences, stories and advice.

In Germany, many older people actually move into multigenerational houses – and not just family homes. The diverse age range of these homes facilitates a constant exchange of ideas and shared lifestyle.

These homes create beautiful situations in which everyone feels included and everyone cares for one another. But you don't have to move into a new place to experience similar rewards. Engaging in multigenerational relationships can give formerly lonely seniors an incredibly rewarding new purpose. Many older adults who are retired struggle to maintain personal satisfaction and a sense of purpose. Befriending or even mentoring a younger adult or teenager can rekindle those important feelings.

Going beyond friendship and becoming a mentor can bring even more genuine joy into your life. Helping other people just plain feels good. It won't take many meetings with a young protégé before you start to notice how good you feel and how much you look forward to your next meeting. And she will be feeling the same thing. Her successes in

life will also be your successes, which will boost everyone's self-esteem and happiness. Multigenerational friendships can have long-lasting benefits. Dealing with unexpected and unpredictable circumstances is one of the absolute best ways to exercise your brain, and there are few things in life as unpredictable as another human – especially a friend who is in an unfamiliar stage of life, or a friend who will introduce you to totally new things, people, experiences and circumstances.

One 12-year study found seniors experienced 70 percent less cognitive decline when they engaged in frequent social contact.

There are more long-term benefits to these relationships than just helping prevent mental illnesses such as Alzheimer's and other dementias. There is hard science showing that seniors who form and maintain strong relationships have fewer physical limitations and are able to live more active, pain-free lives. Specifically, one study focused on seniors and their involvement in their communities found that those who participated more frequently in social activities maintained lower levels of disability. The lower a person's level of disability, the more likely he is able to live independently.

And that's good, because spending time with younger folks can lead to a more active life than an older person may otherwise be

engaged in. And as we are told time and time again, the more active a person is, the healthier he tends to stay.

Multigenerational friendships are not one-sided. Seniors are not the only people who have something to gain. Every person can think back to a time in her life when she felt lost and confused. Whether it was for a day, a month, a year or longer, we have all had times we have wished we had someone to talk to. When younger people are in multigenerational friendships, they gain critical support and access to knowledge and experiences they may not otherwise have. Ultimately, both friends are able to get more out of life.

It's clear to see that everyone benefits from multigenerational friendships. So the next time you think about expanding your circle of friends, try looking outside your normal age range and you might find your most rewarding friendships yet! ●

# Family Health



# Five Foods Women Can't Afford to Miss

## SALMON

Salmon and other fresh, cold water ocean fish (not farmed) are full of nutrition that women need. Salmon is an excellent source of high-quality protein and ranks as one of the absolute best sources of omega-3 fatty acids – including the critically important omega-3 DHA.

When buying salmon from a grocery store, be sure to read the label closely. Farm-raised fish are generally fed a mixture of corn and soy, which leaves them devoid of the healthy fats. Instead of heart-friendly omega-3s, these fish generally contain the same fats found in corn-fed beef, which do not include DHA. Omega-3 fatty acids have shown great promise in protecting and boosting health.

Other healthy fish women should include in their regular diets are whitefish, sardines, herring and mackerel. Like salmon, all of these fish are good sources of protein and omega-3 fats, which are a must for any woman who wishes to get in shape. Avoid large, long-lived fish near the top of the food chain, as they are higher in mercury and other environmental contaminants.

## GARLIC

To add an anti-aging boost to your fish dinner, season it with ample amounts of garlic. Garlic has been shown in numerous studies to play an important role in managing cholesterol, which has a tendency to rise with age. Similarly, garlic is often used to help reduce the risk of heart disease and high blood pressure, both of which are also health issues that become more prominent as we age.

Foods in the same family as garlic, such as onions, leeks, scallions, chives and shallots (all rich in the element sulfur), can also aid the liver as it cleanses the body of toxins and carcinogens that contribute to the unwanted effects of aging.

## YOGURT

The live bacteria and probiotics in yogurt will help keep your digestive tract working properly. Probiotics help break down the foods we eat and convert them into usable forms that the body can absorb. In addition to aiding in digestion, healthy gut flora consumes unabsorbed nutrients and

guards against certain diseases by aiding the immune system and competing against harmful microorganisms for resources. Watch out for high-sugar commercial yogurts, which raise insulin levels and decrease the benefits of this ancient food.

Another reason to enjoy yogurt is for its high levels of bone-building calcium and magnesium. It may be especially prudent for young women to consume calcium- and magnesium-rich foods. Many doctors now recommend contributing to bone mass during peak bone-building years, which occur for women in their teens and early twenties. Building a “bone bank” can help guard against osteoporosis and fractures later in life.

## BERRIES

Pair yogurt with blueberries for an extra dose of nutritional support. Not only are blueberries one of the best natural sources of antioxidants (nutrients that help fight the damaging effects of free radicals), but they are also one of the best sources of fiber. A single half-pint serving of blueberries contains five grams of fiber. That's nearly a quarter of the recommended daily intake!

Most of us know the positive effects fiber has on the digestive tract, but did you know fiber can also help reduce the risk of developing diabetes, diverticulitis and heart disease? A Harvard study of 40,000 participants found high fiber intake could reduce the risk of coronary heart disease by 40 percent. Coronary heart disease is the number one killer of women in the United States, according to the National Institutes of Health.

When it comes to eyesight, forget carrots; blueberries are the real protector. Studies in Europe and Japan have shown that anthocyanin, a component of blueberries (and related bilberries), boosts vision in such a

way that it quickens the eyes' adjustment to darkness and improves night vision while boosting the speed at which eyesight is regained after exposure to bright glares. Anthocyanins are also thought to help reduce eye fatigue.

## TEA

After eating all the other foods on this list, wash them down with a cup of hot or cold tea. Most teas contain thousands of natural chemical compounds that benefit the body in nearly as many ways. Tea is also full of potent antioxidants. One such group of antioxidants, polyphenols, found particularly in green and white teas (but also in black and oolong), has been shown to help protect nerve functions in the brain. Many teas also contain catechins – another group of antioxidants – which help protect against heart disease and diabetes. Depending on the variety of the tea, up to 30 percent of the dry weight of tea leaves can be composed of catechins. Even though it seems that there are more studies published about green tea consumption, black tea is an equally good health-supporting beverage.

Tea may also help postmenopausal women retain bone mass and stave off osteoporosis. A British study comparing tea drinkers with non-tea drinkers found that the women who drank tea had higher bone mineral density than women who did not.

Of course, the caffeine in tea also provides a boost of energy. But tea also contains theanine, an amino acid unique to tea that appears to have calming effects, which can make teatime a simultaneously calming and energizing experience. ●

# Proanthenols® 100

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A high-quality formulation based upon 50 years of research, Proanthenols is built upon Real OPCs, concentrated extract from specific grape seeds and certain types of pine bark found in southern France.

This synergistic formula also includes Vitamin C, which is shown to contribute to the protection of cells from oxidative damage.◊

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## Is calcium enough to build my child's bone bank?

Calcium is important for growing strong, healthy bones, but it isn't the only nutrient your child's body needs. In fact, we know from clinical studies that calcium is not readily absorbed by the musculoskeletal structure on its own. It requires other nutrients, such as vitamins D and K, to promote its absorption. Magnesium and trace elements such as copper, zinc, manganese, boron and silicon are also important to bone health.



## Ask the Expert

## Should I do anything to protect my DNA?

In short, yes. As with every other part of your body, damage to DNA can occur when free radicals build up in your body. Most nutritionists agree that providing your body with plenty of antioxidants from fresh fruits and vegetables is the best way to prevent damaging free radical chain reactions. Antioxidants are able to donate an electron to a free radical without becoming unstable themselves, thus ending the damaging chain reaction.



## Is it natural to be depressed during the winter?

Many people around the world feel some level of depression during the winter, from a mild case of the winter blues to full-fledged Seasonal Affective Disorder. Feelings of depression and sadness during the winter are often attributed to shorter days, which provide less sunlight. Often, all that is needed to brighten your mood during this time of year is a little extra exposure to bright light, plus some vitamin D supplements. Spending as much time outdoors as possible during the day and keeping lights on when awake during the evening may be enough to help get past a midwinter slump. However, if you feel that you may have more than just a case of the winter blues, visit your doctor. Winter can be a wonderful, fun season. Don't let low light keep you under the weather.

# FY Skin Formula



Not available in Italy.

Not available in Italy.

Only available in Italy.

**FY Skin Formula tablets provide a carefully selected mixture of key vitamins and minerals shown to support and maintain healthy looking skin.**◊ The blend of nutrients in this unique supplement is derived from a specific marine extract. In addition, FY Skin Formula contains Vitamin C known to support the formation of collagen, blood vessels and cartilages as well as Zinc, Vitamins D & E which contribute to the protection of cells from oxidative stress.◊ FY Skin Formula is a great nutritional toolkit which may help you maintain a healthy looking appearance!

Beauty begins from within!



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Food supplements should not be used as a substitute for a varied diet.



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