

# Dr. Marlene's NATURAL HEALTH CONNECTIONS

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## Bacterial Infections: How to Treat and Prevent Them



**Untreated infections are an underlying trigger of inflammation that makes it impossible to get relief from many health conditions. Here's how to resolve the most common infections.**

If you've been reading this newsletter for a while, you know that I often mention the need to treat infections to resolve various health issues.

When infections linger, they can trigger or contribute to many ills, from high blood pressure, type 2 diabetes, and joint pain to fatigue, brain fog, and an inability to lose weight.

In fact, untreated bacterial infections can contribute to virtually any ailment because they trigger persistent inflammation.<sup>1</sup> And as you may know, inflammation underlies all manner of ills when it becomes chronic. Heart disease, diabetes, and dementia are among the common conditions in which inflammation plays a major role.

We hear a lot about anti-inflammatory diets: fish, vegetables, and such; these are beneficial, for sure. But if there's a lingering infection that's ignored, it will keep stoking inflammation. You can't cure a chronic

infection with food, no matter how wholesome your diet.

To be fair, a healthy diet certainly does help. It supports better immune function, which helps you to avoid infections in the first place. And a healthy diet will enhance the effectiveness of any treatment you get for an infection. But it can't substitute for the right treatment.

So, what is the treatment? Natural remedies, which I'll cover in a moment, may sometimes be all you need. But in other cases, such as chronic bacterial infections, antibiotics or other treatment may be essential.

Notice that I mentioned antibiotics for "chronic bacterial infections." Antibiotics do not work for viral infections. And even for bacterial

**IN THE NEXT ISSUE:  
10 Reasons You're Tired  
— and the Remedies**



infections, antibiotics may not be the answer, or not the only necessary treatment. In the case of dental infections, there's no way to avoid seeing a dentist.

I've had patients with infections that had gone untreated for so long that they believed a somewhat debilitated state was the way things had to be. "Getting old" is a common explanation for infection-related symptoms that reduce vitality and zest.

At the very least, an untreated infection will sap some of your energy, mentally and physically, and it may develop into a serious illness. On the flipside, resolving an infection can result in a new lease on life.

Before I discuss the most common bacterial infections, I want to describe in more detail how infections affect overall health. Consider the next section a look "under the hood."

## How My Mother Was Misdiagnosed

Symptoms of infections vary among individuals. But this story illustrates how damaging they can be.

My mother was once diagnosed with anemia, which means low levels of red blood cells. These cells carry oxygen in the blood, so lack of red blood cells means the whole body doesn't get enough oxygen. This leads to fatigue, reduced heart function, and other problems.

Iron is an essential nutrient for healthy red blood cells. So, insufficient iron can deplete red blood cells and lead to anemia. This seemed to be the case with my mother, whose iron level was low.

An iron deficiency may stem from too little iron in a person's diet

or more serious internal malfunctions that prevent iron from being absorbed and used by the body. Sometimes, an anemia diagnosis can lead to invasive testing — such as a colonoscopy — to determine

## Scary Dental Facts

When I see a patient for the first time, I ask about dental health, because studies have found serious health risks related to untreated dental problems.



**Heart disease and stroke:** Multiple studies have found that inflamed gums increase risk for heart disease. For example, one six-year study of nearly 1,600 older people found that severe gum disease increased risk for heart attack, severe heart failure, stroke, and death by 49 percent.<sup>2</sup>

**Type 2 diabetes:** Gum disease may provoke or contribute to insulin resistance, which leads to elevated blood sugar and underlies type 2 diabetes.<sup>3</sup>

**Poor memory:** A study of more than 2,300 older Americans found that poor dental health correlates with a decline in memory and other mental functions.<sup>4</sup> And harmful bacteria in the mouth can spread and destroy nerve cells in the brain, increasing risk for Alzheimer's disease.<sup>5</sup>

### The Good News

Eliminating harmful bacteria and inflammation in the mouth reduces all these risks.

if there is internal bleeding causing iron loss. This is uncomfortable and can be risky for an older individual such as my mother.

Naturally, I immediately got on the case. My mother's diet seemed to provide sufficient iron, but there was a hidden factor that routine medical tests did not reveal.

She had been given a blood test that measures the active, usable form of iron in her blood. Her level was low, and because of this she was diagnosed as being anemic.

However, there's another test that is necessary to get a more complete picture of someone's iron status. It's a test of ferritin: the stored form of iron.

If the active form of iron is low but the level of stored iron — ferritin — is high, it means that there is enough iron in the system but something is preventing it from being used. And that "something" needs to be looked for and found.

I ordered a ferritin test for my mother. It's a simple, inexpensive blood test that is rarely used in today's healthcare system. The test showed an abnormally high level of ferritin. This meant that although there was enough iron in her diet, her body was locking it away in storage and couldn't use it to properly make red blood cells.

Putting on my detective hat, I found out that my mother had had an infected tooth for some time. She hadn't mentioned it because she didn't want to go to the dentist. Consequently, the tooth infection persisted, and now it was adversely affecting the health of her whole body.

As you might expect, I made sure that she did see a dentist and get the tooth treated. Her level of

ferritin dropped, her level of active iron returned to normal, and she regained her energy. And behold, no more anemia!

## Infections and Iron

How did I know that an infected tooth could lead to low iron levels? Here's how it works: When there's any type of bacterial infection in your body, the active form of iron feeds the bacteria. Your body is smart enough to know this and as a survival mechanism, it sequesters iron into the storage form, which the bacteria can't access. In other words, it tries to starve the bacteria of iron.

This might work well in a temporary situation, to help heal an infection. Once the infection is gone, the extra iron is released from storage and the level of active iron returns to normal.

However, when an infection lingers, iron continues to go into storage. And there's a deficiency of active iron, no matter how much iron is in your diet. Although an infection is only one reason this can happen, I've found that it's a very common one.

## Infections and Your Immune System

When an infection goes untreated, it forces your immune system to work overtime to try and fight it off. Consequently, that system can't protect you properly against other pathogens you may be exposed to, such as seasonal bugs.

White blood cells are your body's protective army. These cells continually circulate through your bloodstream, looking for foreign organisms, and they attack any that could be harmful. A lingering, untreated

infection wears down the immune system and reduces the number of white blood cells. As a result, your built-in protection against pathogens becomes less effective.

The constant battle with a chronic infection also depletes zinc. This is a vicious cycle because zinc helps your body to fight infection. Unless you get extra zinc, the depletion will just make matters worse and will make you more vulnerable to other illnesses, such as colds and flu.

The ongoing battle also puts a strain on the adrenal glands, which leads to lower levels of energy. And, as I mentioned earlier, lingering infections stimulate chronic inflammation that underlies virtually every one of today's chronic health conditions.

I know, this is a bleak picture — and I haven't been exaggerating. So now, it's time to look at what you can do.

I'm going to focus on three types of bacterial infections that are the most common ones that I've seen go untreated in all my years of practice. These are urinary tract, sinus, and dental infections. Each one has some specific remedies. But first, I want to discuss antibiotics, a class of drugs that can be both life-saving and problematic.

## What About Antibiotics?

In some cases, antibiotics are an essential treatment for bacterial infections. A key word here is *bacterial*. Antibiotics do not treat viral infections. Colds and flu, for example, are viral infections and don't respond to antibiotics.

For bacterial infections, antibiotics work, but they also produce side effects. While eliminating harmful

bugs, antibiotics also eliminate beneficial ones. This disrupts the balance of microorganisms in the gut — your microbiome — and leads to side effects such as nausea, bloating, indigestion, diarrhea, and stomach pain. The disruption increases risk of reinfection during the next 4 to 6 weeks. And restoring gut balance can take anywhere from a few months to years for some people. Having a healthy gut before an antibiotic prescription may help to restore balance more quickly.

### Dr. Marlene's NATURAL HEALTH CONNECTIONS

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What to Do

If you’re taking an antibiotic, follow the doctor’s instructions. In between doses of the drug — at a different time of day — take a probiotic supplement. Probiotics won’t stop antibiotics from killing beneficial gut bacteria but they will help to replenish them.

There are many probiotic formulations and each person’s gut is unique, so there isn’t a one-size-fits-all solution. See how you feel with a given product, and if needed, experiment to find the best probiotic formulation for you.

Fermented foods can also help. I had one patient who didn’t get relief from probiotic supplements when taking antibiotics. And then, she happened to eat some kimchi — fermented vegetables — for the first time in her life. And much to her surprise, the antibiotic side effects miraculously disappeared. For some people, yogurt with live cultures may help.

In probiotic supplements, doses are measured in billions of colony forming units (CFUs). For ongoing maintenance, I would recommend a lower-dose supplement: no more

than 20 billion CFUs per day. However, if you’re experiencing diarrhea or other severe symptoms, a higher dose may be beneficial. Now, let’s start looking at the most common bacterial infections that may be undermining your efforts to live a healthy life.

Urinary Tract Infections

Urinary tract infections (UTIs) are not just uncomfortable and annoying. They can lead to kidney infections, which can be serious health threats. The more intense the symptoms, the more reason to see a doctor. If your lower back hurts, that’s definitely a sign that you need medical attention. The usual treatment is an antibiotic prescription.

For patients who experience recurring UTIs, antibiotics may also be prescribed for prevention. But this is risky because it does more damage to beneficial gut bacteria and contributes to antibiotic resistance: the evolution of bacteria that no longer respond to antibiotics. This is a huge problem that stems from overuse of antibiotics.

What about natural remedies? Cranberry juices and supplements have been proven to be an effective way to prevent recurring UTIs. More than 50 studies, with nearly 9,000 people, have documented this benefit.<sup>8</sup> And the American Urological Association Guidelines for doctors note that cranberry products can prevent UTIs.<sup>9</sup>

Cranberries contain proanthocyanidins, a unique type of nutrient that prevents harmful bacteria from sticking to the walls of the urinary tract. As a result, the bugs are flushed out instead of adhering to cells and causing an infection.

Cranberries don’t kill beneficial

Diabetes, Drugs, and Urinary Tract Infections

Diabetes increases susceptibility to urinary tract infections because high levels of glucose in the blood interfere with the body’s natural resistance. A recent study found that high blood glucose decreases levels of psoriasin, a natural antimicrobial substance in the human body, and this makes it harder for the immune system to fight off harmful bacteria.<sup>6</sup>

In addition, one class of drugs for type 2 diabetes — SGLT2 inhibitors — increases risks for urinary tract infections. Other diabetes drugs do not have this side effect.

On labels of SGLT2 inhibitors, the FDA requires a warning of potential serious urinary tract infections.<sup>7</sup> Below is a list of drugs in this category.

FDA-approved SGLT2 Inhibitors for Type 2 Diabetes

Brand names	Active ingredients
Invokana	canagliflozin
Invokamet	canagliflozin and metformin
Farxiga	dapagliflozin
Xigduo XR	dapagliflozin and metformin extended release
Jardiance	empagliflozin
Glyxambi	empagliflozin and linagliptin
Synjardy	empagliflozin and metformin

About Metformin

The most prescribed diabetes drug, metformin, is not an SGLT2 inhibitor, and urinary tract infections are not a side effect of metformin. However, metformin can be combined with an SGLT2 inhibitor, which then increases risk for urinary tract infections.

gut bugs, so they don't disrupt the balance of microorganisms in your digestive tract. And bacteria can't become resistant to cranberries.

Both cranberry juice and supplements have been found to help prevent UTIs. Unsweetened cranberry juice is best, if you can tolerate it, or take a cranberry supplement.

Bottom line: cranberry is very helpful in preventing UTIs. But for treatment of an infection that has already developed, antibiotics are the remedy.

Avoiding sugar helps your immune system to ward off or recover from urinary tract and other types of infection. You also want to drink lots of filtered water, to make it easier to flush out harmful bacteria.

## Sinus Infections

The sinuses are air-filled cavities on either side of your nose, in your cheeks, and behind your forehead and eyebrows. Because the sinuses are close to the brain, an infection can be dangerous, so treatment is vital.

Sinus infections can be caused by bacteria or viruses (such as a cold virus). In all these cases, there's a simple home remedy that can help: a nasal rinse.

NeilMed is a popular one that you can buy in any drugstore. It comes with a squeeze bottle and packets of sodium that you mix with filtered or boiled water (just follow the product instructions). In addition, I suggest adding another herbal ingredient to the rinse: a tincture of goldenseal.

Goldenseal is an herb with a long history of use in Chinese medicine and in Native American healing. When used in a nasal rinse, it helps

to kill bacteria on contact with the mucous membranes in your nasal passages. It may also help to stop viruses from replicating and may help eliminate other irritants.

You can add one serving of a goldenseal tincture to the saline solution in the NeilMed bottle and rinse your nose every 2 or 3 hours with the mixture. I've found this to be very helpful, and it can sometimes quickly relieve a sinus infection.

Xylitol is another natural substance that fights bacteria. You can buy NeilMed packets with xylitol, which I recommend.

If the infection persists, see a doctor. If you are prone to repeated sinus infections, it could be that your immune system needs improvement — more about this in a moment. And in some cases, there could be a structural issue in your sinus area that needs to be surgically corrected to prevent

recurring infections.

In some cases, a dental infection can lead to a sinus infection. The nasal rinse can still help temporarily, but the problem won't resolve without correcting the underlying dental problem.

## Dental Infections

Bacterial infection can develop in your mouth for a number of reasons. Incorrect daily cleaning can lead to bacteria below the gum line, causing inflammation, gum recession, and eventually, loose teeth.

Even if you've been regularly brushing and flossing, this could still happen, because many people have never been told how to properly clean their teeth. I've worked with a dentist who developed an excellent protocol to keep your teeth and gums in good shape with a simple daily regimen. I describe it in an earlier issue of this newsletter about dental health, listed in

## 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.



Related to This Topic below. I encourage you to follow the protocol described in that issue.

That said, there may be other reasons for problems. A tooth may have decayed or been damaged in the past or a filling may need repair because it has degraded over time.

Sometimes, an infection may develop in the root of a tooth. In such cases, I don't recommend a root canal, as most of these lead to more infection in the future. It's better to get the tooth extracted and replaced with an implant.

In my experience, anyone with a dental issue usually knows something is wrong but isn't eager to see a dentist. But it's essential to do so.

Controlling blood sugar with a low-carb diet is also essential. Diabetes triples the risk for gum disease.<sup>10</sup> However, getting rid of harmful bacteria in the mouth helps to lower blood sugar and inflammation and reduces risk for diabetes and its complications.<sup>11</sup>

Bottom line: if you have pain or sensitivity, gum recession or redness, a suspicion that all is not well in your mouth, or haven't had a dental check-up for a while, book an appointment with a dentist as soon as possible.

Enhance Your Natural Defenses

I encourage you to check out at least the first earlier issue of this newsletter in the chart below. But the upshot is this: A healthy low-carb diet, adequate sleep, and regular exercise will enhance your immune system. And guard against nutrient shortfalls, which make you more susceptible to illness, with a daily multivitamin. In the Supplement Facts on labels, look for 100 percent of the Daily Value of zinc and vitamin A. Look for "vitamin A," rather than "beta-carotene," which is a precursor rather than the actual vitamin.

If you do have an infection, take extra zinc. Look for a zinc supplement with copper, as high doses of zinc can deplete copper.

A Final Word

Eating too many starchy and sugary foods is one of the worst things you can do for your immune system. Too much starch and sugar generates inflammation, which keeps your immune system occupied in trying to reduce it. And then, your immune system doesn't have enough resources to prevent infections, especially if you are susceptible to recurring ones.

To treat an infection, try the natural remedies I've described and — most important — get any needed dental or medical treatment. You'll be healthier and happier as a result.

Related to This Topic

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

Related Topic	Volume	Issue	Title
A Strong Immune System	3	9	The Guide to a Healthy Immune System for Life
Dental Health	3	10	The 5 Simple Steps to Healthy Teeth and Gums
A Healthy Low-Carb Diet	6	1	Your 2023 Guide to Better Health: Part 1
A Healthy Low-Carb Diet	6	2	Your 2023 Guide to Better Health: Part 2
Multivitamins	2	8	Do You Really Need a Multivitamin?
Diabetes	5	12	Top 20 Diabetes Questions Answered
Sleep	5	4	Restful Sleep: How to Get Enough

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



1 Largman-Chalamish, M., et al. "Differentiating between bacterial and viral infections by estimated CRP velocity." PLoS One. 2022 Dec 7;17(12):e0277401.

2 Ferrannini, G. "Periodontitis and cardiovascular outcome - a prospective follow-up of the PAROKRANK cohort." Abstract presented at the European Society of Cardiology Congress 2021.

3 Kumar, M., et al. "Diabetes and gum disease: the diabolic duo." Diabetes Metab Syndr. Oct-Dec 2014;8(4):255-8.

4 Noble, J.M., et al. "Periodontitis is associated with cognitive impairment among older adults: analysis of NHANES-III." J Neurol Neurosurg Psychiatry. 2009 Nov;80(11):1206-11.

5 Dominy, S.S., et al. "Porphyromonas gingivalis in Alzheimer's disease brains: Evidence for disease causation and treatment with small-molecule inhibitors." Sci Adv. 2019 Jan 23;5(1):eaau3333.

6 Mohanty, S., et al. "Diabetes downregulates the antimicrobial peptide psoriasin and increases E. coli burden in the urinary bladder." Nat Commun. 2022 Sep 20;13(1):4983.

7 FDA Drug Safety Communication. "FDA revises labels of SGLT2 inhibitors for diabetes to include warnings about too much acid in the blood and serious urinary tract infections." Revised March 15, 2022.

8 Williams, G., et al. "Cranberries for preventing urinary tract infections." Cochrane Database Syst Rev. 2023 Apr 17;4(4):CD001321.

9 Bixler B.R., et al. "Updates to Recurrent Uncomplicated Urinary Tract Infections in Women: AUA/CUA/SUFU Guideline." J Urol. 2022 Oct;208(4):754-756.

10 Preshaw, P.M., et al. "Periodontitis and diabetes: a two-way relationship." Diabetologia. 2012 Jan;55(1):21-31.

11 Gurav, A.N. "Periodontal therapy -- an adjuvant for glycemic control." Diabetes Metab Syndr. 2012 Oct-Dec;6(4):218-23.



# Say “Good Bye” to those Senior Moments

## PREVENT, STOP, AND REVERSE MEMORY LOSS & DEMENTIA FOR LIFE!

“Within two weeks my memory came back, and the confusion I had experienced went away. It was a miracle.”

— Cathy D. Carson City, NV

**Do you turn to jelly when you try to remember someone's name... someone you've known for a long time? Maybe it's suddenly asking yourself, 'WHERE AM I?' when you're at a store... or you have to take a few extra moments to add 100 to 75.**

Perhaps you're suddenly feeling bored when you're the most excited person on the planet. Are you repeating yourself like a broken record? Maybe you don't seem like your normal super-focused self.

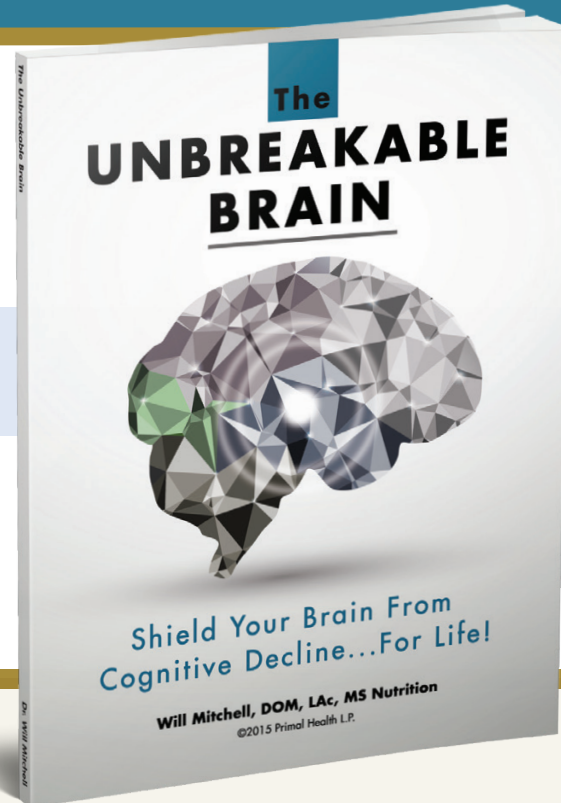
Yes—these are senior moments...and they are the first signs of dementia. The Alzheimer's Association recently admitted it, “Memory loss that disrupts daily life may be a symptom of dementia.”

How long will these “senior moments” continue? If you think memory loss will “go away” like a bad case of the flu... think again. They won't... unless you start taking some simple steps.

That is why world-renowned brain expert Dr. Will Mitchell has recently released his best-selling book, **The Unbreakable Brain**. This simple, but powerful 121-page book gives you a 28-day plan for brain health you can start right away. The plan gives you 7 powerful strategies you can easily adopt, and in the next 4 weeks, you'll be able to...

- Protect your brain
- Keep your mind razor-sharp for as long as you live
- And keep your independence by not spending your final days in a facility.

Here's what Cathy D. from Carson City, NV wrote to Dr. Mitchell after reading **The Unbreakable Brain**, “Within two weeks my memory came back, and the confusion I had experienced went away. It was a miracle.”



Yes—in just 2 week's Cathy's memory was back! Its results like this that have made **The Unbreakable Brain** a national best-seller. It's even popular in the medical community. Beverly C. from West



Renowned Health  
Expert, Dr. Will Mitchell

Des Moines, IA wrote to say, “I took your book to my doctor's office, and he knew of it and said it was one of the best. My doctor is on board with this plan.”

Dr. Will Mitchell put everything you need to prevent and even fight dementia in this easy-to-read book. In addition to his 28-day plan to a sharper brain, you'll also find...

- 1 simple trick to finding the true cause of your memory loss—and how to fix it...
- 14 prescription drugs that kill your memory...
- 5 things your brain needs every day to super-boost memory...
- Complete list of inexpensive nutritional supplements that revive the brain...
- At-home test that reveals if you'll get full-blown dementia...

Over 180,000 copies **The Unbreakable Brain** have already been sold to folks like Dorothy from Shelton, WA. who said, “I am delighted with my results, and I would highly recommend this book to anyone struggling with memory problems as they age.”

**Get your copy of The Unbreakable Brain today and protect your brain in just 28-days!**

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# What Is High Blood Pressure — Really?

It's one of the top conditions that is treated with prescription drugs, so you would expect a clear medical definition of high blood pressure. But this isn't always the case.

There are guidelines issued by different medical organizations, and they don't all agree. In each organization, a panel of experts reviews all the available research and creates guidelines that state the blood-pressure readings that require medications. So, some doctors may prescribe medications sooner than others, depending on the guidelines they are following.

Guidelines are expert opinions, based on available evidence. But not all experts interpret the research in exactly the same way, so different organizations come up with somewhat different numbers (listed in the chart on this page).

## Why This Matters

One person's blood pressure may be diagnosed as high according to one guideline but not according to another. As a result, one or more drugs to lower blood pressure may be prescribed — or not. Drugs have side effects, and with any prescription, the benefits and risks need to be evaluated for each individual.

Many of my patients have come to see me because they didn't want to take blood-pressure medications for the rest of their lives. If you are told you need such medication, and your blood-pressure readings are

“high” according to one guideline but not another, you may want to discuss this with your doctor.

## The Real Problem With Blood Pressure

From a conventional medical perspective, most high blood pressure is “essential hypertension,” meaning the cause is unknown.

In fact, high blood pressure is a symptom of an underlying malfunction. And this fact is not widely recognized in healthcare today.

High blood pressure may be the result of a high-carb diet, which leads to high insulin and high blood sugar and drives up blood pressure. For decades, studies have documented that this mechanism

underlies high blood pressure.<sup>1</sup> A low-carb diet can reverse it.

For more details on how this works, you can take a look at Volume 6, Issue 5, of this newsletter: *Blood Pressure Control: What Matters Most*. In that issue, I also discuss other triggers of high blood pressure and pros and cons of different blood-pressure drugs.

To be sure, high blood pressure increases health risks for heart disease, diabetes, stroke, kidney disease, and vision problems.

If you are struggling with elevated blood pressure or taking a medication to lower it, you can start eating a low-carb diet and add some exercise to your daily routine. Check and record your blood pressure daily to see how your efforts are affecting your readings. Share the information with your doctor and ask to get your drug dose adjusted as needed. Eventually, you may not need the drug at all.

## Different Guidelines for Prescribing Blood-Pressure Drugs

According to guidelines issued by different organizations, blood-pressure medication is indicated at these levels:<sup>2</sup>

ORGANIZATIONS	AGES	BLOOD-PRESSURE READING
American Academy of Family Physicians	18 and older	140/90 mm Hg or higher
American College of Cardiology and American Heart Association	18 and older	130/80 mm Hg or higher
U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs and U.S. Department of Defense	18 to 59	130/90 mm Hg or higher
U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs and U.S. Department of Defense	60 and older	150/90 mm Hg or higher

Experts all agree that normal blood pressure is below 120/80 mm Hg.

Before prescribing medications, a physician always needs to take into account a patient's individual health situation.

1 Brosolo, G., et al. “Insulin Resistance and High Blood Pressure: Mechanistic Insight on the Role of the Kidney.” *Biomedicines*. 2022 Sep 23;10(10):2374. 2 Coles, S., et al. “Blood Pressure Targets in Adults With Hypertension: A Clinical Practice Guideline From the AAFP.” *Am Fam Physician*. 2022 Dec;106(6):Online.



# Fall Asleep Faster and Stay Asleep Longer!



**P**roblems sleeping at night? Not anymore with Primal Labs' **SleepRefined®** and its unique "dual-release" technology.

**SleepRefined®** takes the proven better-sleep supplement melatonin to a whole new level of effectiveness.

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But typical melatonin clears out of your body quickly, so it may not work all night long.

Yet **SleepRefined®** provides two layers of melatonin to mimic "all night" melatonin production. The first 2.5 mg is released when you go to bed to activate your natural sleep cycle. Then, throughout the night, the remaining 1.5 mg is gradually released to help you sleep longer and deeper.

That's not all. **SleepRefined®** includes...

- **Suntheanine**, a proprietary form of the amino acid L-Theanine, found in green tea. Its "quick release" dose helps calm your mind and prepares it for sleep.
- **Venetron**, a plant prized in Chinese medicine for calming the mind and soothing anxious nerves. It is also clinically shown to improve sleep quality in the middle of the night and later in the sleep cycle.

With **SleepRefined®**, you'll fall asleep faster... stay asleep longer... and wake up refreshed and energized, with no groggy feelings. Safe, natural, non-habit forming.

*"With **SleepRefined®**, I sleep better and do not have that sleepy feeling in the morning." — Barbara*

*"**SleepRefined®** works better than any sleep aids I've used!" — Bets*

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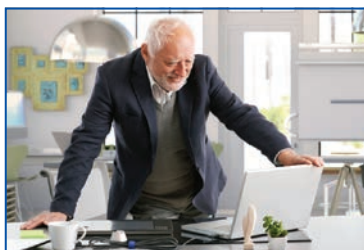
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Monday-Friday 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. CST • Saturday-Sunday 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. CST



# 101-Year-Olds Who Love Their Jobs

Last year, Walter Orthmann, a sales manager at a textile company in Brazil, set a Guinness World Record for the longest career at a single company: 84 years! At the same time, he celebrated his 100<sup>th</sup> birthday.



This year, while he continued to work at the same job, his co-workers threw him a party for his 101<sup>st</sup> birthday. And they posted a video of the celebration on Instagram ([https://www.instagram.com/p/CrONyw1gpx\\_/](https://www.instagram.com/p/CrONyw1gpx_/)).

Orthmann started working at the age of 15 to help support his family, which was a customary practice at the time. He was hired as a shipping assistant, then worked his way up to an executive position, which he continues to hold. He does some exercises every day and drives himself to and from work.

In Mason, Ohio, 101-year-old Jayne Burns works as a fabric cutter, four days per week, at a Joann Fabric and Crafts store. She's held the job for 26 years, since shortly after her husband died. And she plans to continue because she loves the interaction with co-workers and customers, and enjoys being active. She, too, has been on social media and drives herself to work: 20 minutes each way.

Burns has tried to retire but returned to work because she missed her co-workers and the routine. What's her top career advice? "It's important to find people who are friendly and kind," she recently told a CNBC reporter. She feels that her job takes attention away from aches and pains and has helped her live a longer, happier life.

These two centenarians live more than 5,000 miles

apart and they don't know each other. But they share similar attitudes toward their jobs: They work because they want to, not because they have to. They feel that their jobs and relationships with co-workers enrich their lives. They don't want to retire. And research shows that their outlook is good for health and happiness.

## The Longest Happiness Study

The Harvard Study of Adult Development,<sup>1</sup> which began in 1938 and is ongoing, is the longest study of happiness that's ever been done. During that time, there have been thousands of participants spanning four generations. These are some research highlights:

**Retirement:** When people retire, they don't usually miss doing the work. But they do miss the friendships they had with co-workers and others related to their career. Developing new friendships through hobbies and volunteer work may be good replacements. But some people find that going back to work, in some form, is ultimately what makes them happy.

**Social Fitness:** While diet, exercise, and good sleep are all necessary to stay in good health, "social fitness" is equally important. It means cultivating and maintaining relationships of different types, including those that invigorate you, those that help you weather tough spots and celebrate good times, and those that encourage you to learn new things and pursue your goals.

If you feel your social fitness could use a boost, think of someone you enjoy talking to, pick up the phone and give them a call. And perhaps get together for a cup of coffee or a walk.

## Music Beats Sleeping Pills

A recent research review has found that for mild to moderate insomnia, listening to music can work just as well as sleeping pills — without increasing risks of serious injury or death, as the drugs do.<sup>2</sup> Slow, relaxing music is

generally best, but slightly more upbeat tunes work better for some people.

Music can also mask ambient noise and can become part of an effective sleep routine, according to the researchers. You can let the



music keep playing or set a timer to turn it off at a certain time. Just make sure that the music player doesn't emit bright light that could keep you awake.

<sup>1</sup> Lifespan Research Foundation. Harvard Study of Adult Development. <https://www.lifespanresearch.org/> <sup>2</sup> Koskey, J. "Music for Sleep." The Carlat Report: Psychiatry. 2023 April/May;21(4&5):6 and 12.

# Barbecues and Beer

Beer is a traditional drink at barbecues, but if you're following my low-carb diet, it's among the drinks for which you need to count carbs — and limit them. (Soda, of course, is another.) But if you're enjoying a barbecue with friends on a hot day, who wants to count carbs?

You could skip the counting by sticking with no-carb plain or sparkling water, flavored and sweetened without sugar, such as a zero-carb soda with natural sweeteners. But maybe you'd rather grab a beer. Well, there's a smart way to do just that.

You may already know that light — or lite — beers can be low- or zero-carb. And some nonalcoholic beers contain zero carbs (see the chart below).

Nonalcoholic beer is something to consider, especially if you're a regular beer drinker. A recent study found that as we get older, we become more vulnerable to alcohol shrinking the brain, which impairs memory and overall mental function. While this is a significant risk for heavy drinkers, it's something we can all keep in mind.<sup>1</sup>

Nonalcoholic drinks are also a good option if you're a designated driver. And it's a trendy thing today to have interesting drinks without alcohol. Mocktails — cocktails without the booze — are gaining popularity, but they aren't likely to be low-carb.

Other easy ways to overload on carbs at barbecues include potato salad and corn. I'm not saying that you can't enjoy these. You can — but go easy on the portions. Fill



more of your plate with vegetables that aren't starchy.

I've often been asked if my diet includes cheat days, meaning eat anything on one day. It doesn't, because the "cheat" derails progress a lot, and it isn't worth it. If you can't stop eating potato salad, corn, or a dessert once you start, it's easier to skip it. You will feel much better the next day, and the next.

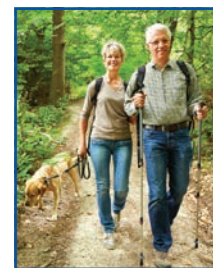
## Carbs in Drinks

When you're having fun at a barbecue, choosing low- or no-carb drinks makes it easier to avoid carb overload.

DRINKS	GRAMS OF CARBS PER CAN
Regular beer	12 to 25
Low-carb (lite) beer	0 to 5
Nonalcoholic beers	0 to 19
Wine coolers	13 to 37
Regular soda	39

If you're wondering which beer contains 0 grams of carbs, Bud Light Next is one. Partake IPA is a zero-carb nonalcoholic beer, and Hoplark 0.0 is a zero-carb beer-like drink made from hops. For a real cocktail with zero carbs, you can mix gin with a sugar-free tonic.

# 20 Minutes to a Better Mood



A recent study at the University of Limerick in Ireland looked at how much exercise older people need to lift their mood or ward off depression. And it's only 20 minutes of an activity such as brisk walking on five days a week, or an equivalent amount.<sup>2</sup>

The study looked at more than 4,000 men and women aged 50 and older. And it found that for sedentary people, a 20-minute, five-day regimen lowered the odds of major depression by 43 percent, as well as improving mood. More exercise produced greater benefits.

Exercise is the most effective way to increase your body's natural production of brain-derived neurotrophic factor (BDNF), a hormone that shuts down inflammation and repairs damage in the brain. This is one major reason why exercise outperforms drugs for depression.

If going outdoors for a walk isn't practical for you during summer heatwaves, you can walk in an air-conditioned mall, attend classes in a health club or community center, try online workout videos at home, or just march in place and do lunges and jumping jacks to get your heart pumping a bit.

If you like dancing, put on your favorite music and dance to your heart's content — by yourself or with a friend. The 20-minute time frame is a minimum, not a limit.

1 Sullivan, E. "Neuroimaging evidence for accelerated aging of brain morphology in alcohol use disorder." 46th Annual Scientific Meeting of the Research Society on Alcohol (RSA). 2023 June 25.

2 Laird, E., et al. "Physical Activity Dose and Depression in a Cohort of Older Adults in The Irish Longitudinal Study on Ageing." JAMA Netw Open. 2023 Jul 3;6(7):e2322489.



# Q&A

**Q: What do you think of the new Alzheimer's drug that the FDA recently approved?**

— Jerry T.

**A:** The brand name of the drug is Leqembi; lecanemab is the generic name. And while the drug manufacturer and some researchers are calling it a breakthrough, other doctors are questioning whether its benefits outweigh its risks.

Leqembi reduces levels of amyloid plaques in the brain, which are considered to be the cause of Alzheimer's disease. But there's a problem with this reasoning. Studies have shown that many people with such plaques do not have any signs of Alzheimer's and live healthy lives with no mental decline. And other Alzheimer's patients do not have significant plaques.

In fact, amyloid plaque is produced in the brain as a protective mechanism. The plaque is a response to something that the immune system views as a threat, such as toxic levels of mercury or the herpes type 1 virus, which can cause encephalitis and harm the brain.

Treatment in such cases could be a drug that enables mercury to be eliminated, or an antiviral drug for herpes. These could stop overproduction of brain plaque. And then, a plaque-reducing drug might be more helpful.

As an analogy, pus can develop when a wound becomes infected with bacteria. To treat the infection,

an antibiotic might be prescribed for oral or topical use to kill the bacteria causing the infection. The rationale behind Leqembi is somewhat like prescribing a drug to reduce the pus, without addressing the infectious bacteria.

With any drug, there are risks and benefits. The question is always: How does the potential benefit compare with the potential risk for a given patient?

Here's what the research so far has shown about Leqembi: It did reduce plaque. During an 18-month trial, it also somewhat slowed the decline in mental function among people with mild Alzheimer's disease, meaning individuals who didn't need help with daily life. However, it didn't improve memory or any other mental abilities.

The slowed decline equates to an Alzheimer's patient being able to function for three-to-five more months before needing assistance with basic, everyday tasks.

The risks include brain bleeds, brain swelling, aneurysms, or brain tumors. People with the APOE4 "Alzheimer's gene" and those taking a blood thinner are at increased risk for brain bleeds and swelling.

According to the FDA, adverse reactions to the drug can also include headache, confusion, dizziness, vision changes, and nausea. Less often, brain swelling can lead to seizures or other severe neurological symptoms.

Before prescribing Leqembi, doctors need to confirm the presence of brain plaques with an MRI that was done during the past year. The drug is given every two weeks by intravenous infusion, which takes about an hour for each treatment in a medical center.



To check for brain bleeds and swelling while a patient is on the drug regimen, the FDA requires that additional MRIs be done before the fifth, seventh, and fourteenth infusions. The cost of the drug itself — \$26,500 per year — may be covered by insurance, but the MRIs may not be.

I should also mention two earlier issues of this newsletter about Alzheimer's and how mild cognitive problems can be reversed: Volume 2, Issue 12, *The Guide to Lifelong Brain Health*, and Volume 1, Issue 1, *The Link Between Diabetes and Alzheimer's Disease*. These cover treatable causes of mental deterioration. I encourage you to take a look at both of these newsletter issues.

## 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.