

Dr. Marlene's NATURAL HEALTH CONNECTIONS

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Herbs and Spices for Better Health



Artificial and “natural” flavorings are food additives made in a lab. They have no nutritional value and may be harmful. But nature’s flavoring ingredients — herbs and spices — deliver both flavor and health benefits.

When we think of herbs, it’s often in a medicinal sense. This isn’t surprising, given that herbs have been used as medicine for thousands of years, but that isn’t the only way they can be of benefit.

Herbs also have a long history of being used to season food. Various combinations of herbs and spices give the traditional cuisines of different cultures their distinct aromas and tastes. And they enhance health.

Today, we don’t rely on herbs and spices nearly as much. More than half the food in the American diet is made with highly processed, industrial ingredients that are designed to make the food appealing and even addictive.

Unlike herbs and spices, these ingredients are not found in nature or in home kitchens, and they don’t enhance health. Instead, they can cause harm.

The names of processed industrial ingredients don’t sound like food.

Maltodextrin, for example, is widely used to sweeten, thicken, and improve the texture of foods, and to extend shelf life. It’s also a fat replacement in low-fat foods.

There’s no such thing as a maltodextrin plant. The food additive is a white powder made from plant starches that have been highly processed with high heat, enzymes, and acids.

After all that chemical manipulation, the characteristics of maltodextrin are quite different from the plant starches used to produce it. In nature, starch makes up one part of a plant, and others include fiber and an assortment of nutrients.

When we eat plants, we ingest the whole spectrum of its nutrients, which our bodies are designed to digest. And those natural ingredients

**IN THE NEXT ISSUE:
Herbal Supplements: How
To Get the Full Benefits**



nourish and enhance the way our bodies function. In the case of fiber, it helps with elimination of waste, including toxins.

In contrast, the isolated plant starches that have been highly processed and turned into maltodextrin don't work the same way in our bodies. Instead of nourishing, the food additive causes problems.

Studies show that maltodextrin upsets the balance of beneficial bacteria in the gut, which can

lead to gas, bloating, and chronic inflammatory conditions in the digestive system. Maltodextrin can also contribute to food intolerance, weight gain, asthma, and skin rashes or irritation. And it can cause a sharper spike in blood sugar than table sugar — which contributes to diabetes.

Maltodextrin is only one of thousands of industrial ingredients allowed in foods on supermarket shelves, in fast food, and in most takeout food. If you think I'm exaggerating, just read some ingredient lists on labels of foods that come in packages or check out lists of ingredients on company websites of popular restaurants.

I realize that there are exceptions. Unfortunately, they are in the minority so they are harder to find. And ready-to-eat or packaged foods without industrial food additives generally cost more.

The healthy alternative is to eat fresh food, prepared from scratch. This is challenging for anyone who is used to eating packaged, takeout, and typical restaurant food. Herbs and spices can make it easier — and more beneficial — to prepare and enjoy tasty fresh food.

Herbs or Spices?

Are herbs and spices the same thing? They're used the same way in preparing food, although technically speaking, their definitions are slightly different.

Herbs are usually leaves of plants and can be fresh or dried. Spices are usually made from other plant parts, such as roots, bark, seeds, and flowers, and they are typically dried and crushed. But the differences don't really matter in a kitchen.

A fresh basil leaf — an herb — looks very different from spices such as ground cinnamon or turmeric. But when the basil is dried and packaged in a shaker, it looks more like a spice and gets used in the same way.

This is also true with oregano, rosemary, and other dried herbs. They all share the spice shelf, and they can all be used to make delicious and nutritious dishes.

In a practical sense, you can just think of herbs and spices as natural, healthy seasonings. If it comes from a plant, all the forms are beneficial: fresh, dried, or ground. Dried herbs are convenient because they last much longer than fresh ones.

I'm talking about culinary uses of these seasonings because they can enhance health in more ways than one. Since they come from plants, they contain an array of plant compounds that enhance health in various ways.

I realize that not everyone loves cooking. However, if you use herbs and spices in preparing real food that didn't come from packages, such as fish, meat, and vegetables, it's easier to make healthy dishes that taste great.

To keep things simple, I'm going to put aside the technical difference in the definitions of herbs and spices. In the rest of this article, I'll use the word "spices" to describe dried herbs and spices that are used to season food.

Powerful Nutrients in Spices

The plants that we use as spices contain a lot of different compounds that can exert a beneficial effect. Granted, we eat only small quantities, but the nutrients in

Dr. Marlene's

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spices are concentrated, especially in dried forms.¹

One study analyzed the constituents in just six spices: rosemary, thyme, oregano, cinnamon, cumin, and bay. In these six alone, the study found 52 different polyphenols — one category of plant nutrients.²

Polyphenols, found in most plant foods, are antioxidant substances that plants produce to protect themselves against UV radiation and pathogens. Eating foods rich in polyphenols, especially over the long term, helps to protect us against heart disease, diabetes, osteoporosis, cancers, and neurological diseases.³

The Mediterranean diet is considered to be one of the world’s healthiest diets. It gained fame because residents of Mediterranean regions who ate their traditional diet had low rates of high blood pressure, heart disease, neurological disorders, diabetes, obesity, eye diseases, and cancer — conditions that cause so much disability in this country.

Although it’s famous for using high-quality, antioxidant-rich, extra virgin olive oil, the Mediterranean diet also contains a variety of spices. These include basil, bay leaf, fennel, cloves, cumin, ginger, turmeric, garlic, oregano, rosemary, mint, parsley, thyme, and sage. They are used in different combinations.⁴

Garlic and onion are somewhat unique in that they are vegetables that can be eaten raw or cooked. But they can also be used as spices — fresh or dried. Garlic powder and onion powder are easy to use to flavor many foods.

We eat spices in much smaller quantities than fruits and vegeta-

bles, which are major sources of antioxidants and many other plant nutrients. But the antioxidants and other beneficial components in spices are highly concentrated, so a little goes a long way.

Research Challenges

Today’s scientific studies typically measure results by giving participants a specific substance and measuring its effects on one or more health markers. This is the model for testing drugs. For example, studies of statin drugs have looked at how much a certain drug dosage will lower cholesterol.

This approach is difficult to follow in measuring benefits of spices in real-world settings. There

are so many variables, such as the effects of various food combinations, quantities and combinations of spices per serving, and each individual’s overall diet. Much of what we know about the characteristics and benefits of spices comes from investigations of plant chemistry and how specific constituents enhance health.

Nevertheless, some studies have been designed to mimic the way we eat spices in real life and to measure specific effects.

Benefits of Spices in Burgers

To study the effects of spices in real-world settings, scientists at the University of California, Los



Burger Study Spices

In a UCLA study that showed spiced burgers reduced oxidation, below is the spice blend created just for the study. Researchers measured each spice in grams, but since most of us don’t do that, I’ve also listed approximate amounts in teaspoons.

Ground spice per pound of ground beef	Grams	Approximate number of teaspoons
Cloves	0.9	0.5
Cinnamon	0.9	0.33
Oregano	5.4	3
Rosemary	0.9	0.75
Ginger	2.1	1
Black pepper	1.2	0.5
Paprika	6.1	3
Garlic powder	2.7	1

I don’t know how this recipe tastes in a burger as I haven’t tried it. I’m listing the spices used in the study to illustrate that spice blends can contain a lot of different ingredients, including very small quantities of some. If you do decide to try it, mix the spices in a half-cup of water, and then thoroughly mix the liquid with the ground beef before forming burger patties.

We season foods with spices to make them taste good, so the aim is to create a dish that is pleasing to you. If your family has spice recipes that you grew up with and liked, consider giving those a try. You can also buy many different spice blends.

Angeles (UCLA), carried out an interesting study using burgers. In a group of ten healthy adults, the researchers evaluated the effect of eating a burger with a blend of spices that are known to be good for our health.⁵

The spices were mixed into the ground beef before it was cooked, much like a recipe on a packet of seasoning would direct. For the contents of the spice blend, see the complete list of spices, and quantity of each spice, that researchers used, in *Burger Study Spices* on the previous page.

The quantity of spices per burger was comparable to popular recipes. In short, the burgers were prepared in a realistic way, like you might do in your kitchen. Other burgers were prepared without the spice blend, for comparison.

Researchers tested levels of oxidation to measure effects of the spiced burgers. Oxidation is a

normal byproduct of the process of staying alive, but too much oxidation has a harmful effect, much like internal rusting. A visible example of oxidation is an apple slice turning brown.

Levels of oxidation in our bodies are increased by toxins in our food and environment, UV radiation, stress, intense physical activity, smoking, and excessive drinking or drug use. Oxidation contributes to unhealthy inflammation, atherosclerosis, diabetes, and cancer development, and it speeds up aging.

At the start of the study, each participant was tested for levels of a marker of oxidation: MDA (short for malondialdehyde). Levels of oxidation were measured again after study participants ate a spiced burger, and a week later, after they ate a burger without the spice blend. These before-and-after tests showed that the spiced burger significantly

reduced oxidation, lowering levels of MDA by 49 percent.

Spices in Burgers Help Diabetics

Another study at UCLA tested the effects of burgers, with and without the same spice blend, in a group of 18 men with type 2 diabetes. After the spiced burger, levels of oxidation were significantly lower and peripheral blood vessels were more dilated, enabling better blood flow.⁶ Improved circulation is important for diabetics.

These studies looked at benefits of consuming spices only in one burger. Other research shows more benefits from ongoing use of spices in various foods.

4 Anti-Inflammatory Spices

Chronic inflammation underlies or worsens every health condition that plagues many people today, from type 2 diabetes and high blood pressure to heart disease and Alzheimer's disease. To investigate possible benefits of spices, researchers from the University of Florida, in Gainesville, and Pennsylvania State University, in University Park, joined forces to test the anti-inflammatory effects of various spices.

They came up with a method to approximate the way we eat spices in real life. Participants were asked to avoid spices in their food during the study. To test a spice, they were given a capsule that contained an amount of a dried spice that would realistically be eaten in a meal.

These capsules weren't dietary supplements; they were dried spices like those you would buy in a store. But for study purposes, they were put into capsules to

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.



Many Impacts of Spices on Health

Many studies have investigated the natural substances in different spices and have identified some specific therapeutic effects. Here's a snapshot of some of the conditions that spices help protect against:⁹

Health Conditions	Protective Spices
Inflammation	Rosemary, ginger, turmeric, clove
DNA damage	Basil, paprika, rosemary, ginger, turmeric, sage, and cumin
Cardiovascular diseases, including heart attack	Garlic, turmeric, ginger
Neurodegenerative diseases	Mint, onion
Diabetes	Cinnamon, bay leaf, fenugreek, mustard, pomegranate
Gastrointestinal diseases	Black pepper, bay leaf
Hypertension	Cardamom, cinnamon
Liver diseases	Caraway, cardamom
Endocrine diseases	Ginger, turmeric
Obesity	Saffron, turmeric
Bone diseases	Cloves
Oxidative damage to red blood cells	Fenugreek, garlic
Immune system malfunction	Turmeric
Renal diseases	Garlic, fennel flower, ginger
Ulcers	Ginger
Unhealthy growth of pigment cells	Turmeric
Elevated cortisol, the stress hormone	Lavender, rosemary
Alcohol abuse	Thyme, ginger
Gum disease	Licorice

Protection Against Cancer

Spices	Cancer Types
Turmeric	Rectal, oral, head, neck, and leukemia
Saffron	Skin, rectal, and liver
Garlic	Prostate and colon
Onion	Gastric
Rosemary	Breast and colon
Mustard	Rectal and bladder
Bay leaf	Melanoma

Mediterranean Diet Spices

A traditional way of eating associated with a healthier, longer life, the Mediterranean diet includes many spices such as the ones below. They are valuable sources of antioxidants and many other plant nutrients and may be used individually or in a variety of combinations.



Spicy Foods

People who regularly eat spicy foods have less heart disease, fewer respiratory diseases, and lower risk for cancer, and are less likely to die prematurely. The heat can come from fresh chili peppers or spices such as cayenne, crushed red pepper, chili powder, or hot paprika.¹⁰

How to Use This Information

I've given you a long list of spices, and even then, it's far from a complete list of all the spices that are used today. I'm not recommending that you try to add all of them to your diet — that certainly isn't realistic, or necessary. Rather, I want to convey that there are a lot of spices that can enhance health. The best way to benefit is to try different ones and eat a variety — often.

make it possible to control the amount eaten per day. Otherwise, the research would contain too many variables to draw useful conclusions about the spices.

For each spice tested, a group of people took a daily capsule of that spice for seven days. Their blood markers were measured before and after that week.

Where a spice is known to be more bioavailable when cooked and is used that way in real life, the capsule contained a heat-treated form of a dried spice. This simulated the way we eat spices in our food in the real world.

Four spices emerged as the best for reducing inflammation: clove, ginger, rosemary, and turmeric. In addition, the study found that paprika, rosemary, ginger, turmeric, sage, and cumin helped to reduce damage to DNA.⁷

Rosemary Enhances Memory and Alertness

Rosemary, one of the spices of the Mediterranean region, has a long history of use. And recent scientific research confirms some benefits that were observed long ago.⁸

The ancient Greeks used rosemary to enhance memory, among other things. A physician and pharmacist of that era, Pedanius Dioscorides, wrote this about rosemary: “the eating of its flower in a preserve comforts the brain, the heart and the stomach; sharpens understanding, restores lost memory, awakens the mind, and in sum is a healthy remedy for various cold ailments of the head and the stomach.”

In this century, researchers in Maryland tested the effects of different amounts of dried

rosemary spice and a placebo on mental function. There were 28 participants with an average age of 75. Rosemary spice was mixed into 16 ounces of low-sodium tomato juice, and tomato juice without the spice was used as a placebo.

Researchers performed cognitive tests up to six hours after participants drank the tomato juice. These tests showed that 750 mg of dried rosemary — about half a teaspoon — speeded up memory, meaning it reduced the time it takes to remember something. And after drinking the juice with rosemary, participants reported being more alert.

The study also tested larger amounts of rosemary in tomato juice, and found that they worsened memory and did not help alertness. About half a teaspoon — not more — was the beneficial amount.

You can add rosemary to salad dressing, or mix extra virgin olive oil, rosemary, salt, and pepper with vegetables and roast them in the oven. You can also sprinkle fresh or dried rosemary (and other spices) on chicken, meat, or fish.

Best Cooking Methods

Cooking can affect the antioxidant capacity of spices, for better or worse. And some studies have examined the effects.

One study looked at the impact of different cooking methods on cinnamon, cloves, fennel, ginger, lavender, parsley, rose, rosemary, sage, and thyme. Researchers found that simmering, stewing, or making soup with such spices increased antioxidant capacity, but grilling and stir frying decreased it. They also found that freezing fresh herbs, whole or chopped, preserved

antioxidant capacity.¹¹

Another study tested rosemary, sage, and thyme, and found that these produced anti-inflammatory effects. Benefits occurred with both cooked and uncooked food seasoned with one or more of these spices.¹²

How to Benefit from Spices

With so many different spices, it's possible to create many different flavors — something for everyone. If you find ways to use spices with dishes prepared from scratch and using only fresh foods, you can eat those dishes in place of less-healthy packaged or takeout foods. By doing this, you'll benefit two ways: By avoiding harm from highly processed industrial ingredients, and by getting therapeutic benefits from the spices and natural foods you eat.

Keep in mind some basics of healthy eating: Using spices doesn't change the need to moderate carbs and stick with healthy fats. In *Related to This Topic*, on page 7, I've listed some earlier newsletter issues that cover the basics of my low-carb diet, healthy fats, and the best ways to cook meat. I've also included some issues on food sensitivities to gluten and other foods. If you know that you can't tolerate a certain food and you continue to eat it, this will reduce, and may block, the benefits of eating healthy foods and spices.

When choosing spices, it's important to be good to your taste buds. If you enjoy the flavor of a healthy food, you will want to eat it on a regular basis. So, I suggest you look over the list of therapeutic spices, see if there are any that appeal to you, and start with those.

Where to Start

If you aren't familiar with many spices, look for packets of spice blends to season dishes you like. The blends usually come with directions, including the quantity of meat, fish, or vegetables the packet is designed to season.

Spice blends offer an easier way to start than buying a lot of different individual spices. After a while, you may want to try making your own blends.

For some combinations of spices that are used in the Mediterranean diet, look for "Italian Herbs," "Italian Seasoning," or "Herbes de Provence." Although we don't typically associate France with the traditional Mediterranean diet, Provence, in southeastern France, borders northwest Italy, and the native herbs and spices of both regions are similar.

Spice Shopping Tips

Be aware that some spice products can contain anti-caking agents and other additives, such as "natural

flavoring." I'm skeptical of a spice blend that needs added flavoring. After all, aren't the spices supposed to provide flavor? Try to find blends that contain a variety of spices without additives.

Long ingredient lists on food packages are usually not a good sign. However, when it comes to spice blends, a long list of herbs and spices can be a good thing.

Spices have a long shelf life (typically a year or more), but they eventually lose some flavor and potency. So, check "Best before" or "Best used by" dates on labels.

If you are experimenting with new spices, buy small quantities. For spices you know you will use often, larger containers provide the best value. It's also a good idea to do an annual spice check: Look for outdated spices in your cupboard and replace them.

A Final Word

To recap, start with spices to season dishes that you already like. For example, if

you like Italian food, try an Italian seasoning mix when cooking meat, fish, or vegetables. If you like tacos, choose a taco spice blend to mix with ground beef or fish. Then, experiment with other blends, and if you're adventurous, try some recipes that call for fresh herbs. For example, fresh basil goes well with tomatoes.


Spices don't have any carbs and will enhance the taste of foods in a low-carb diet, such as the one I recommend. They can take your meals to a new and improved level, in terms of enjoyment and health. Trying new spices will expand your taste horizons and give you an opportunity to benefit from a greater variety of nature's flavors.

Related to This Topic

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

Related Topic	Volume	Issue	Title
A Healthy Diet	7	1	My Low-Carb Diet — Fine-Tuned
Healthy Fats	4	11	Healthy Fats: Deadly Myths and Life-Saving Facts
Eating Meat	3	2	The Diabetic's Guide to Eating Meat
Food Sensitivities	7	6	Food Sensitivities: Are They Hurting You?
Gluten	2	3	How Gluten Can Cause More Than 30 Health Conditions
Inflammation	4	4	How to Calm Harmful Inflammation

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



1 Opara, E., et al. "Culinary herbs and spices: their bioactive properties, the contribution of polyphenols and the challenges in deducing their true health benefits." *Int J Mol Sci.* 2014 Oct 22;15(10):19183-202.

2 Vallverdú-Queralt, A., et al. "A comprehensive study on the phenolic profile of widely used culinary herbs and spices: rosemary, thyme, oregano, cinnamon, cumin and bay." *Food Chem.* 2014 Jul 1;154:299-307.

3 Pandey, K.B., et al. "Plant polyphenols as dietary antioxidants in human health and disease." *Oxid Med Cell Longev.* 2009 Nov-Dec;2(5):270-278.

4 Naureen, Z., et al. "Foods of the Mediterranean diet: garlic and Mediterranean legumes." *J Prev Med Hyg.* 2022 Oct 17;63(2 Suppl 3):E12-E20.

5 Li, Z., et al. "Antioxidant-rich spice added to hamburger meat during cooking results in reduced meat, plasma, and urine malondialdehyde concentrations." *Am J Clin Nutr.* 2010 May;91(5):1180-4.

6 Li, Z., et al. "Decrease of postprandial endothelial dysfunction by spice mix added to high-fat hamburger meat in men with Type 2 diabetes mellitus." *Diabet Med.* 2013 May;30(5):590-5.

7 Percival, S.S., et al. "Bioavailability of herbs and spices in humans as determined by ex vivo inflammatory suppression and DNA strand breaks." *J Am Coll Nutr.* 2012 Aug;31(4):288-94.

8 Pengelly, A., et al. "Short-term study on the effects of rosemary on cognitive function in an elderly population." *J Med Food.* 2012 Jan;15(1):10-7.

9 Yashin, A., et al. "Antioxidant Activity of Spices and Their Impact on Human Health: A Review." *Antioxidants (Basel).* 2017 Sep 15;6(3):70.

10 Jiang, T.A. "Health Benefits of Culinary Herbs and Spices." *J AOAC Int.* 2019 Mar 1;102(2):395-411.

11 Chohan, M., et al. "Determination of the antioxidant capacity of culinary herbs subjected to various cooking and storage processes using the ABTS(•+) radical cation assay." *Plant Foods Hum Nutr.* 2008 Jun;63(2):47-52.

12 Opara, E., et al. "Culinary herbs and spices: their bioactive properties, the contribution of polyphenols and the challenges in deducing their true health benefits." *Int J Mol Sci.* 2014 Oct 22;15(10):19183-202.

Resisting Holiday Temptations

The holiday season is prime time for high-carb, sugary treats that can thwart your best efforts to eat a healthy diet. While it's possible to enjoy some of these, it takes a bit of planning to do so in a healthy way.

The key thing to keep in mind is that high peaks in blood sugar lead to cravings, especially for high-carb foods, and they make it difficult to avoid overindulging. One way to prevent this is to make sure that you're sticking with a low-carb diet on a daily basis and having holiday treats only on special occasions.

For example, if you have a tradition of making certain holiday desserts for family gatherings, make enough for the get-together but don't keep extras around the house. Enjoy a little at the gathering, but then

continue with your low-carb diet the rest of the time.

Here's another tip: Before going to an event where there are many treats, be extra vigilant in eating only low-carb foods — with a little healthy fat — before you go. That way, you will start with stable blood sugar, and you have more of a carb “budget” to spend at the event.

Once there, take an inventory of the high-carb options and decide which one, or ones, you really want to eat. Enjoy a little of whatever you choose. Don't feel obligated to eat every side dish and dessert. And aside from the food, take time to enjoy the company of family and friends.



Tourists May Age Slower

Being a tourist can enhance health in various ways that add up to slower aging, so to speak.



That's the conclusion of research at Edith Cowan University in Australia.¹ Travel for pleasure can reduce stress; new surroundings can boost mood; there are often opportunities

to walk, hike, bike, or be physically active in some other way; and you might enjoy meeting people.

However, there's an opposite effect if a trip is plagued with mishaps — like the Griswold family experience in the classic 1983 *Vacation* movie with Chevy Chase.

Personally, I'm well aware, as you might be, that a pleasant trip makes you feel good, whereas an

unpleasant trip leaves you in need of a vacation when you get home. The research is not groundbreaking. But it gets attention, and it's a good reminder that there are more ways than one to enhance your health.

November can be a good time to visit places outside of peak tourist season, with less crowding for a lower cost. However, I'd steer clear of flying right around Thanksgiving weekend — typically the busiest in the whole year.

Music Relieves Pain, Stress, and More

A new study shows that listening to music after surgery reduces pain and anxiety and can aid in recovery. That's the finding of a review of dozens of earlier studies by researchers at the California Northstate University College of Medicine at Elk Grove.²

Patients who listened to music experienced improved circulation, which brings more oxygen and nutrients to tissues. They also used less than half the amount of morphine, compared to patients who did not listen to music on the first day after surgery.

Music had a calming effect, and tests showed that it

lowered levels of cortisol, the stress hormone. Other research has found that in life in general, listening to music can lower stress, reduce pain, boost energy, enhance mood and motivation, help to keep the mind sharp, and relieve mild to moderate insomnia just as well as sleeping pills.

The best type of music to listen to depends on your preference. If you are looking for stress relief, choose the type of music that relaxes you. If you're looking for an energy boost or motivation, choose music that has that effect on you.

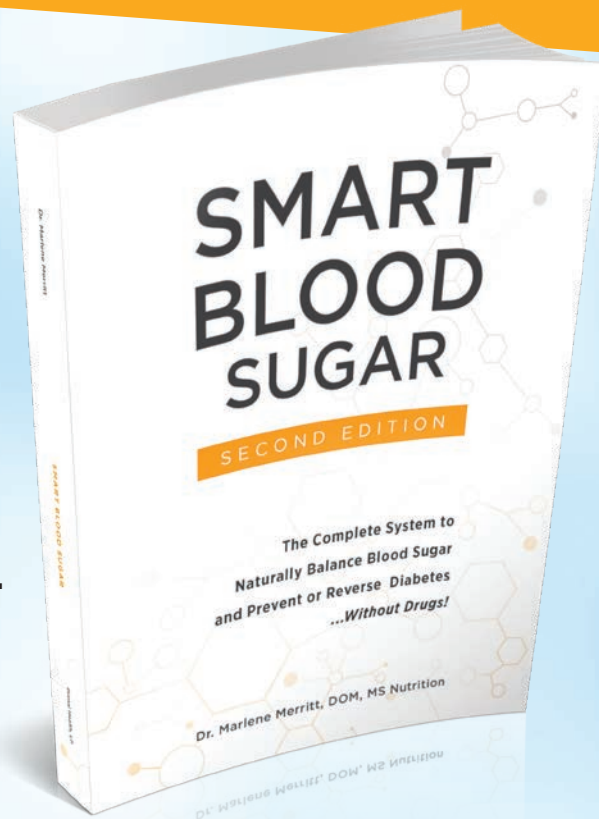
¹ Hu, F., et al. “The Principle of Entropy Increase: A Novel View of How Tourism Influences Human Health.” *Journal of Travel Research*, 2024; DOI: 10.1177/00472875241269892 ² Frezza, E., et al. “Listening to Music After Surgery Lowers Pain and Anxiety.” Presented at the American College of Surgeons (ACS) Clinical Congress in San Francisco. October 19–22, 2024.

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



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

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



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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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Why Plain Soap Is Best

Frequent hand-washing is a basic way to reduce your risk



of catching colds, flu, Covid-19, and any other illnesses that are going around during the winter season. And the kind of soap you use makes a difference.

Soaps labeled “antimicrobial” or “antiseptic” might seem like the best choice. After all, they are designed to kill bacteria. But this is not the case.

Antibacterial soaps contain added chemicals to kill harmful bacteria. However, they also kill beneficial bacteria that are naturally present on the surface of our skin. The beneficial bacteria help to protect skin against harmful ones and help the immune system to resist and fight infections.

According to the FDA,¹ antibacterial soaps could do more

harm than good. Longer-term use of antibacterial soaps can make bacteria resistant to the bug-killing chemicals, contributing to antibiotic-resistance when you really need antibiotics to work to treat an infection.

In addition, harsh chemicals in soaps may irritate the skin. And that makes you not want to wash your hands as often.

Why Plain Soap Works

The reason soap works is that soap lather and scrubbing lifts harmful bacteria off the skin, so those bacteria can be washed away when you rinse your hands. So, it’s important to lather up and scrub properly:

- Wet your hands and create a lather with plain soap. Make sure to lather the back of your hands, between fingers, and under the nails.

- Scrub for at least 20 seconds: the time it takes to hum the “Happy Birthday” song twice.
- Rinse your hands well under running water, then dry.

You may be wondering why I’m explaining this, as it’s so elementary. We often overlook very simple things that can help us. Do you wash your hands, as I’ve described above, after you come back from shopping or other outings? Does everyone else in your household? Many people don’t.

Protecting Your Skin

Whether you prefer liquid or bar soap, products without chemical scents are least likely to irritate. If you prefer a scented product, look for one with essential oils.

To prevent dry skin, avoid hot water and use a natural, unscented moisturizer. Natural moisturizing ingredients include jojoba oil, coconut oil, shea butter, aloe vera, avocado oil, and olive oil.

Fish Oil Reduces Aggression

Children and adults of all ages who take fish oil supplements are less likely to act in an aggressive way, according to a study at the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia. The conclusion was based on an analysis of decades of earlier research.²

Researchers combed data from 28 clinical trials with a total of nearly 4,000 participants, including those living in normal communities, clinics, and prisons. Those who took fish oil were consistently less likely to react aggressively to things other people did or said. Some, but not all research also showed that the supplements reduced the odds of individuals impulsively starting to act aggressively, without provocation.

Other studies suggest that fish oil may also reduce

other types of antisocial behavior. And fish consumption in different countries has been associated with lower homicide rates.

If you don’t eat omega-3-rich fish — such as salmon, sardines, herring, or mackerel — at least two or three times per week, a fish oil supplement is a good idea. It will be more effective if you also eat fewer inflammatory oils, such as canola, corn, soy, sunflower, and cottonseed oils, which are found in most processed food.

I recommend checking fish oil supplements for freshness. Break open a capsule and smell the contents. The oil should not have any fishy odor. If it does, it’s rancid — don’t use it. Return it to the store and choose a different brand.

1 U.S. Food & Drug Administration. “Skip the Antibacterial Soap; Use Plain Soap and Water.” <https://www.fda.gov/consumers/consumer-updates/skip-antibacterial-soap-use-plain-soap-and-water>
2 Raine, A., et al. “Omega-3 supplementation reduces aggressive behavior: A meta-analytic review of randomized controlled trials.” *Aggress Violent Behav.* 2024 Sep-Oct;78:101956.

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: I had a B12 blood test, and my doctor said my level was high. Is it safe for me to take a supplement that contains B12? — *Carol T.*

A: Vitamin B12 isn't toxic, and there is no set upper limit for a safe amount to take. In a healthy adult, several years' worth of B12 is stored and used as needed. Taking more than your body needs doesn't cause a problem.

I don't know what level the doctor considered "high." For most nutrients, what is defined as "normal" is a range based on average levels among tests done by a given lab. And "normal" can vary somewhat from one lab to another.

This so-called normal is not the same as an optimal level. Consider this: We are a nation in which many people suffer from diseases that are mostly preventable with a healthy diet and lifestyle, such as diabetes and heart disease. So, the average levels of nutrients are based on a population whose state of health is certainly not one to which to aspire.

My nutritional approach seeks to help people achieve optimal health, which is much better than average. Here's the difference in the case of B12: A blood level below 200 or 250 pg/mL is considered low in conventional medical terms. However, an optimal level is 500 pg/mL, so I would consider levels under that as low.

A level above 900 pg/mL is generally considered high. In and of itself, this doesn't mean that taking

B12 would be dangerous, as your body would ignore the excess.

However, an unusually high level of B12 could be an indicator that something else is not functioning properly. For example, it could be that B12 is not being utilized properly in the body. Possible reasons for this vary for each individual.

Low B12 can lead to various symptoms, such as:

- Irrational anger
- Confusion
- Depression
- A fast heartbeat
- Numbness and tingling in the hands and feet
- Memory issues
- Balance problems
- A sore mouth or tongue



In severe cases, B12 deficiency can be mistaken for dementia — which resolves with enough B12.

Q: I like cereal for breakfast but avoid it because of the carbs. I can't tolerate eggs. What low-carb foods can I eat for breakfast? — *Armand J.*

A: You'll be happy to hear that there is a type of cereal that is low-carb: grain-free keto granola. There are a few different brands. They are made with nuts, seeds, and some healthy fat.

Some contain a bit of sugar or fruit for sweetness, while others are sweetened with sugar alternatives such as erythritol or monk fruit. That said, I wouldn't limit my breakfasts to keto cereal, or to any other food, for that matter.

Cereal and eggs are viewed as

traditional breakfast foods, but breakfast can consist of virtually any food. Traditionally, the French used to reheat their soup course from the night before as a common breakfast. Both the Japanese and the Scots have eaten fish for breakfast. Lox is one of our traditions, but you can eat any fish for breakfast.

Eating leftovers from yesterday's dinner, including vegetables, can seem strange. But it's a nutritious, low-carb option. You might want to combine a leftover protein dish with some fresh spinach, wilted in a frying pan with some butter or ghee. And maybe add some tomatoes or other vegetables.

We've grown up with preconceived ideas of breakfast, but there isn't any natural law that says you must stick with cereal or bacon and eggs. Another option some of my patients like is plain Greek yogurt with berries. I don't recommend flavored yogurts because they are high in sugar. A protein shake is another option. I encourage you to experiment and find your own favorites.

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.