

Dr. Marlene's NATURAL HEALTH CONNECTIONS

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12 Simple Signs of Health or Unwellness

Is there a crease in your earlobe? Do you have brittle nails or hair? Is your voice hoarse? Do you often burp, belch, or pass gas? These and other everyday signs can give you clues to nutritional deficiencies or underlying health issues that, quite often, can easily be resolved.



This may not be news to you, but it's important to keep in mind: Today's healthcare system doesn't focus on health. Rather, it's a system of disease care.

Even so-called preventive check-ups are designed to identify symptoms of disease, and to treat those symptoms with medications. High blood pressure? Take a pill (or a few, if one doesn't work). High cholesterol or high blood sugar? Take pills for those, too.

While the pills may prolong life, they do have side effects, and they don't bring about optimal health. These markers are symptoms of internal wellness or unwellness. When they indicate unwellness, the real solution is to find the underlying cause and correct it. That's what brings about optimal health.

To be fair, medical guidelines do recommend changes in lifestyle and

diet as a first line of treatment for elevated blood pressure, cholesterol, and blood sugar. But as you probably know, doctors aren't trained to help patients make the necessary changes. And even if they were, the time allocated for visits with patients is typically too short to address individual challenges and make headway.

Here's an ironic situation: With a referral from a doctor, Medicare will cover some nutritional counseling for people who have diabetes or kidney disease, or who have had a kidney transplant in the past three years. But it won't cover nutritional counseling for people who are at high risk for these diseases. (And the standard diet for type 2 diabetics is counterproductive, but that's another story.)

**IN THE NEXT ISSUE:
Superfoods: What They
Are and How To Benefit**

I'm sure you get the point. In earlier newsletter issues, I've covered a lot of information about diet and lifestyle. And I've described tests you can ask for from your doctor, or get directly from labs, to get earlier warning of developing problems. I've listed some of those earlier issues in *Related to This Topic* on page 6.

In this article, I'll focus on everyday signs you may be experiencing that show something needs to be addressed. And I'll give you

remedies for the most common causes. But before I delve into each sign, I want you to be aware of two common traps to avoid.

The Five Most Dangerous Words

"Maybe it will go away." For years, I've heard this from patients, family members, and friends more times than I could ever count.

Here's how it often comes up: They mention something that's bothering them. It could be a sore knee, indigestion, irregularity, or any other symptom. Then, I might ask if they've tried to correct it or are planning to see a health professional about it. And the response is something like, "It's no big deal, maybe it'll go away."

Right there, that frame of mind stops them from seeking a remedy. And seemingly "no big deal" symptoms can interfere with living a vibrant life.

Take a sore knee, for example. Without thinking about it, the person is going to limit their movement to some degree. Even if the knee soreness isn't severe, there's an instinctive reaction to move less.

They may not get up and walk around the house as often. They may have been going for walks but have decided to stop or go walking less often. Or, they think, "I guess I'll just have to be careful when I walk." And they don't exert themselves as much as they used to, so they're getting less exercise even when they're up and about.

Shoulder problems are also quite common — and too often, ignored. I've seen people conclude: "I guess I'll use my right arm because my left my shoulder isn't working right."

In other situations, a symptom that may not affect daily life in any obvious way may indicate a nutritional deficiency. And that could affect health in many ways, such as making you more susceptible to a cold or flu, or something worse.

The "I'm Old" Trap

Do you know anyone who complains about not having as much energy as they used to? All too often, they mistakenly think, "It's because I'm old." Sure, our bodies change as we live longer. But "I'm old" gets blamed — unfairly — far too often.

This idea and the five most dangerous words are traps. They are the two biggest reasons why people tolerate uncomfortable, unpleasant, or even debilitating symptoms instead of seeking a remedy.

Don't ignore these things. Find out why they're happening. Then, take steps to correct the situation.

Now, let's look at some common signs that shouldn't be ignored, and the remedies.

A Diagonal Earlobe Crease

Of all the signs I'm covering in this story, this one is likely the most surprising. It may even seem weird.

A diagonal crease in the earlobes is linked to higher risk for heart disease and stroke. It's also referred to as "Frank's sign," because in 1973, the connection between the crease and cardiovascular health was first described in medical literature by Dr. Sanders T. Frank.

Since then, studies have found that people who have had heart attacks or strokes, or have known risk factors for these, are much more likely to have the crease. So much so that some researchers

Dr. Marlene's NATURAL HEALTH CONNECTIONS

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have concluded: “Adding Frank’s sign to the list of classic risk factors for the development of ischemic heart disease and stroke in the future should be considered.”¹ (Ischemic heart disease here means heart attacks.)

One study of 1,050 people in Spain found higher risk for heart disease and stroke with these types of creases:²

- A crease that extends all the way across the earlobe, rather than only part of the way.
- A deeper crease.
- More than one crease in an earlobe.
- Creases in both ears, rather than one ear.

The crease is not a guarantee that you have heart disease or are at high risk for stroke, and not everyone who has a heart attack or stroke has the crease — but many do.

You may well be wondering, why? The earlobe has a lot of blood supply. The blood is delivered by capillaries, the tiniest

type of blood vessel. When those capillaries are not functioning as they should, the diagonal crease can develop in the earlobe.

This is an outward sign that may indicate that capillaries in other parts of the body are also not functioning well. Capillaries deliver oxygen and nutrients to tissues throughout our bodies, and they help to remove waste products. The heart and brain are among the vital organs for which capillaries perform these vital functions. If the capillaries are damaged, the heart and brain don’t get proper support. And that’s the connection between those diseases and the crease.

Sometimes, other signs or symptoms of risk may have been overlooked or ignored, but the crease is visible to the naked eye. If you have the crease in one or both ears and haven’t had a medical check-up for a while, that’s a good reason to get checked and take steps to follow a healthier diet and lifestyle.

Brittle Hair and Nails

Brittle hair, brittle nails, or both may seem like a cosmetic issue, not something that is a significant health matter. But they are outward signs of insufficient protein. In particular, they indicate a shortage of a specific type of protein: collagen.

Protein is essential for repair of all tissues in your body, and collagen is a protein with special functions. The word “collagen” comes from the Greek word for glue — “kolla” — because collagen acts like an essential glue for tissues throughout the human body.

Inside our bodies, collagen connects and helps to strengthen and maintain the structure of all

the different parts. It makes a protective covering for organs. It enables arteries to be strong and flexible. It’s a building block of cartilage, which cushions our joints and helps to keep them flexible. It also keeps skin supple and prevents hair and nails from becoming brittle.

Collagen levels decline as we get older — it’s one reason why skin wrinkles and sags. And with today’s diets, it’s difficult to get enough collagen from food.

Collagen is most concentrated in the connective tissue of animals. Consequently, it’s found in the gristly, gelatinous cuts of meat, especially around the joints of animals. These cuts have traditionally been cheap because they are tough and much less appealing than more tender parts. Fish also contain collagen.

To prepare the gristly cuts, you have to cook them in a broth — at a low heat, for hours. With herbs and spices, and sometimes wine in the broth, the process tenderizes the meat and creates a rich flavor. It makes a delicious dish.

European immigrants traditionally cooked this way — perhaps one of your grandmothers or great-grandmothers did. Today, traditional, slow-cooked meat dishes are still popular in Europe.

Sadly, few people now cook this way in the U.S. Instead, we eat only the leaner cuts of meat. Even prime cuts, which have more fat, come from muscle meat — not joints — so they aren’t a rich source of collagen.

I cover collagen in more detail in an earlier issue of this newsletter, listed in *Related to This Topic* on page 6. It includes a recipe that

The Earlobe Crease



Diagonal earlobe creases, such as the ones shown above, are linked to higher risk of heart disease and stroke. Although these creases are more common in older people, they can also occur earlier in life.

makes it easy to prepare your own bone broth, which is the top food source of this essential protein.

Collagen Powder Supplements

While brittle hair and/or nails are an outward sign of insufficient collagen, the shortfall also damages our internal components, such as arteries and joints. We can't see internal manifestations with our eyes, but we may be able to feel them. Joints that aren't as flexible as they used to be is one common sign. Stiffer arteries can lead to angina, so exercise produces chest pain, or they leave people out of breath after climbing stairs.

Studies have shown that collagen powder is an effective way to enhance health and relieve some of the symptoms. These are some research highlights:

- Supplementing with collagen powder helps to rejuvenate skin by increasing its moisture levels and elasticity, according to a review of 14 earlier studies with a total of 967 people.³
- Collagen can also rejuvenate hair, according to a study of 130 women (90 percent of participants) and men between the ages of 40 and 60. The trial compared the effects of a placebo and the supplement — 8 grams (8,000 mg) of hydrolyzed collagen (explained below) and 60 mg of vitamin C — taken daily for 12 weeks. Those taking the supplement showed improvements in the health of the scalp and hair, and better hydrated, more elastic skin.⁴
- A Japanese study tested collagen against a placebo in a group of 85 women between the ages of

43 and 65. It found that taking 5 grams (5,000 mg) of collagen daily enhanced the health of nails and skin. Improvements began to be seen after 28 days, with greater improvement as participants continued to take collagen.⁵

- Other studies have found that taking collagen daily enhanced the health of joints,⁶ bones,⁷ muscles,⁸ and arteries.⁹

Surprising? Not really. Collagen is essential for all connective tissues throughout the human body, so it has far-reaching effects.

In supplements, look for collagen peptides or hydrolyzed collagen powders. Both are formulated to be easily absorbed and used by the human body. Unflavored collagen powder is tasteless and can be mixed with either hot or cold beverages or moist foods. Flavored powders are also available.

White Spots on Nails

Although white spots on nails can sometimes be a side effect of overzealous manicures, they can also be a sign of zinc deficiency.¹⁰ Zinc is essential for a strong immune function that can resist viral and bacterial illnesses, for wound healing, and to maintain a sense of taste and smell.

In children, lack of zinc can impair normal growth and development. In older adults, a shortfall can impair thinking and memory.

Your body uses more zinc when you're sick to help you get over the illness. White spots most likely appear some time after you were sick, because your body used up all your zinc while fighting the illness. The solution is to take zinc in supplements, but you don't need

super high doses.

I encourage you to take a multivitamin that contains 100 percent of the Daily Value (%DV) of zinc, not more. That percentage will be listed on the label in Supplement Facts.

The important thing is to take that multi every day. Zinc won't make the spots that are already there disappear. But once the deficiency is corrected, your nail will grow without white spots.

Nails grow slowly, so allow at least a few months to see a difference. On average, fingernails grow about one-eighth inch per month, and toenails grow roughly half that fast. Meanwhile, it's essential to consistently take your multi to remedy the zinc shortfall.

9 More Simple Signs

Below are some other visible signs that, if they occur repeatedly, indicate a need for action. And I've included remedies for the most common causes. In some cases, I mention earlier newsletters that cover the remedy in detail; the specific issues are listed in *Related to This Topic* on page 6.

A hoarse voice: This can also show up as needing to clear your throat a lot. It's often a type of silent heartburn, where there's irritation in the esophagus but it doesn't necessarily cause a burning sensation. Follow the steps in my earlier issue on digestion.

Burping: Also known as belching, this is usually a sign of insufficient bile to easily digest fats. Bile is produced in the liver, stored and concentrated in the gallbladder, and released to break down fats during digestion. I recommend

taking a daily ox bile supplement, one serving with each meal that contains fat.

After four to six weeks, stop taking the supplement and see if the issue is resolved. If not, see your doctor to find the cause.

Gas: If it has just started, it's likely a reaction to a food you ate during the last couple of days but don't usually eat. Try to identify that food and avoid it. But if you have gas continually, there are two possible scenarios.

Gas with a smell typically means difficulty digesting protein. A betaine hydrochloride supplement at the start of each meal should help; more details are in my earlier newsletter issue on digestion.

Gas without a smell typically means difficulty digesting raw vegetables and fruit. Try cooking your vegetables and go easy on fruit. You can also take an enzyme supplement with each meal, per product directions.

Bad breath: Mints merely mask it. The cause is usually bacteria in the mouth because of problems with gums or teeth. That same bacteria can get into your bloodstream and cause chronic inflammation and cardiovascular problems. See a dentist and get your mouth treated. To maintain a healthy mouth, see my earlier newsletter issue on the topic.

Chapped lips: I don't mean occasional chapped lips in cold weather. If you're continually using lip balm because your lips feel dry all or most of the time, it's a sign of dehydration. You need to drink more fluids, especially water.

Irregularity: You should have at least one bowel movement every day. If not, do take action. Drink more water and take magnesium, because it pulls water into the bowel and helps to get things moving. Lack of fiber can also be an issue. You can take a fiber supplement and aim to eat a variety of vegetables every day — they're the best sources of fiber (and many nutrients).

Urination can also be insufficient. You should need to go about every three hours, for at least eight seconds. Urine should be light yellow or colorless. If this isn't happening, the most common reason is lack of fluids. Drink more liquids, which can be cold or hot, herb tea, plain water, or carbonated (but not sugary) drinks.

If you see blood in the toilet bowl, see your doctor right away.

Poor night vision: While cataracts or other eye disorders may be

causing a problem, reduced vision at night may also stem from lack of vitamin A. Many supplements contain beta-carotene, a form of vitamin A that is a precursor, which your body has to convert to the active form of vitamin A. I don't recommend this form, as not everyone can efficiently make the conversion. Look for retinyl palmitate, which is the active form of vitamin A.

The active form is in some (but not most) multivitamins, and it's in cod liver oil. I recommend getting 100 percent of the Daily Value (%DV in the Supplement Facts on labels) of the retinyl palmitate form. I cover vitamin A in more detail in an earlier newsletter.

Fatigue: Skipping meals or eating a high-carb, sugary diet can lead to fatigue that is easily fixed by switching to a low-carb diet. Fatigue can also be a problem with adrenal glands. Some other

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.



common causes include low vitamin B12 or low iron (blood tests will tell), low thyroid function (also identified by blood tests), or lack of restful sleep because of sleep apnea or other reasons.

I cover blood tests and each of the other issues in earlier newsletters. If none of those resolve the fatigue, it's time to investigate further, with the help of your doctor.

Joint problems: Different joints can be affected, including the neck, different parts of the back, shoulders, knees, and hips. Stiffness, discomfort, or pain can limit your range of motion, inhibiting your

everyday movement and making it difficult to get regular exercise.

Muscles can spasm or there can be misalignment, because some muscles are too tight while others are too loose, and this can cause joint pain. Or there can be inflammation that generates discomfort.

In the knee, pain on the outside of the knee joint (the right side of your right knee, for example) is typically a sign of misalignment that needs to be corrected.

On the other hand, pain on the inside of the knee joint (the left side of your right knee) typically indicates inflammation. Supplements can help to calm

the inflammation and relieve pain.

Two earlier newsletter issues can help you restore alignment and/or use supplements as a remedy.

A Final Word

The signs and symptoms I've given you are ones that I've found to be quite common and — unfortunately — often ignored. There's a myth that as we live longer, we have to endure various ailments that reduce our zest for life and restrict our mobility. Putting up with these things increases the risks for chronic diseases and can make life miserable. And there are remedies!

I encourage you to be honest with yourself: If something is bothering you, don't ignore it. Rather, take action. It may take some effort, but the reward is more than worth it.

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
Blood Pressure	6	5	Blood Pressure Control: What Matters Most
Cholesterol	1	4	When Statin Drugs Can Harm You More than Cholesterol
Type 2 Diabetes	6	12	Diabetes Drugs and Supplements: Your Top Questions Answered
Exercise	1	7	The Secret to Effective Aerobic Exercise (page 7)
Tests	6	6	Blood Tests: Which Ones Do You Really Need?
Collagen	4	5	Collagen: How It Helps You Stay Young, Strong, and Pain-Free
Digestion	1	6	The 6-Minute Heartburn Remedy
Dental Health	3	10	The 5 Simple Steps to Healthy Teeth and Gums
Adrenal Health	5	7	How to Tap into Hidden Energy
Thyroid	2	7	The 30-Day Thyroid Restoration Protocol
Sleep	5	4	Restful Sleep: How to Get Enough
Vitamin A	5	7	Vitamin A: The Right Kind (page 8)
Joint Alignment	7	3	Lasting Relief for Achy Joints
Joint Inflammation	7	4	Foods and Supplements for Healthy Joints

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



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10 Iorizzo, M., et al. "Leukonychia: What Can White Nails Tell Us?" *Am J Clin Dermatol.* 2022 Mar;23(2):177-193.

5 WAYS DUOMEGA 3&7 FISH OIL MAY SAVE YOUR LIFE.

Harvard College
and Cleveland Clinic
confirm it.



#1 Provides missing Omega for a healthier heart

In the 1970s, Danish researcher Dr. Jorn Dyerberg discovered Alaskan Eskimos' hearts were 7 times healthier than his fellow Danes, in spite of mainly eating oily fish. This discovery led to the billion dollar Omega 3 fish oil industry. But what was lost in the original research was Eskimo blood was rich in Omega 3 and Omega 7. And yet, 99% of fish oils sold today don't have Omega 7. **DuOmega 3&7** corrects this error and provides the missing Omega 7 for heart health!

#2 Cleveland Clinic finds Omega 7 vital to heart health

Dr. Michael Roizen, chief Wellness Officer at Cleveland Clinic, conducted a study of Omega 7 on adults at risk for cardiovascular events. After 30 days of taking a purified form of Omega 7 called Provinal®, the subjects showed a 44% reduction in inflammation...an 18% reduction in triglycerides... an 8% reduction in LDL (bad) cholesterol... and a 5% increase in HDL (good) cholesterol.

#3 Harvard study shows lower incidence of blood sugar issues

Research at Harvard School of Public Health showed that people with the highest blood levels of Omega 7 had a 60% lower incidence of blood sugar issues. Study subjects had lower body mass index (BMI), healthier triglycerides, and lower inflammation. Omega 7 also improved glucose metabolism and insulin sensitivity. **DuOmega 3&7** contains Provinal®, the purest and best studied of all Omega 7s.

#4 Double Strength Omega 3 promotes normal blood pressure and brain health

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#5 Fish oil benefits with no fishy taste or burps

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*"**DuOmega 3&7** has helped me keep my blood sugar in the normal range." — D. Campbell*

*"I've been taking **DuOmega 3&7** for a number of month now, and my triglycerides are back to normal." — M.C.*

*"I love **DuOmega 3&7**. Last time I had blood work they called to ask what I was doing for my cholesterol. They were amazed!" — Wayne G*

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Blood Pressure and Salt

Conventional wisdom says that eating too much salt is a common reason for high blood pressure, but this isn't always the case. In fact, too little salt can raise blood pressure. This may seem hard to believe, given that we always hear the opposite, but it's true.

Although the "lower salt" recommendation prevails, not all studies support the premise.¹ It's a controversial topic.

Salt Does Not Work Alone

Studies of the link between salt and blood pressure don't typically consider potassium or other minerals that play a crucial role in regulating blood pressure. When one large study did so, researchers were surprised by the outcome.

For 16 years, researchers at the Boston University School of Medicine followed 2,632 adults as part of the Framingham Offspring Study. At the start of the study, participants were between the ages of 30 and 64 and were in good health, with normal blood pressure.

By the end of the study, these were the findings:²

- Participants who consumed less than 2,500 mg of sodium daily had higher blood pressure than those who consumed more sodium. This is not a typo: Those who ate less sodium had higher blood pressure.
- Those with the lowest blood pressure also consumed at least 2,300 mg daily of potassium and adequate magnesium and calcium. Higher intake of these

minerals correlated with lower blood pressure.

Meanwhile, our dietary guidelines and the American Heart Association recommend that healthy people under age 50 limit sodium to 2,300 mg daily, and after age 50 to 1,500 mg daily. Given the findings in the Framingham study I described above, the lower target could increase blood pressure.

Low-Salt Health Risks

In Canada, a study at McMaster University in Hamilton, Ontario, took a different approach.³ Rather than looking at blood pressure levels, researchers looked at salt consumption and risk of heart disease, stroke, and death. They examined data on more than 133,000 people from 49 countries.

They found that regardless of blood pressure level, consuming less than 3,000 mg of sodium daily was linked to greater risks of heart disease, stroke, and death. (The average sodium intake in Canada ranges between 3,500 and 4,000 mg daily.)

The study also found that about 10 percent of people who consumed more 6,000 mg of sodium daily had high blood pressure. They noted that in such situations, reducing sodium would be beneficial.

According to the FDA, our daily intake of sodium across all age groups (including infants and children) averages 3,400 mg. But most American men average around 4,200 mg before age 60 and 3,800 mg after. Most women



average around 3,200 mg before age 60 and 2,800 mg after. Women are less likely to exceed the 2,300 daily recommended amount.

Scientifically speaking, there's a "J curve" for healthy salt consumption, meaning too little or too much salt is not healthy, and there's a sweet spot in between. While some situations may require reducing salt, many Americans may be eating the right amount. However, lack of another vital mineral raises blood pressure.

Missing Potassium

Potassium is vital for healthy blood pressure but is lacking in American diets. On average, women consume about half the recommended 4,700 mg daily amount, and men consume about 3,000 mg. This isn't surprising, because 70 percent of our food is processed, and processed food is not a good source of potassium. Eating whole foods, such as those I've listed in the chart on the next page, is the way to correct the shortfall and have healthier blood pressure.

I've also listed some good food sources of magnesium. Supplements are an additional option. If you experience loose stools, it means you took too much, so cut back. Calcium should not be a problem if you consume dairy products or plant-based alternatives with added calcium.

Good Food Sources of Potassium and Magnesium

Include these foods in a low-carb diet of whole foods and plenty of vegetables.

Good Potassium Sources

Adults should consume 4,700 mg of potassium daily to maintain healthy levels of blood pressure.

Food	Potassium Content
Spinach, raw, 2 cups	334 mg
Chicken breast, grilled, 3 oz	332 mg
Salmon, 3 oz	326 mg
Beef, top sirloin, 3 oz	315 mg
Tomato, 1 medium	292 mg
Broccoli, cooked, chopped, 1 cup	229 mg
Turkey breast, roasted, 3 oz	212 mg
Asparagus, ½ cup	202 mg
Canned tuna, light, 3 oz	153 mg
Coffee, brewed, 1 cup	116 mg
Tea, brewed, 1 cup	88 mg

Good Magnesium Sources

Men should get 420 mg of magnesium daily, and women should get 320 mg. I recommend taking a magnesium supplement as well as including some of these foods in your diet.

Food	Magnesium Content
Roasted pumpkin seeds, 1 oz	156 mg
Chia seeds, 1 oz	111 mg
Dry roasted almonds, 1 oz	80 mg
Cooked spinach, ½ cup	78 mg
Dry roasted cashews, 1 oz	74 mg
Roasted peanuts, ¼ cup	63 mg
Black beans, ½ cup	60 mg

Insulin, Blood Sugar, and Blood Pressure

One thing that's important to know: Elevated blood pressure is a symptom of something being off. It isn't a disease, although it's treated as one with medications. The way to reduce elevated blood pressure and enhance overall health is to correct the underlying trigger.

The most common triggers are elevated insulin and/or elevated blood sugar. When metabolism starts to go awry, insulin is the first marker to rise. It's triggered by years of eating a high-carb diet.

If you've been reading this newsletter for a while, you're probably familiar with this cycle: Too many carbs cause blood sugar to spike after meals. Extra insulin is released to enable the blood sugar to get into cells, where it can be used for energy. As this pattern continues, insulin eventually remains elevated. High insulin promotes fluid retention and other changes that can raise blood pressure.⁴

If it continues uncorrected, high insulin develops into insulin resistance, meaning cells become resistant to insulin. As a result, blood sugar doesn't get into cells but stays in the bloodstream — and blood sugar becomes elevated. The rise in blood sugar may or may not be high enough to be classified as type 2 diabetes,⁵ but either way it also contributes to high blood pressure.⁶

A Low-Carb Diet Lowers Blood Pressure

Studies have found that following a low-carb diet can lower blood pressure in people with⁷ and without⁸ insulin resistance or type 2 diabetes and reduce the need for

medication. Carbs include starchy foods as well as sweet foods and sweetened drinks.

Some studies have focused specifically on sweet drinks. One study of 2,696 people, in the United States and the United Kingdom, found that such drinks raise blood pressure.⁹ Another study of 810 people, at Louisiana State University in New Orleans, found that having fewer sweetened drinks lowered blood pressure.¹⁰

Some of my patients had struggled with blood pressure for years, even though they were taking medications to lower it. And when they adopted my low-carb diet, their blood pressure finally dropped. Eating mostly whole foods and limiting carbs generally lowers high blood pressure, without worrying about salt.

1 Gaudal, N., et al. "Conflicting Evidence on Health Effects Associated with Salt Reduction Calls for a Redesign of the Salt Dietary Guidelines." *Prog Cardiovasc Dis.* 2018 May-Jun;61(1):20-26.

2 Moore, L.L., et al. "Low Sodium Intakes are Not Associated with Lower Blood Pressure Levels among Framingham Offspring Study Adults." *The FASEB Journal.* 2017 31:446.6-446.6.

3 Mente, A., et al. "Associations of urinary sodium excretion with cardiovascular events in individuals with and without hypertension: a pooled analysis of data from four studies." *Lancet.* 2016 Jul 30;388(10043):465-75.

4 Salvetti, A., et al. "The inter-relationship between insulin resistance and hypertension." *Drugs.* 1993;46 Suppl 2:149-59.

5 Castro, L., et al. "Association of hypertension and insulin resistance in individuals free of diabetes in the ELSA-Brasil cohort." *Sci Rep.* 2023 Jun 10;13(1):9456. doi: 10.1038/s41598-023-35298-y.

6 Sun, D., et al. "Type 2 Diabetes and Hypertension: A Study on Bidirectional Causality." *Circulation Research.* 2019 Mar 15;124(6):930-937.

7 Unwin, D.J., et al. "Substantial and Sustained Improvements in Blood Pressure, Weight and Lipid Profiles from a Carbohydrate Restricted Diet: An Observational Study of Insulin Resistant Patients in Primary Care." *Int J Environ Res Public Health.* 2019 Jul 26;16(15):2680.

8 Savoia, C. "Carbohydrates and Hypertension: The Quality Counts." *Hypertension.* 2021 Aug;78(2):431-433.

9 Brown, I.J., et al. "Sugar-sweetened beverage, sugar intake of individuals, and their blood pressure: international study of macro/micronutrients and blood pressure." *Hypertension.* 2011 57: 695-701.

10 Chen, L., et al. "Reducing consumption of sugar-sweetened beverages is associated with reduced blood pressure: a prospective study among United States adults." *Circulation.* 2010 Jun 8;121(22):2398-406.

Resistance Exercise Defies Aging

The loss of muscle as we age, at a rate of 3 to 8 percent per decade after age 30, is considered an inevitable process. After age 60,

muscle is lost even more rapidly. This contributes to fat gain, type 2 diabetes, heart disease, and osteoporosis.¹ And eventually, it results in frailty, which is a major cause of falls, disability, and loss of independence in older people. The stereotypical “little old man” or “little old lady” are examples of frail people.

Terrible as this sounds, it isn’t inevitable.

Muscle in Recreational Athletes

Researchers at the University of Pittsburgh measured thigh muscles of 40 high-level recreational athletes whose ages ranged from 40 to 81. These men and women typically trained four to five times per week, and many were master athletes in their chosen sport.

The study found little or no difference in the muscles of these older and younger athletes. But the difference was striking when compared to muscles of older sedentary people; see pictures from the study on the left.²

Studies have also found that older people with low muscle mass are three to four times more likely to suffer from a disability, to have balance problems, and to need a walker to get around.

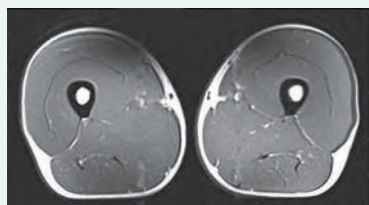
What To Do

At any age, resistance training strengthens and helps to rebuild muscles. For example, one study tested the effects of such training in 11 people whose ages ranged from 85 to 97. A 12-week program of heavy resistance training increased the strength of their quadriceps by up to 47 percent. And lean tissue in those muscles increased by nearly 10 percent.³ Such improvements make a big difference in an individual’s ability to walk and perform all the other everyday tasks we take for granted.

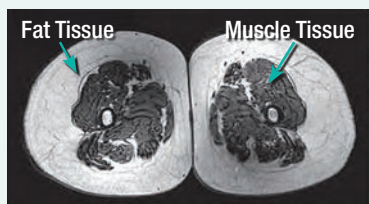
Why doesn’t every doctor routinely prescribe resistance training? We could look for reasons but, really, resistance exercise doesn’t need a prescription. Anyone can — and should — do it two to three times per week.

Thigh Muscles Compared

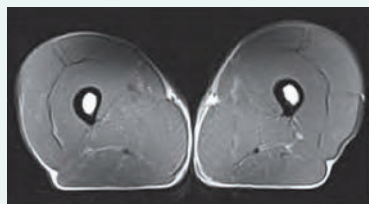
40-year-old triathlete



74-year-old sedentary man



74-year-old triathlete



Spring Cleaning Tips

The old tradition of spring cleaning is a good one. It refreshes your home, just as many things in nature begin to flourish and start new lives. But beware of toxins in cleaning products; look for nontoxic options.

If you aren’t sure about a specific product, one good resource is a guide to cleaners from the nonprofit Environmental Working Group. The guide, which provides information about toxins to avoid and lists safe, nontox-

ic products, can be found at www.ewg.org/cleaners.

Spring is also a good time to clean out your system. I’m not suggesting fasting or juicing. Rather, make an extra effort to choose organic foods where possible, stick to low-carb, whole foods rather than high-carb or processed ones, and go for a daily walk. It’s a good way to give yourself a refreshing boost.



1 Volpi, E., et al. “Muscle tissue changes with aging.” *Curr Opin Clin Nutr Metab Care*. 2004 Jul;7(4):405–410. 2 Wroblewski, A.P., et al. “Chronic exercise preserves lean muscle mass in masters athletes.” *Phys Sportsmed*. 2011 Sep;39(3):172–8. 3 Kryger, A.I., et al. “Resistance training in the oldest old: consequences for muscle strength, fiber types, fiber size, and MHC isoforms.” *Scand J Med Sci Sports*. 2007 Aug;17(4):422–30.

Say “Good Bye” to those Senior Moments

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

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

— Cathy D. Carson City, NV

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

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

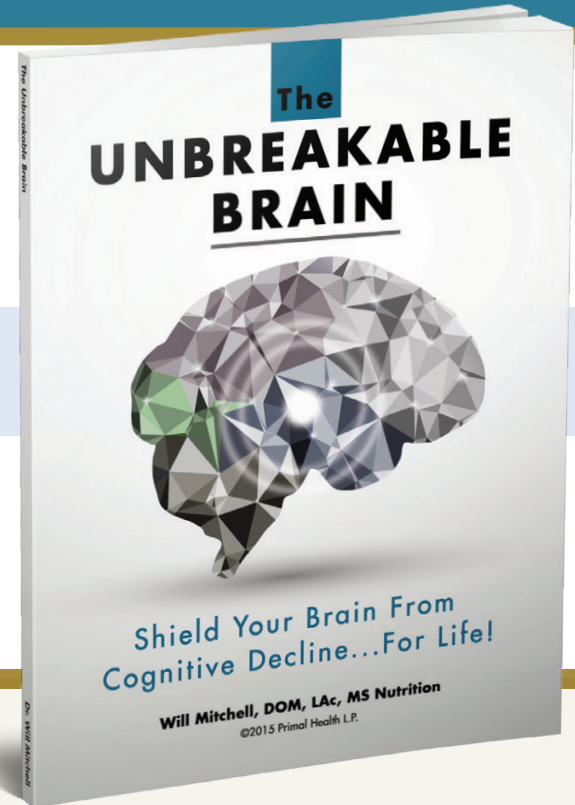
Yes—these are senior moments...and they are the first signs of dementia. The Alzheimer's Association recently admitted it, “Memory loss that disrupts daily life may be a symptom of dementia.”

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

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

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

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



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

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



Renowned Health
Expert, Dr. Will Mitchell

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

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

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

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

Get The Unbreakable Brain for Just \$27!
www.SimpleBrainFix.com/NHC2

Q&A

Q: I have type 2 diabetes. Are brown foods better than white foods? And is bread better for me if I bake it myself instead of buying it at the store? — Jake W.

A: I understand why you're asking. The theory that brown foods, notably grains, are healthier is based on the notion that they are unrefined — brown rather than white rice, for example, or whole wheat flour rather than refined wheat flour.



Refining does strip foods of nutrients, so unrefined — brown — foods are more nutritious. But another issue can reduce this benefit: overindulgence in carbs.

The carb content of bread made with whole wheat (brown) and/or refined wheat (white) can be identical or very similar, and both cause spikes in blood sugar. Breads made with some other whole grains may be a bit lower in carbs, but they are still a major source of carbs.

Brown rice is likely to raise blood sugar a bit less than white rice. But it's still a source of carbs that need to be tracked and moderated if you want to control your blood sugar.

Baking your own bread puts you

in control of the ingredients, so it won't contain chemical additives. But the carb content is not going to differ from store-bought breads made with the same types of grain. What you do with it will determine how it affects your health.

I think home-baked bread is harder to resist than store-bought versions. The trick is to moderate your portions. How thick are your slices? How many do you eat at one sitting?

I suggest slicing your bread so that one slice doesn't contain more than about 10 grams of carbs. If the recipe you use didn't come with nutrition facts, you can calculate your own using an online calculator, such as www.myfitnesspal.com/recipe/calculator.

After you bake a loaf, enjoy a slice. Once it's cooled, slice the whole loaf, put each slice in a separate freezer bag, and put them all in your freezer. When you want bread, you can take out one slice, let it thaw or toast it, and enjoy. Otherwise, it's too tempting to overindulge and sabotage your efforts to control your blood sugar.

Q: My doctor gave me a vitamin B12 test that showed my levels were normal. Should I take B12 supplements and, if so, how much should I take? — Andrea S.

A: I'm glad you're getting your B12 level checked. The answer to your questions partially depends upon your actual B12 level, rather than simply a "normal" result. Blood levels of vitamin B12 between 200 pg/mL and 900 pg/mL are considered to be in a normal range. This is a wide range, and this isn't the only problem.

"Normal" is typically based on levels of a nutrient found in most people. But most people are not in optimal health. Estimates of how many Americans are truly healthy range from 6 to 12 percent of the population. So, most of the B12 levels that are included in establishing a normal range are not those found in healthy people.

An optimal blood level of B12 is over 500 pg/mL. If you don't know your actual number, I suggest getting it from your doctor. If your health provider has a secure website that you can log into, the test results should be there.

How much B12 do you need to take? The real answer is enough to get and maintain your blood level above 500 pg/mL. If your level is already in that range, then you should keep doing whatever you're doing. You may also want to check out an earlier issue of this newsletter, in which I cover B12 and other testing in more detail: Volume 6, Issues 6, *Blood Tests: Which Ones Do You Really Need?*

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.