

Dr. Marlene's NATURAL HEALTH CONNECTIONS



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CONTENTS

What Supplements
Can and Cannot Do 2

Nutrients Depleted
by Common Drugs 3

Everyday Herbs 4

CoQ10 for
Healthy Aging 5

Supplements for
Common Conditions 6

Benefits of Swimming
and Water Exercise 9

Soaps Can Attract
or Repel Mosquitoes 11

Hidden Toxin in
Food Coloring 11

Should I Limit
Cholesterol in Food? 12

How to Choose Supplements for Your Personal Needs



With thousands of supplements on store shelves and online, it's easy to get confused. This guide will help you navigate the aisles and web pages to find the right supplements for you.

I get asked this question so often: “Which supplements should I take?” And this one: “Can a supplement replace my medication?”

I hope that by the end of this article, you will have some answers to these and other questions you may have about supplements. To start, it's important to understand what different types of supplements can and cannot do, and how they differ from drugs.

The most basic type of supplement is designed to provide essential nutrients that may be lacking in your diet. Essential nutrients are vitamins and minerals that our bodies need and must get from food in order to function well.

They include the familiar ones: vitamin A, a combination of B vitamins, vitamins C, D, and E, calcium, magnesium, potassium, and zinc. Less familiar but essential ones include iodine, copper, and selenium.

You've probably guessed that this type of supplement is a multivitamin. Although there are many varieties of multivitamin products, they all fill nutrient gaps and help to guard against dietary shortfalls that can negatively affect your health.

There are those who argue that we should get all our nutrients from food. I wouldn't disagree if most of our food was rich in nutrients and everyone ate an ideal, or close to ideal, diet. But because this isn't the world we live in, it makes sense to take a daily multivitamin.

For some nutrients, such as vitamin D, vitamin B12, and magnesium, multivitamins may not

IN THE NEXT ISSUE:
Bacterial Infections:
How to Treat and
Prevent Them



contain enough for optimal health, and separate supplements with these ingredients can be beneficial.

In addition, there are other nutrients that aren't technically vitamins or minerals but are also necessary for good health. Omega-3 fatty acids, in fish oil, are an example.

Herbs are another type of supplement. They can provide a combination of benefits for overall health. Ginseng, ashwagandha, and turmeric are examples that I'll discuss in more detail in a moment.

Dr. Marlene's

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In another category, there are supplements designed to enhance specific aspects of health, such as blood sugar, blood pressure, digestion, and others. These may contain herbs and/or other natural substances to provide targeted benefits.

What Supplements Can and Cannot Do

While supplements are valuable nutritional tools, they are just that — supplements. They can't substitute for a healthy diet. If you routinely eat mostly processed food, the supplements will still help but they will be working uphill.

If you know you need to upgrade your diet, do take a multivitamin and other essential nutrients that I'll describe in a moment. But at the same time, start taking steps to improve your diet. Supplements will speed up and enhance the results of your efforts.

A healthy diet includes a variety of non-starchy vegetables, protein, and healthy fats. It should not include an overload of sugary and starchy foods. In *Related to This Topic* on page 5, I've listed two earlier newsletter issues that cover my diet in detail, and I recommend that you become familiar with these if you aren't already. The same applies if you're struggling with blood sugar, joint pain, or another health issue.

Why We Lack Essential Nutrients

As I mentioned earlier, the nutrients in a multivitamin can correct nutrient shortfalls in your diet. This is important because at least 70 percent of the food this nation consumes is highly processed, with many ingredients

that don't resemble food in nature and additives that our bodies aren't designed to digest.¹

In addition, the soil in which our food is grown has been depleted. In its natural state, soil contains a variety of minerals and other nutrients that plants absorb as they grow.

Industrial farming, notably since the 1940s, has increased crop yields but it's also had an adverse side effect. The heavy machinery used to till soil, chemical fertilizers, herbicides to kill weeds, and pesticides to kill bugs have all reduced the natural nutrient content of soil. As a result, the nutrient content of our food has dropped.²

Some medications you may be taking can also deplete nutrients. (See *Nutrients Depleted by Common Drugs* on page 3.)

That said, let's take a look at the types of supplements and which ones may be helpful for you.

A Multivitamin and Other Essentials

A multivitamin should contain all the essential vitamins and minerals. I recommend taking one with approximately 100 percent of the Daily Value (%DV) of most nutrients, not higher doses in a multivitamin.

However, you will likely need additional vitamin D. Get your vitamin-D level tested and take enough to get your levels up to 50 ng/mL. I've found that most people need to take 5,000 IU daily of vitamin D with one daily serving of vitamin K2. Vitamin D increases absorption of calcium, and vitamin K2 ensures that the calcium will be used to build bones rather than being deposited in the wrong place, such as arteries.

Omega-3 fats in fish oil or cod liver oil are another essential supplement for anyone who doesn't eat fatty fish, such as salmon, sardines, or herring, two or three times per week. Omega-3s are essential to control inflammation and for overall good

health. On any fish oil product, look for EPA and DHA content in the Supplement Facts on labels. EPA and DHA are the beneficial components of fish oil, and the concentration of these varies in different products. Take enough fish oil to get about 1,000 mg

of EPA plus DHA per day. If you don't like pills, some liquid supplements are more concentrated and come in different flavors. Many older people also need extra vitamin B12. Symptoms of a shortfall can include confusion, weakness, fatigue, memory problems, and depression. Anyone who doesn't eat meat — our main source of B12 — should definitely take B12 supplements.

Nutrients Depleted by Common Drugs			
These are some known nutrient depletions associated with widely used drugs. Heartburn drugs are available both by prescription and over the counter; the others are available only by prescription.			
Used for:	Drug Class:	Examples of Drug Names:	Nutrients Depleted:
Heartburn	Proton pump inhibitors (PPIs)	Prilosec, Nexium, Prevacid	Vitamins B12 and C, calcium, magnesium, iron
	H2 blockers	Tagamet, Zantac, Pepcid	Calcium, folic acid, iron, vitamin B12, vitamin D
Elevated blood pressure	ACE inhibitors	Lisinopril, Benazepril, Captopril	Zinc, vitamin D
	Calcium channel blockers	Norvasc, Cartia, Cardizem	Potassium, vitamin D
	Diuretics (water pills), loop and thiazide	Lasix, Bumetanide, Chlorthalidone	Magnesium, potassium, zinc, vitamin D
	Diuretics, potassium sparing	Aldactone, Inspra, Midamor	Folic acid
Diabetes	Oral medications to lower blood sugar	Glucophage (metformin), Avandia, DiaBeta, Prandin	Vitamin B12, folic acid
Elevated cholesterol	Statins	Lipitor (atorvastatin), Mevacor, Zocor	CoQ10, vitamin D
Bacterial infections	Antibiotics	Amoxil, Bactrim, Ceclor, Cipro, Levaquin	Calcium, magnesium, potassium, B12 and other B vitamins, vitamin K, vitamin D
Depression	Antidepressants	Prozac, Zoloft, Cymbalta, Paxil	Folic acid
Inflammation	Corticosteroids	Prednisone, Dexamethasone	Calcium, magnesium, vitamin D

Will You Feel a Difference? You may or may not because the effect may not be obvious — at first. I've had patients tell me that they didn't think their multivitamin made a difference — until they stopped taking it. And then, they noticed they weren't as alert in the afternoon, or some other change for the worse. Even subtle shortfalls of essential nutrients make the human body more prone to both acute illnesses, such as colds and flu, and to chronic health issues that are all too common today. Supplements can make a big difference. A study of more than 10,000 American adults looked at nutritional shortfalls among people who took a multivitamin on most days and those who took no supplements. Those who took no supplements were:³

- 24 times more likely to lack vitamin D, essential for healthy bones, immune function, muscles, brain function, and overall health.
- 8 times more likely to lack vitamin E, essential for healthy blood flow, immune function, protection against pollutants, and many other functions.

- At least twice as likely to lack vitamins A, C, and K, and magnesium, which are all necessary for healthy function of the human body.

The important thing is to take the supplements consistently. Make it part of your daily routine — take them with breakfast, for example.

Did You Know?

Low vitamin D can triple the risk for high blood pressure.⁴

A Basic Digestive Remedy

If you have digestive issues, such as bloating after eating, indigestion, or heartburn, too little stomach acid is usually the underlying problem. The production of stomach acid typically decreases as we get older. As a result, food doesn't get efficiently broken down

in the stomach, causing discomfort. This can also lead to stomach juices moving up the esophagus, which causes heartburn. It also prevents nutrients from being absorbed as they should be.

The remedy is to take betaine HCL with pepsin, before or with the first few bites of each meal. HCL, short for hydrochloric acid, restores acidity in your stomach and relieves digestive problems. I explain this in more detail in my earlier newsletter on digestion, listed in the chart on page 5.

Everyday Herbs

In Western culture, we tend to think of herbs as remedies for ailments, but some can provide ongoing support for your overall health. The herbs in this category are adaptogens, meaning they help your system to adapt to stress and shore up your ability to deal with life's daily challenges.

Adaptogens restore internal balance and have a rejuvenating effect. They may help your body to generate more energy when you need it and to calm you down in times of anxiety or stress.

The concept of balancing internal systems is a basic one in the Eastern medical systems of Ayurveda and Traditional Chinese Medicine, which are thousands of years old. There is no such concept in Western medicine; drugs treat symptoms and aren't designed to rejuvenate or bring about balance.

Scientific studies are designed to measure effects on specific symptoms, as there is no defined way to measure “rejuvenation” — an overall improvement in well-being and function. But scientific research has validated some specific benefits of adaptogens, such as *Panax ginseng* and *ashwagandha*.

Panax ginseng: In Traditional Chinese Medicine, *Panax ginseng* is the only herb that is used by itself, rather than in customized herbal formulas. It's known for restoring balance and as a tonic that improves vitality and longevity.

Research shows that it reduces stress and inflammation, enhances immune function, reduces fatigue, and helps to control blood sugar. Taking it during the day enhances energy and alertness, whereas taking it before bedtime helps you get better sleep.⁵

These different benefits are the results of the herb's balancing properties. *Panax ginseng* is part of my personal daily regimen.

Panax ginseng is also called Korean ginseng. However, it is not the same herb as Siberian ginseng,

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.



which comes from a completely different plant.

Look for a root extract of Panax or Korean ginseng and a listing of the percentage of ginsenosides in the Supplement Facts. Ginsenosides are the active ingredient in the herb, and the quantity of these is what matters. Get 10 mg to 15 mg of ginsenosides daily.

Ashwagandha: In Ayurveda, the ancient Indian system of healing, ashwagandha is one of the most important herbs. It's been described by researchers as a rejuvenator that promotes a more youthful mental and physical state and increases happiness.

Studies show that the herb can reduce feelings of stress and anxiety as effectively as anti-anxiety drugs — without the adverse side effects of drugs. It also reduces harmful internal effects of stress. It helps to restore hormonal balance, improves sleep, lowers inflammation, reduces joint pain, enhances endurance and memory, improves heart function, and can help to reduce belly fat and food cravings.⁶

When choosing ashwagandha products, look for a patented form of the herb that has been tested in studies. KSM-66 and Sensoril are some examples, and they should be listed by name in the Supplement Facts on the label. Because formulations vary, I suggest following product directions.

Which Herb Should You Take?

You can take either Panax ginseng or ashwagandha; there's no need to take both as separate supplements.

Another option is to take a single supplement that contains a

combination of adaptogens, which may include the two herbs I've described and others. Such products are often labeled as herbal formulas for stress. For dosage, follow product directions.

CoQ10 for Healthy Aging

CoQ10 is an enzyme that is both made by our bodies and required as a nutrient from food. It's essential for the heart, muscles, and all cells to efficiently produce energy. It can enhance heart function, even in people with heart failure.⁷

Organ meats are the richest food sources, so our diets don't provide much, and our internal production

declines as we get older, especially after middle age. In addition, statins reduce levels of CoQ10.

CoQ10 is beneficial for anyone who is middle-aged or older, and it is a necessity for anyone who takes statins. Take 100 mg to 200 mg daily.

Turmeric for Chronic Inflammation

Turmeric has been used as a remedy for many ailments for thousands of years, and studies support its efficacy. At its heart, turmeric is an anti-inflammatory herb that works in multiple



Related to This Topic

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

Related Topic	Volume	Issue	Title
A Healthy Diet	6	1	Your 2023 Guide to Better Health: Part 1
A Healthy Diet	6	2	Your 2023 Guide to Better Health: Part 2
Multivitamins	2	8	Do You Really Need a Multivitamin?
Vitamin D	3	8	Vitamin D: Fight Diabetes, Osteoporosis, Infections, and More
Digestion	1	6	The 6-Minute Heartburn Remedy
Ashwagandha	6	1	Ashwagandha Relieves Stress and Rejuvenates (page 9)
Turmeric	4	8	How to Benefit from Turmeric (page 9)
Blood Sugar and Diabetes	5	2	How to Use Supplements to Prevent and Reverse Type 2 Diabetes
Blood Pressure	4	6	Top Blood Pressure Supplements and How to Use Them
Joint Problems	2	5	The 90-Day Program to Relieve Arthritis
Thyroid	2	7	The 30-Day Thyroid Restoration Protocol
Sleep	5	4	Restful Sleep: How to Get Enough
Healthy Arteries	1	4	When Statin Drugs Can Harm You More than Cholesterol
Stress	4	6	How to Conquer Hidden Stress (page 8)
Blood Tests	6	6	Blood Tests: Which Ones Do You Really Need?

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

ways within the human body and produces a variety of benefits.

Anyone who is suffering from a condition that is driven by or accompanied by inflammation can benefit from turmeric. Inflammation plays a significant role in many health conditions, including diabetes, arthritis or other pain, muscle soreness after exercise, high blood pressure, circulatory problems, heart disease, memory and mood problems, and inflammatory digestive diseases. Turmeric can help in such situations.⁸

The active ingredient in turmeric is curcumin. The name of a supplement product may be “Turmeric,” or it may be “Curcumin.”

In its natural state, turmeric is not well absorbed. To solve the problem, there are patented extracts that have been formulated for better absorption, and you can find them in many supplements. Patented forms include CurcuWin, CurQfen, LongVida, Meriva, NovaSol, or Theracurmin. Follow product directions. To treat pain, you may need to take an extra serving per day.

Supplements for Common Conditions

Natural remedies don’t work in the same way as drugs. Whereas a drug targets a specific symptom or health marker, herbs and other supplements work on the underlying processes that cause or contribute to a problematic condition.

As an analogy, let’s say one room in your house is too cold — that’s the symptom. Taking a drug would be like bringing a portable heater into that room. But there are still cold spots in the room, or the heater blows a fuse or creates a fire hazard. Meanwhile, the real

problem is a window or door that is poorly sealed, letting cold drafts into the room. Using targeted natural remedies, along with essential nutrients and dietary and lifestyle changes, would be like sealing up the drafty window or door — solving the real problem.

With a combination of a healthy diet, lifestyle, and the right supplements, it’s possible to reduce or eliminate the need for medications to treat many health conditions. Changes in medications should be made in conjunction with your doctor.

Snapshot of Natural Remedies

For each condition below, the listed supplements can help to improve or resolve it. These supplements work best along with the essential nutrients I’ve described, plus a healthy diet.

Health Concern	Beneficial Supplements
Diabetes or elevated blood sugar	Gymnema sylvestre, banaba leaf extract, white mulberry leaf extract, alpha-lipoic acid
Elevated blood pressure	Magnesium, green tea extract, grape seed extract, garlic, CoQ10, hawthorn
Joint pain	Boswellia, turmeric, glucosamine sulfate and/or chondroitin sulfate
Low thyroid	Iodine, bacopa monnieri, ashwagandha
Sleep problems	Melatonin, L-theanine, herbal sleep formulas

The *Snapshot of Natural Remedies* chart on this page lists beneficial supplements for common health concerns. The full details on how to use each remedy, and additional helpful nutrients, are covered in earlier newsletter issues, listed in *Related to This Topic* on page 5. For any condition you need to treat, I encourage you to check out the issue on the related topic.

A Final Word

A friend of mine had been suffering from painful joints for some time, despite eating a healthy diet, doing as much exercise as she could, and generally following a healthy lifestyle. She had never heard of glucosamine sulfate until I suggested that she try it.

She started taking the supplement daily and her joint pain soon disappeared. Sometimes it takes more than one supplement to resolve a health problem, such as changes in diet and other lifestyle habits. But used correctly, natural remedies can bring about major improvements.

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Vicki wanted to lose weight, but she hated exercise – so how the heck did she **drop 32 pounds** in two months?

If you're having trouble losing 15 pounds or more, just see what happened to Vicki...

Like most of us hitting middle age, Vicki started packing on a few extra pounds each year. Her weight crept up so gradually she hardly noticed. But eventually, Vicki, her husband, and her doctor became concerned. As you might imagine, Vicki's self-esteem took a big hit.

Vicki tried to lose weight by depriving herself of all her favorite foods. She forced herself to eat boring salads and tasteless frozen diet meals. And she exercised like crazy (even though she hated it). But the extra pounds just wouldn't budge.

That's when a friend suggested Vicki try **Smash-It!** This nutrient-infused slimming shake was developed by Primal Labs – a leader in nutritional supplementation.

In the first month alone, Vicki lost 3.5 inches from her belly and 2 inches from her waist, hips, and thighs. And when you hear Vicki tell the story, you'll see why she feels like a different person. "I have so much energy. Oh my gosh, my co-workers noticed within two weeks I was dropping weight," she said. "I was walking around with a big smile on my face."

It's easy to see why Vicki had a big smile. She lost 18 pounds in just 30 days merely by substituting one meal a day with Smash-It! But she wasn't done...

In the second month, Vicki lost an additional 2.5 inches off her belly and waist, and 1.75 inches off her hips. **In only two months, Vicki lost a grand total of 32 pounds!**

What's more, Vicki lost all this weight with only minimal exercise. Which just shows you proper nutrition is 90% of successful weight loss. Because if you're eating the wrong foods, you can't exercise enough to get rid of unwanted fat.

And that's the secret of **Smash-It!**, the delicious meal-in-a-glass that works better than any diet or weight loss program.

Smash-It! has been scientifically formulated to fix the #1 reason most people can't lose weight: **TOXIC FAT CELLS**. Most people get stuck with unwanted pounds, not because of *too much* fat, but rather because of too much of the *WRONG* kind of fat.

This was proven in a landmark study at Temple University. Researchers studied fat cells of overweight people and found them to be toxic, inflamed, and unhealthy. Worse yet, these toxic fat cells "affect blood pressure, blood sugar, triglycerides, and cholesterol," according to *Future Medicine*.

Fortunately, a delicious **Smash-It!** meal replacement shake is an amazing improvement over any meal replacement, protein supplement, or "nutrition shake" you may have tried. In fact, by drinking a daily **Smash-It!** shake, you can:

1. FIX those toxic fat cells for good...
2. FIRE UP your metabolism and supercharge your health...
3. TAKE INCHES AND POUNDS OFF your hips, thighs, and waist, giving you the body you've been dreaming of...

Discover everything
you will get with
Smash-It! on the
next page!



Here's What You'll Find in Smash-It!

First, you'll get 21 grams of **quality protein** in a proprietary Quadsourc Blend. This includes whey and pea protein, and even cranberry seed protein to help boost your metabolism and give you the nutrition you need.

Next, a patented *Spectra Blend* contains 29 of nature's most powerful, health-boosting fruit, vegetable, spice, and herbal extracts, including green tea, turmeric, broccoli, bilberry, cinnamon, blueberry, acerola, and many more.

You'd have to eat several servings of fruits and vegetables to get the **antioxidant power** you'll find in *Spectra Blend*. As you know, antioxidants fight the free radical damage that comes with aging. Plus, they increase nitric oxide production to support healthy blood pressure levels and brain function.

In **Smash-It!**, you'll also get:

- ✓ 3 grams of gut-healthy **fiber**, including oat fiber, xanthan gum, and blue agave inulin to help support healthy lipid levels
- ✓ 8 special **enzymes** to help you better digest your food
- ✓ 6 special **probiotics** — "friendly" bacterial strains to support regularity and immune function
- ✓ Biotin and chromium to help maintain healthy blood sugar levels
- ✓ Vitamins A, C, E, B, and D for more health benefits, including support for bone and brain health, as well as healthy blood pressure
- ✓ L-leucine, an amino acid that helps minimize the loss of lean muscle tissue — something to guard against as you age (and when losing weight)
- ✓ And many more vitamins, minerals, and other nutrients to maintain your good health

But what about fat? You know you need fat to feel full and satisfied, so you won't be tempted by unhealthy carbs and sweets. But it has to be *good* fat, not the bad fats typically found in fast and processed foods.



Well, **Smash-It!** contains the absolute **best kind of fat** — medium chain triglycerides found in coconut oil that your body easily burns for energy. And as an added bonus, these fats help support cognitive health.

What's more, the Primal Health team knew that if it didn't taste great, you wouldn't drink it. So, **Smash-It!** comes in rich chocolate, strawberry, and vanilla caramel flavors. It's sweetened with monk fruit that's actually sweeter than sugar. **Smash-It!** contains just one gram of sugar per serving. Compare that to Ensure, with its unhealthy 15 grams of sugar.

With **Smash-It!**, you can **safely and easily melt off up to 15 pounds in just one month**. And enjoy all these benefits in just 30 seconds a day — with minimal exercise and NO impossible-to-maintain diet. What's not to love?

And no worries... Try **Smash-It!** completely risk-free with a no-questions-asked 100% money-back guarantee.

Just like Vicki, now YOU can start shedding those unwanted pounds. Imagine looking and feeling years younger... Fitting into your skinny clothes again... Sounds amazing, doesn't it? Say hello to your new life.

TRY IT TODAY! Smash-It! Nutrient-Infused Slimming Shake
GetSmash-It.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

Benefits of Swimming and Water Exercise

There's something really revitalizing about a dip in the ocean on a summer day. Kids love it and can spend hours going in and out of the water. We don't do that so much as adults — but we should.

If you aren't near a coast, there are lakes and rivers. And then, of course, there are swimming pools. And summer is a great time to not only get your feet wet but also to try out some new ways to get moving.

Swimming isn't the only way to benefit from moving in water. Various types of exercise classes in water can be designed to enhance aerobic fitness, increase flexibility, strengthen muscles, and produce a variety of other benefits.

Seaside Benefits

Before the invention of today's drugs, a visit to the seaside was a common recommendation from doctors. It had been observed for many years that being by the ocean was therapeutic and helped patients to recover from many diseases.

We've mostly forgotten that. However, a recent European study looked at the association between overall health and distance from the sea, among more than 11,000 people in 15 countries. And it found that living near an ocean, or visiting frequently, enhanced health.¹

Being close to other bodies of water, such as lakes and rivers, can also be beneficial. Other types of natural surroundings, such as forests, are also therapeutic.

If you have poor balance or a fear of falling, exercise in water eliminates the problem. Classes are typically held in water that is shallow enough to allow you to stand on the bottom, with the water reaching up to your chest.

Support from the water prevents you from falling, giving you the freedom to do different movements without feeling fearful. The water offers some resistance, challenging muscles in a gentle and beneficial way without putting stress on joints. And it's fun to splash around.

These are some benefits that studies have identified.

Less Risk of Falls

Falls are a leading cause of disability among older adults. Regular swimming can reduce the risk, according to an Australian study. Researchers tracked more than 1,600 men, with a mean age of 76, for nearly 4 years. They found that swimmers were less likely to suffer a fall than those whose leisure time activities included walking, playing golf, or gardening.

In tests of balance — indicators of fall risk — swimmers were more stable when standing, with less swaying. And swimmers were better able to walk along a narrow path that challenges balance.²

The researchers noted that swimming is not considered an effective way to prevent fractures, because it is not a weight-bearing activity and, therefore, does not improve bone density. But swimming may



help to prevent falls from occurring in the first place.

Water exercise classes have also been found to reduce risk for falls.³ A review of earlier research analyzed 14 studies of various types of water exercise among adults between the ages of 60 and 90. And researchers found that water exercise improved balance and upper- and lower-body strength — benefits that make falls less likely.

Although the same results can be achieved by doing exercise on land, the risk of injury may be lower with water exercise. And people who are concerned about keeping their balance in an exercise class may feel more confident and motivated to take exercise classes in water.

Healthier Joints

Arthritis deters people from being physically active and contributes to ongoing worsening of their health. Exercise in water reduces stress on joints, making it easier to move.

Studies have shown that aerobic exercise improves heart function, enhances flexibility, increases strength, reduces depression, anxiety, and fatigue, and helps to relieve joint pain. Exercise also

reduces damage to joints by increasing the rate of repair, as long as the exercise is not excessive. But joint pain makes it difficult to exercise on land.

Although swimming can be beneficial for anyone with problematic joints, it isn't always possible — if someone can't swim, for example, or has shoulder problems. Water exercise can offer similar benefits to aerobic exercise on land, with fewer challenges for people with osteoarthritis or rheumatoid arthritis.

Deep water running is one example. It's done while wearing an inflated vest or swim ring to stay afloat, in the deep end of a pool, and "running" in the water. While the leg movements are like running, the water eliminates the stress of hitting the ground with each stride.⁴

Water exercise has also been shown to benefit people with fibromyalgia and may produce greater improvements in their sleep and mood than exercise on land. And people with joint pain are less likely to fear that exercise will increase their pain when it's done in water.⁵

Better Mental Function

A French study found that regular swimming can enhance mental function in older adults. Researchers concluded this after testing young people and two groups of older adults between the ages of 65 and 80. One older group was sedentary, and the other consisted of people who regularly swam. There were 16 people in each group.

Young people scored highest on tests of mental function. However, those who were swimmers scored higher than those who were seden-

tary. Those in the swimming group had been swimming at least twice per week for at least two years.⁶

Both swimming and other types of exercise in water can also lift a depressed mood, reduce anxiety, and enhance overall well-being.⁷

How to Benefit

If you like swimming, I encourage you to do it often, outdoors if possible. In fact, going to the beach or lake with family or friends is a great way to socialize and get some exercise if you alternate swimming with socializing.

Go in the water and swim, enjoy the company for a while, have another swim, socialize some more, swim again, and so on. This way, you get multiple mini workouts, which is more beneficial than one big workout after sitting all day. And it's more fun.

I also encourage you to take swimming or other types of exercise classes in water. I've completed numerous triathlons, so I've done plenty of swimming in my life. But when I took a master swimming class, I learned a lot and really enjoyed it.

No matter your level of skill, classes can be fun and rewarding. A class keeps you accountable, and it takes you to a higher level of competence. It doesn't matter what your skill level is at the outset.

Another thing to keep in mind is where and how you vacation, whether it's a day trip, a weekend, or a longer break. Consider some outdoor activities. And when you're around a pool, jump in, swim, or do some other exercise.

I often see people standing around in the shallow end, chatting.

There's certainly nothing wrong with that, but if you don't also swim or move around in that pool in some other way, you're missing a golden opportunity to enhance your day, and your health.

The Benefits of Water Exercise



The Aquatic Exercise Association, a nonprofit organization that educates and certifies instructors, notes that the benefits of water exercise include:

- A healthier heart
- Stronger muscles
- Better endurance
- More flexibility
- Improved coordination
- More power to initiate sudden movements
- Enhanced agility
- Better balance
- Lower risk of falls
- More balanced and steady walking
- Improvement in joint and back pain

1 Geiger, S.J., et al. "Coastal proximity and visits are associated with better health but may not buffer health inequalities." *Commun Earth Environ*. 2023 May 24;4:166.

2 Merom, D., et al. "Swimming and other sporting activities and the rate of falls in older men: longitudinal findings from the Concord Health and Ageing in Men Project." *Am J Epidemiol*. 2014 Oct 15;180(8):830-7.

3 Martínez-Carbonell Guillamón, E., et al. "Does aquatic exercise improve commonly reported predisposing risk factors to falls within the elderly? A systematic review." *BMC Geriatr*. 2019 Feb 22;19(1):52.

4 Westby, M.D. "A health professional's guide to exercise prescription for people with arthritis: a review of aerobic fitness activities." *Arthritis Rheum*. 2001 Dec;45(6):501-11.

5 Gowans, S.E., et al. "Pool exercise for individuals with fibromyalgia." *Curr Opin Rheumatol*. 2007 Mar;19(2):168-73.

6 Abou-Deh, A., et al. "Swimming as a positive moderator of cognitive aging: a cross-sectional study with a multitask approach." *J Aging Res*. 2012;2012:273185.

7 Tang, Z., et al. "Effects of aquatic exercise on mood and anxiety symptoms: A systematic review and meta-analysis." *Front Psychiatry*. 2022 Nov 17;13:1051551.

Soaps Can Attract or Repel Mosquitoes

Mosquitoes bite some people more than others, and if you're in the bugs' favorite food group, you're probably well aware of your popularity. However, a new study has found that scented soaps make people more — or less — attractive to these pesky insects, which can transmit diseases.



The study was done at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University in Blacksburg, more commonly known as Virginia Tech. It tested four popular brands of soap with flowery or fruity scents.¹

Researchers didn't torture study volunteers by allowing mosquitoes to bite them. Rather, the volunteers wore a sleeve after no soap use and a new odorless sleeve after washing their arm with each soap. Researchers extracted the scents from these sleeves and made the odors available to mosquitoes that were kept in a meshed cage. And they observed the insects' reactions to each scent.

In the process, they observed that the natural scents of volunteers produced different reactions; some were more attractive to mosquitoes. However, soaps made a significant difference.

Because each person's body chemistry is unique, the same scent can make mosquitoes react differently to each individual. But researchers did observe a pattern: A soap that was coconut-oil based and did not contain chemical fragrance — Native was the tested brand — had a repelling effect on three out of four volunteers. Other research has found that some fats, such as coconut oil, can be a natural repellent.

Dove and Simple Truth brands made some of the volunteers more attractive to the insects. And the responses to the fourth brand — Dial — varied.

What Can We Learn?

Individual body chemistry makes it difficult to anticipate which soap will help to keep mosquitoes away from you, although a coconut-oil based soap without chemical fragrance may be worth a try. But other products, such as deodorants, laundry detergents, and skincare and hair products, also influence your personal scent.

Bottom line: if you want to be less attractive to

mosquitoes, it makes sense to be aware of how different products may affect your personal popularity. You could experiment with some unscented or naturally scented products to see what works best for you.

Meanwhile, none of this replaces common sense if you're going to be exposed to lots of mosquitoes and other bugs. Clothing and insect repellents can provide proven protection.

Hidden Toxin in Food Coloring



Titanium dioxide is a metal that makes food (and paint) whiter and colors brighter. It's also a good sun block and is a safe ingredient in sunscreen — but not in food.

Titanium dioxide is banned from food in Europe because it can accumulate in the human body and may cause DNA damage. But it's FDA-approved as a food additive in this country.

Is titanium dioxide listed as an ingredient on food labels? Not necessarily, because the law doesn't require its disclosure. Food manufacturers may voluntarily list it, and they do so on more than 1,800 food products.

In other cases, titanium dioxide is hidden in artificial food coloring. It isn't allowed in organic food products but it is in nonorganic products, so you have to be a bit of a label sleuth to detect it.

What to Look for on Food Labels

Titanium dioxide — best avoided — is not added to organic foods. In all others, it may be listed as an ingredient on food labels in one of these ways:

- Titanium dioxide
- Artificial color
- Color added

Foods that often contain titanium dioxide include:

- Candy
- Chewing gum
- Puddings
- Ice cream
- Popsicles
- Cheeses
- Cream or half-and-half
- Non-dairy creamers
- Dips
- Soups
- Dressings
- Cake frosting
- Macaroni and cheese
- Plant-based "meat"

For more information, visit the nonprofit Environmental Working Group at www.ewg.org.

¹ VanderGiessen, M., et al. "Soap application alters mosquito-host interactions." *iScience*. 2023 May 10;26(5):106667.

Q&A

Q: I understand that a level of 200 mg/dl of total cholesterol is healthy. Does that mean I shouldn't get more than 200 mg of cholesterol daily from the food I eat? You recommend eggs, but one egg contains nearly that much. — *Marty H.*

A: I understand why this can be confusing. The 200 mg/dL of total cholesterol you mention refers to the level of cholesterol in the blood, not the cholesterol content of food.

It was once believed that eating foods that contain cholesterol led to higher blood levels, and doctors and dietitians recommended limiting foods that are rich in cholesterol, such as egg yolks. But as more research was carried out, this theory proved not to be valid.

In 2015, the Dietary Guidelines for Americans stopped recommending a limit for cholesterol in the food you eat. However, the idea that eating cholesterol raises blood cholesterol has persisted, despite evidence to the contrary.

Your liver makes cholesterol because it is an essential substance. If your body needs more, your liver makes more, and vice versa.

Cholesterol is used to make steroid hormones, such as estrogen, progesterone, testosterone, and cortisol — the stress (fight-or-flight) hormone. When you're under a lot of stress, your body makes more cortisol, and the liver makes more cholesterol to enable

that extra cortisol production.

Levels of cholesterol typically go up among students at exam time, accountants at tax time, and anyone else who is experiencing a stressful situation. Once the exam, tax season, or other stressful situation is over, cholesterol levels go down. This is a natural fluctuation.

Cholesterol also helps to repair injuries and heal infections. If you sprain an ankle, for example, cholesterol levels will go up to help it heal and to repair damaged tissues. Once the sprain has healed, cholesterol will go down. In addition, cholesterol in cells helps the immune system to fight off an infection.

These are beneficial and essential roles of cholesterol. But high levels of insulin also stimulate extra cholesterol production. The way to deal with this is to eat a diet that is rich in nutritious whole foods and low in carbohydrates. This will lower insulin levels, and cholesterol levels will then naturally fall as well.

Low thyroid function can also lead to high cholesterol because it slows down elimination of excess cholesterol — another natural process. The solution is to correct the thyroid function.

In my practice, I've found that high insulin, triggered by eating too many carbs, is the most basic reason for high cholesterol. Unmanaged stress is another major reason. And there can be untreated infections — dental ones are very common — or low thyroid that also need attention.

I hope this helps to clarify the role of cholesterol. I cover cholesterol in more detail in Volume 1, Issue 4, of this newsletter: *When Statin Drugs Can Harm You More than Cholesterol.*

Q: Can you make some suggestions for combining a healthy diet for diabetes and one which also manages gastroparesis issues?

— *Lydia A.*

A: Gastroparesis literally means “stomach paralysis.” It isn't a complete paralysis but a weakening of the nerves and muscles that contract to move food through the stomach and the rest of the digestive tract. And then, food lingers in the stomach, producing various symptoms such as bloating, indigestion, pain, heartburn, nausea, and constipation.

Late diabetes is the most common cause of gastroparesis. To effectively manage the diabetes, start with a low-carb diet such as the one I recommend.

Meanwhile, there are two supplements that can help to stimulate the digestive system: betaine HCL and bitters — also called digestive bitters or Swedish bitters. Take one serving of each remedy just before each meal or with the first bite or two, so that these substances are in your stomach throughout the meal.

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.