

Dr. Marlene's NATURAL HEALTH CONNECTIONS

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CONTENTS

Gluten Allergy
or Intolerance?2

Symptoms of
Gluten Intolerance..... 3

Obvious and Hidden
Gluten Sources4

Why Gluten Intolerance
Goes Undiagnosed 5

How to Tell if Gluten Is
Harming You6

The Best Way to Eat
Gluten-Free7

How to Avoid a Fake
Hypertension Diagnosis ...8

When Metformin
Stops Working.....8

Is Your Dental
Floss Toxic?8

Why Exercise
Improves Memory9

Can Apple Cider Vinegar
Help You Lose Weight? ...10

How **Gluten** Can Cause More Than **30** Health Conditions

Many people have experienced miraculous recoveries from debilitating neurological, autoimmune, and other health conditions by avoiding gluten. Even so, some view gluten-free foods as a fad. Here are the facts.

The popularity of gluten-free diets keeps growing, but you may also hear arguments against abstaining from gluten. It's a natural component of wheat, rye, and barley, say critics, and avoiding gluten means not eating all the foods made with these grain flours.

After all, humans have been eating grains for thousands of years, and conventional dietary wisdom says that grains — notably whole grains — are a healthy food group. Cereal is one of our breakfast staples, along with toast, pancakes, and waffles.

Yet, supermarkets are carrying more and more gluten-free foods, and restaurants are adding more gluten-free options to their menus. Even bakeries that make high-end pastries and cakes are offering gluten-free versions.

Is this a fad based on an imaginary problem? Or have millions of people

suddenly developed a mysterious allergy to everyday foods that we grew up eating?

I'll let you draw your own conclusions at the end of this article. But I must tell you that in my practice, I've had patients who experienced miraculous recoveries that baffled their doctors, after they stopped eating gluten.

Some reversed multiple sclerosis. Their neurologists were shocked because not only had their symptoms disappeared, but tests showed that lesions no longer existed in their brains. Others have resolved Hashimoto's thyroid disease without medication, relieved depression, or eliminated long-standing, serious digestive problems that seemed undiagnosable and untreatable.

For many people, long-term, mysterious symptoms, or just a persistent feeling of unwellness,



can be relieved by eating gluten-free. Does that mean everyone should always avoid gluten? Not necessarily, but I highly recommend familiarizing yourself with what gluten does, and then making informed choices.

Gluten Isn't a "New" Problem

When we were younger, no one talked about gluten intolerance, so it seems like an issue that's developed in recent years. But in

fact, it was recognized in ancient Greece. A leading physician around 100 AD, Aretaeus of Cappadocia, identified "The Coeliac Affection." This was what we now call celiac disease, an autoimmune disease triggered by gluten. The name came from the Greek word for abdomen, "koelia."

Centuries passed before other physicians started connecting diet and celiac disease, which was sometimes called a "wasting disease," because it impairs absorption of nutrients and can literally produce a "wasting" of the body. In the 1920s, one doctor concluded that all starchy carbohydrates were at the root of the condition. And then, there was a turning point during World War II. A Dutch pediatrician, Dr. Willem Dicke, observed that children with celiac disease got well when there were bread shortages, but symptoms returned when bread became

available again. A few years later, Dr. Dicke identified gluten as the offending ingredient in grains and developed the first gluten-free diet.

Since then, a gluten-free diet has become recognized as the only treatment for celiac disease, and its incidence has risen dramatically. One study tested nearly 10,000 Air Force recruits over 50 years ago, and nearly 13,000 people more recently, and found that the incidence of celiac disease had increased by 400 percent.¹ However, not everyone who reacts to gluten is classified as celiac.

Celiac Disease and Gluten Intolerance

Celiac disease is a reaction to gluten that damages villi in the intestines. Villi are tiny, fingerlike projections on the surface of the small intestine. They increase the surface area in that part of the digestive system and contain specialized cells

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Gluten Allergy or Intolerance?

There are two possible types of negative reactions to gluten: an allergy and an intolerance. The two terms are often used interchangeably but they are quite different.

An allergy is an immediate reaction. Someone eats bread or some other food with gluten and there's an instant response, such as hives, asthma, itchiness, or a tightening of the throat, making it difficult to breathe.

This type of reaction is an IgE immune response and, if severe, can be life-threatening. Some people react this way to shellfish or peanuts, or other foods. It isn't a common reaction to gluten and isn't the reason most people abstain from gluten.

The other type of reaction, which is much more common than you might think, is a gluten intolerance. The reaction occurs in a different part of the immune system and is difficult to connect to gluten because there are no immediate symptoms. Hours, or even days, may pass before any reaction. And by that time, it may be difficult to connect symptoms to gluten, even when the substance really is the trigger.

The delayed reaction can seem so disconnected from gluten or any other food that it may be discredited. Or, when symptoms are neurological, such as a feeling of mental foggy or mental exhaustion, the reaction may seem like it's "all in your head." But this isn't the case.

that transport nutrients into the bloodstream. In a nutshell, they are essential for a human body to properly absorb nutrients.

In celiac disease, the reaction to gluten damages the villi and causes them to flatten. The surface area, where nutrients are absorbed, decreases and the damaged villi can't transport nutrients properly. It was once believed that this phenomenon was the only way that gluten could cause harm and that it affected a small percentage of the population. But neurologists now believe that gluten intolerance always damages the nervous system, while the digestive system is harmed only 30 percent of the time.

It's become apparent that gluten intolerance — also described as “gluten sensitivity” — is much more common than once believed. In medical terms, it's called “nonceliac gluten sensitivity.”² Researchers have recognized its existence, but the condition isn't well understood. In the practice of conventional medicine, gluten intolerance is just beginning to be acknowledged, and there are plenty of skeptics.

Gluten Is Hard to Digest

Gluten makes up a significant part of the protein in wheat, rye, and barley. When we eat any type of protein, our digestive system breaks it down into amino acids. Gluten is composed of two proteins: glutenin and gliadin.³ Enzymes in the human digestive system can't completely break down the gliadin. In a healthy person, leftover fragments that can't be digested are excreted.

People who are gluten intolerant are genetically predisposed to

have a different reaction. And then, some of the undigested gluten leftovers sneak through the intestinal barrier into the blood, triggering an immune reaction. And a variety of symptoms ensue.

The genes that underlie celiac disease or non-celiac gluten intolerance are present in about 80 percent of the population. In other words, 4 out of 5 people can potentially react adversely to gluten. However, possessing these genes doesn't mean that they must be turned on. If they are, they can be turned off, but it takes some work.

What Turns on Gluten-Intolerance Genes

The prevalence of gluten-sensitive genes doesn't explain the rise in celiac disease and gluten intolerance during the last few decades, because genes don't change that quickly. What has changed is the type of grain we eat and the quantities we consume.

In recent decades, wheat has been bred to be more resilient and easier to cultivate and harvest, and its gluten content has dramatically increased in the process. At the same time, we've been eating more and more wheat.

Compare the traditional, old-style dinner of home-cooked meat and potatoes (which don't contain gluten) to today's popular take-out meals, such as pizza with extra bread sticks, giant pasta bowls, huge buns on burgers, and the like. And then there's this: In baking, gluten acts as a glue that makes dough easy to work with, and it gives bread and pastry that light, spongy consistency that makes it desirable. It also extends shelf life. To enhance baked foods,

commercial bakers often add extra gluten to their recipes. And gluten is added to other foods (see *Gluten Sources: Obvious and Hidden*). In short, the typical American diet contains much more gluten than it did a few decades ago. And we eat bigger portions, more often.

The sheer quantity of gluten

Symptoms of Gluten Intolerance

Gluten intolerance can contribute to obesity, prediabetes, diabetes, heart disease, osteoporosis, chronic fatigue, joint pain, and even short stature.

When one of our patients has symptoms that fall into two of the three categories below, we suspect gluten intolerance. These are some possible symptoms in each category:

Digestive Problems

- Heartburn/acid reflux disease
- Stomach ache
- Bloating
- Diarrhea
- Constipation
- Irritable bowel syndrome
- Inflammatory bowel disease
- Pancreatitis
- Anemia
- Psoriasis
- Eczema
- Hives
- Dermatitis herpetiformis

Neurological Problems

- Multiple sclerosis
- Migraines
- Depression
- Phobias
- Dementia
- Attention Deficit Disorder
- Cerebellar ataxia
- Neuropathy
- Schizophrenia
- Seizure disorders
- Parkinson's

Autoimmune Conditions

- Hashimoto's disease
- Grave's disease
- Type 1 diabetes
- Rheumatoid arthritis
- Psoriasis
- Patch balding

Gluten Sources: Obvious and Hidden

There are only a few natural sources of gluten:

- Wheat
- Barley
- Rye

However, there are different types of wheat and common ingredients derived from these grains that contain gluten. You need to know what these are. Otherwise, it's easy to inadvertently eat significant amounts of gluten.

Varieties of wheat — all these contain gluten:

- Durum
- Einkorn
- Emmer
- Farina
- Kamut
(a trademarked name for
khorasan wheat)
- Farro
- Graham
- Semolina
- Spelt
- Triticale (a hybrid of
wheat and rye)
- Wheatberries

Whole and Refined Grains

It doesn't matter whether a gluten-containing grain is whole, refined, bleached, or unbleached. All these forms contain gluten.

Oats: A Special Case

Oats do not contain gluten. However, they can easily be contaminated with gluten from other grains, during harvesting, storage, and processing. Unless oats are specifically labeled "gluten-free," they are a possible source of gluten.

Couscous Contains Gluten

Couscous is not a type of grain, although it may look like one (see photo on page 7). It does contain gluten because it's made from wheat flour formed into tiny balls. It's basically a type of pasta with a firmer texture and round shape. Couscous is a staple in North Africa, much as we eat rice or noodles, and has become a popular alternative to rice or traditional pasta as a base for stews or vegetables, or as a side dish.

Hidden Sources of Gluten

Gluten is added to many foods that you wouldn't consider sources of wheat or other grain (see list below). In addition, these are some ingredients that could be hidden sources of gluten.

Malt: This is basically a flavoring ingredient, usually made from barley and often listed in ingredients as malt flavoring, malt syrup, or malt extract. Malt vinegar is another malt product. All these are sources of gluten. Rarely, malt may be made from corn, which does not contain gluten.



Here's an example of a label listing "whole wheat flour," which immediately conveys that this is a source of gluten. And, the product contains extra gluten, which is listed as a separate ingredient.

Brewer's Yeast: It may or may not contain gluten, depending on how it's made. Brewer's yeast can be a byproduct of beer production, in which case it does contain gluten because it's grown on grain. However, brewer's yeast in dietary supplements is often grown on sugar beets, in which case it doesn't contain gluten. Nutritional yeast and regular baker's yeast are not sources of gluten.

Wheat Starch: Although it is a natural source of gluten, some wheat starch is processed to eliminate most of its gluten content. If a food contains wheat starch and isn't labeled "gluten-free," it likely contains gluten. "Modified wheat starch" is made from corn or potatoes, so it is not a source of gluten.

Soy Sauce: It contains gluten, but the amount is so small that most people can eat it on a gluten-free diet. Tamari sauce, with a similar flavor, contains no gluten.

Gluten as a Food Additive

Gluten improves the texture and shelf life of processed food products. In addition to being in breads, buns, pastries, donuts, crackers, pretzels, cakes, cookies, any other baked goods, and most cereals, it's added to many other foods. Labels may list wheat protein or gluten as ingredients. These are some examples of foods that may be surprising sources of gluten.

- Sauces
- Soups
- Marinades
- Breading of deep-fried foods
- Lunch meats
- Sausages, meatballs, meatloaf, hamburgers (in added bread crumbs)
- Vegetarian meat substitutes made with wheat protein or containing added gluten
- Seitan, a vegetarian meat substitute made with gluten
- Nutrition or energy bars

that's eaten today overloads our ability to break it down in our digestive system and turns on the genes that trigger celiac disease and gluten intolerance. As a result, many people suffer from various symptoms I've described.

How Gluten Affects Healthy People

If you're currently healthy, without any symptoms, it's best to maintain that state. Simply reducing the amount of gluten in your diet can help you accomplish this feat.

Scandinavian researchers carried out a unique experiment. They tested low-gluten and high-gluten diets in a group of 60 middle-aged adults who had no known health issues. For 8 weeks, these people ate a low-gluten diet (with 2 grams of gluten per day), followed by their normal diet for 6 weeks (with 12 grams of gluten daily), and then a high-gluten diet (with 18 grams of gluten daily) for 8 weeks.

They discovered three interesting effects of the low-gluten diet: It improved the condition of the microbiome — the combination of bacteria in the digestive tract — which affects every aspect of health. It reduced an inflammatory response by the immune system. And, people in the study felt better and lost some weight, without eating fewer calories.⁴ They had higher levels of peptide YY, a gut hormone that reduces appetite.

The quantity of gluten in the average American diet would match or exceed the high-gluten diet tested in the study, according to research by the USDA.⁵ Just one slice of our bread contains about 2 or more grams of gluten.

Another important lesson from the Scandinavian study is this: In the low-gluten diet, grains were replaced with naturally gluten-free foods high in fiber. The researchers noted that many gluten-free packaged foods are low in fiber and nutrients —not healthy.

Why Gluten Intolerance Goes Undiagnosed

I see many people whose doctors have told them that they don't have any problem with gluten, because results of blood tests were negative. Yet, a gluten-free diet later resolved their long-term health issues. The tests didn't effectively detect the problem.

Blood tests aren't accurate because the internal reaction to gluten can take weeks, months, or even longer to become visible in the blood. Meanwhile, the immune system is attacking nerve and other cells as though they were invaders and causing damage.

In the case of celiac disease, the “gold standard” of diagnostic tools is a biopsy of intestinal tissue. It's done by inserting an endoscope into the mouth, down through the throat and into the intestines, under sedation. Sound unpleasant? It is, and it's unnecessary for most people.

The biopsy looks for damaged villi, the fingerlike projections on the surface of the small intestine that I mentioned earlier. In conventional medical practice, if the biopsy shows that the villi are not damaged, the patient is diagnosed as being free of celiac disease. But here's the problem: Damage from a gluten reaction has been going on for quite a while before changes in villi can be detected. Why wait until it's become that severe?

Both blood tests and biopsies can also produce false positives. Bottom line: nearly two decades of research shows that these tests are not reliable.⁶

About Dr. Marlene

Dr. Marlene Merritt's passion for natural medicine is fueled by her drive to help others, and her own experience of overcoming a debilitating heart condition, diagnosed at the age of 20. A competitive cross-country cyclist at the time, she suddenly began experiencing severe chest pains. Forced to quit the sport, she suffered from extreme fatigue and constant pain for another 15 years, despite doing everything that conventional, Western medical doctors told her to do.

And then, the tide turned. A physician trained in naturopathic healing recommended a whole-food vitamin E supplement. A week after starting the supplement regimen, her energy began to return, and the pain began to disappear.

Dr. Marlene is a Doctor of Oriental Medicine, has a Master's in Nutrition, and is an Applied Clinical Nutritionist. She is Board Certified in Bariatric Counseling, and certified in the Bredesen MEND Protocol,TM a groundbreaking method of reversing Alzheimer's disease. She sees patients at the Merritt Wellness Centers in Austin, Texas, and Santa Fe, New Mexico, trains health practitioners nationwide, and is the author of *Smart Blood Sugar* and *The Blood Pressure Solution*.



How to Tell if Gluten is Harming You

In my practice, there are three categories of symptoms that put me on alert for a possible intolerance of gluten: digestive, neurological, and autoimmune (for specific examples of conditions, see *Symptoms of Gluten Intolerance*, earlier in this story). If a patient is experiencing symptoms in at least two of these categories, such as bloating and migraines, a gluten intolerance is very likely.

There are two tests that, in combination, accurately detect gluten intolerance. These require only a stool sample, which is biopsied in a lab to look for antibodies that have been proven to exist when an individual is gluten intolerant.

Only one lab — Enterolab in Dallas — does these tests, using a process they have patented. You can order the tests and get your results directly from the lab, unless you live in the states of New York or Maryland. These states don't allow residents to buy medical testing directly from a clinical lab, but you can still get them through a health practitioner.

If you go the direct route, visit www.enterolab.com or call 972-686-6869 to order these tests:

- Gluten Sensitivity Stool Test (Fecal Anti-Gliadin IgA)
- Anti-Tissue Transglutaminase IgA Stool Test

That said, there's another, cheaper way to test your own tolerance or intolerance of gluten: Eliminate it from your diet for 4 to 6 weeks and see if you feel better. If you do, then gluten was a problem. But there are right and wrong ways to do this.

How to Correctly Eliminate Gluten

If your system is reacting to gluten, it can take 3 to 6 months, or longer, for that reaction to completely calm down. To get an accurate sense of your gluten response, I recommend eating gluten-free for 4 to 6 weeks. This time period may be too short to completely resolve symptoms, but it should give you a good idea of whether eliminating gluten is helpful for you.

Some people can't tolerate even tiny amounts of gluten, such as one bite of cake or a cracker, while others can tolerate some, but not too much. The goal is to find what works for you. Most people eat more gluten than is optimum, simply because of the grain overload in American diets. It isn't surprising, as whole grains have been touted as a healthy food for decades. Dietary guidelines used to recommend eating the equivalent of 5 or 6 slices of bread per day.

While you're abstaining from gluten to test your own reaction, it's vital not to cheat. If you happen to react to small amounts, a bite or two can set you back to square one — literally. Cheating is like trying to put out a fire while still lighting a match and pretending it doesn't matter because it's a small match. It just doesn't work. The foods you substitute for grains or other foods with gluten also make a difference and can sabotage your efforts.

Beware of Gluten-Free Food Pitfalls

If you substitute large amounts of gluten-free grains that you typically don't eat, your digestive system can have a hard time digesting them. In addition, I've

seen people load up on gluten-free breads, muffins, cakes, and the like. These can be more starchy, higher in carbs and/or sugar, and lower in fiber than your usual diet, which is counterproductive.

Gluten-Free Grains, Flours, and Pastas

There are quite a few gluten-free grains and "pseudograins," meaning foods that resemble grains but are actually seeds. They may be eaten as a side dish, such as rice, or milled into a flour used in baking, batters, or for thickening sauces.

Gluten-Free Grains

- Rice
- Corn
- Sorghum
- Millet
- Teff
- Oats (if labeled gluten-free)

Gluten-Free Pseudograins

- Amaranth
- Buckwheat
- Quinoa

Gluten-Free Flours

Soy, chickpeas, other beans, and any of the foods above can be found as gluten-free flours. In addition, almond and coconut flours are good gluten-free, low-carb options.

Gluten-Free Starches

Popular starches used as thickening agents include arrowroot and tapioca, from the cassava plant. Use them in moderation, to avoid an overload of carbs.

Gluten-Free Noodles

Spiralized zucchini or other vegetables are good gluten-free substitutes for pasta. Shirataki noodles, made from a Japanese yam, are another option. They are simply fiber, with no carbs, no calories, and no gluten. Quinoa pasta is another, popular option, as long as it doesn't also contain some wheat flour.

Increasing carbs can worsen energy sags or rollercoasters and intensify symptoms. The best types of substitutions are vegetables, which most diets don't get enough of, and perhaps small portions of gluten-free grains, preferably in forms that aren't processed. In addition, it pays to take the time to understand gluten-free food labels.

What Gluten-Free Labels Mean

The FDA allows foods to be labeled “gluten-free” if they contain less than 20 parts per million of gluten.⁷ As an example, a 1-ounce slice of gluten-free bread could contain half a milligram of gluten, or less. Experts agree that this is not a harmful amount.

Some foods state “Certified Gluten-Free” on the label, which means they are certified by the Gluten-Free Certification Organization, a program of the non-profit Gluten Intolerance Group.⁸ The organization requires that certified foods contain no more than 10 parts per million of gluten — half the FDA limit — and inspects how foods are produced to ensure they meet this standard.

Couscous and Quinoa: Which One Contains Gluten?



Couscous



Quinoa

While these two foods look similar, they are quite different.

Couscous: It contains gluten because it's a type of a pasta in the form of tiny balls made of wheat flour. Because it has a firm texture, we may not think of it as pasta.

Quinoa: While it looks like a grain, quinoa is really a seed that is naturally gluten-free. It comes from the goosefoot plant, which is in the same botanical family as spinach, beets, chard, and amaranth, a gluten-free grain. While the carb content of quinoa and couscous are similar, quinoa is higher in protein, fiber, and healthy fat. And, it contains significantly more magnesium and iron.

Serving size: 1 cup		
	COUSCOUS (contains gluten)	QUINOA (gluten-free)
Magnesium	13 mg	118 mg
Iron	0.6 mg	2.76 mg
Protein	6 grams	8 grams
Fiber	2 grams	5 grams
Fat	0.3 grams	3.55 grams
Total carbs	36 grams	39 grams

The Best Way to Eat Gluten-Free

I've covered some of the details involved in choosing gluten-free foods but here's the main point: The best choices are foods that nature made without gluten, prepared from scratch. This includes most fresh foods that don't come in packages: All vegetables, fruit, meats, poultry, fish, beans, peas, eggs, dairy products, olives, seeds, nuts, oils made from these, and gluten-free grains. If you eat mostly these types of foods, you won't be eating gluten. Work out ways to minimize what you eat out of packages, and when you need foods in boxes or bags, look for gluten-free versions.

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Is your memory getting worse?

If you're over 50, chances are your brain isn't functioning like it did in your younger years.

This isn't surprising. In fact, the Centers for Disease Control warns that over 16 million Americans now live with cognitive impairment. This includes not only memory problems, but also difficulty in learning new things, concentrating, and making important decisions.

Unfortunately, age is the greatest risk factor for cognitive impairment. By age 65, 40% of folks in the U.S. have age-associated memory issues. So as the years go by, it wouldn't be unusual for you to forget things. Or notice how difficult it is to stay focused during a conversation or TV program.

But I have good news. It doesn't have to be that way...

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— Barbara Sherwood from Leesburg, FL

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How to Avoid a Fake Hypertension Diagnosis

Blood pressure checks in doctors' offices can be artificially high — what's called "white coat hypertension" — as often as half the time. The problem can be solved by checking your blood pressure at home, which I've been recommending for years. But many people are not told to do this, even though medical guidelines recommend it.

In addition, readings can be inaccurate because they're done incorrectly, at home or in the doctor's office. These are some things that can temporarily raise blood pressure by constricting blood vessels or otherwise interfering with accurate measurement:

- Having a full bladder
- Tensing your bicep
- Clenching your fist
- Sitting incorrectly
- Sitting on the wrong type of chair
- Using the blood pressure cuff incorrectly
- Carrying on a conversation
- Being in a noisy area

How to Measure Blood Pressure Correctly

- If you need to go to the bathroom, do so before taking a reading.
- Wrap the cuff around your upper arm, on bare skin, at about the same level as your heart.
- Sit up straight in a chair with back support, not on a couch or stool. Rest both feet flat on the floor. If this is uncomfortable



because the chair is too tall, use a lower chair or a footstool.

- Rest your arm on an armrest or table and keep it relaxed. If your arm isn't comfortably supported, the bicep will tense and constrict blood flow. And keep your hand relaxed.
- Sit in a quiet area while taking the reading. If the TV or radio is on, turn it off.
- Keep track of readings taken on different days.

At home, the most efficient way to keep track of readings is with a blood pressure monitor that digitally records results. And then, you can see the pattern and share the numbers with your doctor.

What Happens When Metformin Stops Working

Metformin is usually the initial drug prescribed for type 2 diabetes, but after a while it may not be enough to control blood glucose. So then, a second drug is prescribed, increasing risk of harm to the heart. In 60 percent of cases, the second drug is one of these: sulfonylureas (DiaBeta, Glynase, and Micronase are some examples) or basal insulin injections (designed to control blood sugar between meals).

Researchers at Northwestern University, in Chicago, found that risks for heart attacks, strokes, and heart failure double when basal insulin is added to metformin,

and increase by 36 percent with sulfonylureas.¹ The study also found that other, newer drugs are less risky, but they cost more and are less likely to be used. However, it's usually possible to reduce or eliminate diabetes medications by changing diet, in the way I describe in Volume 1, Issue 8, of this newsletter.

Is Your Dental Floss Toxic?

Flossing is essential to keep your teeth and gums in good shape, but some types of dental floss contain harmful chemicals, according to a study from the Silent Spring Institute in Newton, Mass., and Public Health Institute in Berkeley, Calif.² Floss that is described as being more comfortable to use, or to

1 Hwang, K.O., et al. "Use of Home Blood Pressure Results for Assessing the Quality of Care for Hypertension." *JAMA*. 2018 Nov 6;320(17):1753-1754. 2 O'Brien, M.J., et al. "Association of Second-line Antidiabetic Medications With Cardiovascular Events Among Insured Adults With Type 2 Diabetes." *JAMA Netw Open*. 2018 Dec 7;1(8):e186125. 3 Boronow, K.E., et al. "Serum concentrations of PFASs and exposure-related behaviors in African American and non-Hispanic white women." *J Expo Sci Environ Epidemiol*. 2019 Jan 8.

glide, slide, or easily slip over your teeth is likely to contain these chemicals: perfluoroalkyl and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFASs). They have been linked to cancer, decreased semen quality, and ulcerative colitis in adults, and to thyroid disease, autoimmune reactions, and reduced sex and growth hormones in children.

PFASs have a unique quality of resisting both water and grease and are found in coatings of many products, including food packaging, non-stick cookware, stain-resistant carpets and fabrics, and furniture. Just because floss is waxed or flavored doesn't necessarily mean it contains PFASs.

Why Exercise Improves Memory

Aerobic exercise improves memory and other types of mental function in a surprising way, according to a study led by the University of Maryland.² It turns out that exercise regulates blood flow to the brain, but the effect is different in healthy older adults and those who have some loss of memory, a condition called "mild cognitive impairment."

Before and after a 12-week exercise program, researchers scanned the brains of 35 people (17 were healthy) between the ages of 61 and 88. All of them scored higher

on memory and other mental tests after the program, but brain scans showed some differences in the effects of exercise. Blood flow to the brain increased in healthy people but decreased in those with some memory impairment.

Increased blood flow to the brain is a good sign for healthy people. However, when there is some subtle memory loss, the brain goes into crisis mode and tries to compensate by pumping extra blood into the area. Exercise counteracts the process and helps to prevent further deterioration.

The exercise program in the study consisted of walking on a treadmill four times per week, at a moderate intensity. Each exercise session lasted 30 minutes.

How Strong Are You? Test Yourself

Staying physically strong as you live longer will help to prevent falls and avoid frailty that robs people of their independence. Here's a simple way to test the strength of your lower body.

- Sit on a sturdy chair, the type that you're likely to have around your dining room table. The seat should be about 17 inches high. Your rear end should be in the middle of the seat, with your feet flat on the floor.
- Cross your arms at the wrists, with the palms of your hands on the front of your shoulders.
- For 30 seconds, stand and sit repeatedly, as quickly as you can, and keep track of how many times you stand. You can use a kitchen timer

or stop watch to count down 30 seconds or have someone keep track of time for you. The scores below are averages.¹

AGE	AVERAGE SCORE	
	Women	Men
60-64	12-17	14-19
65-69	11-16	12-18
70-74	10-15	12-17
75-79	10-15	11-17
80-84	9-14	10-15
85-89	8-13	8-14
90-94	4-11	7-12

A score that's below average for your age indicates a risk for falls. To improve your strength, do the steps above every day for 30 seconds or longer, without a timer. And then retest yourself every few weeks. Over time, you should get stronger.

Best Water for Brewing Green Tea

Green tea is packed with compounds that improve the health of your heart, brain, and metabolism, but the water used to brew it affects its therapeutic potential. Researchers at Cornell University, in Ithaca, N.Y., found that EGCG — the key ingredient in green tea that delivers health benefits — was twice as concentrated when the tea was brewed with bottled spring water or deionized water, compared to being brewed with tap water.³ Deionized water is filtered with a special filter to remove minerals, which can bind with EGCG and significantly reduce its potency.

1 Rikli, R., et al. "Functional fitness normative scores for community-residing older adults, ages 60-94." *J Aging Phys Activity* 1999;7(2):162-81. 2 Alfini, A.J., et al. "Resting Cerebral Blood Flow After Exercise Training in Mild Cognitive Impairment." *J Alzheimers Dis.* 2019;67(2):671-684. 3 Franks, M., et al. "The Influence of Water Composition on Flavor and Nutrient Extraction in Green and Black Tea." *Nutrients.* 2019 Jan 3;11(1). pii: E80.

70-Year-Old Man Feasts on Pasta, Cheese, Bread, and Wine...

...and wakes up with a normal blood sugar reading of 84!

After getting “the lecture” from his doctor, 70-year old Bob Bianchi finally decided to eat better to help control his blood sugar. And while he wasn’t happy about it, he’d been doing pretty well...

Then recently, Bob’s son wanted him to celebrate his birthday together at a favorite Italian restaurant. How could Bob turn him down? “I’m just gonna take a night off and go for broke,” Bob decided.

And boy did Bob *feast*. He ordered the linguini with shrimp, layered in gooey mozzarella cheese and buried under heaps of sauce. Add in some bread and red wine, and it was heavenly!

So when Bob went to test his blood sugar the next morning, he was ready for bad news. But when the numbers popped up on the screen, he couldn’t believe it... His fasting blood sugar **was a mere 84** — smack dab in the middle of the normal range!

How the heck could this happen? Well, Bob had been eating sensibly most of the time, following his doctor’s orders. And he’d also been protecting his blood sugar by taking **GlucoBurn** from Primal Labs, a leader in nutritional supplements.

In fact, after just two days of taking Primal Labs’ **GlucoBurn**, Bob was shocked to see his morning fasting numbers at 63!

GlucoBurn is an easy-to-swallow gel cap containing four powerful nutrients to help with blood sugar control:

- 1 **White Mulberry Leaf Extract (the “Sugar Blocker”):** Prevents carbohydrates from getting broken down into sugar, so they never make it to your bloodstream.
- 2 **Banaba Leaf Extract:** Acts like an insulin copycat because it mimics the way insulin works at the cellular level. This allows your body to burn more sugar.

3 **ALA (Alpha Lipoic Acid):** Deep inside the energy factories in your cells, ALA helps break down sugars and amino acids into raw fuel — giving you more energy.

4 **Gymnema Sylvestre (the “Sugar Destroyer”):** This powerful nutrient slows down the digestion of carbs and sugar, making it harder for glucose to reach your bloodstream.

Here’s How GlucoBurn Works:

Just take one capsule with each meal. You’ll receive an optimal dose of the pure form of all four nutrients. Their effectiveness is supported by over 25 scientific research studies, including 11 randomized controlled trials, the gold standard of scientific research.

These clinical findings show that the four ingredients in **GlucoBurn**:

- ✓ Support **healthy blood sugar metabolism**
- ✓ **Reduce blood sugar spikes** after meals
- ✓ Support **healthy fasting blood sugar** levels
- ✓ Support **healthy HbA1c** levels
- ✓ **Stimulate insulin** release
- ✓ **Mimic** naturally occurring insulin

YES! You can do all these things with **GlucoBurn**. With blood sugar in the normal range, you’ll also enjoy better concentration, more energy, and a brighter mood. Put **GlucoBurn** to the test, and you’ll be convinced.



Get GlucoBurn Today!
GlucoBurn.com/NHC3

For Faster Service, call 1-888-309-0629 Monday-Friday 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. CST • Saturday-Sunday 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. CST

Q&A

Q: A friend of mine has been taking a teaspoon of apple cider vinegar before meals. She is convinced that it's helping her lose weight, even though she isn't following a weight-loss diet. Is this possible? — Nancy A.

A: It is possible. Studies show that apple cider vinegar slows the emptying of food from the stomach and lowers blood-sugar spikes after meals. It also increases insulin sensitivity, which improves metabolism, and helps to keep levels of blood sugar stable and in a healthy range.

This mechanism helps to prevent energy crashes, reduces the odds of cravings between meals, and can make you feel satisfied with less food. This may be why your friend has lost some weight.

Animal studies suggest that it may help to lower blood pressure and cholesterol. In addition, it helps to protect the stomach against harmful bacteria.

That said, I would caution you against going overboard and taking too much apple cider vinegar, as it can upset your stomach. Start with a teaspoon a day and work up to a tablespoon daily. Mix the vinegar in a glass of water and drink it before a meal or take a smaller amount before two or three meals. The acidity of vinegar, even when mixed with water, can harm the enamel on your teeth, so I always suggest rinsing your mouth after drinking it. Or, use apple cider

vinegar in salad dressing.

Some studies have shown similar benefits with red wine vinegar, but apple cider vinegar is the one most widely used and studied. It is unique, among vinegars, in that it contains malic acid, a nutrient found in apples that enhances energy production. Although the vinegar contains only traces, the malic acid may be helpful.

Two things to be wary of: You can buy apple cider vinegar pills, but studies have found that these are not effective. And, if your usual rate of stomach emptying is slow — you can feel it if it is — I wouldn't recommend taking vinegar before meals, as it can intensify the problem.

Q: I am 66 but everyone says I look younger. My problem throughout my life has always been getting sick with upper respiratory illnesses. How do I improve my immune system? — Paul N.

A: Whenever you have any congestion, I recommend staying away from dairy until it clears up. Ongoing, it helps to avoid sugar, as it depletes immunity. At the same time, supplements can boost your levels of several nutrients that are vital for a healthy immune system.

Zinc is especially important and gets depleted by sugar, illnesses, other sources of stress, and low stomach acid, which inhibits absorption of nutrients. Volume 1, Issue 6, of this newsletter goes into more detail about how to tell if your stomach acid is low, why it matters, and how to restore it to healthy levels. Meanwhile, I recommend taking daily zinc

supplements: 50 mg daily for about a month to replenish levels, and then 20 mg daily. High zinc doses can create a copper deficiency, so it's best to also get some copper from a multivitamin.

These are other essential supplements to enhance immune function: Cod liver oil for vitamin A; take 3 grams daily. There's a long history of traditional cultures using cod liver oil for good immunity. In addition, take 5,000 IU daily of vitamin D with some fatty food to improve absorption. And, take 250 mg daily of vitamin C.

If you have a cold, letting zinc lozenges dissolve in your mouth will help you get over it. For nasal or chest congestion, put a few drops of eucalyptus essential oil in a pot of hot, steaming water. Take the pot off the stove, drape a towel over your head, and breathe in the eucalyptus steam. You can do this several times a day.

Do you have a question for Dr. Marlene?

Send your health-related questions to drmarlene@naturalhealthconnections.com. Please include your first name and the initial of your last name. Although she cannot answer each question directly, Dr. Marlene will select a few in each newsletter and will address other questions and concerns in articles in future issues. Answers are intended for educational purposes only and should not be viewed as medical advice. If you need help with your subscription or have questions about Primal Health supplements, email support@primalhealthlp.com or call 877-300-7849.