

# Dr. Marlene's NATURAL HEALTH CONNECTIONS

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## Your 2023 Guide to Better Health: **PART 2**

**The most important steps to take to keep improving your health throughout the year and beyond.**

Who doesn't want to be healthier? And if you're in good shape now, I'm sure you'd like to stay that way. The good news is that there's a lot you can do to achieve those goals.

This newsletter issue plus Part 1 of my 2023 guide, last month, gives you the most important things to do, step by step. If this is your first newsletter, I encourage you to log in to [www.naturalhealthconnections.com](http://www.naturalhealthconnections.com) and familiarize yourself with the January issue. Meanwhile, I'll give you a quick recap of the earlier points I covered last month.

With my new patients, I've found that untreated infections, especially in the mouth, urinary tract, and sinuses, are quite common. There's no way to get around the fact that these need to be treated. As well as causing chronic discomfort, they trigger harmful inflammation that will prevent you from getting the full benefits of other steps you take to resolve health issues and improve wellbeing.

It's also important to know your health markers, such as blood

pressure, blood sugar, and others that can be measured during routine health check-ups. (See the chart on page 3 of last month's issue for a list and optimal levels.) Being aware of these markers will give you a baseline, and future tests will show you the results of your efforts.

Some common medications (listed last month) deplete essential nutrients, and the shortfall needs to be corrected with supplements.

In addition to covering these topics last month, I gave you my four rules for a healthy, low-carb way of eating. The health benefits of a low-carb diet are supported by decades of research, as well as my years of experience with patients, with new studies continually adding to the evidence.<sup>1</sup>

I also promised to give you more diet tips and ways to overcome challenges, so let's start there. I'll

**IN THE NEXT ISSUE:  
How to Stay Mentally  
Sharp — for Life!**



begin with breakfast because it can be a significant stumbling block. And if you're missing good nutrition in the morning, it becomes much more difficult to make healthy, low-carb choices later in the day.

## The Breakfast Challenge

I recommend eating your first meal of the day within an hour of getting up. This is important because it helps to keep blood sugar and energy stable and prevents brain fog.

Dr. Marlene's

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irritability, energy sags, and hard-to-control cravings later in the day. These are all symptoms of unstable blood sugar, which a nutritious, low-carb breakfast wards off.

Unfortunately, breakfast has been challenging for some of my patients because they aren't hungry in the morning. This is usually a result of stress and/or an unhealthy pattern of eating too much late in the day, not giving the digestive system enough time to break down food before you go to sleep.

Our bodies are designed to digest food during the day, to give us energy to be active. While we sleep at night, essential maintenance and repair functions take place. Digestion is not among these.

The word "breakfast" is a combination of "break" and "fast." Eating in the morning is supposed to break an overnight fast.

If you find food unappealing — or even revolting — in the morning, start with something very small, such as a plain cracker, to start shifting your digestive system into gear, and gradually build up to a real breakfast. Or try *A Healthy Instant Breakfast* on this page.

My patients who didn't eat breakfast have often asked me if smoothies are a good option. I don't recommend them.

## The Pitfalls of Smoothies

Smoothies are thought of as healthy breakfasts but they are typically very high in sugar. Smoothies are generally made with a lot of fruit and fruit juice — that's what makes them taste good. While fruit contains beneficial nutrients, it's also high in natural sugar, and the sugar is even more concentrated in fruit juices.

You may think that because the sugar in fruit and fruit juice is naturally present, you don't need to worry about it. But this isn't so. Your body treats the sugar in a fruit smoothie the same way it treats sugar in candy and donuts. The

## A Healthy Instant Breakfast

As an alternative to fruit smoothies, which are typically very high in sugar, you can try a drink made with a low-carb protein powder that also contains some healthy fat. These are some key things to look for in a protein powder:

- Medium chain triglycerides (MCTs), which are healthy fats; look for coconut sources.
- Whey concentrate as a protein source. Whey concentrate is less processed than whey isolate. If you are sensitive to dairy, avoid whey because it's made from milk, and look for collagen as a source of protein; collagen does not come from dairy. Some products contain a combination of whey and plant proteins. Avoid soy protein because it can impair thyroid function and is difficult to digest.
- Natural sugar alternatives, such as monk fruit or stevia.
- Concentrated greens, such as spinach and kale.
- Fiber.
- Enzymes and probiotics to enhance digestion.

One serving should contain between 10 and 20 grams of protein. For a tasty, creamy drink, use a handheld blender or frother to mix the powder with 10 ounces of filtered water or, if you prefer, an unsweetened plant milk. You can add some cinnamon or vanilla for extra flavor and/or turmeric to reduce inflammation.

result is blood sugar that rapidly spikes and then crashes; eventually it stays chronically elevated.

For most people today, the high sugar content of smoothies outweighs the benefits of the nutrients, which can be obtained from other plant foods such as vegetables — without the liability of excess sugar.

Coffee that is fortified with healthy fat is another instant-breakfast option.

## How to Make Nutritious Coffee

If you normally have only coffee in the morning, you can turn it into a tasty, nutritious drink by adding a teaspoon of grass-fed, unsalted butter or coconut oil to a cup of hot black coffee. Use a blender or milk frother to turn it into a creamy drink.

Another option is to add MCT oil to black coffee, in addition to or instead of butter. MCT is short for “medium-chain triglycerides,” a type of fat found in coconut oil and other foods that your body easily uses to generate quick and stable energy, more so than other fats.

MCT oil is available as a liquid or powder. Some powdered MCT comes in single-serve packets; you can just mix the powder into hot black coffee with a spoon.

All these versions of coffee are low in carbs and tasty, without sugar. If you really need to sweeten it, use a natural sugar alternative such as liquid stevia, monk fruit, or xylitol (which I use). Any one of these coffees will give you stable energy and help to ward off cravings for sugary pick-me-ups.

While skipping breakfast is not a healthy habit, eating the wrong type of food can also be problematic.

## The Cereal Trap

Eating sugary, high-carb food in the morning leads to a sharp rise in your blood sugar, followed by a crash. And that’s when energy sags, the brain gets foggy, and cravings strike. Unfortunately, one of our most beloved breakfasts — sugary cereal — is at the root of this problem.

Some of my new patients had been eating cereal for breakfast for so long that it seemed unthinkable to eat anything else. And there’s a reason for this.

More than 100 years of marketing campaigns have trained us to view sugary cereal as a healthy, comforting way to start the day. But this is a false premise.

Believe it or not, cereal started out in the latter part of the 1800s in the health spas of that era, as a remedy for digestive problems. But it didn’t resemble our cereal today — not even vaguely. It was far from appealing.

The original American cereal was baked with flour that was very coarsely ground. It produced rock-hard chunks that often had to be soaked in milk overnight to be edible. Nevertheless, this early version of cereal gained some popularity in health spas that promoted a vegetarian diet.

And then, in the early 1900s, some of the leading entrepreneurs of the day devised ways to turn this off-putting breakfast food into a tasty treat, by adding sugar and refining grains in various ways.

Corn, for example, was turned into flakes and mass-marketed with a prize in the box. (Can you believe it? Those little prizes first appeared more than 100 years ago!) And when grains of wheat and rice were exploded under pressure (“puffed” cereals), they were viewed as the eighth wonder of the world.

The new versions of cereal became high-carb, sugary treats that

## 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.





were far from nutritious. But they continued to be viewed as healthy foods — not by accident or because of scientific evidence, but by virtue of effective marketing. Remember the prizes in cereal boxes?

So, it's no wonder that a morning habit of eating high-carb, sugary food can be hard to break. And now, we have many more choices, including breakfast bars for eating on-the-go. These are still viewed as good-for-you foods when, in fact, they may be about as healthy as a candy bar.

Pancakes and waffles are other popular breakfast foods associated with comfort and childhood memories. And they, too, are high in carbs and sugar.

Am I saying that you can never eat cereal, pancakes, or waffles? No. What matters most is what you eat most of the time. If you follow a nutritious low-carb diet and your blood sugar and insulin are in a healthy range, it's possible to have some treats. And "keto" versions of starchy foods are low-carb (count *total* carbs, not net carbs). Bear with me; I'll explain this more in a moment.

## What to Eat for Breakfast

I've given you some of our breakfast history because these morning sugar habits are so deeply rooted in our culture that it may seem unthinkable to eat other types of food for breakfast.

I haven't forgotten that bacon and eggs are also traditional breakfast foods. And they are naturally low in carbs, if you don't add pancakes and syrup, toast and jelly, biscuits, or grits.

Many people now stay away from bacon and eggs. The fear

is that cholesterol in egg yolks will raise your cholesterol levels, but this doesn't happen for most people. And bacon is high in fat — true, but it isn't a bad fat. If you eat bacon as a side dish, rather than filling your plate with it, it's satiating, it will give you stable energy, and it won't make you crave a donut mid-morning.

Bottom line, eggs, with or without bacon, are a good breakfast food. Pasture-raised eggs are a better choice than factory-farmed ones, because they are more nutritious and flavorful and don't contain tox-

ins that are present in the feed given to hens on factory farms.

There is an exception with eggs: Some people just can't tolerate eggs and should avoid them. For everyone else, the problem with eggs is lack of variety.

You can prepare eggs many ways: fried, poached, hard- or soft-boiled, or baked, using many different recipes, and it's a good idea to experiment. One simple, low-carb way I like to eat scrambled eggs is with some spinach that's lightly sautéed — just enough to make it warm and

## Low-Carb Breakfast Foods

I do recommend eggs unless you're sensitive to them. If you eat eggs with toast, biscuits, grits, or hash browns, you can reduce the carbs by replacing these with non-starchy vegetables, such as fried onions, peppers, tomatoes, or leafy greens. Add the veggies to an omelet or scramble, bake them with the eggs, or eat them on the side.

### Beyond Eggs

Although eggs are a zero-carb, nutritious food, they shouldn't be the only thing you ever eat for breakfast. A healthy diet needs a variety of foods. While you could eat any protein, vegetables, and healthy fat for breakfast, just as you would for any other meal, these are some traditional options:

**Yogurt:** Flavored yogurts are carb-rich because they are sweetened, and low-fat versions lack natural fat that keeps you satiated and helps to keep blood sugar stable — avoid them. Instead, choose full-fat, unflavored yogurt. For sweetness and flavor, add some berries or vanilla liquid stevia, and to add crunch, a few nuts or keto granola.



**Vegetables:** Potatoes and corn (including grits) are high in starch, which acts just like sugar in your body, and they are not low-carb options — avoid them. Instead, choose any other vegetables, raw or cooked, and combine them with eggs or a meat or fish.

### Traditional breakfast meats and fish:

We view bacon, sausage, ham, steak, and smoked salmon as breakfast foods. And in the United Kingdom, smoked herring (kippers) are another. Instead of eating these with hash browns or other types of breakfast potatoes, try them with different vegetables.



### What About Cheese?

Many egg recipes contain cheese, and it is not a significant source of carbs. However, some people find it difficult to digest. If cheese agrees with you, go ahead and eat it. But consider it a complementary ingredient that improves flavor and texture, rather than the main part of your meal.

soft. You can add the spinach to the pan when the eggs are almost done — it's a quick breakfast.

Another problem is that if you eat the same food, day in and day out, your body can eventually start to react badly to it. And you'll get bored with eating eggs every day.

A big challenge in coming up with low-carb breakfast ideas is our thinking that only certain foods can be eaten in the morning. This simply isn't so. Our bodies don't have any built-in mechanism that dictates, "You must eat only cereal, bacon and eggs, toast, biscuits, pancakes, or waffles for breakfast."

Here's an example of a quick, nutritious, low-carb breakfast: leftover meat or fish and vegetables from yesterday's dinner. That said, I realize that this may not be appealing to everyone, so I've listed some more traditional options in the *Low-Carb Breakfast Foods* chart on page 4.

## Shocking Sugar Facts



- American adults consume 60 pounds of sugar per year, on average, according to the American Heart Association. That's the equivalent of half a dozen 10-pound bowling balls filled with sugar.
- A 12-ounce can of soda generally contains the equivalent of 10 teaspoons of sugar.
- Many popular cereals contain 3 to 5 teaspoons of sugar per serving, and it's easy to eat more than a single serving.

On food labels, sugar content is listed in grams. Divide the number of grams by 4 to get the quantity in teaspoons.

## The Sweetness Challenge

Humans are naturally attracted to sweet foods, and once upon a time, there was a good reason for this. Back in the days when people foraged for their food, a sweet-tasting plant was less likely to be poisonous and likely to provide more calories per bite — something ancient humans needed.

Unfortunately, our genes haven't changed but the amount of sugar in our food supply has exploded. And our taste buds have become accustomed to sweeter foods and drinks.

Top sources are drinks: sodas, fruit juices, energy and sports drinks, and teas and coffees. Snacks and sweets are the next-biggest category. And don't forget added sugar in all sorts of places where you wouldn't expect it: sauces, soups, salad dressings, ready-made meals, and savory snacks. Even processed fish, meats, meat substitutes, rice, pasta, and noodles may contain added sugar.

Sugar is addictive.<sup>2</sup> And ever since the low-fat-food craze began, food manufacturers have been adding more sugar to all types of foods to enhance taste.

All this may not be news to you, but I'm mentioning it because I continue to see so many people filling their supermarket shopping carts with sugary foods. How do you overcome this challenge? Read food labels like a hawk, including labels of foods that don't seem sweet, and avoid excess sugar.

If you like soda, there are many sugar-free versions, including those sweetened with stevia, monk fruit or xylitol — natural sugar alternatives that I recommend. Another option is to buy plain sparkling water and add liquid stevia,

which comes in many flavors. The same sweeteners also work well in tea, coffee, and desserts.

## The Starch Challenge

In response to consumer concern about added sugar, the food industry has turned to sugar-free sweeteners in many foods and beverages. In contrast, starch has been overlooked, but our bodies treat starch just like sugar.

In packaged and restaurant food, starch is a major ingredient. Pizza relies on crust. Burgers and other sandwiches come with buns or slices of bread. Tacos have tortillas. Pasta, rice, beans, fries, chips, and most other snacks, not to mention cakes and cookies, are all starchy foods.

I'm not saying that you should never eat any of these, but you do need to limit the quantities of the total carbs they contain. And it's easier to do if you identify some alternatives to starchy foods that are your staples.

Here are some examples of low-carb alternatives:

**Pasta:** Spiralized zucchini or other spiralized vegetables. Shirataki noodles, made from a Japanese yam called "konjac," are another naturally low-carb option. They're also called "konjac noodles" or "miracle noodles."

**Rice:** Cauliflower, broccoli, or other vegetable "rice," or shirataki rice, also called "miracle rice."

**Pizza:** Make mini pizzas on eggplant slices as the "crust," or on a low-carb bread.

**Lasagna:** Replace pasta with thinly sliced eggplant.

**Chips and other snacks:** Raw or cooked veggies dipped in ranch or another salad dressing or hummus. Or add a nut butter — it’s good on celery. For variety, choose different veggies and dips.

**The Ultimate Carb Challenge**

“Must I give up bread, potatoes, pasta, popcorn, cake, and ice cream forever?” This isn’t the exact question any single patient has asked me; it’s a summary of many questions they’ve asked along those lines.

The fact is, you don’t need to give up any food. Limiting carbs only from certain types of foods and drinks — those that are easiest to overeat and cause most problems — leaves room for eating virtually anything. But, and this is a big “but,” you do need to limit carbs from the foods and drinks listed on page 5 of Part 1 of this guide.

This means that you could have some potato chips or cake, for example, but not too much. However, many of my patients find that once they start to eat these treats, they can’t stop. They find it easier to avoid them altogether.

Must they do that forever? It depends. It takes years to wreck a metabolism with an excess of carbs. Following my diet repairs the damage and enables your body to become healthier. However, this doesn’t mean that your metabolism will magically return to what it was when you were a teenager.

Once you’ve restored blood sugar and insulin to healthy levels, you may be able to occasionally eat a bit more carbs and maintain those levels. It really depends on how much damage had been done and how well your system was

able to repair itself. This varies a lot from one person to another. The good news is that if you make a habit of eating a nutritious, low-carb diet, with healthy fat and regular meals and snacks, you won’t be getting frequent cravings for high-carb treats and drinks. And now, it’s time to talk about exercise.

**Exercise Basics**

Want to double the benefits of a low-carb diet? Exercise can do that because it increases insulin sensitivity.<sup>3</sup>

Insulin works like a delivery service that takes blood sugar to muscle and other cells. If those cells are resistant — not sensitive — insulin can’t get the sugar in the door. Over time, this prompts your body to make more insulin to try to overcome the resistance, and elevated insulin levels promote fat storage and inflammation. Eventually, even excess insulin can’t overcome the resistance, and blood-sugar levels rise.

Exercise unblocks the delivery mechanism by increasing insulin

sensitivity. It opens the doors, so to speak, for the blood sugar to be absorbed and used to produce energy. Levels of blood sugar drop, insulin levels drop, and there’s less fat storage, inflammation, diabetes, and other ills.

Counting steps has become a popular way to track daily activity and can be motivating. You can use a fitness wrist band or a phone in your pocket to count steps. Studies with nearly 50,000 people found that walking between 6,000 and 8,000 steps per day was most effective in reducing death from any cause in those over age 60.<sup>4</sup>

However, there’s another important factor: When you exercise more intensely, you get more benefit per minute. For example, you start to reap these benefits when you walk intensely enough to get somewhat out of breath — where you can say a few words but not carry on a conversation.

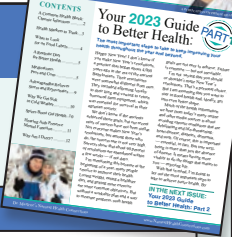
For most people, it’s difficult to exercise intensely for a long period. The best way to do it is in intervals, such as

### Related to This Topic

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

Related Topic	Volume	Issue	Title
Part 1 of This Guide	6	1	Your 2023 Guide to Better Health: Part 1
Sleep	5	4	Restful Sleep: How to Get Enough
Stress	4	6	How to Conquer Hidden Stress (page 8)
Multivitamins	2	8	Do You Really Need a Multivitamin?
Supplements for Diabetes	5	2	How to Use Supplements to Prevent and Reverse Type 2 Diabetes
Supplements for Blood Pressure	4	6	Top Blood Pressure Supplements and How to Use Them

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





one minute of really fast walking and one minute of walking at your normal pace or even slower.<sup>5</sup> Walking uphill is another way to increase intensity. Do these types of intervals for about 20 minutes, 3 to 5 times per week.

Resistance training, using weights or your own body weight for resistance — squats, for example — is also important. It improves insulin sensitivity and helps to preserve and strengthen muscles.

## Good Sleep Is Essential

Lack of sleep contributes to elevated blood sugar and blood pressure, chronic inflammation, weight gain, and accelerated mental decline. Allowing enough time for sleep in a quiet, dark, cool bedroom is one essential step. Another is making sure that you get restful sleep.

If you are following my diet and wake up during the night for

no reason, it could be this: Blood sugar can drop too low, starving your brain, which then wakes you up. The remedy for this is to have a small snack with some fat, such as a tablespoon of a nut butter, before going to bed. This will help to keep blood sugar stable during the night so that your brain doesn't go into starvation mode and wake you up.

Another possible problem is sleep apnea, and it's one that my patients are sometimes hesitant to address. They don't want to sleep with a CPAP (continuous positive airway pressure) machine. So, they avoid the issue and routinely don't sleep well.

However, a CPAP machine is not always necessary. Recent research shows that an oral appliance is an effective remedy in many cases. The appliance fits over your teeth like a mouth guard and positions your jaw in a way that keeps your airways open for restful sleep. There's no machine. An ear, nose, and throat doctor (an otolaryngologist) can determine if you're a candidate and fit you with an appliance.<sup>6</sup> Some dentists can also provide these.

## Managing Stress

Unstable blood sugar is stressful for your body, and a low-carb diet will help on that score, as will exercise and good sleep. But there's also life stress. It's harmful when it becomes chronic and can be an underlying trigger for high blood sugar, high blood pressure, and other ills.

As a culture, we tend to overschedule our lives and omit taking breaks and vacations, so much so that we fail to recognize that there's something wrong with

this. It's important to recognize triggers in your life and take steps to reduce stress. Taking a break to do some breathing exercises, for example, can make a difference. For more details, see my earlier article about stress, listed in *Related to This Topic* on page 6.

## A Final Word

The steps I've covered in this guide are essential for good health, but you might be wondering about supplements. They can definitely be beneficial and I do recommend them. However, they are designed to supplement, rather than substitute for the points I've covered here. In *Related to This Topic* on page 6, I've listed some earlier newsletters that cover supplements for different situations, and I encourage you to read those earlier issues.

In addition, keep in mind that your overall way of living, including your relationships with others, social activities, and hobbies that interest you all enrich your well-being. The basics I've described will help you to have the energy to enjoy all those things, while reducing your health risks.

## The Checklist for Better Health

Here's a snapshot of the steps I've described in this issue and in Part 1 of this guide, in the January issue:

- ☐ If you have any infections, get these treated.
- ☐ Keep track of your health markers: blood pressure, blood sugar and others listed on page 3 of Part 1.
- ☐ If you take medications, check whether they deplete any nutrients and take supplements to correct any shortfalls.
- ☐ Follow my 4 diet rules, summarized in the *Low-Carb Diet Snapshot* on page 5 of Part 1.
- ☐ Exercise regularly.
- ☐ Manage stress.

1 Soto-Mota, A., et al. "Evidence for the Carbohydrate-Insulin Model in a Reanalysis of the DIETFITS Trial." *The American Journal of Clinical Nutrition*. Published online 6 January 2023. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ajcnut.2022.12.014>

2 Ahmed, S.H., et al. "Sugar addiction: pushing the drug-sugar analogy to the limit." *Curr Opin Clin Nutr Metab Care*. 2013 Jul;16(4):434-9.

3 Way, K.L., et al. "The Effect of Regular Exercise on Insulin Sensitivity in Type 2 Diabetes Mellitus: A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis." *Diabetes Metab J*. 2016 Aug; 40(4): 253-271.

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5 Francois, M.E., et al. "Effectiveness and Safety of High-Intensity Interval Training in Patients With Type 2 Diabetes." *Diabetes Spectr*. 2015 Jan; 28(1): 39-44.

6 Buiet, G., et al. "Predictive Factors for Efficacious Oral Appliance Therapy in Moderate to Severe Obstructive Sleep Apnea Patients." *Laryngoscope*. 2021 Jun;131(6):E2089-E2096.

# Eating Meat Substitutes? Beware!

Burgers and other “meats” made from plant foods have become popular. However, Swedish researchers have concluded that these products are deficient in iron.<sup>1</sup>

To put this in context, here’s what we’ve known for a long time: In food, iron comes in two forms. The most absorbable form — heme iron — is found only in meat, poultry, and seafood. Plants contain a different form — non-heme iron — which the human body cannot break down and utilize as well.

If a diet contains a combination of meats and plant foods, the combination of iron forms can provide adequate amounts of the mineral. Iron is essential for your body to use oxygen to produce energy, so a shortfall can lead to fatigue, anemia, and other problems.

People who don’t eat any animal foods need to consume nearly twice as much iron daily because they don’t absorb as much as meat eaters.

## The New Discovery

Today’s trendy meat substitutes are generally made with protein extracted from soy and other legumes. These protein extracts undergo extensive processing, with high heat and high pressure, to give them a texture and chewy quality like real meat. And this processing makes the iron (and other minerals) significantly harder to absorb in the human body, especially from soy products.

## Why This Happens

Soy and other legumes contain nutrient blockers — phytates — that prevent iron and other minerals from being absorbed. The extra processing to give plant burgers a “meaty” taste boosts levels of phytates beyond natural amounts. And the phytates block nutrients from the plant burgers and other foods you eat with them.

In contrast, the study found that tempeh, a traditional soy food that is fermented, does not significantly block nutrient absorption. This is because the fermentation process destroys nutrient blockers.

For anyone who doesn’t want to eat meat, I’ve never recommended soy protein. But if you’d like to eat soy foods, choose only fermented versions, such as tempeh or natto.

### Best Food Sources of Iron

These provide heme iron, the most absorbable type:

Food	Serving Size	Iron
Clams, canned	¼ cup	8 mg
Beef liver	3 ½ oz	7 mg
Oysters, raw	6	5 mg
Beef sirloin	3 ½ oz	4 mg
Shrimp	3 oz	3 mg
Ground beef	3 ½ oz	2 mg
Turkey, dark or light meat	3 ½ oz	2 mg
Pork tenderloin	3 ½ oz	2 mg
Canned tuna, light meat	3 oz	1 mg
Haddock	3 oz	1 mg
Chicken breast	3 oz	1 mg

For people who eat meat, these are daily recommended amounts of iron from all sources, including animal and plant foods and supplements:

Age 19–50: 8 mg for men and 18 mg for women  
Age 51+: 8 mg for both men and women

For vegetarians and vegans, the recommended amounts are 1.8 times those listed above.

# Sleep Better After a Hot Bath

A study of 11,000 people in Beppu, Japan, a city that has many natural hot springs, found that residents over age 65 who routinely enjoy an evening soak in the hot springs sleep better. And they’re less likely

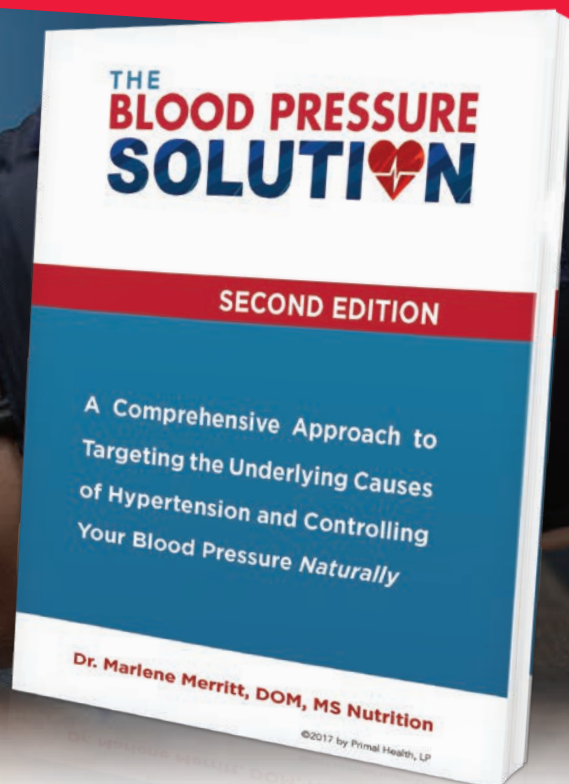
to have high blood pressure.<sup>2</sup> The practice of bathing in hot springs is more than 5,000 years old. It lowers stress and helps older people to fall asleep faster, benefits that contribute to healthy blood pressure.

Few of us live near natural hot springs, but you can enjoy an evening bath with some Epsom salt. It relaxes muscles, reduces stress, and can help to relieve pain. Epsom salt is a natural source of magnesium, which is well absorbed through the skin.

1 Mayer Labba, I.-C., et al. "Nutritional Composition and Estimated Iron and Zinc Bioavailability of Meat Substitutes Available on the Swedish Market." *Nutrients*. 2022 Sep 21;14(19):3903.  
2 Yamasaki, S., et al. "Hot spring bathing is associated with a lower prevalence of hypertension among Japanese older adults: a cross-sectional study in Beppu." *Sci Rep*. 2022 Nov 14;12(1):19462.



# Get Dr. Marlene's Best-Selling Book... **Blood Pressure Solution!**



**Dr. Marlene has been sounding the alarm about dangerous blood pressure drugs for the last 15 years — and offering a safe, natural alternative.**

She has worked with hundreds of patients who were suffering high blood pressure—many were taking two, three, even four medications and going through awful side effects...

Just like Kathleen Kelly, whose ankles swelled up from the prescription blood pressure drugs she was taking. She also suffered an awful cough from using Lisinopril. By the time she read Dr. Marlene's best-selling book, **Blood Pressure Solution**, Kathleen's doctor had her on three blood pressure medicines combined—and her blood pressure was still high!

"My patients are always surprised to see how easy it is to use my natural Blood Pressure Solution," said Dr. Marlene. "The diet is not restrictive. Many of the foods you thought were taboo are perfectly ok—like steak is ok, butter is ok, natural sea salt is ok, even several carb foods are good. Part of the solution is to get good fats into your diet."

After reading **Blood Pressure Solution**, Kathleen made simple lifestyle changes found in the book and began to see immediate results...

***"My blood pressure came down right away...I just feel great. I'm ecstatic. I go around telling everybody I found the fountain of youth. I have much more energy now. My concentration and focus are better. I can walk around my block without getting winded anymore. I am 100% off my medication."***

Did you see that? Kathleen reports she is 100% off her medications. And so can you!

Yes! You too can be off these anti-hypertensive drugs... maintain blood pressure in the normal range... and feel good again!

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

Dr. Marlene originally developed her unique solution for her patients at the Merritt Wellness Center in Austin, Texas. And after seeing just how successful it was for people in her own community—she decided to put her entire natural solution, with step-by-step guidance, into an easy-to-use book called, **Blood Pressure Solution**.

This is a comprehensive approach to targeting the underlying causes of hypertension and controlling your blood pressure naturally.

Dr. Marlene's book has been sweeping the country with over 330,000 copies sold in the U.S., and even 32,000 copies shipped overseas.

So, are you ready to bring your blood pressure back to the normal range? Gain more energy? Drop a few unwanted pounds? And feel better than you have in years, just as Kathleen did?

Great! Get your copy of Dr. Marlene's best-selling book, **Blood Pressure Solution** today! Go to the website listed below, and you'll see a complete review of the book, watch videos from people just like Kathleen and order your copy of **Blood Pressure Solution**!

**Get Your Copy Today! Go To:**  
**[www.PrimalLabs.com/BPS](http://www.PrimalLabs.com/BPS)**

# Exercise Snacks Explained

Sitting for hours, at work or at home, isn't good for you. It decreases circulation and is bad for blood sugar, blood pressure, and the overall function of your body. This isn't news. But a recent study on this subject made headlines,<sup>1</sup> and I wanted to put it into context.

The news coverage conveyed that when sitting for a while, you should get up and walk around for 5 minutes every half-hour — as an “exercise snack.” This was the “prescription.” But this was the result of tests in a lab, where the setting was not the same as a real work or home environment.

There were 11 people in the study, in their 40s, 50s, and 60s, mostly without diabetes or high blood pressure. They sat in a comfortable chair for 8 straight hours, except for breaks directed by the researchers and bathroom breaks. They could read or work on a computer or phone; they ate meals in their chairs.

Participants' blood sugar and blood pressure were monitored in response to no breaks or walking breaks ranging from 1 to 5 minutes every half-hour or every hour. All amounts of walking lowered blood pressure; blood sugar improved most with a 5-minute walking break every half-hour.

## The Real-Life Takeaway

This study was done with only a few people. And most of us don't sit for 8 straight hours. But there's no question that too much sitting is a big problem. Remember when you had to get up to change the TV channel? Now you can stream entertainment endlessly from your couch.

So, what can you do with this information? Do avoid sitting for long periods, but be realistic.

If you're sitting at work, I'd suggest getting up and walking around as often as your job allows, at least during meal and other scheduled breaks. At home, you have more options — walking around while talking on the phone, for example, or doing household chores.

An earlier study of 13 middle-aged people with high blood pressure and/or high blood sugar and unhealthy cholesterol found that good exercise snacks included all types of chores. These included washing dishes, standing while folding laundry, cleaning around the house, unloading groceries, and putting away household objects.

In that study, routinely being up and about for 5 minutes every hour or for 10 minutes every 2 hours produced these benefits: lower blood sugar, blood pressure, and triglycerides, and improved cholesterol.

And doing household chores can enhance your home. You could clean out or organize a closet, garage, or attic — in 5- or 10-minute exercise snacks.



# Singing Enhances Stroke Rehab

Aphasia — difficulty speaking, writing, and understanding language — affects about 40 percent of people who suffer a stroke. Sadly, the condition can persist for a year. But singing can help.

Surprisingly, it's possible for people to sing, even if they can't speak due to aphasia. And flexing those singing “muscles” aids recovery.

A four-month study in Finland<sup>2</sup> tested a singing program in addition to standard care. Stroke survivors and their caregivers sang in a choir, were guided through singing exercises, and were given instructions on how to practice between in-person sessions.

Tests were done five months after the start of the singing regimen, and again after nine months. Results showed definite improvements at the fifth month, compared to patients who received only standard care. And the improvements were still apparent after nine months.

Benefits included improved speech, better everyday communication, and more participation in social activities. Overall, both patients and their caregivers experienced enhanced well-being.

I'm not aware of any programs of this type in this country. However, if someone you care about suffers from aphasia after a stroke, I encourage you to ask local health professionals about speech pathologists or therapists who include singing in rehab programs.

<sup>1</sup> Duran, A.T., et al. “Breaking Up Prolonged Sitting to Improve Cardiometabolic Risk: Dose-Response Analysis of a Randomized Cross-Over Trial.” *Medicine & Science in Sports & Exercise* (J):10.1249/MSS.00000000000003109, January 12, 2023. <sup>2</sup> Siponkoski, S.-T., et al. “Efficacy of a multicomponent singing intervention on communication and psychosocial functioning in chronic aphasia: a randomized controlled crossover trial,” <https://doi.org/10.1093/braincomms/fcac337>

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## Here’s How GlucoBurn Works:

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

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

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

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



Get GlucoBurn Today!  
**GlucoBurn.com/NHC3**

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



# Q&A

**Q: My primary care doctor says I need knee surgery. Can I take supplements instead? — Jake W.**

**A:** Supplements, such as fish oil and turmeric, can help to reduce inflammation in joints, and collagen nourishes the tissues that support joints. If you also eat a low-carb diet that keeps insulin and blood sugar at healthy levels, the supplements are more effective. But if there's too much damage, surgery is sometimes necessary.



Knee surgery can be less or more invasive, depending upon the degree of damage that needs to be corrected. But there are also options that are non-surgical.

A joint can wear down because of unbalanced muscle tension. Practitioners who specialize in physical therapy and rehabilitation can pinpoint such imbalances and help you to correct them.

Another non-surgical treatment may be done with PRP — platelet rich plasma. PRP is a substance that is extracted from your own blood and injected into joints to help them heal.

I recommend that you explore all your options. Look for practitioners who do physical rehabilitation and can check for and correct muscle imbalances. And consult one or more orthopedic specialists who take an integrative approach, including PRP, for example.

Seeking out a variety of different practitioners can often uncover solutions that were not obvious.

**Q: How can I get rid of bad breath? — Dolly G.**

**A:** Bad breath can have different causes. The most common one I've seen is bacteria in the mouth, due to dental decay or gum disease. As an immediate aid, you can chew xylitol gum.

Xylitol, a natural sugar alternative, is derived from “xylan,” a plant fiber found in berries, beets, oats, and other foods. It's been proven to reduce harmful mouth bacteria, cavities, and gum disease. But there's more to handling dental bacteria than just xylitol.

I describe a complete home regimen for dental health in Volume 3, Issue 10, of this newsletter: *The 5 Simple Steps to Healthy Teeth and Gums*. Developed by a dentist, it's a system I've used with many patients and have followed myself for years. (It also whitens teeth.)

That said, if you have any discomfort in your mouth or have been putting off dental treatment that you know you need, see a dentist.

A chronic or lingering sinus infection can also cause bad breath because bacteria from the sinuses goes into the back of the throat. Xylitol gum may help, but it isn't the full treatment.

For a sinus infection, I recommend a nasal rinse such as NeilMed, available from any drugstore. Liquid goldenseal, added to the rinse solution, can help to eradicate the harmful bacteria.

Add one-to-two dropperfuls of goldenseal to one dose of the

solution and rinse your nasal passages with this combination, two to three times per day, until the infection is gone. See a doctor if you do this for seven to ten days and the sinus infection doesn't resolve, or if you have sinus pain or see blood when you blow or rinse your nose.

Bad breath can also be caused by bacteria in the stomach. This typically happens because not enough stomach acid is being produced to efficiently break down food. Then, harmful bacteria multiply and can cause odor in the breath. Taking a supplement of HCL with betaine at the start of a meal can boost stomach acid and reduce the bacteria that cause odor.

A dry mouth can also lead to more harmful bacteria that cause bad breath. It's often the result of breathing through the mouth. If you're a mouth breather, practice breathing through your nose and aim to make it a habit. It's a healthier way to breathe because the nose filters out dust, allergens, and pathogens in the air.

## 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.