

# Dr. Marlene's NATURAL HEALTH CONNECTIONS

VOLUME 5 | ISSUE 11

A PUBLICATION OF PRIMAL HEALTH



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## How to Stay Healthy All Winter Long



**How concerned should you be about COVID? Colds? Flu? Find out, and learn the most important steps to take to protect yourself and stay healthy during this challenging winter season.**

Last year in a fall issue of this newsletter, I said, “This cold and flu season is unlike any other.” This is so true — again — and this year’s dangers may be less obvious but more hazardous.

It’s been almost three years since the COVID virus began to disrupt our lives with lockdowns. The numbers of infections, hospitalizations, and deaths have fluctuated since then, and because they aren’t as high as they once were, as I write this, it’s easy to become complacent. But this is the wrong thing to do.

In fact, we face some serious new challenges this year for several reasons. Chief among them are confusion about where we stand with the COVID pandemic and incorrect information about the real risks of infection.

It’s been a while since public health organizations told us to socially distance, wash our hands often, and wear masks. And so, many people feel as though we no longer need to take

precautions. But this isn’t correct.

Two things contributed to the end of social distancing and, for the most part, the end of masks. As more people were infected with the COVID virus, it was believed that as a nation we would develop immunity to it, making another infection less likely (more about this in a moment). And once vaccines became widely available, they reduced the risks of severe illness, hospitalization, and death.

These two factors did work to relieve an obvious healthcare crisis during which our hospitals and healthcare workers had been overwhelmed with the volume of people suffering from COVID infections. However, what we’ve learned since then shows that the risks of COVID are more complex and longer lasting.

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**IN THE NEXT ISSUE:**  
**Top 20 Diabetes**  
**Questions Answered**

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In addition, let's not forget that colds and flu also pose ongoing health threats during the winter season. While both were dramatically reduced by social distancing and masks during the last two winters, we have much greater exposure this year because such precautions have pretty much been abandoned.

### My Personal Strategy

There is much we don't yet know about how to deal with COVID.

Dr. Marlene's  
**NATURAL HEALTH CONNECTIONS**

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I'm going to explain what we do know and the most important things to do to protect yourself in today's environment. But before I delve into the available evidence, I'd like to share with you my personal approach to staying healthy.

I got vaccinated as soon as vaccines were available. And I haven't given up on wearing a mask, washing my hands, using hand sanitizer, and exercising caution about being in crowded spaces.

### What I Do

I regularly go to the gym, and gyms are one of the most likely places for COVID transmission. They are indoor spaces that are not always well ventilated. And exercise makes people breathe more heavily, which expels their breath into a larger area and makes it easier to spread bugs if someone is infected. (Singing works the same way.)

My exercise routine is essential for my health and well-being, so I don't want to give it up. But I take precautions.

While at the gym, I always wear an N95 mask, which is the best

kind. My gym has antiseptic wipes available, and I use these to wipe down each piece of equipment before I use it. Unfortunately, most people don't do this.

Once my workout is finished, I thoroughly wash my hands with soap and water before I leave the gym. And I don't take my mask off until I'm outdoors.

When I'm shopping in a store, I wear a mask if it's crowded. And at restaurants, my husband and I have consistently been eating outdoors.

I don't usually wear a mask at outdoor events. However, I did hear of someone becoming infected with COVID in an "outdoor" arena that had a roof and open sides.



I keep hand sanitizer in my car and always use it after shopping in a store. And I let the sanitizer dry on my hands rather than wiping it off, as that's what makes it effective.

Am I being too cautious? I certainly don't think so, and I've stayed healthy — neither my husband nor I have gotten COVID so far.

### Most Effective Masks

Wearing a mask when indoors in stores and other public places dramatically reduces the odds of catching a cold or flu or getting infected with the COVID virus.

A study of more than 1,800 people found that this is how much consistently wearing different types of masks reduced risk for COVID infection in indoor public spaces:<sup>1</sup>

Compared to no mask:		
Type of mask:		
Risk reduced by:	<b>Surgical mask</b> 66%	<b>N95 or KN95 mask</b> 83%

**What about cloth masks?** These were not very effective and offered little or no protection against infection.

## False Notions

I've heard various reasons why many people no longer feel they need to take precautions to avoid or reduce their risk for COVID. These include:

- I've already had COVID, so I have natural immunity.
- I got sick (or someone I know got sick), and it wasn't a big deal.
- We can't get rid of COVID so I may as well take my chances.
- I'll get it sooner or later, no matter what I do.
- I'm in good shape, so if I do catch it I won't get seriously ill.
- I'm vaccinated, so I don't need to worry.
- I have to live my life.
- It's like the flu or a bad cold.

It's true that not everyone who gets sick with COVID has serious — or any — symptoms. However, long COVID can develop in anyone, including healthy people of all ages, even after a mild or asymptomatic infection. And you can spread the virus to people around you.

To help you make smart decisions, there are some important facts you need to know.

## COVID Immunity from Earlier Infection

With huge numbers of people becoming infected in the early part of the pandemic, it was thought that this might lead to “herd immunity,” when so many people have developed immunity after an infection that the virus ceases to be a threat. Hopeful as this sounded, it hasn't happened.

The problem is, the COVID virus has mutated many times. And it continues to mutate.

The human body can develop resistance to a specific virus after an infection because the immune system learns how to ward it off. But if that virus mutates, the immune system is not prepared to resist the altered version. This is why we can get infected with cold and flu viruses many times: they mutate.

When only the original COVID virus was circulating, it was rare for people to get infected a second time. But with new mutations, such as omicron variants, getting infected again has become more common, because the immune system is not able to resist a new strain of the virus.<sup>2</sup>

## Likelihood of Repeated Infections

Omicron was initially discussed in the media as though it were

one strain of the COVID virus. But we've learned that there are a variety of omicron strains, making it harder for us to resist infection.

A study of more than 11,000 people in Iceland found that the more time that had elapsed since an earlier infection, the more likely that a second infection could occur with an omicron variant. And it can strike people of all ages.<sup>3</sup>

A large study of Danish people found similar trends: People who had been infected with one of the earlier strains of COVID — those circulating in 2020 and for much of 2021 — had a significant amount of protection against being infected again with those same strains.

Things changed when omicron variants began to spread in late 2021. And the research shows that people who were infected with earlier strains of COVID are *not* well protected against the omicron strains.<sup>4</sup>

### About Dr. Marlene

Dr. Marlene Merritt's passion for natural medicine is fueled by her drive to help others and by her own experience of overcoming a debilitating heart condition, diagnosed at the age of 20. A competitive cyclist at the time, she suddenly began experiencing severe chest pains. Forced to quit the sport, she suffered from fatigue and chest 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 degree and is board-certified in Nutrition, and is board-certified in Functional Medicine. She is certified in the Bredesen MEND Protocol™, a groundbreaking method of addressing Alzheimer's disease, and is a Proficiency Diplomate in the Shoemaker CIRS protocol for treatment of mold-related illness. She is the author of *Smart Blood Sugar* and *The Blood Pressure Solution*, and co-author of *The Perfect Sleep Solution*. After 31 years in private clinical practice, she now focuses on writing and educating health professionals and consumers to reach more people and positively impact their health.





## Health Risks After COVID

Many people are suffering from long COVID: persistent symptoms long after a COVID infection.

Common ones include fatigue, brain fog, difficulty breathing and being physically active, heart problems, blood-clotting disorders, kidney problems, diabetes, digestive problems, muscle pain, and neurological issues.

So far, no definitive treatment for long COVID has been established. But a large study of people in our Veterans Administration healthcare system sheds some valuable light on what our priorities need to be.

Researchers analyzed data on more than 5.6 million people. Of these, more than 250,000 had suffered one COVID infection, more than 38,000 had suffered two or more infections, and the rest had not been infected.

Researchers found that being infected with COVID more than once doubled the risk of death from any cause in the following six months, compared to people who had never been infected. And second or additional infections significantly increased the risks of other lasting health issues, including all the symptoms of long COVID.<sup>5, 6</sup>

## What Underlies Long COVID?

The COVID virus obviously attacks the respiratory system, as do colds and flu. But COVID can also cause significant damage to the heart, brain, lungs, other organs, and nerves. It can cause disorders with breathing, blood clotting, blood sugar, digestion, muscle function, immune function, and energy production.<sup>7</sup>

The damage persists and causes lasting symptoms. Such situations are unique to each individual and need to be treated accordingly.

However, studies also point to an underlying mechanism: COVID virus remnants that persist in different parts of the body. These remnants aren't the live, infectious virus that caused the initial illness. Rather, they are genetic material — leftover debris — stuck in different tissues.

Studies have found that virus debris can be anywhere in the human body, including the brain,<sup>8</sup> lungs,<sup>9</sup> intestines,<sup>10</sup> breasts, appendix, and skin.<sup>11</sup>

Imagine that you drop a glass bowl on the floor and it shatters. You carefully pick up the pieces and throw them away. The mess appears to be cleaned up. However, if there are tiny shards of glass stuck in carpet fibers, or between floorboards or tiles, and you step on them with bare feet, you can cut yourself.

In the case of COVID, studies show that even infections that were mild or produced no symptoms can deposit viral debris and lead to lingering symptoms for weeks, months, or more than a year after an initial infection.

Since the debris is foreign matter, the immune system can react, producing ongoing inflammation and attacking the body's own tissues. Cold and flu viruses don't pose this type of danger.

## How to Eliminate Viral Debris

You can help your body to eliminate leftover debris from the COVID virus by moving fluid in your lymph system. Lymph contains the clear white liquid you see that isn't blood when you cut your finger.

Gentle exercise, saunas, deep breathing, and lymphatic massage can all help. Lymphatic massage doesn't put pressure on muscles but uses stroking movements to stimulate movement of fluid. And drink plenty of filtered water.

St. John's wort became popular for mood problems, but it can also help your body to eliminate viral debris. It works on certain detoxification enzymes. However, this mechanism also changes the way your body metabolizes many drugs. It can make drugs less or more potent and potentially toxic. If you are taking any medications and want to try St. John's wort,

## Protection Basics

These are basic tools to reduce your odds of getting infected with COVID, colds, and flu:

- **COVID vaccines:** If you were vaccinated more than 4–6 months ago, get a booster shot. Also get a shot if you had COVID more than 4–6 months ago.
- **Masks:** In public indoor spaces, wear an N95, KN95, or KF94 mask or, next best, a surgical mask.
- **Hand washing:** Wash your hands thoroughly and often, with soap and water, for 20 seconds or the time it takes to sing *Happy Birthday* twice.
- **Hand sanitizer:** Keep a bottle in your car and use it after shopping or being in another public place, and always let the liquid dry on your hands — don't wipe it off. Sanitizer doesn't replace hand washing but is helpful in between.

Bottom line: Stay vigilant. And if you're sick, please stay home. If you can't stay home, please wear a mask to prevent spreading germs.

work with a knowledgeable health practitioner, as drug dosages may need to be adjusted to avoid drug toxicity or ineffectiveness.

COVID Vaccines

During the past two years, COVID vaccines have been proven to reduce serious illness and death. There’s no doubt about this.

Equally important, if you get sick after being vaccinated, you have lower odds of developing long COVID. This is the conclusion of a review of studies with more than 17,000 people, led by researchers at Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine in Baltimore.<sup>12</sup>

The same group of researchers also looked at studies of people who were vaccinated while they were suffering from long COVID. In these cases, results were mixed. Some people improved after vaccination, some experienced no change, and others felt worse.

If you were recently infected or received a vaccine shot, wait four-to-six months before getting the

vaccine or a booster for optimal protection. Keep in mind that it takes two weeks after a vaccine shot for your immune system to develop protective antibodies.

Lifestyle and Supplements

Eating a healthy low-carb diet of fresh foods, getting adequate sleep, getting regular exercise that reduces stress and rejuvenates you, and managing stress are basic ways to enhance your own immune system.

While there are no supplements that are proven to prevent or treat COVID infections, guarding against nutrient shortfalls will help your immune system to function well. A multivitamin, extra B vitamins, and CoQ10 will help to shore up your defenses. And taking echinacea daily can help to ward off colds and flu or reduce the length and severity of these infections if you do get sick.

I also suggest keeping andrographis in your medicine cabinet. If you feel like you may

be getting a cold or flu, take the herb right away to stop or slow replication of these viruses in your system. N-acetyl cysteine (NAC) and liposomal glutathione can also help you recover from a respiratory infection. For more details and tips on using these, and foods to eat and avoid, I encourage you to read the earlier issues of this newsletter listed in the chart on this page.

By protecting yourself from the outside (see *Protection Basics* on page 4), nourishing your body from the inside, and taking some of the supplements I’ve mentioned, you can be in better shape to stay healthy during this challenging season.

Related to This Topic

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

Related Topic	Volume	Issue	Title
Lifestyle and Immune Function	3	9	The Guide to a Healthy Immune System for Life
Flu Vaccines	2	10	Real Flu Prevention: With or Without a Flu Shot
A Low-Carb Diet	5	6	New Blood Sugar Dangers: What to Do
Food Sensitivities	4	12	Food Sensitivities: Hidden Triggers of Many Health Conditions
Gluten	2	3	How Gluten Can Cause More Than 30 Health Conditions
Sleeping Well	2	2	The 10-Minute Sleep Solution

Access these online by logging in to [www.NaturalHealthConnections.com](http://www.NaturalHealthConnections.com).



1 California COVID-19 Case-Control Study Team. "Effectiveness of Face Mask or Respirator Use in Indoor Public Settings for Prevention of SARS-CoV-2 Infection — California, February–December 2021." *MMWR Morb Mortal Wkly Rep*. 2022 Feb 11;71(6):212-216.

2 Medic, S., et al. "Risk and severity of SARS-CoV-2 reinfections during 2020-2022 in Vojvodina, Serbia: A population-level observational study." *Lancet Reg Health Eur*. 2022 Sep;20:100453.

3 Eythorsson, E., et al. "Rate of SARS-CoV-2 Reinfection During an Omicron Wave in Iceland." *JAMA Netw Open*. 2022 Aug; 5(8):e2225320.

4 Michlmayr, D., et al. "Observed protection against SARS-CoV-2 reinfection following a primary infection: A Danish cohort study among unvaccinated using two years of nationwide PCR-test data." *Lancet Reg Health Eur*. 2022 Sep;20:100452.

5 Al-Aly, Z., et al. "Outcomes of SARS-CoV-2 Reinfection." *Research Square*. 2022 June 17. <https://www.researchsquare.com/article/rs-1749502/v1>

6 Le Page, M. "The risks from covid-19 reinfection." *New Sci*. 2022 Jul 9; 255(3394): 21.

7 Proal, A.D., et al. "Long COVID or Post-acute Sequelae of COVID-19 (PASC): An Overview of Biological Factors That May Contribute to Persistent Symptoms." *Front Microbiol*. 2021 Jun 23;12:698169.

8 Chertow, D., et al. "SARS-CoV-2 infection and persistence throughout the human body and brain." *Research Square*. 2021 Dec. 20. <https://www.researchsquare.com/article/rs-1139035/v1>

9 Ceulemans, L.J., et al. "Persistence of SARS-CoV-2 RNA in lung tissue after mild COVID-19." *Lancet Respir Med*. 2021 Aug;9(8):e78-e79.

10 Gaebler, C., et al. "Evolution of antibody immunity to SARS-CoV-2." *Nature*. 2021 Mar;591(7851):639-644.

11 Goh, D., et al. "Case report: Persistence of residual antigen and RNA of the SARS-CoV-2 virus in tissues of two patients with long COVID." *Front Immunol*. 2022 Sep 5;13:939989.

12 Notarte, K.I., et al. "Impact of COVID-19 vaccination on the risk of developing long-COVID and on existing long-COVID symptoms: A systematic review." *EClinicalMedicine*. 2022 Aug 27;53:101624.

# Health Maintenance Often Takes a Back Seat

A recent survey of 2,000 homeowners found that 7 in 10 think that maintenance of their house is more important than maintenance of their health during fall months.<sup>1</sup> While you definitely don't want your roof to leak or the heating system to break down during cold weather, it's also vital to take steps to maintain your own well-being.

Staying healthy means doing things that will enhance and preserve your health, even when you're feeling fine. It could include a variety of actions, such as:

- regularly getting good sleep and exercise
- making sure you routinely eat a healthy diet
- taking good care of your teeth
- doing things that lower your stress level
- getting routine health check-ups
- staying in touch with people you care about

However, only 15 percent of survey respondents put

a high priority on such things. Maintaining their car was likely to rank higher in importance.

## Motivation to Act

The survey also found that anxiety, fear, or a physical symptom was more likely to prompt action to enhance one's well-being. But you're better off doing things to *stay* healthy rather than waiting for something to go wrong.

When the traditional holiday season begins around Thanksgiving, many people throw caution to the wind when it comes to healthy eating. But this isn't a good strategy. It's possible to enjoy some holiday treats on special occasions without abandoning healthy habits. And if you know your routines could use an upgrade, the fall and winter season is a good time to take steps in that direction.



## Most Nutritious Fish

A new study has evaluated nutritional quality of different types of fish and seafood and their impact on the environment. And it identified the best combinations of high nutritional value and low environmental impact. As it turns out, we aren't taking full advantage of some of the best options:<sup>2</sup>

- Wild pink and sockeye salmon
- Small fish such as herring, mackerel, sardines, and anchovies
- Farmed mussels and oysters

Salmon has gained popularity, and wild salmon is often recom-

mended as the best type, but it isn't eaten as much as less nutritious varieties of white fish. And the entire category of small fish has not caught on in this country. In fact, these small fish are largely used as feed for livestock and on fish farms, which is unfortunate, as they are inexpensive but very nutritious.

In the seafood category, shrimp are most popular, but they are not especially high in nutrients, and their production, mostly on shrimp farms, is not very environmentally friendly.



Mussels and oysters can be farmed without causing environmental problems and while providing an ample supply. But they aren't widely eaten, which is again unfortunate as they are also very nutritious.

I suggest looking for some recipes for the fish and seafood listed above. And let's discover some new tastes at our tables.

<sup>1</sup> OnePoll for MDLIVE. "Prioritizing Your Health in the Fall." Sept 29, 2022. <sup>2</sup> Bianchi, M., et al. "Assessing seafood nutritional diversity together with climate impacts informs more comprehensive dietary advice." *Commun Earth Environ* 3, 188 (2022).



# 5 Important Reasons to Get Green **SUPER FOODS** Into Your Diet



## Reason #1

### You don't eat enough fruits and vegetables.

Eat your broccoli! Can you hear your mother say it? Sure, but do you really want to?

Getting the fresh vegetables you need every day for good health isn't easy, or fun.

Fruits are friendlier, but unless you're eating berries, you're getting too much sugar. Apples, bananas, oranges, grapes and melons are especially high in sugar. And too much sugar impacts your weight, your blood glucose, and your lipid profile.

And yet vegetables and berries are essential to good health. And that's why, today, many people are choosing Primal Labs' **Super Greens** nutrient drink.

This delicious raspberry-flavored powder mixes easily in water, or can be added to a smoothie. It's loaded with nutritious phytonutrients, alkalizing chlorophyll and free-radical-fighting antioxidants.

In less than one minute you get all the green nutrients you need for the day!

## Reason #2

### You want a healthier body chemistry

Did you know your body's natural pH is 7.4? That's slightly alkaline, which is exactly what your body needs for good health.

But your body's natural pH can come under assault from the typical Western diet, which leans acidic, with a pH between 5 and 6.9.

For example, red meats, deli turkey, sodas, grains and processed foods are all acidic foods. Alcoholic beverages are acidic, too. And even some cheeses are acidic.

It's not hard to choose foods that are almost all acidic, and that can push your natural pH levels down.

**Super Greens** nutritional drink comes to the rescue with its concentrated formula of alkalizing superfoods that provide essential phytonutrients, polyphenols, chlorophyll, live enzymes and several bioavailable vitamins and minerals.

All the nutrients in **Super Greens** support good health while maintaining the proper pH.

## Reason #3

### You want health-promoting Phytonutrients

Fruits and vegetables contain over 25,000 different phytonutrients, and up to 8,000 of them are antioxidants that fight the free radicals that contribute to aging.

**More benefits on the next page! →**



# For Heart Health, Bone Health, Digestive Health and Brain Health – Get **Super Greens**!



Until recently, only a relatively small number of phytonutrients have been studied, but that's changing. And already many of these amazing nutrients are known to...

- Lift your energy
- Boost your immune system
- Fight cellular oxidation (aging)
- Improve your digestion
- Support eye and artery health

## Plus...

- Promote brain health
- Nourish your skin, hair, and nails
- And fight food cravings!

Just a quick glance at these important benefits tells you that getting your phytonutrients is essential to good health. And now they're easy to get with Primal Labs' **Super Greens** nutrient drink.

## Reason #4

### You want a nutritious "greens drink" that tastes great

Maybe you've tried a greens drink before and found it to be "awful." I know what you mean. Some of them taste like blenderized grass clippings. And many of them are sickeningly over sweetened.

**Super Greens** is different. It contains a healthy berry blend that tastes like a refreshing raspberry drink. Make a smoothie with a couple of ice cubes and a scoop of your favorite yogurt, and it'll taste like dessert (incidentally, while most dairy is acidic, yogurt is alkaline).

Best of all, because it tastes so good, you'll love making **Super Greens** a regular part of your diet. And you may even want to have it more than once a day. Can you do that?

You sure can, there's no harm, only good.

Use **Super Greens** daily and you won't miss out on the important nutrients you'd get from fresh fruits and vegetables. For many folks, **Super Greens** is a convenient and delicious alternative.

## Reason #5

### You need to watch your weight

One of the biggest problems many of us have is nagging hunger pangs. That's when we reach for a candy bar. Or a bag of chips. Or a sugar-laden drink.

But that's too much sugar, and too many empty calories.

Here's the solution – mix up a glass of delicious **Super Greens**! It's refreshing. It's filling. It's loaded with green superfoods. And best of all, because it's lightly sweetened with stevia, it has ZERO sugar and only 20 calories per serving.

So, use **Super Greens** to support your heart health, bone health, digestive health and brain health. Use it to keep inflammatory responses normal. And also to support a healthy body chemistry that resists aging.

Considering that it's not always practical to get all the fruits and vegetables you need – **Super Greens** offers a convenient and great-tasting alternative.

Try it and see for yourself how much better you feel. Through this ad, you can get 15% OFF your order. And Primal Labs has an unbeatable 100% money-back guarantee. You must be happy or your money back. Period. So, give it a try on my recommendation. I know you'll be glad you did!



Order **Super Greens** at 15% Off  
Today Through This Special Link:  
[www.PrimalSpecials.com/Greens](http://www.PrimalSpecials.com/Greens)



# Are Heartburn Drugs Harming You?

I'm not a fan of popular heartburn drugs — proton pump inhibitors, or PPIs for short — because they don't solve the most common reason for heartburn and can cause damage. Popular brand names, over the counter or by prescription, include Nexium, Prilosec and Prevacid.

So, I was glad to see an update to the medical guidelines for prescribing these drugs, from the American Gastroenterological Association.<sup>1</sup> That's an organization of doctors who specialize in digestive diseases.

The updated guidelines emphasize one major problem: that the drugs are overused. However, they still don't address the real cause of most heartburn.

PPIs reduce production of stomach acid, based on a faulty premise that too much acid production causes heartburn. In fact, heartburn usually develops because there is initially too little stomach acid.

Without sufficient stomach acid, food isn't broken down properly, and partially digested food basically putrefies and creates excess acid. And then, the acids and stomach juices can irritate the esophagus. But that's not all.

When stomach acid is suppressed by PPIs, nutrients can't be absorbed properly. Long-term use of these drugs can lead to depletion of calcium, magnesium, copper, zinc, iron, and B12. Low stomach acid also leads to an imbalance of gut bacteria, poor digestion, and less-efficient immune function.

## What to Do

If you've been taking heartburn drugs and suddenly stop, you're likely to get rebound symptoms, which may be worse than the ones you had before taking the drugs. But you can take these steps to gradually wean yourself off PPIs:

- With each meal, take one serving of a supplement of betaine HCL with pepsin (about 600 mg in most products). This provides hydrochloric acid and pepsin, an enzyme that helps to break down protein. Both of these are made by your body, and the supplement helps to remedy a shortfall.
- Continue to take your heartburn drug as usual.
- Slowly reduce the dosage of the drug while continuing to take the HCL supplement. You can

also switch to a different type of heartburn drug: an H2 blocker such as Zantac, which is less likely to cause rebound symptoms and is easier to transition from.

- Once you are no longer taking the drug, keep taking HCL with meals. If you occasionally get heartburn, take an antacid such as TUMS.

It will likely take several weeks to wean yourself off the drug. Be patient and don't reduce the dosage too quickly. And it can take several months of HCL with meals to restore your natural production of stomach acid.

## Cautions

If you feel worse right after taking an HCL supplement, stop taking it and work with a practitioner to resolve the situation, as there may be another digestive issue that needs attention. In addition, don't take HCL if you have an ulcer.

That said, I've found that most people who suffer from heartburn experience relief by increasing their stomach acid with HCL supplements, regardless of whether they were taking any heartburn drugs.

# Green Tea Lowers Blood Sugar

A study at The Ohio State University, in Columbus, has found that a green tea extract supplement lowered blood sugar and intestinal inflammation in four weeks. This result occurred in both healthy people and those with elevated blood sugar.<sup>2</sup>

The study used a gummy supplement that contained 890 mg of catechins. If you want to take a supplement,

please choose one without sugar.

I generally recommend drinking green tea because you also get some hydration, and the tea can replace drinks without health benefits, such as sugary sodas. If you like your tea sweet, use flavored or plain stevia or monk fruit.



1 Targownik, L.E., et al. "AGA Clinical Practice Update on De-Prescribing of Proton Pump Inhibitors: Expert Review." *Gastroenterology*. 2022 Apr;162(4):1334-1342. 2 Hodges, J., et al. "Catechin-Rich Green Tea Extract Reduced Intestinal Inflammation and Fasting Glucose in Metabolic Syndrome and Healthy Adults: A Randomized, Controlled, Crossover Trial." *Current Developments in Nutrition*. 2022 Jun;6(Supplement 1):981.

# Walking: How to Get the Most Benefit

You've heard it a million times: Walking is good for you. But how good?

If you walk for 30 minutes a day on most days — a standard recommendation — will it really keep you healthy and strong? While it's certainly helpful, how much you benefit depends on how you go about it.

I've seen people saunter along at a leisurely pace, perhaps chatting with a friend or watching their dog sniff around a yard. Although any walking will help to move fluids in your body and can enhance your well-being, it takes a bit more effort to get maximum benefits from walking, which include:

- Lower blood pressure
- Lower blood sugar
- A healthier heart
- Less risk of type 2 diabetes
- Less risk of stroke
- Less risk of cancer
- Stronger bones and leg muscles
- Increased energy
- Better sleep
- A stronger immune system
- Less stress
- Better balance
- Lower odds of weight gain
- A brighter mood

I'm not trying to discourage you from enjoying a friendly conversation during a leisurely stroll, or from allowing your dog to explore the neighborhood. Both are good things to do — definitely better than sitting on the couch. But you can experience greater benefits if you know how.

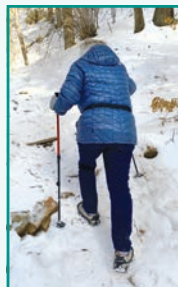
## How Fast Should You Walk?

When experts recommend walking for 30 minutes daily, they also generally mention a moderate or brisk pace. And that last part of the message is all-too-often misunderstood.

"Moderate" may mistakenly be viewed as moving at a leisurely pace that requires little or no effort. And "brisk" may be ignored. So, what do these really mean in the world of exercise science?

### My 83-year-old Mother on a Hike

My mother was initially reluctant to go on hikes with me. Although hiking poles gave her more confidence, her arms quickly tired — until her arm muscles got stronger with weight training. Now, she has no problem with hiking in challenging terrain.



A moderate pace is brisk enough to raise your heart rate and make you sweat a little after walking for about 10 minutes. With moderate exercise, your breathing quickens somewhat, to a point where you can still carry on a conversation but you can't sing.

How fast you need to walk to get to this point depends on your personal fitness level. The less fit you are, the more easily your breathing and heart rate will quicken. As you get more fit, you will need to work harder to produce the same effect.

Moderate exercise is not as intense as vigorous activity. The vigorous kind will increase your heart rate and breathing to a point where you can say only a few words, and will need to pause to take a breath to talk more.

Walking can become vigorous when you walk with intensity or up a fairly steep hill or set of stairs. Walking very fast — sometimes called power walking — or jogging or running are other ways to turn a walk into vigorous movement. But there's more to know for optimal benefits.

## Is Moderate or Vigorous Exercise Better?

The standard exercise recommendations call for either 150 minutes of moderate exercise or 75 minutes of vigorous activity per week. In other words, vigorous exercise produces benefits faster and saves you time, but it has a downside.

I've found that many people don't like vigorous exercise because it's uncomfortable. For example, when people try an exercise class that includes an intense level of activity, discomfort is the most likely reason they don't do it consistently.

Bottom line, most people who have not been regularly involved in some type of athletic activity can't tolerate long bouts of vigorous activity. And even those with an athletic track record may face physical challenges as they get older.

Fortunately, it's possible to get the benefits of vigorous exercise without the downside, at any fitness level — even beginner.

## The Best of Both Worlds

The most beneficial walking is done in intervals, alternating intense walking with walking at a more leisurely pace. A Japanese study of nearly 250 middle-aged and older men and women illustrated this.

Researchers divided participants into three groups: One group did not walk. Another walked for 30 minutes at a moderate pace, 4 or more times per week. And the third group also walked 4 or more times per week for 30 minutes, but in intervals: 3 minutes fast walking and 3 minutes leisurely walking.

Both the walking groups followed their walking programs for five months. And although they spent the same amount of time on their walks, the benefits were not equal.

The group that alternated fast and slow walking had much greater improvement in aerobic fitness and leg strength, and significantly greater reduction in blood pressure.<sup>1</sup>

Another study tested an interval walking program on nearly 700 middle-aged and older men and women to see how well people would stick with the program. The exercise regimen was the same as in the earlier study: 3-minute intervals, alternating fast and leisurely walking, for 30 minutes. This was done 4 times per week.

As expected, there was significant reduction in risk for life-style-related diseases and much improvement in aerobic fitness. And 70 percent of participants continued to follow the fitness regimen nearly 2 years after starting.<sup>2</sup> That's a really high adherence rate. (Most

people who join gyms or make new year's resolutions to start a fitness program give up within a few weeks, or even sooner.)

## Exercise Snacks

The 30-minute walk isn't the only way to benefit. For lowering blood sugar, shorter bouts of interval walking, more than once daily, can be more effective.

One study found that 12-minute exercise "snacks" before each meal lowered blood sugar more effectively than one daily 30-minute walk.<sup>3</sup> In this program, there were two versions of 12-minute exercise routines, done 30 minutes before each meal:

- 1-minute fast walking then 1-minute leisurely walking, repeated 6 times, or
- 1-minute fast walking then 1-minute upper-body exercises with resistance bands, repeated 6 times.

Both aerobic and strength training are necessary for healthy blood sugar, blood pressure, strength, healthy muscles, and overall fitness. Alternating resistance exercise with fast walking is an efficient approach.

## More Walking Options

There are many ways to apply the principle of intervals when walking. The studies I described above are some examples. Others include fast walking for one block and leisurely walking for the next block. If those distances are too far at first, try alternating intensity between lampposts, or for one or two minutes at a time.

Another way to increase intensity is by walking uphill or up a set of stairs. Some communities have public staircases that become popular fitness spots, or local sports stadiums with public access where you can go up the stairs. Hiking trails with a variety of terrain will make you work more intensely at certain spots while enjoying the scenery.

The most important thing is to get started in a way that is practical and simple for you.

## What to Expect

Aim to do walking intervals on three or four days each week. If you haven't been getting any regular exercise, walking the way I've recommended may take two to three weeks for your body to get used to it and for you to really notice a difference in the way you feel.

If you have high blood sugar and take medication, be sure to monitor your levels. Your blood sugar can drop quickly, and your medication may need adjusting. The same can happen with blood pressure. In either case, let your doctor know about your readings and that you're doing an exercise program, and get any medication doses adjusted as needed.

I'll talk more about exercise next month, including resistance exercise. Meanwhile, try interval walking and see how you feel.

1 Nemoto, K., et al. "Effects of high-intensity interval walking training on physical fitness and blood pressure in middle-aged and older people." *Mayo Clin Proc.* 2007 Jul;82(7):803-11.

2 Masuki, S., et al. "The factors affecting adherence to a long-term interval walking training program in middle-aged and older people." *J Appl Physiol* (1985). 2015 Mar 1;118(5):595-603.

3 Francois, M.E., et al. "Exercise snacks' before meals: a novel strategy to improve glycaemic control in individuals with insulin resistance." *Diabetologia.* 2014 Jul;57(7):1437-45.



# Q&A

**Q: I've been taking 150 mg of Armour thyroid daily for over 50 years. My doctor says this is too much, but I feel drained on lower doses. Could I have adrenal failure as well as low thyroid? How can I tell?** — *Joan D.*

**A:** Thyroid hormone levels can be insufficient in two ways. Your body may not make enough of the hormone, or it may not be able to utilize it.

Taking thyroid hormone increases the quantity of the hormone, but it doesn't guarantee that your body will be able to absorb and use it. Routine hormone tests are not detailed enough to show if this is happening.

The basic thyroid test measures TSH (thyroid stimulating hormone), which shows only whether the thyroid is working properly. High TSH indicates low thyroid function, but it doesn't give a full picture.

Blood levels of free T4 (the storage form of the hormone) and free T3 (the active, absorbable form) will show whether your body is able to effectively use these hormones. You can request these tests.

These are optimal ranges: 1.1–1.7ng/dL of free T4 and 3.2–4.2 pg/mL of T3. If one or both of these are low, it means you are not absorbing and using thyroid hormone adequately.

Taking higher dosages of thyroid hormone won't solve this problem. However, some nutrients and herbs

can help your body to make more of its own thyroid hormone and to absorb and use it properly.

Key nutrients include enough (but not too much) iodine; minerals, notably zinc, selenium, and iron; and herbs such as bacopa and ashwagandha. Taking these may reduce your need for the Armour thyroid, so it's important to monitor how you feel, retest periodically, and adjust dosage as needed.

I cover this in more detail, as well as food, lifestyle, and toxins that influence the thyroid, in an earlier issue of this newsletter: Volume 2, Issue 7, *The 30-Day Thyroid Restoration Protocol*. I encourage you to take a look at that issue.

It's also possible that an iron deficiency could be contributing to fatigue. I don't recommend taking high doses of iron supplements, as too much iron can be toxic. However, you can ask your doctor for a blood test to measure your iron levels; it's a common test for older adults.

Poor adrenal function is another possible issue underlying fatigue. Three major factors can impair the adrenals: unstable blood sugar, chronic inflammation, and stress. Volume 5, Issue 7, of this newsletter, *How to Tap into Hidden Energy*, explains how this works and what you can do.

Taking high doses of thyroid hormone can mask other issues that cause or contribute to fatigue, such as nutrient shortfalls or underlying health conditions. Lingering bacterial or viral infections, poor heart function, poor diet, and lack of physical activity are among these. Since we are unique as individuals, there is

no one-size-fits-all fatigue remedy. I will be addressing fatigue in detail in an upcoming issue.

**Q: Can you eat more carbs if you do vigorous exercise?** — *Barbara G.*

**A:** It depends on how long your workouts last. As a general rule, if you exercise for less than an hour, you don't need extra carbs.

If you exercise for more than an hour, it's possible that you could eat around 10 to 20 more grams of carbs. If you go for a 4-hour bike ride, you probably do need more carbs. But if you need a snack, you could also eat some vegetables and healthy fat, such as nut butter on celery.

A low-carb diet trains your body to burn fat for energy — both fat from food and body fat. If you overload on carbs, even if you've been doing some vigorous exercise, you aren't as likely to burn fat. I'll be covering this in more detail in next month's newsletter, so stay tuned.

## Do you have a question for Dr. Marlene?

Send your health-related questions to [drmarlene@naturalhealthconnections.com](mailto: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](mailto:support@primalhealthlp.com) or call 877-300-7849.