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Food Sensitivities:
Are They Hurting You?

Many symptoms seem mysterious and defy clearcut medical diagnoses and treatments in today's healthcare system. Addressing food sensitivities can solve many of these mysteries.



Food sensitivities — also referred to as intolerances — are rarely recognized or addressed in today's healthcare system, but they can trigger a host of debilitating conditions. When this is the case, identifying an offending food and eliminating it from one's diet can produce life-changing health improvements.

One of my patients had suffered from rheumatoid arthritis for years, despite following recommendations from many specialists. But the disease disappeared after she eliminated gluten and dairy from her diet. Needless to say, her doctor was amazed. Another patient believed that his depression and anxiety were hereditary, because his mother had suffered from the same symptoms. But they disappeared when he eliminated gluten — and he couldn't believe how much more energy he had.

The list of symptoms that food sensitivities can cause is long. Fatigue — mental or physical — is a common one (although not all fatigue

stems from food sensitivities). Others include digestive, skin, neurological, and autoimmune conditions, as well as weight problems and mysterious aches and pains. I've included a more complete list on page 3.

I've covered food sensitivities in some earlier newsletter issues, listed in *Related to This Topic* on page 7. This month, I'll give you an updated snapshot of what they are, how to tell if they are hurting you, and how to change your diet when needed.

So, what is a food sensitivity, exactly? It is not the same thing as a food allergy, such as a peanut or shellfish allergy. With a food allergy, the reaction typically occurs within minutes, and rarely a bit later — within an hour or so. A food allergy can immediately cause a rash, hives, nausea, vomiting, or life-threatening

IN THE NEXT ISSUE:
Cancer Prevention:
The Latest Evidence

anaphylactic shock, where the person can't breathe.¹

Both food allergies and food sensitivities are reactions of the immune system and involve antibodies. However, the antibodies in a food sensitivity are different from the antibodies in a food allergy.

A food sensitivity does not produce anaphylactic shock or any other immediate reaction after you eat. Symptoms take up to three days to manifest. Because of the time

lag, and the fact that we eat combinations of many different foods and ingredients, it's often difficult to make a connection between a specific food and a reaction.

Here's another characteristic of a food sensitivity: The symptoms it produces are lasting; they don't come and go. They are symptoms you've been living with and may have considered "normal," or may be inevitable signs of getting older.

To be clear, I'm not saying that everyone is suffering from one or more food sensitivities, but they are more common than you might think. And when a food sensitivity does exist, it's easy to underestimate the beneficial impact of making the right dietary changes.

The 5 Most Common Offending Foods

In the course of any day, or even in a single meal, we eat a combination of foods with many ingredients. So, how do you tell if one or more of these is causing a problem for you?

In all my years of practice, I've found that there are five foods that are most likely to cause issues — the types of symptoms I've listed on page 3. In order — most common, next most common, and so on — these are gluten,² dairy,³ eggs,⁴ soy,⁵ and corn.

They can be whole foods, such as milk, eggs, soybeans, or corn kernels. They can be a natural component of a food, such as gluten in grains. Or they can be extracted from foods and used as an additive in processed foods. Some examples include added gluten, milk proteins, eggs or egg powders, soy protein, and corn flour.

How To Tell If You're Reacting

A sensitivity to any offending food triggers a delayed reaction that can manifest in one or more symptoms or contribute to and worsen a debilitating disease. Because we tend to eat these foods day in and day out, the reaction doesn't end.

Most of my patients had no idea that some of their usual foods could be causing a difficulty. And sometimes, they just chalked it up — mistakenly — to "getting older." Occasionally, I've had patients who knew that they didn't tolerate a certain food but kept eating it anyway. But even in those cases, they were amazed to learn that the offending food had a much broader effect on their wellbeing than they had imagined.

So, how do you tell if you have a food sensitivity? If you're experiencing any of the symptoms I've listed on page 3, follow an elimination diet to identify what you're reacting to.

How an Elimination Diet Works

If you eliminate a problematic food from your diet long enough to allow your body's reaction to calm down, you will experience an improvement in your symptoms. And that will tell you that a given ingredient has been causing problems for you.⁶

It's essential to know *which* food you react to, because you will need to eliminate it long term. If you identify it correctly, it's realistic to revise your diet without it.

How long does it take? I recommend that my patients eliminate a food for six weeks, as a trial. By the end of that time,

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Symptoms of Food Sensitivity

Any of the symptoms listed below can indicate a sensitivity to one or more foods. While the elimination diet I describe in this issue is the best way to tell if you are sensitive to a specific food, I've found some specific telltale signs of gluten intolerance: a combination of symptoms listed in Categories #1, #2, and #3 below. Here's how it works:

If you have symptoms that fall into two of the three numbered categories, you're likely sensitive to gluten. For example, you could have constipation (Category #1) and brain fog (Category #2), or symptoms in Categories #1 and #3, or #2 and #3. Is it possible not to have this combination of symptoms and be sensitive to gluten? Yes, but I've found that the combinations are very common.

Category #1: Digestive and Skin Symptoms

- Heartburn/acid reflux disease
- Stomach ache
- Abdominal bloating
- Gas
- Diarrhea
- Constipation
- Irritable bowel syndrome
- Inflammatory bowel disease
- Pancreatitis
- Anemia
- Eczema
- Hives
- Dermatitis herpetiformis

Category #2: Neurological Conditions or Mental Symptoms

- Anxiety
- Brain fog
- Trouble focusing
- Depression
- Nerve pain
- Numbness in hands or feet
- Multiple sclerosis
- Migraines
- Phobias
- Dementia
- Parkinson's
- Attention Deficit Disorder
- Cerebellar ataxia
- Neuropathy
- Schizophrenia
- Seizure disorders
- Diagnosis of another neurological disorder

Category #3: Autoimmune conditions

- Hashimoto's disease
- Graves' disease
- Lupus
- Type 1 diabetes
- Rheumatoid arthritis
- Psoriasis
- Patch balding
- Other autoimmune diseases

A Special Word About Fatigue

While a sensitivity to one or more foods is not the only possible trigger of fatigue, it often is. Many of my patients have been surprised at having more energy after a food sensitivity has been addressed — even if they didn't complain of fatigue at the outset.

Other Possible Symptoms

Any of the symptoms listed below can also be triggered by a food sensitivity.

- Chronic congestion
- Joint pain
- Other aches and pains
- Susceptibility to infections
- Skin rashes
- Headaches
- Itching
- Fluid retention
- Weight gain
- Weight loss
- Loss of appetite
- Asthma
- Allergies to pollen

In some situations, food sensitivities may not be the cause of a condition, but they can contribute to and worsen it.

you should be able to tell whether you're improving. However, to make this work, you truly have to abstain from the food for the entire six weeks. If you cheat, you have to restart a six-week trial period.

I've seen recommendations for shorter periods of time, but these don't necessarily work. Here's an example: One of my patients was eliminating gluten. After four weeks, she called me, complaining that there was no change, and she didn't want to continue her gluten-free eating plan. I convinced her to keep going. She called again a few days later, amazed that she had woken up full of vim and vigor instead of in a fog — for the first time in many years!

This patient continued to eliminate gluten from her diet and is enjoying a new and improved life. Had she stopped her gluten-free program after four weeks, her gluten sensitivity would have remained hidden and she would have continued to suffer from her symptoms while endlessly seeking a remedy.

Some of my patients have noticed an improvement after a week or two of eliminating gluten or another food, or even sooner. And by continuing to eliminate it, they experienced more improvement and eventual resolution of their symptoms. But this doesn't always happen.

In all my years of practice, six weeks of elimination has proven to be effective to either confirm or rule out a sensitivity to a particular food.

Where To Start

Although I've listed five top foods that can cause problems, I don't recommend eliminating them all at once. It's too difficult to do, and

you won't be able to tell which food is problematic. Eliminate only one food at a time. If there's no change after six weeks of faithfully abstaining from that food, then it is not the problem. Do a six-week elimination diet with another food.

As I mentioned, I listed the top five problematic foods in order of likelihood. Gluten is the most common offender; dairy is the next most common, and so on. Take a look at the *Symptoms of*

Food Sensitivity on page 3. If your symptoms don't fit the combination that usually indicates sensitivity to gluten and you have no other reason to suspect gluten sensitivity, you can start by excluding dairy.

Sources of Gluten



Gluten is not found in meat, poultry, fish, eggs, vegetables, fruit, seeds, nuts, dairy products, oils, or fats. Gluten is a natural component of wheat, rye, and barley. All-purpose flour is made of refined wheat, so the flour and all the foods made with it are a major source of gluten.

Wheat is the most common grain used to make many foods, such as:

- Breads
- Crackers
- Buns
- Cakes
- Pies
- Pastries
- Pizza Crusts
- Croutons
- Pita bread
- Flour tortillas and wraps
- Matzah
- Panini
- Batters made with breadcrumbs or flour
- Some cereals
- Pancakes
- Waffles
- Cookies
- Pastas and other noodles
- Low-carb tortillas
- Pretzels
- Other snacks made with flour
- Couscous
- Malt flavoring
- Malt extract
- Malt syrup
- Malt vinegar (the malt ingredients are made from barley).
- Gefilte fish (contains matzah)
- Fish sticks (contain breadcrumbs)
- Chicken nuggets (contain flour or breadcrumbs)
- Fried chicken or chicken cutlets with a batter that contains flour or breadcrumbs

Sometimes, these and other meat foods may contain bread-crumbs or flour:

- Meatballs
- Meatloaf
- Some sausages
- Burgers that aren't labeled "100% beef"

Oats don't naturally contain gluten but they are often cross-contaminated with gluten from other grains during harvesting and processing. If oatmeal or another food made with oats is not labeled "gluten free," assume that it contains gluten.

Extra gluten is also added to many baked goods to make it easier to handle dough during manufacturing and to improve texture and shelf life. If so, gluten is listed as a separate ingredient on the label. Gluten is also added to many other foods, including some nutrition bars, marinades, soups, sauces, gravies, and meat substitutes such as seitan and others.

Finding Gluten on Food Labels

These are key words that indicate a food or beverage contains gluten. To identify your gluten sources, look for these in ingredient lists of foods and beverages:

- Wheat (see Varieties of Wheat below)
- Wheat flour
- Enriched flour
- Unbleached flour
- Whole grain
- Whole wheat flour
- All-purpose flour
- Wheat protein
- Wheat protein isolate
- Rye
- Barley
- Oats (in foods that are not labeled "gluten-free")
- Gluten
- Malt

Wheat Starch: Some wheat starch is processed in a way that removes most of its gluten, and may be found in foods labeled "gluten free." Otherwise, wheat starch is a source of gluten. However, "modified wheat starch" does not contain gluten.

Soy Sauce: It contains a small amount of gluten which some people can tolerate. However, tamari sauce is a good gluten-free substitute.

Varieties of Wheat

These are different types of wheat, which may be listed by any of the names below. They all contain gluten:

- Durum
- Einkorn
- Emmer
- Farina
- Farro
- Graham
- Kamut
- Semolina
- Spelt
- Sprouted wheat
- Triticale (a hybrid of wheat and rye)
- Wheatberries

Each of us is unique. Just as symptoms vary, so do responses to an elimination diet. If you experience any improvement while eliminating a food, keep following a diet without it. You may find that this completely relieves your symptoms within six weeks. Or, you may find some improvement, in which case, continue to eliminate that food and you might well experience further improvement. If you reach a plateau and have not resolved your symptoms, keep eating a diet without that food and start a six-week elimination of the next food on my list, and repeat the process.

When I first explain an elimination diet to my patients, it can seem difficult to do — even overwhelming. So, I’m going to walk you through the main things you need to know about eliminating each of the top five foods, including hidden sources to avoid, and some tips about how to choose alternative foods

How To Eliminate Gluten

To start, identify your sources of gluten by looking at the ingredient lists on labels of packaged foods and beverages you buy, routinely or as treats. Check for the ingredients listed in the chart on page 4. If a product contains any of those ingredients, put it on a list of your gluten sources. Then, identify an alternative for each one.

One way to eliminate gluten is to switch to a gluten-free version of the same food. For example, if you eat toast for breakfast, you can switch to gluten-free bread to make toast. Or, you could switch to naturally gluten-free foods for breakfast, such as eggs and

spinach, or yogurt with some nuts and berries. If you usually have a sandwich for lunch, try grilled vegetables or a salad with some fish, poultry, or meat.

If you like pasta, there is a gluten-free, low-carb version that is mostly fiber: shirataki noodles, which are made from Japanese yam. Or, you can spiralize zucchini or another vegetable, or use riced cauliflower as a low-carb side dish that’s naturally gluten-free. If you like flour tortillas, Carbonaut gluten-free tortillas are an option.

In addition, there are grains that are naturally gluten-free: rice, corn, sorghum, millet, teff, and oats (if they are labeled gluten-free). Buckwheat, amaranth, and quinoa are seeds that look like grains and can be eaten as gluten-free side dishes. And there are gluten-free flours: almond and coconut flours are good low-carb options that can be used in your favorite recipes.

In a nutshell, eliminating gluten means taking an inventory of your gluten sources and coming up with some alternatives that you can enjoy.

Common Questions About Gluten

These are some questions I’m often asked:

Why is there more gluten intolerance? While we don’t fully know why, the use of a toxic herbicide, glyphosate, on grain, may play a role. And, in the last century, our wheat has been bred to be more resilient and easier to handle during harvesting and processing. Higher gluten content has been a side effect of this evolution. In addition, gluten is used as a food additive in many packaged foods. So, our total gluten intake is much higher than it used to be, and our bodies are not designed to digest that much gluten.

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.



Are whole grains as problematic as refined grains?

Yes. Whole grains contain more nutrients, but they contain the same amount of gluten as refined grains, and need to be avoided on an elimination diet.

Does it matter if flour is bleached or unbleached?

No. When flour is bleached, the process does not reduce gluten content.

How To Eliminate Dairy

Dairy sensitivity is the next most common one, after gluten. The reaction is triggered by protein in any type of cow's milk and other dairy products made from it, including:

- Milk (full-fat)
- Low-fat milk
- Nonfat milk
- Organic milk
- Grassfed milk
- Vitamin-D enriched milk
- Omega-3 enriched milk
- Cream
- Flavored creamers
- Cheeses
- Ice cream
- Buttermilk
- Kefir
- Yogurt



Most of the protein in milk is casein. (Whey is another protein in milk, but it rarely triggers reactions.) Milk proteins can also be ingredients in many packaged foods, under names such as these:

- Casein
- Caseinate
- Calcium caseinate
- Milk powder
- Milk protein

When doing an elimination diet

to see if you're sensitive to dairy, all these need to be excluded. There are many dairy-free alternatives, such as plant milks and plant-based yogurts and cheeses.

Butter Is Different

Butter is made from milk but it is a special case. Food sensitivities are reactions to protein in a food. Pure fat doesn't contain any protein. Butter is just fat, but it may contain traces of protein in an amount that may or may not be sufficient to produce a reaction in sensitive people. But one special kind of butter — ghee — is truly pure fat.

Ghee is a type of clarified butter. It's made by simmering butter until any milk solids separate; then, it's strained to remove the solids and leave only fat. Because ghee doesn't contain any milk protein, you can use it in place of butter while doing a dairy elimination diet.

A Different Type of Dairy Problem

With milk, there can be another reaction that causes digestive discomfort: lactose intolerance. Lactose is the natural sugar in milk. We need an enzyme — lactase — to digest it. The human body can produce this enzyme but it is lacking in many people, so they can't digest lactose. This is different from a sensitivity to the protein in milk.

Anyone who is lactose-intolerant can get lactose-free milk. It isn't actually free of lactose; rather, it contains the lactase enzyme to help digest it. Or, you can take a lactase enzyme supplement when eating dairy foods.

How To Eliminate Eggs

Egg sensitivities are the third-most common ones, in my experience. Steering clear of eggs requires more effort than simply not putting eggs on your plate.

On food labels, these are some ways that egg ingredients can be listed:

- Eggs
- Egg whites
- Egg yolks
- Egg powder
- Egg solids
- Albumin (which means "egg white")
- Ovalbumin (a protein in egg white)



Possible egg food sources include:

- Breaded or battered fried or baked foods
- Salad dressings
- Pie fillings
- Custards
- Puddings
- Breads
- Buns
- Cakes
- Ice cream
- Mayonnaise
- Sauces
- Pastas
- Soups
- Cake frostings
- Meringues
- Pancakes
- Crepes
- Waffles



There are egg-free versions of many of these, or you can make your own from scratch. But be aware that "egg substitutes" may contain egg ingredients.

How To Eliminate Soy

Soybeans (“edamame”) are on many menus of Asian restaurants, but these aren’t our main source of soy; processed foods are. Soy ingredients can appear on food labels in many ways, including:

- Soy protein
- Soy isolate
- Soy flour
- Miso
- Natto
- Tempeh
- Textured vegetable protein
- Tofu
- Soy sauce
- Tamari sauce
- Teriyaki sauce



There is almost no limit to the types of packaged foods that can contain soy, from soy milk, yogurt, and ice cream to baked goods, sauces, soups, snacks, and many others.

Soybean oil is an exception, because it is made of fat extracted from the beans, not from protein. I don’t recommend soybean oil because it is typically highly

refined and inflammatory. However, if you are doing a soy elimination diet, soybean oil does not need to be excluded.

How To Eliminate Corn

There are some widely used corn ingredients that are not particularly healthy, such as high fructose corn syrup, corn syrup, other corn sweeteners, and corn oil, but they don’t contain corn protein so they don’t need to be eliminated during a corn elimination diet.

Corn foods and ingredients that do need to be excluded include:

- Corn on the cob
- Corn kernels
- Grits
- Polenta
- Corn cereals
- Corn fritters
- Cornbread
- Corn tortillas
- Taco shells
- Popcorn
- Tortilla chips
- Other corn chips and snacks
- Corn flour



- Cornmeal
- Corn starch
- Maize
- Masa

If corn tortillas are part of your usual diet, there are corn-free varieties, and many recipes use cassava or chickpea flour in place of corn. Other vegetables can replace corn on the cob or kernels. And there are plenty of snacks without corn.

A Final Word

It isn’t enough to identify a sensitivity to a specific food. Once you know what it is, it’s essential to keep that food out of your diet. Once a reaction has died down and symptoms have been relieved, some people can include *occasional*, small amounts of that food without a problem. But in other cases, that just doesn’t work.

For most of my patients, the relief they have experienced by eliminating a reactive food is worth the effort. And once it becomes a habit, it’s easier to maintain.

With all my patients, I also recommend following my basic low-carb diet and eating whole, rather than processed, foods as much as possible. That’s the best path to a healthy life.

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
Gluten and Health	2	3	How Gluten Can Cause More Than 30 Health Conditions
Food Sensitivities	4	12	Food Sensitivities: Hidden Triggers of Many Health Conditions
Dairy	2	4	Milk Pitfalls to Avoid (page 8)
Soy	3	2	Meatless Burgers: Are They Good for You? (page 10)

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



1 Onyimba, F., et al. “Food Allergies and Intolerances: A Clinical Approach to the Diagnosis and Management of Adverse Reactions to Food.” Clin Gastroenterol Hepatol. 2021 Nov;19(11):2230-2240.e1.
2 Marchioni Beery, R.M., et al. “Wheat-related disorders reviewed: making a grain of sense.” Expert Rev Gastroenterol Hepatol. 2015 Jun;9(6):851-64.
3 Stöger, P., et al. “Type I allergy to cow milk proteins in adults. A retrospective study of 34 adult milk- and cheese-allergic patients.” Int Arch Allergy Immunol. 1993;102(4):399-407.
4 Berry, J., “What to know about egg intolerance.” Medical News Today. Updated Feb 15, 2023.
5 Liener, I.E. “Implications of antinutritional components in soybean foods.” Crit Rev Food Sci Nutr. 1994;34(1):31-67.
6 Malone, J.C., et al. “Elimination Diets.” StatPearls Publishing; 2024 Jan.

Summer Safety Tips

As temperatures rise to unprecedented highs, staying cool becomes more important, not only for comfort but for health and safety. Last summer, records were set for heat-related visits to emergency rooms, hospitalizations, and deaths. As we get older, our bodies can't adjust as well to changes in temperature.

Heat isn't generally a problem if you're in an air-conditioned environment. But despite your best-laid plans, power outages may leave you sweltering and at risk of becoming overheated.

To stay safe, it's prudent to plan. Be aware of weather forecasts, including the heat index as well as temperatures. Created by the National Weather Service, the heat index indicates the degree of health risk from the combination of heat and humidity.

Here's why humidity raises health risks: When the human body gets hot, it sweats. When the sweat evaporates, the body cools down. However, humidity makes it difficult for sweat to evaporate, so your built-in cooling process can't work properly. To check health risks of weather in your area, visit this website: <https://ephtracking.cdc.gov/Applications/HeatRisk/>.

Staying Cool

In hot weather, plan to do outdoor tasks early or late in the day, when temperatures are lower. Make sure your air-conditioning system is properly maintained and be prepared for the worst. Learn where to find cooling centers near you in the event of a power outage. Local news media should provide information, and, in most states, you can also get local information by dialing 2-1-1.

Aside from air conditioning, immersing your whole body in cool water is the most effective way to lower your body temperature. If you have a pool, use it to stay cool. Research shows that even if the water temperature is the same as the air temperature, the water can act as though it's 20 degrees F lower. Your body will cool down four times faster in water than in air of the same temperature.¹

When there's no air conditioning in dry heat, spraying your body with cool water can help to prevent dangerous overheating, according to a study of older adults at the University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center

in Dallas.² If the air is humid, you can cool down by spraying water on yourself and standing in front of a fan or fanning yourself with a magazine or notebook. Evaporation of the water produces the cooling effect.



Sunscreen Tips

Some sun exposure is beneficial. It enables your body to make vitamin D and releases endorphins, internally produced "feel-good" substances. But the beneficial amount of sun exposure is less than it takes to turn your skin pink, and it's best obtained during the cooler times of day.

The rest of the time, we need protection against skin cancer through clothing, shade, and sunscreens. Unfortunately, not all sunscreens are created equal.

There are only two sunscreen ingredients that the FDA has deemed safe: zinc oxide and titanium dioxide. These consist of minerals that form a physical barrier on top of the skin. They are found in many sunscreens, often described as "mineral sunscreen" — I recommend using these. Other sunscreens contain chemicals that are absorbed by the skin and can cause irritation — their safety is not proven.

If you aren't sure about the safety of a specific sunscreen product, the nonprofit Environmental Working Group provides a guide with ratings of many products at www.ewg.org/sunscreen.

Good Sunglasses

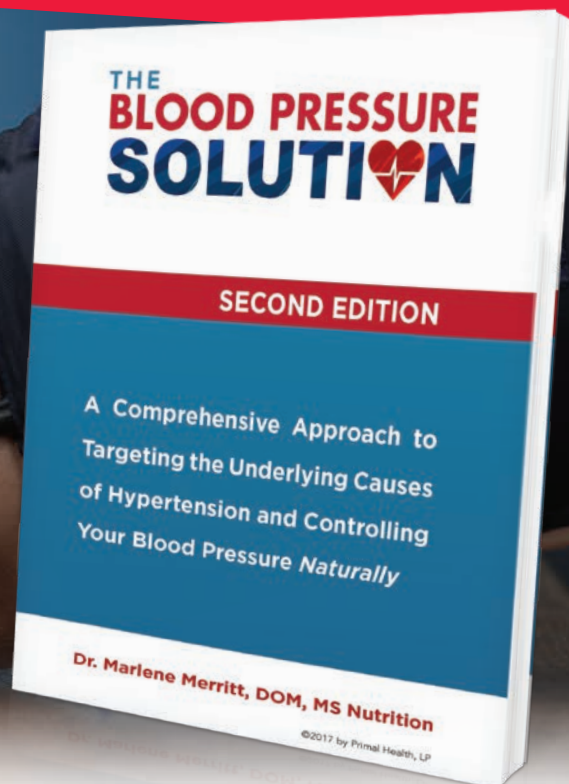
Just because sunglasses have tinted lenses doesn't mean that they will filter out damaging UV rays, which can induce cataracts and other eye damage. To protect your eyes, the lenses need to be treated specifically to block those harmful rays.

To make sure your sunglasses really do protect your eyes, look for a UV400 rating or "100% UV protection" on the label. These are designations created by the FDA to indicate effective UV protection.

By taking common-sense steps, you can stay cooler and safer in hot weather.

1 Casa, D.J., et al. "Cold Water Immersion: The Gold Standard for Exertional Heatstroke Treatment." *Exerc Sport Sci Rev*. 2007 Jul;35(3):141-9. 2 McKenna, Z., et al. "Skin Wetting Helps Cool Older Adults in Very Hot, Dry Weather." *American Physiology Summit*. Long Beach, California. April 2024.

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Get Your Copy Today! Go To:
www.PrimalLabs.com/BPS

Going Fishing? Good Idea

Once upon a time, shopkeepers would hang a “Gone Fishing” sign when they took a break to literally go fishing. Now, the phrase has come to mean taking a break and being unavailable without stating the real reason. But actually going fishing has some perks.

Research shows that spending time around water, in a natural setting, is relaxing, reduces anxiety, improves mood, and lowers the odds of serious mental health conditions. And fishing is a good way to get those benefits.

One British study of more than 1,700 people found that those who regularly went fishing for recreation were less likely to feel depressed or anxious and had better overall mental well-being than those who did not fish often or at all.¹

There can also be some physical fitness benefits — if you’re walking around to different fishing spots or wading in a stream and repeatedly casting out a line. Obviously, you won’t get the same physical benefit if you just sit on a beach with a rod holder parked next to you, waiting for something to tug on the line.

Don’t Want To Fish?

If fishing doesn’t appeal to you, there are other ways to benefit from being in nature around water. You can hike near lakes, rivers, or the ocean, or seek out a route that leads to natural waterfalls. In addition

to swimming, there are watersports such as kayaking, stand-up paddle boarding, and snorkeling.



On land, walking in a forest or other pleasant nature setting is another way to relax, reduce stress, and recharge. The Japanese tradition of forest bathing — walking slowly or just sitting quietly in a forest — is a time-tested, therapeutic practice. The idea is to take in the sights, sounds, and smells of nature.

Fishing Information Sources

If you need to find licensing information and fishing spots near your home or in a location where you will be vacationing, these are some useful resources:

The Recreational Boating and Fishing Foundation is a nonprofit organization that offers information about licenses and fishing and boating spots around the country.

Website: www.takemefishing.org

Fishbrain is a free smartphone app that aims to help you get the best catch. It provides data on fishing spots, types of species in different places, and reports to help predict the likelihood of a good catch. It also includes information about boat ramps, marinas, and bait shops.

Website: www.fishbrain.com

Drugs That Worsen Mental Function

Drugs that worsen mental function are often prescribed — incorrectly — to dementia patients, according to a study of 13 million patients and providers.² Such drugs include:

Z-drugs for insomnia, such as Lunesta and Ambien. They double the risk of hospitalization.

Anticholinergics for a variety of conditions, including some (but not

all) drugs for asthma, overactive bladder, excessive sweating, motion sickness, Parkinson’s disease, peptic ulcers, irritable bowel syndrome, and pupil dilation before eye surgery.

Antipsychotics, most often prescribed for schizophrenia or bipolar disorder, such as Quetiapine fumarate, Aripiprazole, and Risperidone. They increase the

odds of hospitalization by more than 50 percent.

Benzodiazepines for anxiety and insomnia, such as Xanax, Ativan, Klonopin, and Valium.

These drugs can also worsen memory and cause confusion in people who don’t have dementia. If you suspect this is happening, consult your doctor or pharmacist.

1 Wilson, J.J., et al. “Mental Health and Recreational Angling in UK Adult Males: A Cross-Sectional Study.” *Epidemiologia (Basel)*. 2023 Jul 13;4(3):298-308. 2 Mak, C.M., et al. “Inappropriate Medication Use Persists in Older Adults With Dementia.” *American Geriatrics Society (AGS) 2024 Annual Scientific Meeting*.

Get Back Out There...

STOP LETTING FATIGUE AND LOW-ENERGY ROB YOU OF THE ACTIVITIES YOU ENJOY!

Do you feel drained all the time, unable to do the things you love because you have no energy and no motivation?

Do you feel tired and run down... like you're running on empty, even when you get plenty of sleep?

If you're not living the active, fun-filled life, you were meant to live, please pay close attention: You can now get your energy back, boost your mental clarity, calm your nerves and enjoy all-day endurance that will make your life fun again!

That's why I'm excited to introduce the safe and natural energy booster designed for people just like you...

It's called, **ActivAdapt Energy Drink Mix**.

There's truly nothing else quite like it on the market today because one of its ingredients has been proven in a double-blind study to increase energy by 107% within 60 minutes. And even better, this caffeine-free boost of energy lasted 5 hours WITHOUT increasing heart rate or blood pressure!

ActivAdapt is an easy to use drink mix that contains 6 powerful nutrients to help you regain your energy, strength, and stamina:

EnXtra is a brand-new, patent-pending extract from *Alpinia Galanga*, a plant in the ginger family. It's a safe, natural energy-boosting compound that boosts energy levels by 107% and lasts 5 hours!

Rhodiola Root Extract boosts energy levels by increasing ATP, the "energy molecule" inside your cells. Rhodiola has been used by astronauts and military personnel to increase energy levels, boost alertness and sharpen mental focus during long missions.

Schizandra Berry increases endurance and working capacity under stress. Researchers have also found it enhances your reflexes and mental sharpness while calming you down if you're feeling anxious.

Ginseng is well studied for boosting brain function and short-term memory while promoting calmness. A new analysis published last year confirms it also reduces fatigue after exercise and physical activities.

Matcha extract is from a special form of green tea loaded with EGCG, a potent antioxidant that helps flush dangerous toxins from the body—while its amino acids promote a state of relaxation and well-being.

Palatinose is unique because it provides your body with a slow, steady release of energy with no spike in blood sugar—which helps keep insulin levels low. It delivers more energy and increases fat burning.

Here's how **ActivAdapt** works...

Simply add one scoop to water, stir, and it dissolves quickly and easily.

It's caffeine-free and only contains 20 calories. You'll notice a substantial change in your physical and mental energy almost immediately after you drink it... with no jitters, no increased heart rate, no blood sugar spikes, and absolutely no crash.

ActivAdapt is ideal if you want to regain your energy and feel more vibrant and alive than you have in years...

- More physical energy, strength, and stamina
- Increased mental energy and focus
- Greater concentration and better moods
- Deeper, more restorative sleep
- Lower levels of the stress hormone cortisol
- Enhanced weight control, and fewer sugar and carb cravings

It's time to get back out there and start enjoying the activities you've always loved—and with the help of **ActivAdapt**, it's never been easier. Boost your energy levels, bust stress, banish brain fog, and stop fatigue, while increasing your concentration, attention, and mood.

**Get Your Bottle of
ActivAdapt Today and
Start Living the Life You
Were Meant to Live!**



Get ActivAdapt Today!
www.GetActivAdapt.com/NHC2

Q&A

Q: If I have high blood pressure, should I avoid lemons or oranges?

— *Hattie H.*



A: Let me put these fruits in context. In 80 percent of my patients who have high blood pressure, the underlying trigger is a diet high in sugar and other carbs. In addition to my clinical experience, there is plenty of evidence that supports this mechanism.

When you eat too many carbs — sugars and starches — blood *sugar* rises. In response, the human body produces extra insulin to get the blood sugar absorbed and used to make energy, and blood-sugar levels remain in a healthy range. When this pattern continues for years, the extra insulin can no longer compensate for an overload of carbs, and blood sugar becomes elevated.

Here's how this relates to blood *pressure*: Elevated insulin makes you retain sodium, which causes fluid retention and raises blood pressure. Elevated insulin also produces inflammation. And it leads to storage of fat around the waist — a type of fat that is inflammatory — even in thin people. All these mechanisms contribute to elevated blood pressure.

Bottom line, eating a low-carb diet can prevent and reverse this harmful process — and lower blood pressure. Where do lemons and oranges fit in? All fruits

contain some natural sugar, so I recommend consuming fruit in moderation. Berries are a good option as their carb content is lower than that of other fruit.

A spritz of lemon juice, on fish or salad or in a bottle of water, will contain a negligible amount of carbs. However, if you make lemonade with concentrated lemon juice and lots of sugar, the carb content will be high.

Oranges can be part of a healthy low-carb diet. However, orange juice can be a source of carb overload. Juicing oranges eliminates fiber and concentrates the natural sugar in the fruit. Drinking an 8-ounce glass of pure orange juice provides two-and-a-half times the amount of natural sugar (27 grams) as eating one small orange (11 grams).

I recommend a low-carb way of eating, without excluding any foods and tailoring your diet to your own tastes and lifestyle. For a description of how to do this, see Volume 7, Issue 1, of this newsletter: *My Low-Carb Diet — Fine-Tuned*.

In the minority of cases where a low-carb diet doesn't fully handle elevated blood pressure, lack of physical activity, inflammation, and stress are the most common triggers. I cover this in more detail in Volume 6, Issue 5, of this newsletter: *Blood Pressure Control: What Matters Most*.

Q: You've mentioned that dental infections can cause joint pain. Can you explain how these two things are connected? — *Ernest W.*

A: Dental infections can stem from gum disease, one or more

infected teeth, or a root canal that trapped bacteria in the tooth root. Harmful bacteria can cause chronic inflammation throughout the whole body, leading to rheumatoid arthritis, osteoarthritis, and damage to the heart and brain. Chronic inflammation can drive strokes, heart attacks, and dementia.

Most people are surprised to learn that harmful bacteria from the mouth has been found in the synovial fluid that cushions joints.

In addition, harmful bacteria from an infection in the mouth can create antibodies that the human body perceives as a threat, and the immune system misguidedly attacks its own tissues — such as joints — to try and get rid of the antibodies. The same mechanism can also lead to other autoimmune conditions, such as psoriatic arthritis and lupus.

I cover the link between the mouth and other diseases (including diabetes and heart disease) in more detail in Volume 3, Issue 10, of this newsletter: *The 5 Simple Steps to Healthy Teeth and Gums*.

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.