

Dr. Marlene's NATURAL HEALTH CONNECTIONS

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Herbal Supplements: How to Get the Full Benefits

How to use herbs to help relieve stress, calm chronic inflammation, lower unhealthy levels of blood sugar, lower blood pressure, and help protect yourself against cold and flu.



Last month, I covered spices: herbs used to flavor food. Spices can deliver some valuable health benefits, especially if you use them to turn fresh foods into delicious dishes instead of relying on packaged or take-out food that contains chemical food additives. If you haven't already, I encourage you to read last month's newsletter and get creative with spices in your own kitchen.

This month, I want to look at some key herbs in supplements. Before I delve into some specific herbs, I want to address some important points about how to get the most benefit.

Herbal supplements can be very helpful, but they work best with a nutritious diet, some exercise, and adequate sleep. In *Related to This Topic* on page 7, I've listed some earlier newsletter issues that address these topics. I've also included earlier issues about food sensitivities, which can trigger or contribute to

chronic inflammation and prevent you from experiencing the full benefits of an herbal supplement.

Consistency is another key point. Almost all the herbs I describe in this issue work best when they are taken consistently over the longer term (Andrographis is the exception).

Historically, cultures that relied on herbal medicine — long before pharmaceuticals were invented — were much more patient than we are. Today, we look for instant results. But if you decide to take an herb or herbal formula with a specific health goal in mind, take the supplement daily. A single dose, or a few days' use, won't give you the full benefits. And in case you're wondering, a single huge dose can't produce the full effects either, so there's no substitute for consistency.

I also want you to have a good understanding of how to shop for

IN THE NEXT ISSUE:
The Latest on Weight Loss

good-quality herbs, as these will deliver maximum benefits.

Herbal Quality

All dietary supplements are regulated in the United States. But the rules regarding herbs are not stringent enough to ensure high quality in every product. With vitamins and minerals, the process is simpler: Each one is a specific nutrient, often produced in a lab, and its potency can easily be measured. Herbs are more complicated.

Herbs come from plants. Like all plants, a single herb contains many substances; any fruit or vegetable does, too. That's the nature of the plant kingdom.

For medicinal purposes, research has identified active ingredients in different herbs. These active ingredients are largely responsible for the herb's therapeutic effects, although other components play a supporting role.

You could think of this as a singer with a back-up band. For a good performance, there needs to be a good balance between the two. You don't want the star to be drowned out by the back-up singers and musicians, or vice versa. You want a pleasant, captivating harmony between those elements.

With herbs, good quality means that a product contains a consistent, therapeutic amount of the "star" along with the plant's natural supporting players. Good-quality herbs often state, in the Supplement Facts on labels, the percentage or amount of the active ingredient in that product.

Even then, there can be discrepancies from one batch to another. Because plants are living things, each harvest differs somewhat in its

exact chemical composition. Herbal practitioners have dealt with this problem throughout the ages.

All this may seem daunting. However, some herbs come in patented forms, and these can make the selection process much easier. Let me explain why.

Patented Herbal Ingredients

Patented herbal ingredients are specially formulated to contain consistent, beneficial amounts of the active components of an herb. Equally important, they have been tested in human trials and have been shown to have a therapeutic effect.

In short, the manufacturers of patented herbal ingredients have done the work of identifying quality for you. This adds up to reliable, high-quality herbal supplements.

For these reasons, I recommend choosing patented forms of herbs where possible. And for each herb I describe below, I've included some names of patented forms when these are available. There are many patented ingredients, and more are continually being introduced. This makes it impossible to list them all, but there are ways to spot them on labels. (See *How To Spot Patented Herbal Ingredients* below.)

Not every herb is available in

How To Spot Patented Herbal Ingredients

Names of patented herbal ingredients may or may not be listed on the front of a product. However, they should be stated in the Supplement Facts section of a label, on the back of a package or bottle. If you're shopping online, websites should have Supplement Facts on each product page, as an image or a list of ingredients and quantities of each.

Here are some examples of how patented forms of herbs may be listed. Both herbs below help to lower blood sugar.

Name of herb: *Gymnema Sylvestre*

Name of patented form: GS4 Plus

Different ways it may be listed in Supplement Facts:

- GS4 Plus® *Gymnema sylvestre* Extract
- *Gymnema sylvestre* leaf extract (GS4 Plus®)

Name of herb: *Lagerstroemia speciosa*, Banaba extract, or Banaba leaf extract

Name of patented form: GlucoHelp

Different ways it may be listed in Supplement Facts:

- *Lagerstroemia speciosa* leaf extract (GlucoHelp™)
- GlucoHelp™ Banaba Extract (*Lagerstroemia speciosa*) (leaves)

As you can see the exact wording can differ somewhat, which can be confusing. But one thing is consistent: the name of a patented herb is followed by either one of these symbols:

- ™ stands for trademark
- ® means that a trademark has been registered

Either one of these symbols indicates that the herbal ingredient is a patented form.



a patented form, but many are. When you have the option of choosing a single-ingredient herbal supplement, or a formula with one or more patented ingredients, I highly recommend choosing those.

Products with patented herbal ingredients may come with a higher price tag, because they require more precision and advanced technology to produce high-quality products that have been proven to be effective. But the old adage, “You get what you pay for,” definitely applies in this case.

Herbs, Drugs, and Doctors

Western medicine doesn’t typically include using herbs to heal or prevent health conditions, and doctors aren’t trained in the use of herbs. Consequently, they may well caution patients against taking herbs while they are taking medications. This may be based on a lack of data about an herb-drug combination, or lack of knowledge on the part of the doctor, rather than hard evidence that an herb could harm.

In fact, because of this lack of understanding, there tends to be a sort of alarmist reaction in many doctors’ offices, conveying the message that you shouldn’t take any herbs whatsoever. This is not accurate. In some cultures — China, for example — herbs are used along with drugs all the time. But in those situations, practitioners have a background of understanding how these substances can work together.

Bottom line, if you are taking one or more medications and want to start taking herbs, it doesn’t mean that herbs are taboo. However, it’s important to make sure the two would get along.

Herbs are not always as strong

as drugs, often don’t produce side effects, and serious reactions are rare. But they do produce beneficial effects in the human body. If you are taking a medication and want to take an herb, the best way to check is with a health professional who understands both drugs and herbs.

Unfortunately, such health practitioners are hard to come by, so I recommend doing some research on your own and then discussing it with your doctor. Let’s say you’re taking a prescription drug and want to take an herb. You want to know what the herb does and what the drug does.

If both the herb and the drug act in a similar way, then the two together will create a bigger effect than either one alone. The effects of the herb may allow your doctor to reduce your drug dosage or switch you to a milder drug. However, do not just stop taking the drug; consult your doctor.

There’s another essential step: Pay attention. By this, I mean monitor markers that indicate what’s happening in your body. If you’re taking a drug or drugs to lower blood sugar, make sure to consistently monitor and record your levels before and after you start taking an herb. Do the same with blood pressure drugs and herbs.

Be aware that the effects of an herb may not kick in right away, so it’s always vital to keep track of your health markers.

If you start taking an herb, do so consistently, and track and share your markers, such as blood sugar or blood pressure, with your doctor. This way, both you and your doctor can see what’s happening, and the data helps your doctor to see if your medication should be

adjusted. Any reduction of a medication should always be done with your doctor.

In other cases, the benefit of an herb you want to take may be completely unrelated to the reason you’re taking a medication. However, the herb could affect the way the drug is metabolized. For example, St. John’s wort, taken for depression, interacts with many medications, increasing the effects of some and decreasing the effects of others. The results can be dangerous.

Dr. Marlene’s NATURAL HEALTH CONNECTIONS

Editorial Director Vera Tweed
Art Director Jody Levitan
Copy Editor James Naples

For subscriptions and customer service inquiries:
877-300-7849
support@primalhealthlp.com

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Primal Health, LP
3100 Technology Drive, Suite 200, Plano, Texas 75074

I must include a word of warning: Not all herbs and drugs get along, and some herb-drug interactions can be serious and need to be avoided. That said, there are many situations where herbs can be very helpful, even if you take medications.

One thing to keep in mind if your doctor or pharmacist is alarmed at the idea of you taking

an herb: Ask if the potential interaction is well documented or if it's theoretical or based on a rare case history. And aim to arrive at a solution from there.

So far, I've covered some basics to keep in mind when choosing and using herbal supplements. Now, it's time to look at some specific herbs. I've chosen some that are supported by good evidence and

address common situations: stress, inflammation, blood sugar, blood pressure, and common seasonal respiratory illnesses.

Ashwagandha

Stress underlies or contributes to poor health in many ways, from lack of energy, food cravings, and weight gain to diabetes, elevated blood pressure, heart disease, and mental decline. Ashwagandha is an herb that can reduce the harmful effects of stress and help you feel and function better.

Ashwagandha has been widely used for thousands of years in Ayurvedic medicine, which takes a different approach from Western medicine. Instead of treating symptoms, Ayurveda restores balance in the systems that underlie symptoms of unwellness.

Herbs that have such a balancing effect, such as ashwagandha, are called “adaptogens,” as they help an individual to adapt and regain balance when faced with various stressors of life. Ashwagandha can have a calming or revitalizing effect, depending on what an individual needs at the time. In addition to traditional use, studies have shown that the herb does, indeed, work this way.

Levels of cortisol, the fight-or-flight hormone, are an objective marker of stress. Cortisol is essential for mustering our internal resources in the face of danger, helping us overcome an immediate threat. However, today's stressful lifestyles — traffic, overbooked schedules, too much bad news, and such — often lead to chronically elevated levels of cortisol, which impairs normal function and is harmful. Ashwagandha can help to

Where To Find Information About Herb-Drug Interactions

The many drug interaction checkers online typically provide information only on interactions between different drugs, not between drugs and herbs. However, there's one that does include herbs: <https://reference.medscape.com/drug-interactionchecker>

In the blank box, type the name of a drug and hit “return” on your keyboard. Next, delete the name of the drug, type the name of an herb and hit “return.” You can add more names of drugs and supplements, if you like.

As an example, here's a result of my check on *Gymnema sylvestre* and metformin:

The screenshot shows the 'Drug Interaction Checker' interface. At the top, there's a search bar with the text 'Enter a drug, OTC or herbal supplement:' and a 'Print' button. Below the search bar, a red box indicates '1 Interaction Found'. On the left, under 'Patient Regimen', there are two entries: 'metformin' and 'gymnema' (with a sub-entry 'Gymnema sylvestre'). On the right, under 'Minor', the text reads: 'gymnema + metformin', 'gymnema increases effects of metformin by pharmacodynamic synergism.', and 'Minor/Significance Unknown.'

You may well wonder what “pharmacodynamic synergism” means. “Pharmacodynamic” basically means what a drug does to the human body. “Synergism,” as used here, means that when the two substances are combined, they produce a greater effect than either one alone.

We know that both gymnema and metformin lower blood sugar. “Pharmacodynamic synergism” is a fancy way of saying that if you take both gymnema and metformin, the combination will lower blood sugar more than either one by itself.

If you use this or any other website to check for drug-herb interactions, be sure to also check with your doctor or pharmacist.

correct the situation.

One review of studies examined data on 673 people. These studies lasted anywhere from 30 to 112 days. They showed that ashwagandha supplements effectively reduced feelings of stress, and tests of cortisol levels showed that the herb lowered levels of the stress hormone by up to 32 percent. There were no significant adverse effects.¹

Other studies have looked at ashwagandha's effect on anxiety as well as stress. A team of researchers from SUNY Upstate Medical University in Syracuse, N. Y., and the Yale School of Public Health in New Haven, Conn., reviewed human studies with a total of more than 400 people. They found that, compared to anti-anxiety medications, ashwagandha could work just as well. But unlike the drugs, the herb did not lead to addiction or other harmful side effects.²

Other research has examined how the stress-reducing effects of ashwagandha influence various aspects of health. Researchers found that the herb can improve sleep, energy, endurance, heart function, hormonal balance, and memory, and reduce joint pain, chronic inflammation, and belly fat. Among people who can't control their appetite, it can help to reduce cravings.³

Although strengths of different ashwagandha products vary, specific dosages of patented forms of the herb have been tested for efficacy. One such patented form is KSM-66: 300 mg, twice daily. Another is Sensoril, with 500 mg, twice daily, being the most tested dosage. For joint pain and inflammation, 150 mg to 250 mg of Sensoril, twice daily, is another tested dosage.

Turmeric Root Extract

Turmeric is a plant that has been used for thousands of years in two ways: as a spice to flavor food and as medicine for a variety of ailments. In the last few decades, science has validated many benefits of turmeric, with more than 3,000 published articles.⁴

Reducing chronic inflammation, which underlies heart disease, diabetes, dementia, arthritis, and other ills, is one of the chief mechanisms of turmeric. The anti-inflammatory effect has been validated in studies that measured C-reactive protein levels in participants' blood, a standard medical marker of chronic inflammation. This therapeutic result was validated when bioavailable forms of turmeric supplements were taken daily for at least four weeks.⁵

“Bioavailable” — meaning well absorbed — is a vital point here. The turmeric root contains curcumin, which is an active

ingredient that produces the anti-inflammatory effect and other benefits. However, curcumin is well known to be poorly absorbed if it is not properly formulated.

Effective turmeric supplements are produced in ways that enable curcumin to be easily absorbed. These use patented manufacturing technology to produce effective curcumin extracts that have been validated in studies.

I know, I already discussed patented forms of herbs earlier in this article, but I'm emphasizing the point here because it's especially important with turmeric and curcumin. Some patented forms include Longvida, Theracurmin, and Meriva. Now, let's look at some other benefits.

A study of 240 people at high risk for type 2 diabetes compared a turmeric supplement with a placebo, each taken for nine months. None of those who took a turmeric

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.



supplement developed diabetes, and their risk was reduced. But among those who took a placebo, 16 percent developed diabetes.⁶

For mental function, one study compared a turmeric supplement and placebo among 60 healthy people between the ages of 60 and 85. One hour after taking the turmeric supplement, there were significant improvements in memory and attention span. When the supplement was taken for four weeks, there was more improvement in memory and attention as well as improvement in mood and reduction of total and (“bad”) LDL cholesterol.

The supplement in this study was Longvida. Participants took 400 mg, once daily.⁷

Other studies have found that a bioavailable form of turmeric root extract can help to relieve pain from osteoarthritis or rheumatoid arthritis, dilate blood vessels and control blood pressure, reduce risk for heart disease, improve digestion, reduce the incidence of seasonal allergies, and help to reduce risk for cancer.

Herbs for Healthy Blood Sugar

The three herbs below have been proven to lower blood sugar. Each one of these works in a somewhat different way, and they can be taken together.

Gymnema Sylvestre: Used for thousands of years to treat diabetes, the herb has now been proven to lower blood sugar in diabetics and in people whose blood sugar is elevated but not high enough to be classified as diabetes.

Studies of one patented form, called GS4, began more than

30 years ago. These found that insulin-dependent type 2 diabetics, and those taking oral diabetes drugs, could reduce their need for these by taking 400 mg of GS4 daily for 10 to 18 months.^{8,9}

Banaba Leaf Extract (*Lagerstroemia speciosa*):

The first study of the herb was published in 1940, and more studies have followed. Research shows that banaba lowers unhealthy levels of blood sugar, blood pressure, cholesterol, and triglycerides, and it is beneficial for people both with and without type 2 diabetes.¹⁰

Studies of a patented form, called GlucoHelp, found that it improves internal processes of metabolizing glucose. And it will not drive blood sugar too low.

White Mulberry Leaf Extract:

Studies have found that the herb reduces sharp, unhealthy spikes in blood sugar after eating.¹¹ Such spikes are followed by blood-sugar crashes that cause energy sags, brain fog, and food cravings. Left untamed, a rollercoaster pattern of blood sugar eventually leads to chronically high levels and, likely, diabetes.

Research has also shown that taking 400 mg of the extract right before or with a meal will prevent some of the carbs you eat from being digested, reducing their impact on blood sugar. If you take white mulberry leaf extract in a formula, you can take the formula just before or with a meal.¹²

For more details on how these herbs work, and essential nutrients and lifestyle habits for healthy blood sugar, I encourage you to check out an earlier issue of this

newsletter, listed in *Related to This Topic*, on the next page.

Herbs for Healthy Blood Pressure

Some prescription and over-the-counter medications can raise blood pressure, and this can be overlooked. In *Related to This Topic*, on the next page, I’ve listed an earlier article about this.

To improve the health of blood vessels and lower blood pressure, these are two helpful herbs:

Grape Seed Extract: Studies have found that the herb helps to prevent hypertension and to lower blood pressure that has already become elevated.¹³ It works by reducing what researchers call “viscosity,” meaning stickiness that makes it harder for blood to flow. This improves circulation.

In addition, a study of a patented form of the herb, called Enovita, found another benefit: Taking 300 mg daily of Enovita helped to relieve stress in addition to lowering blood pressure.¹⁴ Since stress often underlies hypertension, this is a useful combination of effects.

Green Tea Extract: Green tea is one of my favorite beverages, and I highly recommend it. Tea and green tea extract in supplements have both been shown to help lower blood pressure and reduce the occurrence of heart disease.¹⁵

As with blood sugar, a low-carb diet is an essential step for healthy blood pressure. In *Related to This Topic*, on the next page, I’ve listed some earlier issues of this newsletter that provide more details on diet, lifestyle, herbs, and other supplements. If you’re

struggling with blood pressure, I suggest you check those out.

Echinacea and Andrographis

These are especially important during the winter cold and flu season. There’s a misconception that echinacea should be taken only when you start to feel the symptoms of a respiratory illness. But to fully benefit, you need to be taking it daily, before you get sick.

It takes a couple of weeks for echinacea to build up in your system and enhance your natural defense system,¹⁶ so you want to be taking two servings daily throughout the winter and any other time when you’re likely to get exposed to a bug — in airports and air-

planes, for example.

The trick is to use an effective echinacea supplement. A tincture should make your tongue tingle; if it doesn’t, get a different product. If you prefer pills, break open a capsule and touch the contents to your tongue; if it doesn’t tingle, get another product.

Andrographis is an herb to take at the first sign of symptoms — the sooner the better. Keep it on hand for use as needed.

A Final Word

Once you decide to take an herb or herbal formula, the benefits come from taking it daily. Tinctures are absorbed very quickly, especially if taken on an empty stomach. But if this upsets

your stomach, take herbs with food. Most tinctures are made with alcohol. If you avoid all alcohol, look for tinctures made with glycerin or choose pills.

With any regimen of supplements, what matters is what works for you. That’s when you’re more likely to make the supplements part of your daily routine. And that’s the way to experience better health.

Related to This Topic

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

Related Topic	Volume	Issue	Title
Spices	7	11	Herbs and Spices for Better Health
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?
Inflammation	4	4	How to Calm Harmful Inflammation
Blood Sugar and Type 2 Diabetes	5	2	How to Use Supplements to Prevent and Reverse Type 2 Diabetes
Blood Pressure	5	1	Drugs That Raise Blood Pressure (page 9)
Blood Pressure Basics	1	2	The Top 3 Killer Myths about Blood Pressure
Blood Pressure Supplements	4	6	Top Blood Pressure Supplements and How to Use Them
Sleep	2	2	The 10-Minute Sleep Solution
Exercise	1	7	The Secret to Effective Aerobic Exercise (page 7)

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



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Kindness Reaps Healthy Rewards

Kindness and generosity have been part of holiday traditions at least since Charles Dickens' *A Christmas Carol* was published in 1843, and Scrooge was redeemed by being generous to the poor. It's been a popular story ever since, with the theme depicted in over a dozen Christmas movies.

When we see someone being unexpectedly kind to someone else, it touches our hearts. And when we do the same, it makes us feel good.

Studies show that acts of kindness can reduce stress¹ and depression² and make us happier and more satisfied with our lives. And there are many ways to be kind.

You can give someone a compliment when you really mean it, hold a door open or let someone into

an elevator, ask a cashier in a store how their day is going, or express appreciation to a server or your mail carrier when they do a good job.

Among friends and family, listening to others, genuinely trying to understand them, and letting them know you appreciate them (when you really do) can go a long way. Be curious rather than judgmental. And there are many opportunities to volunteer in any community.

Being kind to others during the holiday season (or any time) is a very good deal. It costs less than the most discounted gifts you can possibly buy. And you can get a lot in return.



Standing on One Leg

A recent study found that how long you can stand on one leg is a very good indicator of balance and how well an individual is aging.³ Good balance is vital to prevent falls, which are a major cause of disability and loss of independence in later life.

Without good balance, feeling unsteady or having a fear of falling can deter you from being more active,

such as walking on hiking trails or playing a sport. This detracts from health in a whole host of ways, from poor circulation and excess weight to elevated blood sugar and increased risk for diabetes.

If you want to try balancing on one leg, make sure you have something sturdy to grab on to, if needed. Or have someone stand nearby to make sure you don't fall.



If you find it difficult to balance on one leg, there are easier balance tests and exercises to start with. I describe these in detail in an earlier issue of this newsletter: Volume 5, Issue 5, *How to Improve Balance and Prevent Falls*.

In that same issue, I also describe a variety of ways to improve balance and strength. I encourage you to check it out and try some of those exercises.

Good Nutrition Helps Recovery from Heart Surgery

Being well nourished can speed up recovery from heart surgery and reduce risk of death. That's the conclusion of a British study that examined health records of more than 2,500 patients in the United Kingdom who received coronary artery bypass or valve replacement surgeries in non-emergency situations.⁴

Before undergoing surgeries, patients' blood was tested for markers of poor or good nutrition. Testing found that those with the poorest nutritional status were nearly five times more likely to die while in the

hospital, nearly four times more likely to need a longer hospital stay, and nearly nine times more likely to die within 30 days after surgery. On average among all these patients: 1.4 percent died while in the hospital and 5.5 percent died during the 30 days after the surgeries.

It may seem like common sense that a patient who is malnourished is poorly equipped to recover from the trauma of a major surgery. However, in the United States, nutritional status is not typically checked before heart surgeries.

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Feel your taste buds come alive...

If you like eating healthy, but hate bland and boring foods, you'll be excited to hear this...

For dinner tonight, you could be eating cheesy chicken and sweet potatoes... and then wake up tomorrow to a savory apple and sausage breakfast scramble... only to pack a scrumptious lunch of Thai turkey meatballs and cauliflower rice.

These meals are **delicious** and **nutritious**, and most important, they're **"perfect"** for healthy blood sugar and healthy blood pressure.

We hired a professional nutrition planner with a degree in culinary arts to create hundreds of complete meal plans. And all of them **adhere to the healthy eating formula** of 65% healthy fats, 25% protein, and 10% carbohydrates.

We call it **Perfect Meal Plans** because it takes the guesswork out of healthy eating.

This inexpensive service provides weekly meal plans that include recipes, shopping lists, and online support. You don't need to be a good cook. You don't need any special tools. Just

follow the weekly meal plan, and you'll soon be losing weight, sleeping better, have more energy and living a healthier life.

Karen L. says:

"Dishes are delicious, they eliminated my cravings, I'm no longer hungry all the time, and better yet, I'm full. I no longer call this a diet. It's simply eating healthy."

And Lewis R. reports:

"Perfect Meal Plans has helped my whole family eat better, and it does away with the insane way people are trying to lose weight and get healthy. The program is great!"

With **Perfect Meal Plans**, it's like having your own nutritionist on call 24/7. So, why eat boring meals, when you can eat like kings and queens—and still get the healthy results you want? And here's the best part! You get tasty, health-improving **Perfect Meal Plans** sent to your email inbox for the low price of just \$9.95. The meals are easy to prepare, they're delicious, and they're perfect for your health. Order today!

Get Perfect Meal Plans for Only \$9.95!
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Foods That Speed Up Aging

You've heard me talk about ultraprocessed foods before — how they are detrimental to health. A new study has revealed more evidence of this and concluded that these foods are associated with faster aging.¹

Faster aging means more deterioration of the heart and other organs, less energy, more loss of muscle tissue and strength, more bone loss, a less efficient metabolism, higher levels of chronic inflammation, and any other sign you can think of for what we call “getting old.” It also increases risks for today's common chronic diseases such as diabetes and heart disease.

Before I continue, let me clarify “ultraprocessed.” The phrase was invented by researchers to describe food that is processed to an extreme degree. More specifically, ultraprocessed foods contain food additives that have been created in labs and factories and don't resemble real food or any ingredients you would have in your kitchen. I've included some examples of these in the chart on this page.

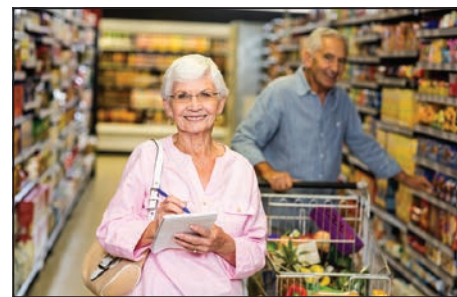
The use of ultraprocessed ingredients makes it easier to mass-produce food that is tasty, shelf stable, has an appealing texture, and makes

you want to eat more. Using industrial methods, ultraprocessed food can be manufactured for the lowest cost and the highest profit.

The New Study

Researchers analyzed health data and eating habits of more than 22,000 Italian adults. Blood tests showed that those who ate the most ultraprocessed foods were aging faster than their peers who ate significantly less or no ultraprocessed foods.

Among the Italians in this study, the highest level of ultraprocessed foods made up about 18 percent of their diet. In the United States, it's estimated that ultraprocessed foods make up 60 percent of the average diet. In fact, we eat more



ultraprocessed foods than any other nation in the world.

Much of the food in our supermarkets is ultraprocessed, so reading labels is a must. For any ultraprocessed foods, especially those that you routinely eat, look for healthier alternatives without ultraprocessed ingredients. And then stick with the healthier versions.

The best solution is to buy fresh ingredients, such as vegetables and meat or fish, and prepare them from scratch. I know it isn't always possible, but do the best you can.

Ingredients in Ultraprocessed Foods

There are too many industrially produced ingredients in ultraprocessed foods to list them all. These are some common ones to look for on food labels — and avoid:

- | | | |
|---|----------------------------|----------------------------------|
| • Ingredients that include the word “gum” | • Dextrose | • Mono- and diglycerides |
| • Carrageenan | • Invert sugar | • Polysorbate 60 and 80 |
| • Cellulose | • High fructose corn syrup | • Any oil that is “hydrogenated” |
| • Maltodextrin | • Modified Food Starches | |

Ultraprocessed ingredients are usually ones that you would never have in your kitchen.

Benefits of Short Walks

You've probably heard that walking or equivalent exercise for 30 minutes per day is known to be beneficial, and it is. However, shorter bouts can be even more therapeutic.

A study at the University of Milan, in Italy, found that walking or climbing stairs in short periods, ranging from 10 seconds to four minutes, used 20 to 60 percent more energy per unit of time than walking

for longer periods.² This is because you use more energy to start than just moving at the same pace for a while, much like your car uses more gas per mile in stop-and-go traffic than on the highway.

This doesn't mean you should exercise less. Rather, take every opportunity to walk or climb stairs in the course of the day. It all adds up. And ideally, also allocate at least 20 minutes per day to doing short bursts of walking really fast, or some other intense exercise, alternated with slower movement.

1 Esposito, S., et al. “Ultra-processed food consumption is associated with the acceleration of biological aging in the Moli-sani Study.” *Am J Clin Nutr.* 2024 Nov 4:S0002-9165(24)00813-X.
2 Luciano, F., et al. “Move less, spend more: the metabolic demands of short walking bouts.” *Proc Biol Sci.* 2024 Oct;291(2033):20241220.

TAKE COLLAGEN PEPTIDES FOR Smooth and Comfortable Aging



When you're young, you have collagen galore. You can run, jump and bend with ease. But as you age you steadily lose it. And then you begin to have problems.

Starting at age 25, you lose 1% to 2% of your collagen each year. And at the same time your body's natural collagen production steadily declines.

By the time you're 55 or 60, your levels are significantly reduced, and you're making very little new collagen.

This shortfall sets the stage for the ailments we associate with aging—achy joints, weak bones and muscles, stiff arteries, and wrinkled and sagging skin.

Low levels of collagen can also cause leaky gut and digestive issues. That's because the lining of your intestines rely on collagen for structural integrity. The same is true for your arteries.

Why you need more collagen

Collagen is essential to your mobility, your muscle strength, and your joint comfort. It's also the key to smooth and flexible arteries. Youthful looking skin. Stronger hair and nails. And a healthy digestive system.

In fact, it makes up 75% of your skin. 80% of your ligaments. 90% of your tendons. 67% of your cartilage. And 30% of your bones.

Think of it as the glue that holds everything together. If you don't have enough, the whole system starts to break down.

Fortunately, there's an easy way to get the replacement collagen you need every day.

Introducing Primal Labs *Collagen Peptides*.

This high-collagen nutritional supplement is unflavored and mixes easily in water, tea, juice, soup and, of course, smoothies.

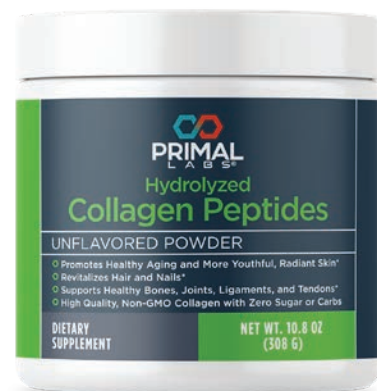
Each serving of **Collagen Peptides**...

- Provides 12.2 grams of high quality collagen from 3 sustainable sources, all non-GMO!
- Hydrolyzed for easy absorption and fast digestion
- Keto-friendly with no sugar and zero carbs
- Mixes clump-free in hot or cold beverages

Primal Labs **Collagen Peptides** is ideal for replacing the collagen you've lost. **And right now, you can try our superior product at 20% off with a 100% money back guarantee.**

Please try Primal Labs **Collagen Peptides** risk-free for 60 days and see for yourself just how great the benefits are!

You don't have to be unhappy with what you see in the mirror. Or hindered by aches and pains. We've got your solution to graceful aging, right here...



**Get 20% Off Today
Through This Special Link:
www.PrimalSpecials.com/Collagen**

Q&A

Q: My feet and ankles get puffy as the day goes on and my shoes get tighter. Why is this and what can I do about it? — *Sally O.*

A: Wearing compression socks, elevating your feet daily above the level of the heart, exercise, and a low-carb diet can all help. In some cases, drinking more water can help. And if you don't eat enough protein, adding protein can help.

With age, it isn't uncommon for the pumping of blood against gravity, from the lower legs toward the heart, to become less efficient. And this can lead to the type of fluid buildup you describe.

When walking or running, the foot and leg muscles pump the blood upward and will counteract fluid buildup. In contrast, standing and sitting contribute to the problem. Vigorous exercise is the most effective and, with good hydration, can clear out toxins that can accumulate in fluid. So, move as much as you can.

Ankle and foot swelling can also be a symptom of more serious conditions, such as heart, liver or kidney disease, blood clots, infections, lymphedema, foot or ankle injury, drug side effects, or venous insufficiency.

Venous insufficiency, which is quite common, occurs like this: Your leg veins have valves that help the blood flow toward the heart. If a valve is damaged, blood can't flow upward properly, and you can get the symptoms you describe.

I recommend that you see your doctor and get checked for any underlying condition that needs treatment. If there is one and you ignore it, it can lead to bigger problems.

Q: How long will it take to transition from blood pressure drugs to supplements? — *Arnie G.*

A: It really depends on why your blood pressure is high. Hypertension is both a disease and a sign that something else is wrong. Some of the possible underlying factors are insulin resistance (a precursor to type 2 diabetes), diabetes, stress, heart failure, liver or kidney disease, or arterial disease.

Insulin resistance and diabetes are the most common and the easiest to reverse with a low-carb diet and lifestyle changes, including exercise, good sleep, and stress management as needed. Other underlying causes require individualized treatment, which may include ongoing medication.

Supplements are not designed to simply replace drugs. Rather, if you make the right lifestyle changes, supplements can enhance the results. The combination has a powerful effect in helping you become healthier.

Blood pressure drugs can save lives, and I don't recommend simply stopping them. Rather, take steps to get healthier while taking the drugs and track the results.

While continuing your medication, start with a low-carb diet and check your blood pressure regularly. Once your blood pressure is going down, let your doctor know how your numbers are changing and ask about adjusting your

drug dosage. Do the same if you add supplements.

Here's why I'm mentioning a low-carb diet first: If your diet is contributing to high blood pressure, any supplements will be working uphill. It's like trying to put out a fire while pouring gasoline on it at the same time.

Where insulin resistance is the major underlying cause of high blood pressure, my low-carb diet can lead to some improvement in a matter of weeks, or even less. It partially depends on how diligent someone is with the diet.

That said, I don't know whether, in your situation, insulin resistance is an underlying factor, or the only underlying factor. So, I can't estimate a time frame for you.

If you haven't already, I do recommend that you start eating a diet of low-carb, whole foods. For details about the diet, supplements, and how to lower blood pressure, I encourage you to check out some earlier issues of this newsletter, which are listed on page 7.

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.