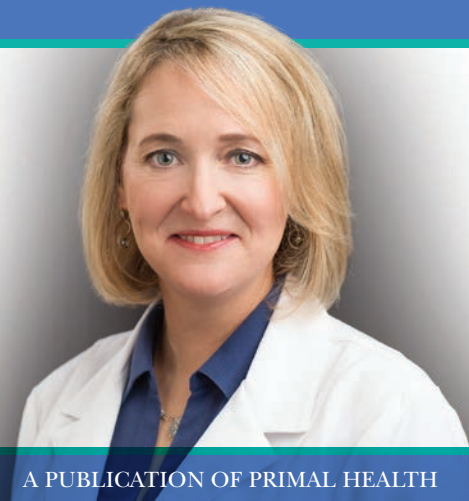


Dr. Marlene's NATURAL HEALTH CONNECTIONS

VOLUME 4 | ISSUE 7

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CONTENTS

Blood Sugar
and Eye Health3

Nutrients to
Prevent Cataracts.....4

Glaucoma, Blood Sugar,
and Blood Pressure.....4

Vitamin A and Vision5

Lutein and Zeaxanthin5

Ginseng Enhances
the Eyes.....6

How to Get Off
Heartburn Drugs8

Most Diets Lack Fiber
—How to Get Enough9

Amazing Benefits
of Swimming10

Am I Getting
Alzheimer's?12

Can Statins Give
Me Diabetes?12

How to Protect and Improve Your Vision



The right diet, specific supplements, eye exercises, and smart use of digital devices can help you avoid eyestrain and reduce risk for today's most common eye diseases.

Digital devices have become a big part of our lives but the more we use them, the more we risk eyestrain. Add to that a poor diet, nutritional shortfalls, and lack of exercise, and our eyes face more challenges than ever before.

You may know that diabetes damages the eyes — diabetic retinopathy is a well-known complication of the disease. But diabetes also increases risk for today's other major eye diseases: cataracts, macular degeneration, and glaucoma. In fact, even before type 2 diabetes develops, elevated blood sugar starts to damage tiny blood vessels and other tissues whose health is essential for good vision.

Lack of important nutrients, such as vitamin A, also contributes to the deterioration of vision that we often associate with aging. "I don't see as well as I used to at night," is a symptom some of my patients tell me about. These same patients are often surprised when I mention

vitamin A, because they are taking a multivitamin that seems to contain plenty of the vitamin. And I'm often asked: "Should I take a higher dose?"

A higher dose is rarely the right solution. There are different forms of vitamin A, and not all of them are well absorbed. Once my patients get into a habit of taking a form of the vitamin that their body can use, they notice a difference.

I'll cover vitamin A and other nutrients for healthy eyes in more detail in a moment, along with dietary changes that can protect and improve your vision. But first, I want to address the subject of eyestrain because it's so common today. And it could be affecting you right now as you read this.

I've been spending much more time in front of a computer screen

IN THE NEXT ISSUE:
How to Achieve and
Maintain a Healthy Weight



since the COVID-19 pandemic began as I've been seeing patients virtually instead of in-person. I'm more efficient, but the extra screen time can be hard on my eyes, so I found some ways to deal with the situation.

Eyestrain Basics

Eye strain can produce a variety of symptoms, including dry eyes, irritated eyes, tired eyes, blurry vision, sensitivity to light, and headaches. Focusing our eyes on

anything for a period of time can lead to eyestrain, but the effect is greater with a digital screen.

Compared to reading a printed page, your eyes work a bit harder when reading on a screen. And the glare from a screen can tire your eyes more quickly.

I find it helpful to rest my eyes by keeping them open in pitch darkness for a minute, or even a few seconds. You can cup your hands over your eyes so that no light enters or hold a piece of fabric against the front of your face so that it blocks all light. And keep your eyes open in the darkness until they feel more relaxed.

It's also helpful to take frequent, short breaks from looking at a screen — even better to take a break from sitting. Getting up and walking around is good for your whole body.

Blinking less often when looking at a screen contributes to eyestrain. When we blink, the natural fluid in our eyes moisturizes our eyeballs, preventing dryness and irritation, and it cleans out any tiny particles of dust. For a helpful exercise, see *Eye Exercises to Reduce Eyestrain*.

Although eyestrain is uncomfortable, it doesn't pose the long-term risks of a poor diet and nutritional deficiencies that contribute to serious eye conditions. I'll cover diet first, and then look at nutrients that are especially important for healthy vision.

Vision and Diet

It's well known that vision problems can be a complication of diabetes. A healthy, low-carb diet can prevent type 2 diabetes, may reverse it, and will reduce the risk of complications such as eye diseases.

For anyone who is healthy, a low-carb diet that keeps blood sugar in a healthy range can also reduce risk for today's other major eye diseases. These include cataracts, age-related macular degeneration, and glaucoma.

The low-carb diet I recommend is easy to follow and doesn't exclude any major categories of food. It does, however, limit the most common types of carbs that cause blood-sugar problems, such

Eye Exercises to Reduce Eyestrain

When using a digital device, make sure to adjust the brightness to a level that's comfortable for you. And try these simple techniques.

Do a blinking exercise: A study by a group of eye doctors in New Zealand found this quick exercise, done every 20 minutes while using a computer, improved blinking habits, reduced dry eye, and increased productivity.¹

- Close your eyes for a couple of seconds, keeping them relaxed.
- Open your eyes.
- Close your eyes and squeeze them with your eyelids for 2 seconds.
- Open your eyes.

Follow the 20/20/20 rule:

Optometrists have found that following a "20/20/20 rule" can reduce eyestrain while using a digital device. Every 20 minutes, look away at something that's about 20 feet away, for 20 seconds.²

If your eyes get uncomfortably dry, try homeopathic eye drops to moisturize them with natural substances. You can buy the drops in stores that sell supplements. Follow product directions.

Dr. Marlene's

NATURAL HEALTH CONNECTIONS

Publisher Travis Davis
Editorial Director Vera Tweed
Art Director Jody Levitan
Copy Editor James Naples

For subscriptions and customer service inquiries:
877-300-7849
support@primalhealthlp.com

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as sweetened drinks and too much grain-based food, such as cereals and baked goods. I encourage you to check out the earlier newsletter issues that describe it in detail, listed in *Related to This Topic* on page 6.

Microcirculation is Key

When we hear about circulation, we tend to think about large blood vessels that nourish the heart. But microcirculation, which occurs through a network of tiny — or “micro” — blood vessels, is also critically important.

Healthy eyes need good microcirculation that delivers ample oxygen and nutrients and removes waste from eye tissues. To improve microcirculation, I recommend drinking three to four cups of green tea and eating a clove of garlic daily. If you don’t like garlic, you can take a garlic supplement.

In addition, exercise improves microcirculation, especially walking or any other movement that raises your heart rate. But all types of movement will have a beneficial effect.

Eye Exercises Can Improve Vision

A few years ago, I noticed that I needed stronger and stronger glasses for reading and decided to look for eye exercises. I found the *Read Without Glasses Method*. It’s a program of eye exercises that has been used by optometrists for over a hundred years. And these exercises — I think of them as my “eye pushups” — improved my vision.

Ever since then, I’ve been using only the lowest-power reading

glasses from the drugstore. Some of my patients have also had good results with this exercise system. You can learn more about it at www.withoutglasses.com. The research section of the site has a test you can do online to determine whether this method can help you.

Blood Sugar and Eye Health

There is a very strong connection between levels of blood sugar and eye health. Even in people who are not diabetic, elevated blood sugar causes some damage to the eyes. Where diabetes has already developed, the damage is greater.

A British study that used a new type of eye test found that examining the eye can predict who will develop type 2 diabetes.³ And it detected early stages of eye damage from elevated blood sugar.

This new test, which is not available yet for use in medical practice, measured advanced glycation end

products (AGEs). If you’ve been reading this newsletter for a while, you may remember me talking about AGEs as harmful molecules. (The abbreviation is appropriate, because they do age you.)

Here’s a basic explanation of AGEs: The key word is “glycation.” It means that sugar molecules attach themselves to proteins and fats and damage them. In other words, AGEs are molecules in your body that have been damaged by sugar.

AGEs are produced in your body when you consume too much sugar. And by sugar, I mean foods and drinks that contain any type of sugar and foods that are high in starch, such as corn, potatoes, rice, wheat, other grains, and all the breads, pastas, pizza crusts, snacks, and desserts made from grains. Both sugar and starch are treated the same way in your body: They raise blood sugar.

In skin, AGEs produce wrinkles.

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,[™] 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*.



In the eyes, damage from AGEs is hidden until vision problems become noticeable.

Elevated blood sugar also damages the tiny blood vessels that nourish the eyes, and it harms nerves. In the eyes, nerve damage interferes with signals from the eye to the brain that enable normal vision.

Nutrients to Prevent Cataracts

Cataracts are deposits on the lens of the eye that interfere with normal vision. Risk for cataracts increases with age, but diet and supplements can reduce the risk.

The AGEs that result from high blood sugar and/or calcium deposits can form cataracts. To prevent them, in addition to a diet that keeps blood sugar in a healthy

range, I recommend taking vitamin K2 supplements to prevent calcium deposits. Vitamin K2 acts like a traffic cop for the calcium in your body, directing it to your bones and teeth where it's needed, and keeping it away from eyes and arteries, where it causes damage.

Vitamin K2 comes in two forms: MK-4 and MK-7. In studies, these have been beneficial amounts: 45 mg daily of the MK-4 form or 180 mcg of the MK-7 form. Some supplements combine the two forms.

Studies have also found that these nutrients help to ward off cataracts: vitamins A and C, B vitamins, omega-3 fats found in fish oil, multivitamins, and lutein and zeaxanthin, two nutrients that I'll cover in more detail in a moment.⁴

Age-Related Macular Degeneration

In the back of each eye is a tiny yellowish spot called the "macula." A diseased macula blocks central vision, can make straight lines appear wavy, and causes other visual distortions. Studies with more than 1.8 million people found that diabetes increases risk for macular degeneration.⁵

Once macular degeneration has developed, specific nutrients may slow its progression, according to two large clinical trials sponsored by the National Eye Institute: The Age-Related Eye Disease Study (AREDS) and AREDS2.

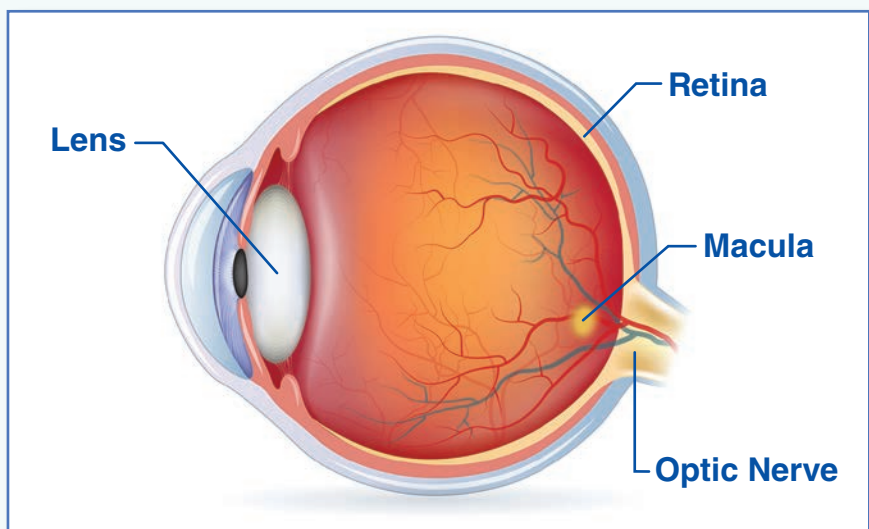
These studies led to a supplement formula with vitamins C and E, lutein, zeaxanthin, zinc, and copper. Such supplements are marketed as AREDS formulas. If you are going to take a supplement with this formula, look for one with about 11 mg of zinc, which is usually sufficient. Many AREDS formulas contain 80 mg of zinc, a very high dose that can be toxic.

Acupuncture from a qualified professional can also help treat age-related macular degeneration.

Glaucoma, Blood Sugar, and Blood Pressure

Glaucoma is an eye disease that can develop in one or both eyes. It robs vision by damaging the optic nerve, which transmits signals between the eye and the brain. Symptoms may include blocked side vision, halos around lights, blurry vision, eye pain, headache, and nausea. The nerve damage is usually caused by a build-up of fluid in the eye that creates pressure and is treated with medications, lasers, or surgery.

Parts of the Eye



Different eye disorders damage different parts of the eye.

- **Lens:** Damaged by cataracts.
- **Retina:** Damaged by diabetic retinopathy.
- **Macula:** Damaged by age-related macular degeneration.
- **Optic Nerve:** Damaged by glaucoma.

Although there is no dietary treatment for glaucoma, a low-carb diet that keeps blood sugar and blood pressure in healthy ranges can help to prevent the disease. Studies that tracked more than 12,000 people found that the risk of increased eye pressure and glaucoma is higher among people with elevated blood sugar and/or blood pressure, and among diabetics.

Studies also found that glaucoma risk was lower among those who ate a diet rich in fruits and vegetables, including leafy greens and vegetables rich in nitrates.⁶

Nitrates improve circulation by helping to keep blood vessels dilated. Most vegetables contain nitrates; celery and beets are especially rich sources.

Vitamin A and Vision

Vitamin A is a critical nutrient for good vision. It nourishes different parts of the eye, enabling it to see the full spectrum of light and to produce the natural fluid that keeps eyes lubricated and clear. Poor night vision is a sign of a lack of vitamin A.

In developing countries, severe vitamin A deficiency is a leading cause of blindness among children. In the United States, extreme deficiency is rare, but subtle shortfalls are not uncommon. In addition to vision, vitamin A is essential for healthy function of the immune system, heart, lungs, kidneys, and other organs.

The problem is this: Vitamin A comes in two forms, one from animal foods and another from plant foods. Our bodies can easily use the animal form but don't use the plant form as well. As a result, even if you get plenty of the plant

form from foods or supplements, you can still fall short. The highly absorbable, animal form of vitamin A is retinol. Liver — which most people don't eat — is the richest food source. Vitamin A in supplements may or may not contain this form.

In plants, the main form of vitamin A is beta-carotene. Although it's called "vitamin A" on labels, it's really a precursor from which our bodies make true vitamin A.

When we ingest beta-carotene, our bodies must convert it to retinol before it can be used in the eyes and other tissues. But that conversion process depends on genetics and other factors; it varies tremendously. Studies show that some people can be eight times more efficient than others in converting plant-based vitamin A to its usable retinol form. I often find that my patients are taking a multivitamin that contains little or no retinol and, consequently, aren't getting enough vitamin A.

I recommend taking a supplement that contains 100 percent of the "Daily Value" of the retinol form of vitamin A. In the Supplement Facts of the label, it's usually listed as vitamin A "retinyl palmitate." Cod liver oil is a good source of this form of vitamin A.

Lutein and Zeaxanthin

Lutein and zeaxanthin are nutrients that are concentrated in the eye. Their highest concentration is in the macula, a spot in the retina at the back of the eye, but they are also present in the retina and in the lens near the front of the eye.

Studies have found that higher levels of these two nutrients can help to prevent age-related macular

Food Sources of Lutein and Zeaxanthin

In studies that have tracked the amount of lutein and zeaxanthin from food in people's diets, benefits were seen with amounts between 5 mg and 10 mg daily of a combination of the two nutrients.

Lutein and zeaxanthin occur together in many foods. These are some approximate amounts, based on food testing by the U.S. Department of Agriculture.⁷

Food Serving size: 3.5 ounces or as listed	Lutein and Zeaxanthin (approximate content)
Kale, cooked	18 mg
Spinach, raw	12 mg
Spinach, cooked	11 mg
Green peas, boiled	2.6 mg
Romaine lettuce	2.3 mg
Squash, boiled	2.2 mg
Edamame beans	1.6 mg
Brussels sprouts, boiled	1.5 mg
Pistachio nuts, raw	1.4 mg
1 Egg yolk, raw	1.1 mg
Broccoli, cooked	1 mg
Pumpkin, cooked	1 mg
Asparagus, cooked	0.8 mg
Frozen corn, boiled	0.7 mg
Frozen green beans, cooked	0.6 mg
1 Whole egg, hard-boiled	0.3 mg
Avocado	0.3 mg

degeneration and may also help to ward off cataracts and diabetic retinopathy. Lutein and zeaxanthin can also reduce the unpleasant effect of glare from bright lights. With higher levels of these nutrients, the eyes take less time to recover from the stress of bright light. Studies have used 10 mg of lutein and 2 mg of zeaxanthin.⁸

One study, at the University of Georgia in Athens, looked at young adults who spent at least 6 hours daily using a digital screen. It compared a placebo and 24 mg daily of a patented extract from marigold flowers, called Lutemax 2020, which contains a specific combination of lutein and zeaxanthin. When taken daily for six months, the extract significantly reduced eyestrain, eye fatigue, and headaches.⁹ Lutemax 2020 is an ingredient in some eye-health formulas.

Ginseng Enhances the Eyes

Ginseng can improve vision by enhancing microcirculation. Studies have found that it improves the function of tiny blood vessels

that feed the eyes, reduces inflammation, improves removal of waste products, and may help to reduce pressure in the eyes. In people who are using eye drops to treat glaucoma, it can help to reduce dry eye.¹⁰

There are different types of ginseng. Studies looking at eye health have mostly used Korean ginseng, also called Asian ginseng or *Panax ginseng*. Extracts vary, so follow product directions. American ginseng (*Panax quinquefolius*) may also be helpful but has somewhat different properties.

Siberian ginseng comes from a different family of plants and is not true ginseng. It is known to enhance overall energy and help to balance stress, but it does not target eye health.

A Traditional Chinese Medicine Eye Formula

Herbal formulas in Traditional Chinese Medicine, designed to repair or balance various systems in the human body, have been used for thousands of years.

The Ming Mu formula (*Ming*

Mu Di Huang Wan is the full name) treats eye disorders and improves vision while nourishing the liver and kidneys. A review of 18 studies for dry eye treatment found that the Ming Mu formula was more effective than typical eye drops of “artificial tears” with pharmaceutical ingredients.¹¹

A Final Word

Eating a healthy, low-carb diet is an essential step to preserve and enhance vision, and drinking green tea will enhance microcirculation. In supplements, the retinyl palmitate form of vitamin A and lutein and zeaxanthin are the top eye nutrients. You can find these in some multivitamins and eye-health formulas. Or take cod liver oil for vitamin A and healthy fats. I also recommend ginseng — the *Panax ginseng* form. Or try the Ming Mu formula.

Regular exercise, such as brisk walking, is also essential for good circulation and healthy eyes. And don’t forget eye exercises!

Related to This Topic

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

Related Topic	Volume	Issue	Title
A Healthy Low-Carb Diet	1	8	The Guide to Healthy Eating
Healthy Carbs	3	6	The Diabetic’s Guide to Eating Carbs
Healthy Meat	3	2	The Diabetic’s Guide to Eating Meat
Supplements for Healthy Blood Sugar	4	3	Supplements for Prediabetics and Diabetics
Diabetes	2	4	Type 2 Diabetes: The Road to Recovery

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



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2 Tribley, J., et al. “Tips for computer vision syndrome relief and prevention.” *Work*. 2011;39(1):85-7.

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8 Sripesma, N.K., et al. “Lutein, Zeaxanthin, and meso-Zeaxanthin in the Clinical Management of Eye Disease.” *J Ophthalmol*. 2015; 2015: 865179.

9 Stringham, J.M., et al. “Macular Carotenoid Supplementation Improves Visual Performance, Sleep Quality, and Adverse Physical Symptoms in Those with High Screen Time Exposure.” *Foods*. 2017 Jul; 6(7): 47.

10 Kim, J., et al. “Ginseng for an eye: effects of ginseng on ocular diseases.” *J Ginseng Res*. 2020 Jan;44(1):1-7.

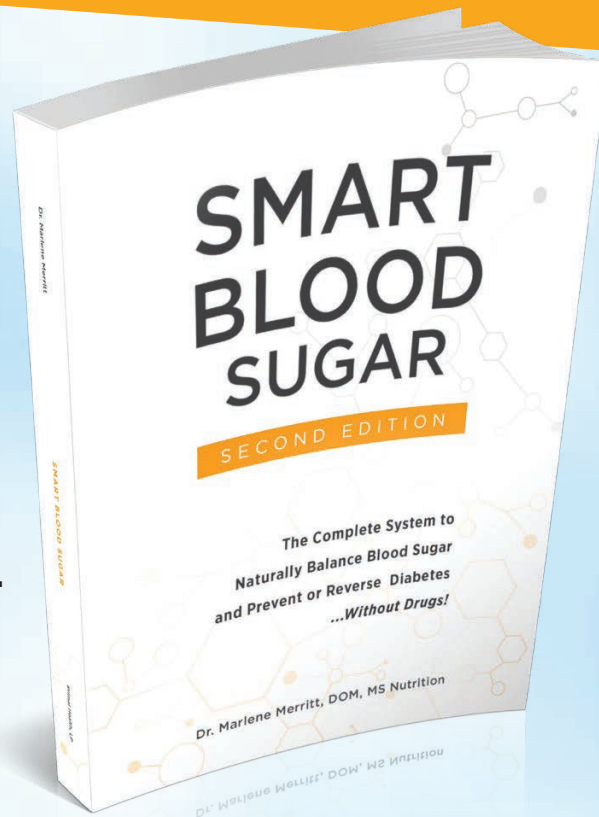
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Dr. Marlene Discovers “Insulin Switch” That Stops Blood Sugar Spikes



This blood sugar “switch” is built into every cell of the body and, when it is flipped “ON”...

- Blood sugar returns to the healthy range
- Weight is shed from belly, neck, arms, and thighs
- Energy levels return to normal
- Sleep becomes easy again



Dr. Marlene has been helping people repair their blood sugar for the last 15 years.

Just like Arthur Mabee, who was suffering from high blood sugar. His insulin levels were so high, the blood vessels in his eyes began bursting. He was severely overweight and suffering from heart problems. Arthur's doctor wanted to put him on Metformin...

That's when Arthur discovered Dr. Marlene's best-selling book, **Smart Blood Sugar**. “I said, ‘Well, I’m going to order this book because this doctor knows exactly what she’s talking about,’” Arthur explained.

In just three days of using Dr. Marlene's **Smart Blood Sugar** program, Arthur began to feel changes in his body. He gained more energy, his memory improved, he began sleeping 8 to 12 hours per night—and best of all—he lost 118 pounds since reading the book.

“I’ve improved my health 190%... I no longer have diabetes. I no longer have a pre-diabetic condition,” shared Arthur. “My eyes have even cleared up. This has definitely helped me more than anything I’ve ever done in my life.”



Did you see that? Arthur no longer has diabetes. And so can you! Yes—it is possible to reverse type 2 diabetes and maintain blood sugar in the normal range.

Dr. Marlene's **Smart Blood Sugar** is working for people all across America. And she believes it can work for you, too. Here's how...

This simple plan works by doing a few simple things that bring blood sugar down while stopping a few things that have been pushing blood sugar up. It's a combination of these two actions that make the protocol work so well.

Dr. Marlene's **Smart Blood Sugar** has become a best-selling book because it cuts through all the confusing and contradictory information and zeros in on the exact steps to take right now to heal your blood sugar.

In this easy-to-read, 100-page book, you will find step-by-step guidance, easy tools, and dozens of tips on how to maintain healthy blood sugar levels and repair insulin resistance without wasting a lot of time or money.

“Get this book, sit down, and do the same thing I did. Read it word for word,” Arthur shares with others. “**Smart Blood Sugar** will help you greatly.”

It's time to bring your blood sugar back in the healthy range. Get your copy of Dr. Marlene's best-selling book, **Smart Blood Sugar**, today for only \$27!

Order Your Copy Today!
www.SmartBloodSugar.com/Book



How to Get Off Heartburn Drugs

Getting off heartburn drugs can be tricky. If you suddenly stop taking them, there can be a rebound effect that makes the heartburn even worse than it originally was. But you can wean yourself off.

My patients are usually surprised to learn that the typical problem is not too much stomach acid but too little, and this lesser amount isn't enough for proper digestion. So food "sits" too long in the stomach, leading to an acidic stomach. Effective treatment of heartburn requires restoring your natural production of stomach acid.

The fact is, stomach acid is a good guy, not a villain. It's essential for:

- Absorption of calcium, magnesium, copper, zinc, iron, and B12.
- Overall good digestion — stomach acid breaks down protein and triggers the release of bile from the gallbladder and enzymes from the pancreas, which are essential for healthy digestive processes.
- Immune function — to kill harmful bacteria and to prevent food allergies.
- Restoration and maintenance of beneficial gut bacteria.

Where to Start

Don't stop taking your heartburn drug cold turkey. Instead, use a supplement of betaine hydrochloride (HCL) with pepsin. At the same time, gradually reduce your drug dose.

HCL increases your levels of stomach acid, and pepsin is a digestive enzyme that breaks down protein. A serving usually contains around 600 mg of HCL.

Be patient. In my experience, it takes three to six months to restore healthy production of stomach acid. Follow these steps:

1. Begin by taking an HCL supplement with each meal while continuing to take your heartburn drug as usual.
2. Gradually reduce your dose of the drug while continuing to take an HCL supplement with each meal. It can take up to several weeks to wean yourself off, depending on the type of drug you've been taking.
3. Once you've stopped taking the drug, keep taking the HCL supplement with meals. If you experience occasional heartburn, take an over-the-counter antacid such as TUMS or Rolaids.

Types of Heartburn Drugs

Proton pump inhibitors (PPIs), such as omeprazole (Prilosec), lansoprazole (Prevacid), and esomeprazole (Nexium), come in prescription and over-the-counter versions. They block production of stomach acid and are the strongest heartburn drugs. PPIs can be the most difficult to get off because they can cause a rebound effect of heartburn that's worse than it was in the first place.

H2 blockers, such as famotidine (Pepcid) or cimetidine (Tagamet),



also come in prescription and over-the-counter versions. Like PPIs, they also block production of stomach acid but to a lesser degree — and getting off these is easier. If you are taking a PPI and experience a rebound effect, switch to an H2 blocker (or ask your doctor to switch your prescription).

To gradually reduce drug dosages while taking a betaine HCL supplement, you can take half a pill or take the drug every other day.

Within about three to six months, you should be able to stop the HCL supplements without having the heartburn return. Don't get frustrated as you go through the process of weaning yourself off.

Once you no longer need to take HCL with meals, keep the supplement on hand. High stress or travel can bring on heartburn, so it's a good idea to take HCL with meals in such situations.

Our production of stomach acid decreases as we get older, potentially contributing to nutritional deficiencies. For some patients, I recommend continuing to take HCL with big meals.

Most Diets Lack Fiber —How to Get Enough



We all know that fiber is essential for regularity but it's also vital for controlling blood sugar, preventing or reversing type 2 diabetes, and maintaining a healthy heart. And eating meals that include adequate fiber can help you feel satisfied without overindulging, which helps to control weight. But many of us don't get enough fiber.

A recent study at Texas Woman's University in Denton found that only 5 percent of men and 9 percent of women are getting the recommended daily amount of dietary fiber: 21 to 25 grams for women and 30 to 38 grams for men.¹

How to Get Enough Fiber

When I mention the need for fiber, I often find that cereals and other grains are the first thing my patients think of. These can be healthy foods, if they are not refined, but the carbs in grains can easily add up to more than your body can tolerate, so grains aren't my first recommendation. If you must have cereal, choose one high in fiber and keep the serving size to about one-third cup. And perhaps, don't eat it every day.

Most important, make a habit of eating vegetables that aren't starchy at each meal. You can also include a small serving of beans (one-half cup), some avocado, and a few other fiber-rich foods from the list on the right.

If you haven't been eating much fiber, add it gradually to allow your system to adapt. Otherwise, a sudden increase can cause digestive upset. And always aim for a variety of plant foods, rather than large quantities of the same one or two items on most days.

Where to Get Fiber

All plant foods contain fiber. These are some good sources.²

Food	Serving Size	Fiber Content
Bran cereals (check Nutrition Facts)	⅓ cup	10–12 grams
Avocado, about 5 ounces	1	10 grams
Acorn squash, cooked	1 cup	9 grams
Blackberries or raspberries	1 cup	8 grams
Split peas	½ cup	8 grams
Lima, black, or pinto beans	½ cup	7 grams
Garbanzo beans	½ cup	6 grams
Black-eyed peas	½ cup	6 grams
Amaranth grain	¼ cup	6 grams
Brussels sprouts	1 cup	6 grams
Turnip, mustard, or collard greens, cooked	1 cup	5 grams
Cauliflower or broccoli, cooked	1 cup	5 grams
Spinach, beet greens, or Swiss chard, cooked	1 cup	4 grams
Cabbage, green or red, cooked	1 cup	4 grams
Almonds, about 23 nuts	1 ounce	4 grams
Asparagus, chopped	1 cup	3 grams
Kale, cooked	1 cup	3 grams
Bell peppers, chopped, raw	1 cup	3 grams
Zucchini, cooked	1 cup	3 grams
Romaine lettuce, chopped	2 cups	2 grams
Celery, chopped	1 cup	1.5 grams

Caffeine Can't Make Up for Lost Sleep

If you haven't slept enough, it's easy to reach for a cup of coffee to perk you up. But the effect of caffeine is limited, according to a recent study of 275 people at Michigan State University in East Lansing.³

Researchers found that caffeine helped sleep-deprived participants to focus and complete simple tasks. But

even with a caffeine boost, lack of sleep led to errors while doing more complex tasks that require following a sequence of steps. As an example, errors are more likely if you drive while tired — which could be dangerous.

Bottom line, a caffeine jolt can take you only so far. There's no substitute for a good night's sleep.

1 Mketinas, D. "Usual Dietary Fiber Intake in US Adults with Diabetes: NHANES 2013–2018." Nutrition 2021 Live Online, June 7–10, 2021. 2 Palmer, S. "The Top Fiber-Rich Foods List." Today's Dietitian. Vol. 10 No. 7 P. 28. 3 Stepan, M.E., et al. "Caffeine selectively mitigates cognitive deficits caused by sleep deprivation." J Exp Psychol Learn Mem Cogn. 2021 May 20. doi: 10.1037/xlm0001023. Online ahead of print.

Amazing Benefits of Swimming

Walking gets so much attention as a simple way to get some exercise that we often overlook some other fun ways to get and stay in better shape — like swimming. A nonprofit organization in the United Kingdom, Swim England, compiled all the available research, including a study of 80,000 swimmers, showing health benefits of swimming. And I thought that summer would be a good time to share their findings.

Swimming, the report found:¹

- Lowers risk of death from heart disease or stroke by 41%

- Lowers overall risk of early death by 28%
- Reduces the incidence of diabetes and heart disease by 20% to 40%
- Lowers blood pressure
- Improves lung capacity
- Reduces joint pain
- Increases bone strength
- Reduces stress
- Helps older people stay physically agile
- Protects memory

Another big advantage of swimming is that virtually anyone



can move in the water, even if you have difficulty doing other types of exercise. It's so gentle on joints. You can start slowly and gradually build strength and flexibility.

If it's been a while since you put on a bathing suit, or your swimming technique could use a brush-up, consider joining a swimming class for people in your own age group. In addition to the physical and mental benefits, swimming is fun!

Weight Loss Improves Tinnitus

Tinnitus can be a ringing, buzzing, clicking, hissing, humming, or roaring sound in one or both ears that is not caused by any external source. It can stem from an underlying condition, such as hearing loss, an ear injury, or a circulatory problem.



But diet and exercise can also help to relieve tinnitus, according to a study of 46 obese people suffering from the condition.²

In the study, participants were divided into three groups: one following a diet and exercise program, another following only a diet, and a third group making no lifestyle changes, as a control group for comparison. The exercise program involved walking at least 10,000 steps daily.

At the end of 12 weeks, researchers found that tinnitus was significantly reduced in both the diet-plus-exercise and diet-only groups, but there was no improvement in the control group. The greatest benefits were seen in people who lost at least 5 percent of their original weight.

The Most Popular Recipes Online

Social media celebrities — so-called influencers — often post healthy, low-calorie recipes on Pinterest that include vegetables, poultry, and seafood. These get a lot of likes and shares, so you may think that they are really popular with home cooks. But this isn't necessarily so.

The recipes that people use to cook dishes at home tend to be high in sugar, fat, and calories, and not so healthy. That's the conclusion of a study at George Mason University in Fairfax, Va.³

Researchers analyzed hundreds of food posts on Pinterest. To identify what people prepared at home, they looked at food photos and comments posted by users — not celebrities — showing dishes that they made in their own kitchens. And there was a clear trend: The higher the sugar, fat, and calories in a recipe, the more likely that home cooks would follow the recipe.

The study also found that people look for recipes that seem tasty, but health does not play much of a part. There seems to be a notion that food can't be tasty *and* healthy. That's a shame because healthy dishes can be delicious — it's often all about the herbs and spices that are used!

¹ Swim England's Swimming and Health Commission. "The Health and Wellbeing Benefits of Swimming." Swim England, June 2017. ² Özbey-Yücel, Ü. Et al. "The Effects of Diet and Physical Activity Induced Weight Loss on the Severity of Tinnitus and Quality of Life: A Randomized Controlled Trial." Clinical Nutrition ESPEN. Available online 28 May 2021. ³ Cheng, X., et al. "Healthfulness Assessment of Recipes Shared on Pinterest: Natural Language Processing and Content Analysis." J Med Internet Res. 2021 Apr 20;23(4):e25757.

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Q&A

Q: I'm worried because I can't remember things like I used to. How can I tell if it's part of normal aging or if I'm developing Alzheimer's disease? — Mindy H.

A: If you sometimes forget where you put your keys, it doesn't mean that you're developing Alzheimer's. With normal aging, in that type of situation, people can generally retrace some of their steps in their mind to help locate the keys.

You unlocked the door when you came home, so you had your keys. Perhaps you dropped them in your bag. Maybe the phone rang just as you came in, and while talking on the phone, you left the keys on the kitchen counter and a bag of groceries is now hiding them.

When memory problems are developing, I find that people have difficulty retracing — they can't go back and recreate their steps.

Most often, I find that the real problem is not an inability to remember but difficulty with focus. When attention is scattered, people have trouble remembering.

One of my patients was concerned about his memory so we gave him some cognitive tests, and he scored very poorly: around 1 out of 10. There was some concern that the tests were done in a noisy, distracting environment, so we redid them a week later.

We made sure that the room was quiet, and that he was relaxed and at ease. And he scored 9 out of 10 on the tests. In other words, being

distracted can make it seem that memory is failing, when it isn't.

In addition to getting rid of distractions in the environment and taking a moment to focus, the herb bacopa (*Bacopa monnieri*) can help. It's been used for centuries in Eastern medicine to improve focus and memory and to reduce stress and anxiety, and there's research to support its benefits.

Compounds called "bacosides" are the active components in bacopa. If you decide to take the supplement, I suggest checking the quantity of bacosides in a product, in the Supplement Facts. Each dose should contain about 33 mg of bacosides, and it should be taken 3 or 4 times per day.

Q: I've read that statin drugs can raise blood sugar. That seems odd because I know that high blood sugar is bad for my heart. Can statins turn me into a diabetic? — Frank B.

A: Research has shown that statins do increase the risk of elevated blood sugar and, therefore, risk for diabetes. And if someone already has diabetes, statins can speed up its progression and the damage it causes.

Following a healthy low-carb diet will reduce the risk, even if someone is taking statins. But there are a few other options to consider.

The most beneficial use of statins is during the first month or so after a heart attack. In such situations, they reduce the risk of a second heart attack. After that, it's best for an integrative cardiologist to evaluate the course of medication.

Among cholesterol-lowering

medications, there are some older drugs that have fallen out of favor but may be safer alternatives that don't raise blood sugar: Cholestyramine (Prevalite and Questran are some brand names) and colestsevelam hydrochloride (WelChol is the brand name).

Statins and the older drugs work in different ways. Statins reduce cholesterol production in the liver. Older drugs don't work in the liver. Instead, they bind with "bad" LDL cholesterol and help to eliminate it through the bowels. This is also how "good" HDL cholesterol works naturally in your body.

With any of these drugs, or without them, a low-carb diet of wholesome foods always lays the foundation for healthy cholesterol levels. I cover this in more detail in an earlier issue of this newsletter: Volume 1, issue 4, *When Statin Drugs Can Harm You More than Cholesterol*.

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.