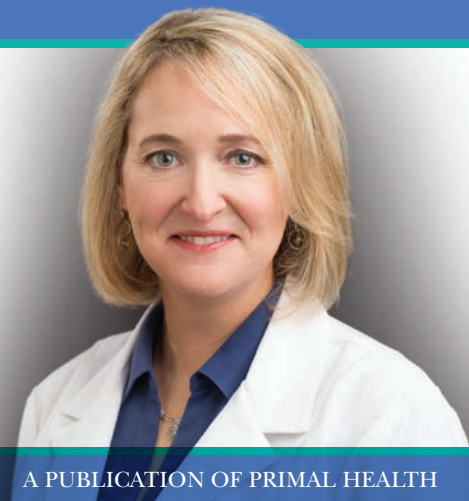


Dr. Marlene's NATURAL HEALTH CONNECTIONS

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Quick Fixes and Lasting Cures for Seasonal Allergies



Natural remedies can quickly relieve flare-ups, and the right diet and supplements can help to stop them from recurring

Suffering from seasonal allergies doesn't mean you have to hunker down indoors with the windows shut tight, wear a mask whenever you go outside, continually take antihistamines, or get allergy shots. There are simple things you can do to help your body deal with pollen and reduce or eliminate seasonal allergic reactions.

Conventional wisdom is based on the notion that allergies are caused by overproduction of histamine. Consequently, the usual solution is blocking the effects of histamine with drugs — antihistamines. But this doesn't fully solve the problem.

Antihistamines can help, and I'm not against using them in the short term. However, these drugs don't always deliver enough relief, and they can have unwanted side effects, such as drowsiness and a dry mouth. For anyone over age 65, the American Geriatrics Society recommends avoiding antihistamines

as they can also cause confusion, blurred vision, constipation, and problems urinating in older people.¹

Another problem with simply relying on antihistamines is this: Blocking histamine never gets to the root cause of seasonal allergies, so it doesn't stop them from recurring.

I approach the problem in a different way: When you experience seasonal allergy symptoms, there's a malfunction in the way your body is dealing with histamine — and it can be fixed without drugs.

What Is Histamine?

For anyone suffering from seasonal allergies, histamine is viewed as the evil perpetrator of symptoms, which may include a stuffy or runny nose, itchy or watery eyes, sneezing, coughing, congested ears, an itchy throat, and/or itchy skin. Less often, headaches or shortness of breath can also be symptoms. If you have asthma, seasonal allergens can

trigger an asthma attack.

Despite all these potential discomforts — which can be quite debilitating — histamine itself isn't a bad thing. Rather, it's an essential part of your immune system.

Histamine helps to protect your body from harmful invaders. It's sometimes compared to a bouncer in a nightclub because when pathogens enter your body, histamine sets off a chain reaction to get rid of them.

Histamine also performs other

vital functions. It helps to keep us awake during the day, it enhances production of stomach acid for good digestion, and it's essential for healthy signaling between cells. Bottom line, it's part and parcel of a healthy body.

How Histamine Goes Wrong

Histamine becomes problematic when there is an excess in your system. There are two sides to this excess: On one hand, your immune system produces too much histamine, and on the other hand, your liver isn't working efficiently enough to clear it from your system.

When seasonal allergies strike, here's what happens: For reasons that aren't fully understood, your immune system mistakes a harmless pollen for a dangerous substance. As a result, it produces extra histamine to launch a defense.

More specifically, the histamine is produced by a special category of cells: mast cells. These are found throughout the human body, but because their function is to protect against invaders, they are most concentrated in areas where pathogens can enter. These areas include the skin, nose, throat, lungs, digestive tract, and eyes.

The other part of the problem relates to your liver. If it were functioning perfectly, it could clear that extra histamine from your system, and you wouldn't experience any symptoms. When allergy symptoms do strike, it's a sign that the liver can't keep up.

How to Solve the Histamine Problem

A real solution should have two parts. It should give you quick relief from symptoms without side

Is It a Cold or a Seasonal Allergy?

Although colds are more common in winter months, you can also catch one in warmer weather. It's important not to mistake one for seasonal allergies, as the mechanisms and remedies are different.

How to Tell the Difference

Seasonal allergy symptoms most often occur above the neck, with congestion or a runny nose, and an itchy throat, eyes, or ears. But the rest of your body doesn't feel sick. Although a cold can have the same type of sinus symptoms, it usually affects your whole body, making you feel tired or achy, and your throat might be sore, rather than itchy.



Cold Remedies

Colds are caused by viruses, not a histamine reaction. If you feel a cold coming on, the earlier you use a remedy, the better. Viruses replicate quickly, so the earlier you stop them, the easier it is to beat the cold. Here's what you can do:

Nasal Rinse: Use a nasal spray or irrigate nasal passages with a rinse, such as a NeilMed Sinus Rinse Kit.

Zinc Lozenges: Let these dissolve in your mouth, several times a day. This way, the zinc neutralizes viruses in your mouth and throat. Chewing or swallowing the lozenges defeats the purpose.

Andrographis: This herb is a strong antiviral. Take one serving of an Andrographis supplement every 2 to 3 hours to keep significant levels of the herb in your system, so that it can continually fight the virus. Keep taking it until symptoms are gone.

Dr. Marlene's

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effects, and it needs to address underlying issues that predispose you to allergic reactions to pollen and other harmless airborne substances.

I'll cover each of these in more detail, but here's a quick preview: For quick relief, I recommend homeopathic remedies and apple cider vinegar, and if those don't provide enough relief, a supplement of betaine HCl with pepsin. Some herbal antihistamines can also help to reduce symptoms.

For lasting relief — to reduce or eliminate your susceptibility to seasonal allergies — an annual cleanse works wonders because it enhances the ability of your liver to clear histamine. My cleanse is simple, safe, and easy to do. It doesn't involve any fasting, living on juices, or hunger. But it does require that you eat more vegetables and avoid processed foods and sugar — I'll explain how to do it in a moment.

An antioxidant found in many plant foods — quercetin — is also helpful. It doesn't replace the need for a cleanse, but it helps to prevent excess histamine production.

I'll describe how these remedies work and how to use each one. I'll also explain how your sleep and eating habits can either predispose you to allergic reactions or help to prevent them. The type of food you eat, the timing of your meals, and any food sensitivities you may have are all contributing factors — for better or worse.

Quick Fix: Homeopathy

Homeopathy is a healing system that stimulates your body to heal itself. Homeopathic remedies contain miniscule amounts of natural substances designed to

trigger internal healing to relieve specific symptoms. They're regulated by the FDA as over-the-counter products, and you can find them in natural food stores and in many drugstores.

Homeopathic remedies are effective for temporary relief, best taken as soon as you start to feel any symptoms.² Some remedies contain a single ingredient that targets a very specific symptom, such as a runny nose or watery eyes, and others combine several ingredients to target multiple symptoms at the same time. They usually come in small tablets or pellets that dissolve under the tongue. Homeopathic eye drops are also available.

If you get a remedy that fits

your symptoms, you should start experiencing some relief in anywhere from about 15 minutes to an hour. But you'll need to keep taking the remedy every few hours; it may take several doses before you notice a big difference.

There are no known side effects or drug interactions from the active homeopathic ingredients, but there have been reports of negative reactions to additives in homeopathic pills. I suggest choosing products from reputable companies, such as Boiron or Hyland's, and following product directions.

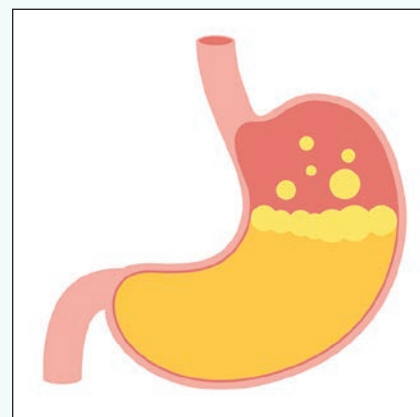
You can use homeopathic remedies along with others that I describe below. But keep in mind that they are for temporary relief.

Beware of the Digestion Myth

There's a commonly held belief that too much stomach acid causes heartburn and indigestion, when the opposite is generally true. In fact, lack of stomach acid is a common issue that underlies much of today's digestive woes, and it contributes to seasonal allergies.

This is what really happens: Too little stomach acid prevents food from being broken down properly in the stomach. Partially digested food and stomach juices can then remain in the stomach for too long and force some of those juices to leak up the esophagus, the tube that connects the throat and the stomach. And that's what causes heartburn.

When there's enough stomach acid, food is efficiently broken down, nutrients are absorbed, and everything travels smoothly through the rest of the digestive system — not up toward your throat but into and through the intestines.



Antacids and other heartburn drugs, over-the-counter or by prescription, suppress stomach acid. They bring short-term relief, but they perpetuate the problem. And the next time you eat, the problem repeats.

This cycle is a boon for manufacturers of antacids and heartburn drugs but it's a vicious cycle for anyone with digestive issues. For more details on all the steps to take for optimum digestion, see *Related to This Topic* on page 7 and check out my earlier newsletter on digestion.

Quick Fix: Apple Cider Vinegar

Apple cider vinegar has a long history of medicinal use³ and is a very effective way to combat seasonal allergy symptoms. Drinking a little of the vinegar mixed in a glass of water, at the first sign of any allergy symptoms, does a couple of important things. It helps your liver to eliminate histamine, and it temporarily helps to calm down the immune reaction that leads to excess histamine in the first place.

I recommend starting with a teaspoon of apple cider vinegar diluted in a glass of water or apple juice, and you can gradually increase the amount up to a tablespoon. Always drink some plain water afterward, as the acidity can harm your tooth enamel.

I'm sometimes asked if it matters which type of apple cider vinegar you take: an unfiltered one that looks cloudy, or a clear, filtered variety. It doesn't matter — both types will do the job. But it must be apple cider vinegar.

Among vinegars, apple cider vinegar is unique because it contains malic acid, a nutrient that's found in various plants but is more concentrated in apples. The malic acid helps the liver to work more efficiently. At the same time, the acidity of the vinegar enhances digestion, which helps to calm the reactions of the immune system.

How Good Digestion Calms Allergies

Excess histamine production is triggered by your immune system making an error: It thinks that pollen, a harmless substance, is a dangerous invader. Good digestion

helps your immune system to more accurately “read” pollen, so that it's less likely to mistake the pollen for an enemy. And then, the histamine defense system that produces symptoms calms down.

We tend to associate pollen with the sinuses, eyes, and other areas that get inflamed or itchy from allergies. But once pollen has entered your system, a significant amount of it ends up in your stomach.

Pollen contains proteins that, like the proteins in your food, need to be broken down into smaller particles in your stomach. If the process doesn't work efficiently, larger particles of protein move further down the digestive tract into the small intestine, where 70 percent of the immune system resides. And then, the incompletely digested particles are viewed by your immune system as enemies, triggering the histamine-allergy reaction.

It may seem surprising that

efficient digestion can make a big difference — but it can. If the pollen proteins are not thoroughly broken down in the stomach, an allergic reaction is about ten times more likely. On the flipside, if digestion in the stomach is good, your odds of reactivity are about *ten times less likely*.

Betaine HCl with Pepsin

If apple cider vinegar doesn't give you enough relief, take a supplement of betaine HCl with pepsin. Apple cider vinegar enhances digestion by gently increasing acidity in the stomach, but it may not be enough.

Betaine HCl — short for hydrochloric acid — increases acidity in the stomach⁴ more than apple cider vinegar. In supplements, it's combined with pepsin, an enzyme your body makes to break down and digest protein. The two ingredients work

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*.



together in complementary ways.

In your stomach, the process of breaking down protein in pollen, as well as in foods, has multiple steps. The acidity of betaine HCl does part of the job, and pepsin turns protein into even smaller particles.

To get a sense of what happens, imagine this: You have string that's tied into a bow, and you want to cut it into tiny pieces. You untie the bow and then cut it up with scissors. Betaine HCl unties the bow, and pepsin chops it up into minuscule pieces.

The tiny pieces are peptides, the basic building blocks of all proteins. When the protein in pollen is fully broken down, it's much easier for your immune system to treat it as the harmless substance that it is. And then, it's less likely to produce extra histamine to fight an enemy.

One word of warning: I don't recommend this supplement if you have a peptic ulcer.

Natural Antihistamines

Some herbs act as natural antihistamines. I don't view these as a replacement for my quick fixes — homeopathic remedies and apple cider vinegar — as they don't work as quickly, but they are helpful.

Herbal antihistamines are not a substitute for an annual cleanse and other dietary changes that you may need to make. Rather, they can be an additional aid, if needed, to help to reduce symptoms during allergy season.

You can take these when symptoms strike, as individual herbs or in a formula for seasonal allergies. These are some helpful ingredients to look for:

Stinging Nettle: A study found that when taken for a month, a nettle extract helped to reduce allergy symptoms, including a stuffy or runny nose, sneezing, and red, watery, or itchy eyes.⁵

Butterbur: A study compared a butterbur extract and cetirizine, the active ingredient in Zyrtec and other allergy medicines, for relieving seasonal allergy symptoms. When taken four times daily, for two weeks, both remedies were equally effective. However, the drug caused drowsiness and fatigue, while the herb did not.⁶

Vitamin C, astragalus, and bromelain, an enzyme found in pineapple, are some other natural antihistamines and may be found in formulas for seasonal allergies.

The Cleanse for Lasting Relief

I recommend that everyone do an annual cleanse for overall health. With seasonal allergies, it becomes especially important because it helps your liver to get rid of excess histamine. What, exactly, do I mean by a “cleanse”?

In a nutshell, it's eating in a way that gives your body a chance to clean itself out and recharge. I've had many patients who were amazed by the fact that after a cleanse, their reactions to pollen either disappeared or dramatically dropped.

The cleanse unburdens your liver of excess toxins and enables it to work more efficiently. And then, your liver can do a much better job of getting rid of the excess histamine that triggers allergy symptoms.

How to Do the Cleanse

For 21 days, eat double your usual amount of fresh, non-starchy vegetables — not starchy ones such as potatoes or corn. In addition, cut out caffeine, sugar, and alcohol, and avoid fast food and processed foods out of a package.

Be strategic in your choice of vegetables. Cruciferous vegetables — such as broccoli, cauliflower, cabbage, and radishes — and allium vegetables — onions and garlic — are the most powerful in cleaning out the liver. During the 21 days, make sure to eat one cruciferous vegetable and one allium vegetable every day.

Choose organic vegetables as much as possible, to avoid toxic pesticides and herbicides. Eat meat that's grass-fed or raised without antibiotics. If you eat dairy products, choose organic ones; if that isn't possible, look for those made without synthetic hormones. And drink plenty of water. For more details about how to do this cleanse, see *Related to This Topic* on page 7 for my earlier newsletter on the subject.

March is an ideal time for a cleanse — before the spring-summer allergy season — but you can do it any time. We're exposed to so many toxins in our food and environment that it's essential to periodically unburden your body, especially your liver.

Quercetin for Allergy Prevention

While you're doing your cleanse, quercetin supplements can help to prevent allergy symptoms by reducing excess production of histamine. Quercetin is an antioxidant found in many fruits and vegetables, espe-

cially apples and onions. It calms mast cells — the cells that release too much histamine when seasonal allergies flare up.

Studies of animals and human cells have found that in the presence of quercetin, mast cells release less histamine and other substances that contribute to inflammation and allergy symptoms. In animals, studies have proved that quercetin reduces allergic reactions.⁷

In my practice, I often recommend quercetin as part of a regimen to relieve allergies naturally. And I've found that it's very helpful.

If you suffer from seasonal allergies, the quantity of quercetin in foods is too small to produce a therapeutic effect — you would have to eat enormous quantities of apples, for example, which is unrealistic. But supplements can provide a concentrated dose.

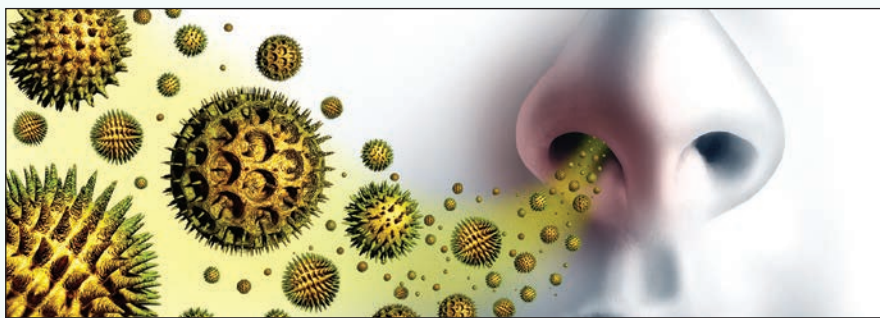
In treating patients, I've found that taking 500 to 1,000 mg of quercetin daily in a supplement is effective in helping to prevent and calm seasonal allergies.

Quercetin also has some other beneficial properties. It calms overall inflammation, which contributes to diabetes, heart disease, joint pain, dementia, and faster aging. It may also help to reduce elevated blood pressure and elevated blood sugar.

How to Eat to Prevent Allergies

Sugar, starch, and an irregular eating schedule contribute to allergy flare-ups. If you eat a lot of starchy foods and sugar, your blood sugar quickly rises, and insulin is secreted in response. Elevated

Seasonal Allergy Checklist



There are two types of treatment for seasonal allergies: quick fixes to temporarily relieve symptoms and longer-term strategies for lasting relief.

Quick Fixes

These quick-fix remedies work best when you start using them at the first sign of symptoms. They aren't intended for prevention of flare-ups.

Homeopathic Remedies: Labels describe specific symptoms for which products are designed. Choose a product that matches your symptoms and follow label directions. You may experience quick improvement in anywhere from about 15 minutes to an hour, or you may need to take it several times for significant relief. Follow the dosage and schedule recommended on the product label. If you use a remedy as directed for at least 24 hours and get no relief, look for a product that more closely fits your symptoms.

Apple Cider Vinegar: As soon as you notice symptoms coming on, mix a teaspoon of apple cider vinegar in a glass of water and drink it. Drink some plain water afterward, to avoid damage to dental enamel. You can gradually increase the amount of apple cider vinegar to a tablespoon but do it slowly to avoid stomach discomfort.

Betaine HCl with Pepsin: If the two remedies above don't give you enough relief, take betaine HCl with pepsin, per product directions. However, don't

take this supplement if you have a peptic ulcer.

Quercetin and natural antihistamines, taken daily, can be additional aids during allergy season. I recommend taking 500–1,000 mg of quercetin daily while you get your system into better shape with a cleanse and a healthy diet. If needed, natural herbal antihistamines can also help (see page 5).

Strategies for Lasting Relief

An annual cleanse will help your liver to function more efficiently and to clear your system of histamine. Getting enough sleep and eating regular meals that are low in sugar and starchy carbohydrates will help to keep your liver in good shape and reduce the odds of excess histamine levels.

If you know or suspect that you have food sensitivities, avoid the offending foods, as these cause reactions in your immune system. If your immune system is already somewhat out of balance when pollen counts rise, it can amplify reactions to pollen.

If you're allergic to dust or pet dander, the same remedies will help. However, if you're being exposed to mold, at home, at work, or in another environment where you spend a lot of time, that's a different problem. Either the mold must be removed, or you have to find a way to stay out of that environment.

For more details on how to deal with these issues, see *Related to This Topic* on page 7.

insulin increases inflammation and creates internal stress in your body, raising levels of the stress hormone cortisol. This hormonal reaction slows down the function of your liver, making it less able to eliminate excess histamine, and increases the odds of symptoms.

If you go for long periods without eating, your blood sugar can drop too low. This also slows down liver function, making it more difficult for the liver to get rid of problematic histamine.

In contrast, if you make a habit of keeping starchy carbs and sugar at healthy levels in your diet and follow a regular meal schedule, your levels of blood sugar will be stable, and your body will be less stressed. Then your liver can work more efficiently, and allergic reactions are less likely. I cover this in more detail in an earlier newsletter, listed in *Related to This Topic* below.

It's also important to drink enough water: about 8 regular-sized (8-ounce) glasses daily for most people. Water doesn't wash

away excess histamine. But being dehydrated impedes your liver function, making symptoms more likely.

I also recommend including bone broth — made the traditional way by simmering bones for hours — in your daily diet. It's very soothing and nourishing for your gut, where most of your immune system resides.

Sleep Reduces Allergies

Lack of sleep is another trigger of internal stress that raises cortisol and slows down the liver. Allergies can keep you awake, but if you don't sleep enough, symptoms are more likely to flare up or get worse. Yes, it's a vicious cycle.

If this is happening, try drinking some apple cider vinegar diluted in water, or taking a homeopathic remedy, before you go to bed. Or keep one of these handy by your bedside and take it if symptoms wake you up during the night.

Obviously, you must also allow enough time to get enough sleep. My earlier issue

about sleep has some additional tips; see *Related to This Topic*.

Food Sensitivities Make Allergies Worse

If you can't easily digest certain foods, it's harder for your body to break down pollen. I'm not saying that everyone has a food sensitivity. But I'm finding that intolerances of gluten, dairy, soy, and eggs are becoming more and more common.

If you know or suspect that you have one or more food sensitivities, avoiding the offending foods is a priority when dealing with seasonal allergies. Otherwise, your system is facing a bigger challenge by having to deal with problematic foods and pollen at the same time.

A Final Word


My quick fixes can give you relief from symptoms. Equally important, enhancing the efficiency of your liver will reduce or eliminate allergy symptoms and prevent them from recurring. And there's a bonus: My preventive steps are beneficial for your overall health, even if you don't suffer from seasonal allergies.

Related to This Topic

These are some earlier issues of this newsletter that address related topics:

Related Topic	Volume	Issue	Title
Annual Cleanse	1	7	The 21-Day Energy Restoration Plan
Digestion	1	6	The 6-Minute Heartburn Remedy
A Healthy Diet	1	8	The Guide to Healthy Eating
Gluten	2	3	How Gluten Can Cause More Than 30 Health Conditions
Sleep	2	2	The 10-Minute Sleep Solution
Mold	2	11	Mold: The Hidden Trigger of More Than 40 Ailments

Access these online by logging in to www.NaturalHealthConnections.com.



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

Tai Chi: Gentle Exercise Head to Toe

It started in ancient China as a type of martial art, but today Tai Chi has gained popularity as a gentle form of exercise that is beneficial for people of all ages and fitness levels. And evidence of its health benefits keeps mounting.

A recent study found that practicing Tai Chi three times a week, for six months, reduced stiffness in arteries.¹ Other studies have found these benefits:

Better balance and coordination: These are necessary to prevent falls and increases confidence when moving, making it easier to stay active throughout the day.

Stronger muscles: Strength counteracts age-related muscle loss and helps to keep joints stable, reducing likelihood of joint problems.

Greater flexibility: Stiffness is one of the signs of aging, but it doesn't have to be if you do the right type of gentle exercise.

Pain relief: Tai Chi can help to relieve pain from arthritis, fibromyalgia, and general neck and back pain. For anyone who can't stand, it can be done sitting down.

Less anxiety and stress: Controlled breathing and mindful movements have a calming effect.

Enhanced perception of space: Being more aware of space around you helps to prevent falls and other injuries.



Increased reach: In addition to making it easier to get things off a high shelf, better reach increases control over your environment.

Improvement in getting up from a chair: This is an important point for maintaining independence as people age.

Tai Chi uses slow, flowing movements with controlled breathing and mental concentration, so the exercise engages your mind as well as your body. And it improves the health of both.

If you decide to try Tai Chi, it's a good idea to go to a class, rather than simply watching an online video, to make sure you do movements correctly. Many recreation centers around the country offer Tai Chi classes.

Low-Fat Diets Rob Manly Hormone

I've always recommended a diet with healthy fat, rather than a low-fat one, because we need the right fats for all our organs and tissues to function properly. A recent University of Chicago study of more than 3,000 American men gives another good reason: Men who followed a low-fat diet had lower levels of testosterone than

men who did not restrict fat.² Low testosterone decreases sex drive, muscle, and bone, and increases fat.

The study results are not surprising because it's well known that cholesterol, which is scarce in a low-fat diet, is a building block of the hormone. Being overweight is also associated with lower testosterone levels.

Snack Pitfalls: Beware of "Healthy" Chips

We all know that potato chips are not a rich source of nutrients. They're high in carbohydrates and are generally made with unhealthy oils. It's a perfect storm to drive up levels of blood sugar and inflammation. And since it's hard to eat only

¹ Mori, K., et al. "Impact of Tai Chi Yuttari-exercise on arteriosclerosis and physical function in older people." *Arch Gerontol Geriatr.* 2020 Jan 10;87:104011.2 Fantus, R.J., et al. "The Association between Popular Diets and Serum Testosterone among Men in the United States." *J Urol.* 2020 Feb;203(2):398-404.

one serving, overindulgence in chips can easily contribute to unhealthy weight gain.

But now, many chips are made from different vegetables, such as carrots, beets, cauliflower, and even kale. They sound healthier, but are they?

Not really. Regardless of what chips are made of, they typically have nutritional content similar to classic potato chips — high carbs, low protein, and low fiber — and most are made with vegetable oils that promote inflammation.

The Biggest Problem

Regardless of what type of vegetables chips are made of, one serving is typically 1 ounce, or about 10 chips — not very satisfying. If you eat only that amount — occasionally — and the rest of your diet is full of wholesome foods, that shouldn't be a problem.

But if you routinely eat chips, you're probably eating more than that.¹ And the extra carbs and unhealthy fats can be sabotaging your efforts to reach or maintain a healthy weight and healthy levels of blood sugar and blood pressure.



Healthier Snacks

The best snacks are nutritious, low in carbs, and contain healthy fat. These are some good options:

- Chopped veggies dipped in hummus or ranch dressing, or with a spoonful of nut butter
- A piece of cheese
- Beef jerky
- A small handful of nuts



These types of snacks will keep your blood sugar stable and satisfy your hunger without making you crave more. And that can help you get or stay on a healthy path.

Why Soybean Oil Is Unhealthy

Soybean oil is the most widely used oil in American food, in all sorts of packaged foods, for deep-frying fast food, and in feed for animals that produce our meat. Although some still consider it a healthier alternative to saturated fat, evidence of its harm keeps mounting.

A new study at the University of California, Riverside, has found that it causes changes in the brain that can contribute to neurological diseases such as Alzheimer's, anxiety, depression, and autism.² This study also tested the effects of coconut oil and found that it doesn't produce similar harm.

This research was done in mice, comparing tightly controlled diets with and without soybean oil.

The same type of research is not practically possible in humans, and it would not be ethical to feed a high-soybean oil diet to people just to prove a point. Earlier research at the same university found that soybean oil contributes to insulin resistance, obesity, and diabetes.

What to Do: Based on the data at hand, the researchers recommend eating less soybean oil. I go a step further and recommend avoiding *all* soybean oil.

As you might know, my more basic advice is to steer clear of packaged food altogether. But I realize that we don't live in a perfect world.

When buying any food in a

package, it doesn't take long to look at the ingredient list. And if the ingredient list is so long and full of chemical names that you can't quite get through it, take it as a sign to look for an alternative.

Salad dressings and restaurant foods are the top two sources of soybean oil, but it's also in many other foods, from cookies, breads, and snacks to soups and heat-and-serve packaged foods. Nevertheless, it is possible to find better options.

Cottonseed oil, corn oil, and other vegetable oils are also unhealthy because they are inflammatory. Coconut oil, olive oil, butter, and lard are some good alternatives.

¹ Njike, V.Y., et al. "Snack Food, Satiety, and Weight." *Adv Nutr.* 2016 Sep 15;7(5):866-78. ² Deol, P., et al. "Dysregulation of Hypothalamic Gene Expression and the Oxytocinergic System by Soybean Oil Diets in Male Mice." *Endocrinology.* 2020 Jan 8. pii: bqz044. doi: 10.1210/endo/bqz044. [Epub ahead of print].

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...

Primal Labs is proud to introduce **CogniForce**, a ground-breaking nutritional supplement for optimal brain support.

CogniForce is an easy-to-swallow gel cap containing 10 powerful nutrients to help you improve cognitive function, memory, and brain health:

- ✓ **Ginkgo:** Improves blood flow to the brain. This supports memory, mood, and focus — and exerts a positive effect on the brain's processing speed to help avoid "senior moments."
- ✓ **L-theanine:** This amino acid stimulates brain neurotransmitters to boost concentration and mood — and promote relaxation.
- ✓ **Acetyl-L-carnitine:** Research shows this amino acid can significantly improve memory and focus — and lift you out of those occasional "blue moods."
- ✓ **The B vitamins riboflavin, vitamin B6, folate, and B12:** Studies show these crucial vitamins help prevent the brain shrinkage many people experience as they grow older.
- ✓ **Sensoril®:** This patented extract of the ancient Ayurvedic herb ashwagandha helps lower cortisol — the stress hormone.

✓ **L-tyrosine:** Another amino acid crucial for production of brain neurotransmitters involved in memory and cognition.

✓ **Bioperine®:** Patented extract of black pepper fruit helps improve absorption of nutrients.

Today, people from all walks of life are protecting their brains with **CogniForce**. Here's what a few of them had to say:

"I have been taking **CogniForce** for about 5 weeks now. I noticed a positive result fairly early. I am feeling more alert and better able to handle tedious work that used to overwhelm me."

— Lee Miller from Austin, TX

"I started taking **CogniForce** fifty-two days ago, and my own forgetfulness has slowed down."

— Hayley Burns from Richmond, VA

"I've been taking **CogniForce** just a little over a month now, and it has helped me improve my thinking and mood swings."

— Barbara Sherwood from Leesburg, FL

If you want to maintain your memory and protect your brain into your 60s, 70s, 80s and beyond... the time to do it is NOW. Join thousands of satisfied users experiencing the brain-boosting effects of **CogniForce**.

We're so confident in the brain and memory-supporting power of **CogniForce**, we offer a 60-day **RISK-FREE** 100% money-back guarantee. You have nothing to lose.

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Q&A

Q: Is organic expeller-pressed canola oil safe to use in small amounts for cooking? It responds well to higher temperatures, which is why I use it. —Peter A.

A: Canola oil that is organic and expeller-pressed is fine to use in small quantities for cooking. But when it comes to other canola oils, I recommend avoiding them for two reasons.

First, canola oil is made from the seeds of the rapeseed plant. When it isn't organic, the plant is typically genetically modified to withstand highly toxic herbicides, and residues of the chemicals can remain in the oil.

Second and equally important, most canola oil is extracted with high heat and a chemical solvent such as hexane. The oil is then bleached and deodorized. This type of processing damages the oil, making it rancid, and rancid oils are a driver of atherosclerosis. Other seed oils, such as corn, soybean, and vegetable oils, are made the same way and should also be avoided.

In contrast, organic canola oil plants are grown without toxic herbicides. And when the seeds are expeller-pressed, it means that the oil was extracted with mechanical pressure, rather than high heat and chemicals.

Other oils that withstand high heat and can be used for cooking include avocado oil and coconut oil. If you don't like the taste of coconut oil, try a refined one.

There isn't anything harmful in refined coconut oil — only coconut proteins are removed, which eliminates the coconut taste. Otherwise, refined coconut oils are just as good as unrefined ones.

Olive oil can also be used for sautéing. In fact, extra virgin olive oil is traditionally used for cooking in Mediterranean regions.

Q: I've been trying to lose weight by following a paleo diet for the last few months. I thought it would be a healthy way to eat since it's low in carbs, but I'm not losing any weight. Do you think this is a healthy diet to follow? —Alicia L.

A: The paleo diet is based on the premise that ancient hunter-gatherers didn't eat grains, dairy, or refined sugar, and that this may be the way we're programmed to eat. It emphasizes whole foods, pasture-raised meats, wild fish, and lots of fresh vegetables — all good things.

The fact that dairy is excluded is not a bad thing because many people don't tolerate dairy foods. And no one can argue with the merits of avoiding refined sugar.

Unfortunately, I've found that in the real world, there are some pitfalls. The diet is difficult to follow, and often leads to people eating too much protein, which can lead to weight gain or at least prevent weight loss. It's something I've seen much too often with attempts to follow a paleo diet.

Eating too many nuts is another common pitfall. Although nuts are a nutritious snack in modest quantities, it's quite possible to go overboard. It isn't difficult to do

with almond flour, nut milks, and nut butters in many dishes as a substitute for starchier ingredients.

I've also seen a lack of fermented foods, such as sauerkraut and other vegetables made with live cultures. Yet these are important for healthy digestion and a strong immune system.

I would suggest taking stock of your staples and making sure that a variety of non-starchy vegetables make up the bulk of your meals. Include a variety of meats and fish in modest quantities — about a quarter of your plate. A small handful of nuts can be a good snack, but nut flours and butters shouldn't be major ingredients in your meals.

If you find this difficult to follow, you might like my less-stringent approach in *The Guide to Healthy Eating* in Volume 1, Issue 8, of this newsletter. It doesn't eliminate any category of food.

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.