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# Natural Ways to Slow the Aging Process

By Lynn Allison

One of the pioneers of successful aging was the indefatigable Jack LaLanne. In the 1950s, when Americans were growing fatter and lazier, and smoking cigarettes was the finale to high-fat meals, Jack was urging people to eat right and get fit. He embodied successful natural aging, and to this day, his senior physical feats are mind-boggling. In 1974, at age 60, he swam from Alcatraz to Fisherman's Wharf in San Francisco while handcuffed and shackled to a 1,000-pound boat. At 65, he towed 65 boats, each filled with 1,000 pounds of wood pulp in Lake Ashinoko, near Tokyo, Japan.

One of his many now-famous sayings was, "People don't die of old age, they die of neglect and inactivity." When he died in 2011 at age 96, Arnold Schwarzenegger called his good friend "an apostle of fitness by inspiring billions around the world to live healthier lives."

Dr. Mark Lachs, a geriatric medicine specialist and author of "Treat Me, Not My Age: A Doctor's Guide for Getting the Best Health Care as You or a Loved One Gets Older," says that LaLanne embodied many attributes of successful aging. "He was the original 'use it or

lose it' guy, preaching to us that things in motion tend to stay in motion, and things and people that don't will stop," says Lachs, professor of medicine at Weill Cornell Medicine. "LaLanne essentially told us to maintain what we gerontologists call physiologic reserve, making sure that the extra capacity we're given at birth is available to support our longevity."

Lachs says that LaLanne's fruitful aging came from having a sense of purpose. "While social networks seem to shrink with aging for many, his seemed to grow as he transformed his message for a changing world," said Lachs. LaLanne even had a Facebook page in his 90s, with thousands of fans.

## Brain Health

LaLanne's extreme physical fitness and penchant for exercise helped keep his brain sharp and youthful. Austin Perlmutter, M.D., an internal medicine physician and the co-author of *The New York Times* bestseller "Brain Wash," with his father, neurologist David Perlmutter, M.D., tells *Health Radar* that "physical exercise may be one of our best options for preserving brain health."

Perlmutter, a frequent lecturer and contributor to several online

publications including *Psychology Today* adds: “Research suggests that frequent exercise may help to reduce the risk for dementia, and more generally preserve brain function as we age. Getting exercise has been associated with a significantly larger hippocampus, the memory center of the brain.”

One of the ways that exercise may help to slow brain aging is by increasing a protein called brain-derived neurotrophic factor, (BDNF), which is thought to support healthy neuron function and help grow new neurons into adulthood. Breaking a mental sweat may help to support better brain function as we age.

“Studies show that cognitively complex activities like reading, learning a new language, or playing a game may have a positive impact on cognitive function. They may also help to offset risk for Alzheimer’s disease,” says Perlmutter.

### Battling Inflammation

According to Perlmutter, elevated inflammation is associated with cognitive decline

and brain aging. “Luckily, there are several things we can do to lower inflammation today. We can avoid refined and highly processed foods, consume more healthy fats like omega-3s, exercise, get good sleep, and engage in stress-reduction techniques,” he says.

“Poor quality sleep is a risk factor for both cognitive decline and dementia,” says Perlmutter. “This may be in part due to sleep’s positive effects on the brain’s garbage-disposal system. When we sleep, the metabolic waste from the day is flushed out of our brains. Missing out on this important process may lead to waste buildup, which contributes to cognitive decline and premature aging.”

Elevated, sustained stress appears to be particularly toxic to parts of the brain necessary for healthy cognition. For example, the prefrontal cortex and the hippocampus, which are involved in making good decisions and memory, both appear to be structurally damaged by the effects of chronic stress. “This makes it all the more important to take part in stress-lowering interventions

like meditation, moderate exercise and spending time in nature,” says Perlmutter.

### Cardiovascular Aging

Cardiologist Dr. Joel Kahn, clinical professor of Medicine at the Wayne State University School of Medicine in Detroit, and author of “The Whole Heart Solution,” tells *Health Radar* that 75%-85% of heart disease diagnoses can be prevented. “This is based on studies on more than 100,000 people around the world,” he says. “Researchers have found that with a simple pattern of good lifestyle habits — what I call vitamin ‘L’ — can help you protect the aging cardiovascular system.”

Here is Kahn’s prescription for vitamin “L”:

- **Do not smoke.** “All the studies reinforce the now 40-year-old notion that smoking is an extremely bad habit,” he says.
- **Be active.** Get 30-40 minutes of walking daily, says Kahn.
- **Control your weight.** The most consistent way to reduce risk of heart attack for men was keeping their waist under 40 inches, and



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for women, under 35 inches. This also helps lower your risk of diabetes, stroke, and cancer.

- **Consume alcohol in moderation.** Almost every study has shown that some consistent use of alcohol predicted up to 85% reduced risk of having a heart attack. “And it’s interesting, because different countries have different alcohol cultures, but the results indicate that one ounce of hard liquor, five ounces of wine, and eight ounces of beer are relatively equivalent in protection,” says Kahn.

- **Get seven hours of sleep a night.** “The MORGEN Study of 1,000 people found that the people who followed the lifestyle habits I’m talking about but slept less than seven hours had about a 65% chance of being heart attack-free, compared to up to 85% for those who got seven hours,” said Kahn.

- **Eat five or more servings of fruits and vegetables daily.** “I saved this habit for last because it’s the one people hit the least. Only 1%-3% of Americans do it — but it’s the most important. Every single study has found that eating five or more servings of vegetables and fruits a day is a must for reducing risk of cardiovascular disease and slowing the aging process,” says Kahn. “It’s simple and very doable.”

## Insulin Resistance

Jonny Bowden, Ph.D., co-author along with cardiologist Stephen Sinatra, M.D., of the updated version of “The Great Cholesterol Myth,” tells *Health Radar* when we talk about “slowing down aging,” what we really mean is slowing down the side effects of aging, such as less mobility, less energy, lowered

libido, and increased risk of heart disease and diabetes. Bowden says the “single best predictor of accelerated aging and disease is insulin resistance.” In fact, it is the underlying cause of most diseases of aging. To prevent and even reverse insulin resistance, change your diet.

“Reduce processed foods of all kinds in your diet and eat more whole foods that are found in nature,” he says. “The beautiful part of insulin resistance is that it can be reversed and prevented with diet alone.”

Bowden’s second piece of advice for slowing down aging is exercise. “As a health and fitness expert with more than 30 years of experience, I say walk every day or as frequently as you like. Of every exercise studied, walking is the most unequivocally beneficial to the brain, heart, circulatory system, mood — you name it,” he says. “Walking may not get you on the cover of *Fitness* magazine, but it can extend your life and protect you from nasty diseases.”

Finally, Bowden says that successful aging is dependent on a third dimension beyond diet and exercise. “It’s about community, relationships, and participation. The oldest living people in the world have all these boxes checked,” he says. “There are studies confirming the Roseto Effect that shows relationships and social bonds can overcome a host of on-paper risk factors that would kill most people.”

The Roseto Effect is based on the low rate of heart disease noted in the 1960s in the small, closely-knit Italian community of Roseto, Pa. As the residents gradually

## Searching for the Fountain of Youth

Scientists are constantly searching for ways to prolong lifespan, delay illness or both, says cardiologist Dr. Joel Kahn. Some areas of exploration that Kahn notes are:

**Prescription medicines.** A trial of metformin, a diabetic drug, for preventing disease is underway in New York City. The results may be available in four years. Medications like rapamycin and dasatinib are in earlier stages of evaluation.

**Oxygen therapy.** Research from an Israeli center of hyperbaric oxygen treatment have shown that multiple sessions of a specially designed oxygen protocol show reversal of the aging process measured in laboratory results.

**Supplements.** Some supplements show promise for favorably impacting the aging process. These include extracts from pomegranates called urolithin-A, a substance from wheat germ called spermidine, and a compound called alpha-ketoglutarate.

shed their social structure, the rate of heart disease increased, becoming similar to surrounding communities and towns.

“Your piece of mind and your freedom from chronic stress are huge factors in thwarting degenerative diseases,” says Bowden. “Finding a way to manage stress effectively could be one of the single most powerful strategies for aging well. Meditation, volunteering, playing with animals, spending more time in nature, and engaging in group participation are ways to achieve this goal. These are the lifestyle behaviors that are associated with long and healthy lives.” □



# Making **YOU** Live Healthier

with Mehmet Oz, M.D. & Michael Roizen, M.D.

## A Guide to Healthy Hormones

**W**hat do vitamin D, dopamine, and insulin have in common? They're hormones. While you may think hormones are just what turns your tween into a tough-to-manage teen or trigger hot flashes, they do much more than that.

There are 47 different hormones, most produced by endocrine glands such as the thyroid, pancreas, testes, and ovaries. Exceptions include dopamine, which can be produced in the gut and brain, and vitamin D, which is produced by chemical reactions in the skin.

Hormones circulate in the bloodstream, helping control and coordinate metabolism, reproduction, growth, and development, and to help direct the body's response to everything from injury and infection to environmental factors. They also affect hunger, thirst, anger, fear, and sexual behavior.

### Boosting Your Hormones

Hormones may seem like mysterious chemical powerhouses, but there is a great deal you can do — directly or indirectly — to influence their impact on your body. For example, by adopting a healthy sleep schedule, you encourage proper secretion of the hormone melatonin, which helps you sleep and then become alert.

So how can you make sure your hormones are helping you stay or become healthy? The basics are: Get plenty of exercise, eat a nutritious diet, get regular restful sleep, and manage your stress response.

Exercise helps your body dispel surplus stress hormones, regulates metabolism, helps muscle function, and promotes good sleep. All those functions rely on appropriate doses of hormones such as insulin, growth hormone, thyroid-secreting hormone, melatonin, and testosterone (women have it too). Exercise helps make sure you're getting the right amount of all of them.

A healthy diet free of inflammatory added sugars,

red and processed meats, and other highly processed foods not only stops over- or underproduction of hormones, it stabilizes your metabolism, protects your cardiovascular system, and impacts levels of the hormones leptin and ghrelin (appetite controllers), estrogen, and testosterone. Through your gut, a healthy diet affects production of the neurotransmitter hormones serotonin and dopamine, which influence temperature, appetite, muscle movement, and mood. By eating only when the sun is out, you facilitate insulin and other hormones' functions — and that optimizes your metabolism.

Stress reduction using meditation, yoga, exercise, and deep-breathing techniques allows you to moderate the effect of stress hormones such as cortisol. When they're chronically high, they damage everything from your blood vessels to your brain.

### Protecting Your Hormones

Limit exposure to endocrine-disrupting chemicals (EDCs) found in cash register receipts, plastics, pesticides, canned foods (lining the cans), processed foods and their packaging, fire retardants in upholstery, detergents, toys, cosmetics, and more. Here are some ways you can avoid these dangerous chemicals:

- Shop organic and eat fresh or frozen, not canned, foods when possible; replace plastic food containers and storage bags with glass.
- Reject register receipts.
- Avoid plastics marked "PC" for polycarbonate, or recycling label #7.
- Don't use plastic made of PVC-recycling label #3.
- Avoid personal care products that list "fragrance" — a catch-all term that can indicate the EDCs called phthalates — as an ingredient. □

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# 7 Hidden Signs of Cardiovascular Disease

By Charlotte Libov

Heart disease is the No. 1 killer in the United States, yet people often ignore key warning signs coming from their heart until it is too late. Part of the problem is that some warning signs of heart problems are less obvious than the classic signal of chest pain.

“For more than a half century, the traditional message has been that chest pain is the definitive warning sign of heart attack. But there are many other, overlooked signs as well,” says cardiologist Chauncey Crandall, M.D.

Chest pressure, pain running down the arms, unusual fatigue, dizziness, and nausea can also signal an impending heart attack, notes Crandall. And a heart attack isn't the only type of problem that can lead to a cardiac emergency.

“There are hidden signs that can also be tip-offs to serious cardiac problems, including congestive heart failure and arrhythmias (irregular heartbeats) that, if left untreated, can result in death,” says Crandall, who is the director of Preventive Medicine at the world-renowned Palm Beach Cardiovascular Clinic in Palm Beach Gardens, Fla.

Here are seven warning signs of hidden heart disease that you need to be aware of:

1. **Persistent cough.** If you cough while lying down and stop coughing when you sit up, it can mean you have congestive heart failure. When your heart isn't beating properly, fluid backs up your blood vessels and leaks into places like your lungs.
2. **Leg, ankle or foot swelling.** If your ankles are getting thicker, it could be a sign that your heart muscle isn't pumping efficiently. Veins get backed up and push excess fluid into your body tissues, causing feet, ankles, and legs to swell uncharacteristically. Also, if you feel bloated in unusual places, try pressing on your skin. If it leaves a pitted indent, that means your tissues could be harboring excess fluid and you should see a doctor.
3. **Loud Snoring.** While snoring is not a danger sign itself, loud snoring may be the tipoff that you are suffering from obstructive sleep apnea, a common sleep disorder. Sleep apnea can occur during the night when the muscles that support the soft tissues in your throat, the tongue or soft palate, temporarily relax, narrowing the airway and momentarily cutting off breathing, sometimes numerous times during the night. This can put additional strain the heart, which can lead to high blood pressure. While sleep apnea is most often associated with men, women can suffer from it as well.
4. **Feeling cold all the time.** People with congestive heart failure may find that they often feel cold in their arms, hands, feet, and legs (often referred to as the extremities). This happens because the body is circulating most of the available blood to the brain and other vital organs to compensate for the failing

heart's inability to pump enough blood to the entire body.

5. **Erectile dysfunction.** The inability to achieve or maintain an erection has different causes, one of which is that it can be a tipoff to nerve damage from diabetes. That raises the risk of heart attack, heart failure, and atherosclerosis, which is an accumulation of fatty deposits in the blood vessels that delivers blood to the penis. Atherosclerosis, which is the disease process that causes narrowing in the heart's coronary arteries and sets the stage for heart attack, also occurs in blood vessels through the body.

6. **Swollen gums.** Bleeding or swollen gums is a sign of gum disease. Gum disease causes chronic infection, which keeps the body's immune system turned on. Compounds excreted by the immune system called cytokines kill germs, but they can also punch holes in arteries and produce plaque that can cause heart attack.

7. **Palpitations.** Some people are sensitive to their heartbeat, and may feel that it is beating too fast. This can just be a harmless sensation. But true heart palpitations can also be a tip-off for several heart problems. It may be that your heart is too weak to beat efficiently (congestive heart failure), or it can be a sign of atrial fibrillation, an irregular heartbeat that raises stroke risk. Or it may be a sign that you have mitral regurgitation, also known as a leaky heart valve. □

# Surviving a Loss: Experts Reveal How to Cope with Grief

By Fran Kritz

As we get older, the loss of loved ones is inevitable, as are the feelings that come with that loss.

“Mourning is the outward signs we show. Grief is how we are feeling inside,” says David Kessler, a grief expert and author of a recent book, “Finding Meaning: The Sixth Stage of Grief.”

The first five stages of grief, according to Kessler, are denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and acceptance, though how each person deals with them is specific to them.

Kessler says, however, that “the stages are not linear, and how we experience loss is as unique as our fingerprint.”

Friends and family may ask — often too quickly — “how are you doing,” sometimes hoping we’ll say we are fine. “Adjusting to a new reality takes time and doesn’t follow a predictable pattern or timetable,” says Amy Greene, MDiv, DMin, director of the Center for Spiritual Care at the Cleveland Clinic in Ohio.

Edy Nathan MA, LCSWR, a grief specialist who practices in New York City, says exercise such as stretching, yoga, and walking have been shown to be effective tools for coping with the emotional and physical states of grief.

## Seek Help If Necessary

But if at a certain point you feel you would like help in handling

your grief, there are many options, including spiritual counseling, psychological counseling, and support groups.

It’s always a good idea to share news of a loss, and discuss how you’re feeling with your physicians.

In addition to being able to offer support, and resources, they will also want to make sure you are taking care of your physical health, including taking prescribed medications and keeping medical appointments.

Here are some suggestions for dealing with grief:

**Be gentle with yourself.** Try not to judge yourself for not “doing better” or “keeping it together.” Time is an excellent healer.

But if you feel you could use someone to talk to, reach out to friends, family, spiritual leaders, or your doctors.

**Try to get extra rest.** It’s common to be physically and emotionally exhausted after a loss. Getting extra rest can help. Set a regular sleep schedule and try to go to bed and wake up at the same time each day.

But if you find you are sleeping too much, you may want to force yourself out of bed. Nathan points out that sleeping too much can be a way of avoiding grief.

**Keep structure in your day.** Set a time to wake up, eat meals, groom, and dress even if you’re not leaving your house. And because you may not be feeling hungry, set regular mealtimes and accept offers of food from people who ask.

**Set goals.** You should have specific goals, but be sure to make them reachable, short-term goals — like a walk, or a trip to the dry cleaners — so that you don’t get overwhelmed.

And make a list of daily activities that you need to do — such as grocery shopping or laundry — and that you like to do, such as gardening.

**Hold off on major decisions early in your grief period.** Early on in your grief, emotions might dictate your decisions, such as getting rid of things that belonged to someone you loved who died. It’s best to give yourself time before making important decisions. That way you will be able to really consider what you want to do.

Kessler also offers some helpful things to say and do when someone you know is grieving:

- I am so sorry for your loss.
- I wish I had the right words; just know I care.
- I don’t know how you feel, but I am here to help in any way I can.
- You and your loved one will be in my thoughts and prayers.
- My favorite memory of your loved one is . . .
- I am always just a phone call away
- Give a hug instead of saying something
- We all need help at times like this, I am here for you
- I am usually up early or late if you need anything
- Say nothing. Just be with the person. □

# Thyroid Problems Often Missed by Doctors: What You Need to Know

By Gary Greenberg

If you're not feeling your best, chances are good that your thyroid gland is at least part of the problem. This butterfly-shaped gland in the front of your neck is often overlooked in medical exams, but your body feels the impact when it produces too little or too much of its vital hormones.

"Thyroid hormone is essential for the body," says leading integrative physician David Brownstein, M.D. "This tiny 1.5-ounce gland produces a teaspoon of hormone over the course of a year, and that regulates the metabolic rate of every cell in the body 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year."

When the thyroid produces too little of its primary hormones, triiodothyronine (T3) and thyroxine (T4), the condition is called hypothyroidism.

That slows down metabolism, potentially leading to fatigue, weight gain, brittle nails, lifeless hair, brain fog, depression, constipation, and lower sex drive. Less commonly, the thyroid overproduces (hyperthyroidism), which can promote anxiety, heart palpitations, excessive sweating, weight loss, insomnia, and hyperactivity.

## Underestimated Problem

According to the American Thyroid Association, about 20 million Americans have thyroid issues, but some 60 percent don't know it. Many holistic-oriented practitioners believe those estimates are low. "I think the prevalence is way underestimated," says holistic nutritionist Ann Louise Gittleman. "There's barely a woman I see that doesn't have a thyroid issue." Women are five to ten times more likely than men to have thyroid imbalances, likely due to their more complicated hormonal system and/or higher rate of autoimmune issues.

Conventional doctors often misdiagnose thyroid problems because the symptoms are common to many other conditions, and the standards for "normal" thyroid hormone production may be too broad.

"Being within a normal range in an unhealthy population is not necessarily a good thing," notes Gittleman, author of "The New Fat Flush Plan."

"Many people suffer subclinical thyroid dysfunction, meaning they are within the normal range, but the gland is not functioning properly."

## The Role of Iodine

Brownstein believes thyroid disorders are at epidemic levels, largely due to iodine deficiencies. "Iodine levels have fallen by 50 percent over the last 40 years," he tells *Health Radar*. "And you can't make thyroid hormone without adequate amounts of iodine."

Compounding the problem is our daily exposure to fluoride, chlorine, and bromide, toxins from the halide family of elements that inhibit iodine reactions in cells. Fluoride and chlorine are often found in tapwater, and bromide is used in many pesticides.

"It's a double whammy for the thyroid gland," says Brownstein, author of the *Natural Way to Health* newsletter. "We have less iodine and more halide toxins, and that's a disaster for the thyroid."

One way to deal with low thyroid function is to take the thyroid hormone-replacement medication levothyroxine, which is the most commonly prescribed drug in the U.S. But that just treats symptoms, not the underlying cause.

To treat thyroid conditions holistically, Brownstein suggests seeing a "iodine-literate" physician who can analyze your hormonal balance. Therapy includes upping your iodine consumption by eating iodine-rich foods — most notably organic sea vegetables and ocean fish — and/or taking iodine supplements.

Iodized salt is not a good answer because it isn't very bioavailable — only about 10 percent of the iodine is absorbed by the body. Brownstein also says that the recommended dietary allowance of 150 micrograms a day is insufficient, in part due to our exposure to iodine-inhibiting halide toxins.

"In my experience, iodine in doses ranging from 6-50 mg a day is adequate for the vast majority of the population," he says.

Selenium, zinc, and iron are three other essential minerals that have vital roles in thyroid function. Vitamins A and D are also important. □

# Dealing With Carpal Tunnel Syndrome



**John J. Fernandez, M.D.**, is an assistant professor at Rush University Medical Center. He is the creator of some of the most advanced surgeries in the treatment of the hand, wrist, and elbow. Fernandez is also the director for Midwest Orthopedics at Rush University Medical Center. He also serves as one of the team physicians for professional sports teams the Chicago Bulls, the Chicago Red Sox, and the Chicago Steel.

## **Q: What is carpal tunnel syndrome?**

**A:** Carpal tunnel syndrome (CTS) develops when excessive pressure builds up around the median nerve at the wrist. Picture a garden hose with water running through it as the healthy nerve. If the hose gets a kink in it, the water can no longer flow with ease. Several tendons and nerves pass through this carpal tunnel as they travel into the hand. If the diameter of the tunnel decreases, or the contents within the tunnel increase in size, pressure will increase around the nerve.

## **Q: How common is this condition?**

**A:** An estimated 8 million people are affected by carpal tunnel syndrome each year. There is a higher incidence in people between the ages of 40 and 60, and women have three times greater risk of developing CTS because of higher levels of the hormone estrogen. Diabetes, thyroid and kidney disease, arthritis, and pregnancy are also linked to the condition. Work activities, particularly heavier work, increase the prevalence. Smoking, obesity, alcoholism, and external trauma including fractures to the area can increase risk as well. There is some controversy over the effects of lighter tasks such as keyboarding.

## **Q: What are the symptoms of CTS?**

**A:** Patients experience the classic complaints of numbness and tingling, particularly in the thumb, index, and middle fingers. Weakness, dropping things, fatigue, and hand cramps can

also occur. Symptoms may be more intense at night, affecting your sleep. Positional factors, such as holding a book, steering wheel, or hair dryer, can also cause discomfort.

## **Q: When should you seek medical attention?**

**A:** If you allow carpal tunnel syndrome to advance, it can result in permanent nerve injury. When symptoms start affecting your daily life, including sleep or work, evaluation is recommended. Diagnosis is made based on a combination of history, physical exam, and objective testing. Electromyography (EMG electrical testing), MRI, and ultrasound can help confirm CTS.

## **Q: How is carpal tunnel syndrome treated?**

**A:** Treatment goals are to alleviate the pressure on the nerve. Wearing a wrist splint at night can maintain the tunnel in a more open position and decrease pressure on the nerve. Medications like anti-inflammatories or steroids can decrease swelling around the nerve. This may include steroid injections within the carpal tunnel. If these measures fail, surgery can be effective. The surgery can be performed in less than 15 minutes with local anesthesia. The patient can then use the hand for light activities immediately, including keyboarding and driving. Heavier tasks can begin after 3-4 weeks, and most people return to normal use within 6-12 weeks.

## **Q: How can a person prevent CTS?**

**A:** The best way is to identify activities that aggravate your symptoms and modify or eliminate them. For example, you may want to adjust your workstation. Gain control of contributory medical conditions, and make lifestyle changes to maintain a healthy weight. Quit unhealthy habits like smoking and drinking. If carpal tunnel syndrome cannot be prevented, at least recognize the symptoms and intervene early. These things can help assure a healthy and happy nerve for the rest of your life. □



# Olive Oil, Garlic, and Apple Cider Vinegar Ward Off Diseases

The health benefits of olive oil, garlic, and apple cider vinegar have been touted for thousands of years as safe, natural, and powerful defenses against chronic disease while boosting the immune system to ward off airborne pathogens and other invaders. David Friedman, M.D., the bestselling author of “Food Sanity: How to Eat in a World of Fads and Fiction,” says that he extensively uses all three of these superfoods in pasta dishes and as a salad dressing and marinade. They work together synergistically to improve overall health and increase longevity.

## Olive Oil

Olive oil is a staple of the Mediterranean diet, which research shows can reduce the risk of cardiovascular disease. The oil contains vitamin E, copper, iron, and calcium. It is rich in antioxidants, including oleuropein, which fights inflammation and cancer. It also contains tyrosol that combats heart disease, oleanolic acid to improve liver function, and quercetin to lower blood pressure, according to the National Institutes of Health.

“Olive oil contains mono-unsaturated fatty acids that help lower bad LDL cholesterol while maintaining good HDL cholesterol,” says Friedman. Research also shows that olive oil is beneficial for lowering blood pressure because it makes nitric oxide more bioavailable, keeping arteries dilated and clear.

Olive oil also helps fight age-related cognitive decline because it protects against inflammation, oxidative stress, and proteins that trigger Alzheimer’s disease.

## Garlic

In 460 BC, Hippocrates, the father of modern medicine, prescribed garlic to treat a variety of ailments. Now, modern science confirms that the “stinking rose” is effective for treating the common cold, high cholesterol, dementia, and cardiovascular disease. There is also evidence garlic may help reduce the risk of cancer.

At a meeting of the International Garlic Symposium (IGS) held in Japan, scientists revealed that garlic contains incredible healing properties. The most benefits came from a product called aged garlic extract (AGE), which is produced by aging and extracting crucial compounds in an ethanol base for 20 months.

“As our population ages, hypertension, heart disease, and other diseases of aging such as Alzheimer’s will continue to rise,” says Matthew Budoff, M.D., a cardiologist and professor of medicine at UCLA. “These diseases may be partially preventable with healthy lifestyle and therapies such as aged garlic extract.”

Garlic may also be instrumental in staving off dementia. Several research papers written by German scientists suggest that AGE can prevent arterial stiffness by maintaining the flexibility of the arteries and enhancing nitric oxide

availability, relaxing blood vessels and reducing the risk of dementia and Alzheimer’s disease.

According to the National Institutes of Health, eating one fresh clove of garlic a day or taking AGE may lower your risk of breast, esophageal, stomach, bowel, and prostate cancer.

## Apple Cider Vinegar

Apple cider vinegar, made from fermented apples, helps the body absorb minerals, improves digestion, and aids in weight loss. Friedman explains that apple cider vinegar blocks some of the body’s digestion of starch, which would normally convert to fat. Studies show that acetic acid, the main component of apple cider vinegar, suppresses body fat accumulation and thwarts metabolic disorders caused by a high fat diet. Apple cider vinegar can also improve insulin sensitivity, according to the American Diabetes Association, and increases feelings of fullness, which may lead to weight loss and reduced belly fat.

“People who took one tablespoon of vinegar for 12 weeks had lower body weight, a smaller body mass index, less visceral fat, a smaller waist measurement, and lower triglyceride levels,” Friedman says.

The best way to take apple cider vinegar is to drink it, but be sure to mix it with juice or water to lessen the acidity. “I mix two teaspoons in 10 oz. of organic apple juice each morning,” Friedman says. You can also take a 500 mg supplement each day. □

# Don't Waste Money on the Wrong Supplements

The U.S. dietary supplement industry was projected to rake in more than \$36 billion in 2020 despite there being scant scientific evidence that most of the products actually improve health or increase longevity.

Although the typical American diet lacks vital vitamins, minerals, and other nutrients, experts say many supplements found on drug store or supermarket shelves aren't likely to supply much benefit to the average consumer.

"Every person has different nutritional needs because they are different biologically, chemically, metabolically, genetically, in their environmental exposure, what medications they may be taking, what stage of life they are in, and so on," says functional nutritionist Paula Mendelsohn. "That's why people should consult dietitians or nutritionists, who are trained to [determine] who needs what."

Without going through that process — which typically involves blood tests to determine a person's nutritional profile — buying supplements is a crapshoot. Mendelsohn warns that "90 percent of the supplements in stores are designed to optimize shelf life and cost rather than bioavailability and functionality." With that in mind, here's what you need to know about some of the most popular supplements:

**Calcium, iron, and magnesium.** Calcium carbonate, iron sulfate, and magnesium oxide are the most common supplemental forms of these essential minerals, but they

are hard for the body to utilize because they are all basically rocks. Better options are products in which the minerals are combined with more bioactive substances, most notably amino acids. Look for calcium hydroxyapatite and iron glycinate. The best magnesium combinations depend on what you are trying to support, including: taurate (wound healing) L-theanine (neurological system), glycinate (muscle aches, heart) and citrate (regularity).

**Vitamin E.** The most common E supplements are synthetic, evident by a "dl" prefix on the labeling, such as dl-alpha tocopheryl acetate. The isomers in the "dl" forms block each other, and thus limit bioavailability. Natural forms have just a "d." Mendelsohn recommends d-alpha tocopheryl succinate. Vitamin E is a potent antioxidant. But being fat-based, it sticks around in the body and can be toxic at high levels.

**Folic acid.** This form of the B vitamin folate is synthetic, and some people have a genetic variation that prevents converting it into the form cells can utilize. Folate is especially vital for women of child-bearing age because a deficiency early in pregnancy can cause spina bifida in the baby. Mendelsohn suggests a supplement with activated folate as opposed to folic acid.

**Vitamin B12.** The most common form of vitamin B12 is cyanocobalamin, which is cheap and shelf stable. But Mendelsohn says it's not

very bioactive or functional. Better choices are methyl-, adenosyl-, or hydroxycobalamin. Supplementation is important for vegans because the best sources of the vitamin are meat products.

**Vitamin D.** The sunshine vitamin is critical for immune function, so it's especially critical during the pandemic. Many if not most Americans are deficient in vitamin D. The most common, cheaper supplement is D2, derived from plant sources. But D3, which comes from animals, is more bioactive. Mendelsohn believes the RDA of 400 IUs won't do much to move the needle and recommends a daily dose of 5,000 IU for those with a blood level less than 40 ng/mL.

**Gummies.** Avoid any vitamin in gummy form. "You should not be purchasing any supplements that are wrapped in corn syrup or any type of sugar because the body needs extra vitamins to fight the effects of sugar," Mendelsohn tells *Heath Radar*. "You should also avoid sugar-free supplements sweetened with sucralose and aspartame."

**Probiotics and omega-3s.** "If they are not refrigerated when you buy them, they are probably not in a good form," says Mendelsohn, owner of Boca Wellness & Nutrition in Boca Raton, Fla. "Omega-3s are very delicate fats and don't tolerate heat well. And probiotics are living organisms that become active at 98.6 degrees. You want to keep them dormant and moisture-free until they are in our intestines." □

# FDA Approvals: Prostate Cancer, ACL Implant, Amputation, Pancreatic Necrosis

Compiled exclusively by Health Radar, here are the most significant new drugs and medical devices approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration.

## Oral Hormone Therapy for Prostate Cancer

Orgovyx (relugolix) is the first oral hormone therapy approved to treat advanced prostate cancer. As opposed to currently approved hormone therapies that are injected or placed as implants under the skin, Orgovyx is administered orally and works by blocking the pituitary gland from producing luteinizing hormone and follicle-stimulating hormone. Researchers evaluated the safety and efficacy of Orgovyx in the phase 3 HERO study, a randomized, open-label trial in prostate cancer patients randomly assigned to either Orgovyx once a day or leuprolide injections every three months for 48 weeks. Among the 622 patients who received Orgovyx, 96.7 percent achieved and maintained castrate levels of testosterone (<50 ng/dL) by day 29 through the end of treatment compared with 88.8 percent of men who received leuprolide acetate injections. The most commonly reported side effects included hot flush, increased glucose and triglycerides, musculoskeletal pain, decreased hemoglobin, fatigue, constipation, diarrhea, and increased liver enzyme levels.

## Anterior Cruciate Ligament Implant

An anterior cruciate ligament (ACL) implant that offers an alternative to traditional ACL reconstruction has received marketing authorization — the first approval for an ACL tear treatment in more than 30 years. The Bridge-Enhanced ACL Repair (BEAR) Implant received approval under the De Novo premarket review pathway, the FDA regulatory pathway for low- to moderate-risk devices of a new type. The resorbable implant, made from bovine collagen, is the only currently available alternative to reconstruction with allograft, autograft, or suture-only repair for an ACL rupture. The approval is indicated for skeletally mature patients at least 14 years old who have a complete ACL rupture confirmed on magnetic resonance imaging. The ACL

stump must be attached to the tibia to construct the repair. The surgeon secures the BEAR Implant via suture and injects the patient's own blood into the implant to form a device-protected clot thereby enabling the body's healing process. Within about eight weeks of the procedure, the implant is absorbed and replaced by the body's own tissue.

## Implant System for Leg Amputations

The Osseoanchored Protheses for the Rehabilitation of Amputees (OPRA) Implant System was approved for transfemoral amputations for adults with above-the-knee amputations who can't use a conventional socket prosthesis. The OPRA Implant System is surgically anchored and integrated into a patient's remaining thigh bone so that it can connect to an external prosthetic limb, as opposed to conventional leg prostheses that use a socket fitted over the residual limb to secure the device to the leg. OPRA extends through the skin at the bottom of the patient's residual limb and connects to a prosthesis.

## Tissue Removal for Pancreatic Necrosis

The FDA granted marketing authorization to the EndoRotor system, which provides a minimally invasive way to resect and remove necrotic tissue for patients with walled-off pancreatic necrosis (WOPN). The approval provides a new treatment option for the estimated 15 percent of patients with severe pancreatitis who also develop WOPN. Current treatments involve invasive surgery or endoscopic tools not specifically indicated to treat WOPN. The EndoRotor system is used in direct endoscopic necrosectomy and should only be used after other procedures to drain the WOPN. Serious adverse events related to the procedure were reported in three patients: Two had gastrointestinal bleeding and the third had a pneumoperitoneum and later died after contracting sepsis and multiorgan system failure due to massive amounts of infected pancreatic necrosis. Other serious adverse events included hematemesis, deep vein thrombosis, and pancreatitis; all were attributed to patients' underlying conditions rather than the device. □

**FIT GAMERS DEFY ‘FAT’ STEREOTYPE**

Gamers — or eSports players — are generally stereotyped as fat and unfit, but the first study to investigate body mass index (BMI) in gamers found that they weigh less, barely smoke, and drink less. The study, published in the *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, surveyed participants from 65 countries. “The findings challenge the stereotype of the morbidly obese gamer,” said eSports researcher Michael Trotter. Gamers were 9%-21% more likely to be a healthy weight than the population, but they were 4.03% more likely to be morbidly obese than the global average. Only 3.7% of gamers smoked daily compared to the global rate of 18.7%.



**DRINKING COCOA MAY MAKE YOU SMARTER**

Volunteers at the University of Birmingham who were given a cocoa drink containing high levels of flavanols were able to complete complex cognitive tests more quickly and easily than those given a drink which contained no flavanols. Flavanols are antioxidants that are found in cocoa, grapes, tea, berries, and other foods. They are known to be heart-healthy, but their effects on brain health

aren’t as defined. Noninvasive brain imaging found that volunteers who drank the cocoa had a faster and greater increase in blood oxygenation levels, which led to increased speed — an average of 11% faster — and accuracy.

**ANTIBIOTIC COMBATS ZIKA INFECTIONS**

Hundreds of children were born with brain deformities after their mothers contracted the Zika virus in 2015. Now, researchers at the National Institutes of Health found that the common antibiotic methacycline was effective at preventing brain infections and reducing neurological problems associated with the virus in mice. However, the antibiotics didn’t completely counteract the damage caused by the Zika virus. The weight of mice infected with the virus was lower than control mice even in those given methacycline. “These results suggest that tetracycline-based antibiotics may at least be effective at preventing the neurological problems associated with Zika virus infections,” said organic chemist Rachel Abrams.

**OSTEOPOROSIS UNDERDIAGNOSED IN OLDER MEN**

Even when older men experience a fracture, many still aren’t diagnosed with and treated for osteoporosis, according to a study from the University of Alabama at Birmingham. While the bones of both men and women become thinner and weaker with age, emphasis of bone density testing has been on women because bone loss accelerates during menopause, and men don’t typically have problems

until around age 70. A study of 9,876 of men insured by Medicare who had suffered fractures found that fewer than 6% had a bone mineral density test (BMD) in the two years before their fracture.

**RA DRUG IMPROVES HEART DISEASE**

A two-year study by the U.K.’s University of Leeds found that drugs used to treat the early symptoms of rheumatoid arthritis (RA) also treat early stage heart disease. Research published in the *Annals of the Rheumatic Diseases* found that patients treated with DMARDs (disease-modifying antirheumatic drugs) showed improvements in stiffness of the aorta. “The rheumatoid arthritis treatment improved vascular stiffness, regardless of how the patient responded to the RA medication,” said Sven Plein, suggesting that in addition to suppressing inflammation, the RA meds influence heart disease possibly by having a direct effect on the processes of heart disease.

**ESTROGEN THERAPY MAY CAUSE DEADLY COVID-19 CLOTS**

One of the potential complications from COVID-19 infection is the formation of blood clots, and women with coronavirus who take either hormone replacement therapy or estrogen with birth control, or are pregnant may have an increased risk. “We need additional research to determine if women who become infected with the coronavirus during pregnancy should receive anticoagulation therapy, or if women taking birth control pills or hormone

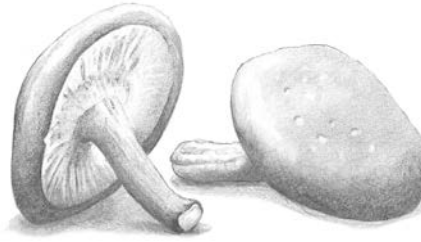
replacement therapy should discontinue them,” said Daniel Spratt of Maine Medical Center.

### LOW RISK OF CANCER SPREAD ON ACTIVE SURVEILLANCE

Men with early prostate cancer who opt for active surveillance have a 1% or less chance of their cancer spreading or death from prostate cancer, according to a study published in *The Journal of Urology*. “In the long term, active surveillance is a safe and viable option for men with low-risk and carefully selected intermediate-risk prostate cancer,” said senior author Peter R. Carroll. The researchers analyzed 1,450 men with early-stage prostate cancer who chose active surveillance. After seven years, 99 percent were still alive with no metastases.

### PARKINSON’S DRUG TREATS MACULAR DEGENERATION

Levodopa, the drug commonly used to treat Parkinson’s disease, safely stabilized and improved vision in people with an advanced form of macular degeneration, according to a study published in *The American Journal of Medicine*. While only 10%-15% of age-related macular degeneration (AMD) patients have neovascular AMD (nAMD), it’s responsible for 90 percent of the vision loss associated with the disease. When patients newly diagnosed with nAMD were treated with levodopa, vision improved enough for patients to read an additional line on the eye chart — the equivalent of improving from 20/40 to 20/32. Patients needed fewer more expensive, invasive treatments such as anti-VEGF treatment, which involves injections directly into the eye.



### PLANT-BASED DIET SPEEDS METABOLISM

Eating a plant-based diet boosts metabolism, leading to weight loss and improvement of risk factors for heart disease and diabetes, according to a study published in *JAMA Network Open*. When researchers compared overweight volunteers who switched to a plant-based diet with no calorie limit to a control group who made no changes in their diet, the plant-based group increased the number of calories burned following a meal by an average of 18.7%. Within 16 weeks, the plant-based group lowered their body weight by about 14 pounds, including significant drops in fat mass and visceral fat found around internal organs. In addition, fat inside the livers of the plant-based group was reduced by 34%, their fasting plasma insulin concentration dropped by 21.6%, and LDL cholesterol was reduced by 15.5 mg/dL. There were no significant changes in the control group.

### GREEN TEA EXTRACT MAY REDUCE NOROVIRUS RISK

Adding green tea extract to prepared foods as an edible film may cut the risk for norovirus, a highly contagious illness that causes vomiting and diarrhea. A study from Ohio State University found that adding green tea extract to a film-forming substance created a barrier that killed norovirus as well as two types of bacteria: *E. coli* K12 and

*Listeria innocua*. Both aid bacteria that causes food-borne illness.

### RECOVERED COVID-19 PATIENTS CAN STILL CARRY VIRUS

An Italian study found that almost 17% of patients considered fully recovered from COVID-19 test positive for the virus. Patients who continued to have respiratory symptoms, especially sore throat and rhinitis, were more likely to have a positive test result. “Our findings indicate that a noteworthy rate of recovered patients with COVID-19 could still be asymptomatic carriers of the virus,” said researcher Francesco Landi.

### ASPIRIN MAY ACCELERATE CANCER IN SENIORS

Older adults with advanced cancer who start taking aspirin may increase the risk of their disease progressing, says a study published in the *Journal of the National Cancer Institute*. While previous research has shown that aspirin may reduce the odds of middle-aged people developing cancer, especially colon cancer, there was little information on its effects on seniors. The new study found that aspirin was linked to a 19% greater risk of being diagnosed with a cancer that had spread, and a 22% greater risk of being diagnosed with stage 4 or advanced cancer. Those who were diagnosed with advanced cancer were more likely to die during the study’s follow-up period than those taking a placebo. Harvard researcher Andrew Chan said the study suggested a “possible adverse effect of aspirin on the growth of cancers once they have already developed in older adults.” □

# The Truth Behind Health Claims About Meatless Meat

Beyond Burger, Impossible Foods, and other meatless “meats” are exploding in popularity, largely because people think they are healthier for both humans and the planet. But when you take a closer look at these highly processed foods, the truth becomes a bit fuzzier.

“I don’t think these products are necessarily better for you,” says registered dietitian Toby Amidor. “A Beyond Meat burger is made with water, pea protein isolate, expeller-pressed canola oil, rice protein, sunflower lecithin, and the list goes on.

“Why go to the trouble of putting all this stuff together when you can just have meat that comes straight from the cow?”

Not only are vegan meats more processed than beef, but they are considerably more expensive. Beyond Burger and Impossible Food patties cost \$12 a pound and up — about three times more than regular ground beef and twice as much as grass-fed.

Still, the market for meatless meat is booming. Unlike black bean, quinoa, and other veggie burgers, this new generation of substitutes captures the taste, texture and even the juiciness of real beef. Most consumers are not vegans, but rather meat-eaters that are trying to cut down on their beef consumption.

“Other companies are making soy-based tuna as well as vegan sausages, deli meats, and even pork rinds,” says Amidor. “To make the flavorings, these alternative meat products have a variety of ingredients, many of which you won’t recognize.”

## Nutrition Comparison

It’s a mixed bag when it comes to nutrition in vegan meats versus beef. Beyond Burger and Impossible Foods patties contain 250 and 240 calories, respectively, while 80 percent ground beef is 300. Beef has slightly more total fat (20 grams vs. 14 grams), but about the same amount of saturated fat.

One big difference is that the fake meats have more than four times the sodium of beef and one-third less protein. It should be noted that these beef substitutes may be plant-based, but they don’t count as servings of vegetables because they are so highly processed.

“Whether you have a beef patty or one of the substitutes, it’s still a good idea to balance your meal with vegetables,” Amidor tells *Health Radar*. “Only one in 10 Americans get enough veggies.”

## Other Health Factors

It should also be noted that Beyond Burgers are soy-, gluten- and GMO-free, and they get their reddish color from beet juice extract. The Impossible Foods version is made with GMO soy that may be tainted with glyphosate, the carcinogenic chemical used in the herbicide Roundup.

The Impossible patty also produces its juicy texture through the use of soy leghemoglobin — an iron-containing plant protein — processed with genetically engineered yeast. It is a novel food ingredient that was tested on lab rats for 28 days with no apparent health risk, but the verdict is still out.

“Is it possible that soy leghemoglobin is safe? Sure,” says *Consumer Reports* senior scientist Michael Hansen, Ph.D., in a magazine article. “Do we know that for sure? No. We just don’t have enough data either way yet.”

## Environmental Impact

Impossible Foods claims that the environmental impact of its product is 87%-96% lower than standard beef production in various categories, including global warming potential, land usage, and water consumption. But those figures relate to concentrated animal feeding operations (CAFOs), which are the worst offenders.

Studies show that there is far less difference, or none at all, when it comes to grass-fed beef raised using sustainable farming practices.

The new meatless meats are likely comparable to grass-fed beef in health and planetary impact, though their carbon footprint is much smaller than most of the beef (CAFO) consumed in the U.S.

“Personally, I prefer eating something made with ingredients I can actually see,” says Amidor, author of “The Best 3-Ingredient Cookbook.” “I’d rather eat real beef, or if I want to go plant-based, a quinoa or black bean burger.” □

# Drugs That Are Toxic to the Brain

We all want to stay mentally sharp as we get older. While eating nutritious foods, exercising, and engaging in stimulating activities can help stave off mental decline, experts warn that certain common drugs contribute to failing brain function. “Most adults take multiple medications, which may cause side effects that impair memory and lead to confusion,” Gary Small, M.D., author of “2 Weeks to a Younger Brain” tells *Health Radar*. “Many of the drugs that cause such problems are anticholinergic, which means that they impair the signaling of a neurotransmitter acetylcholine, which is important for normal cognitive functioning.”

Small says that examples of these drugs include medications for diarrhea (Lomotil), depression (Paxil), asthma (Ipratropium), urinary incontinence (Detrol), and allergies (Benadryl). He adds that many over-the-counter medications to treat insomnia also have this effect on the brain.

Patricia Salber, M.D., MBA, founder and editor-in-chief of the website “The Doctor Weighs In,” adds that anti-anxiety drugs called benzodiazepines — such as Xanax, Valium, Ativan, and Restoril — can trigger memory loss and confusion in older adults.

“Antidepressant tricyclic drugs such as Elavil, narcotic painkillers, and anti-seizure drugs such as Depakote and Tegretol may also be damaging to the brain,” Salber tells *Health Radar*.

“Two drugs that may be overlooked as possible causes of memory loss are statin drugs that

are designed to lower cholesterol levels, and beta-blockers used to treat hypertension,” she notes.

## Dementia Complications

British researchers recently reported that some medications can also trigger negative neurological reactions in people who already have dementia. For example, sleeping pills known as “Z-drugs” were found to increase the risk of strokes, falls, and fractures in this population.

People who suffer from dementia are often prescribed sleep aids such as Sonata (zaleplon) and Ambien (zolpidem), but in high doses these can have serious side effects.

“Z-drugs are commonly prescribed to help people sleep,” Chris Fox, M.D., said in a news release from the University of East Anglia’s Norwich Medical School. “However, these drugs were never licensed for dementia, and they have been associated with adverse effects such as falls and fractures in older people.”

## Insomnia Epidemic

Joseph Maroon, M.D., a neurosurgeon, author, and triathlete, tells *Health Radar* that “our overstressed, overcommitted, and overanxious” society is now facing an epidemic of increased insomnia and the soaring use of sleeping aids.

“All of these drugs have come under high scrutiny because when they block the neurotransmitter acetylcholine, the risk for dementia increases,” he says. He recommends

cannabidiol (CBD) to his patients suffering from insomnia because it naturally improves sleep and reduces anxiety.

“It’s also an excellent alternative analgesia to treat pain and reduce inflammation.” Studies have shown that 25 mg of CBD is the correct dosage for anxiety, but a higher dosage may be needed to get better sleep.

“In my own practice I have had many patients who have complained of chronic insomnia report more restful and deep sleep with CBD in the range of 25 to 75 milligrams,” says the author of “Square One: A Simple Guide to a Balanced Life.”

Salber says that while anticholinergics are used to treat a wide variety of illnesses and conditions, “they are particularly harmful over time and have a profound effect on older adults who may experience confusion, worsening memory function, and memory loss.” People with urinary incontinence or overactive bladder are often treated on a long-term basis with these drugs.

“The American Geriatrics Society strongly recommends that anticholinergics be avoided in older adults,” says Salber.

She adds that people who are currently taking these drugs should discuss alternative options with their doctors to see if the root cause of the problem could be addressed, and other, safer options could be implemented such as going to the bathroom more frequently, wearing diapers or drinking fewer liquids in the case of urinary incontinence. □

## Hyperbaric Oxygen Reverses Aging Process

Hyperbaric oxygen therapy (HBOT) can stop blood cells from aging and reverse the aging process in healthy adults, say Israeli researchers. Using treatments with high-pressure oxygen in a pressure chamber can reverse two major processes associated with aging: the shortening of telomeres (the protective caps located at the ends of chromosomes) and the accumulation of old and malfunctioning cells in the body. Healthy participants 64 or older underwent a series of 60 HBOT sessions over a period of 90 days. Blood samples taken before and after indicated that the treatments actually reversed the aging process in telomeres and decreased the accumulation of old, non-functioning cells. The length of telomeres increased by up to 38 percent, and the amounts of senescent cells (old cells that no longer divide) decreased by up to 37%. “Our HBOT protocol was able to [prove] that the aging process can be reversed at the cellular-molecular level.” The study was published in the journal *Aging*.

## Freezing Controls Prostate Cancer

A less-invasive technique called hemi-gland cryoablation (HGCryo) destroys prostate cancers by freezing them, according to a study published in *The Journal of Urology*. “Freedom from cancer, as documented by biopsy, was found in 82 percent of men who underwent HGCryo at their 18-month follow-up,” said researchers from the University of California, Los Angeles. All men had cancers grade 2 or higher. The HGCryo procedure, which uses an advanced ultrasound/MRI fusion system, places needles in and around the area of the prostate where the cancer is located. The tissue is then frozen using argon gas which destroys the cancer and surrounding area. The technique provided effective cancer control even in patients with more advanced

(grade 3 or four) cancers. None of the patients died from cancer during the study, and none developed metastatic prostate cancer. There were no significant complications, and side effects were “generally mild and short-lived.”

## Slowing Multiple Sclerosis Progression

An anti-inflammatory drug administered intranasally may help slow the progression of multiple sclerosis (MS), according to research from the University of Alberta. The disease, which has no known cause and no cure, occurs when the immune system destroys the protective sheath called myelin that covers nerves and destroys their ability to communicate with other nerves. “Nerves in the brain are like insulated wires, but in MS there is initially a loss of the insulation, and then the eventual loss of the wire,” said researcher Christopher Power. “Those losses are caused by inflammation,” he continued. Inflammasomes are molecules that activate an inflammatory response in the body, and that response must be controlled to halt the progression of MS. Power’s research group identified a drug called VX-765 that inhibits caspase-1, a component of inflammasomes that promotes inflammation. It was injected into the noses of mice, sending it directly to the brain and avoiding the circulatory system. PET scans showed “intranasal therapy is effective in preventing demyelination and axon injury and loss.”

## Baking Soda May Prevent Leukemia Relapse

Sodium bicarbonate, or baking soda, can reprogram T cells in leukemia patients to resist the effects of cancer cells that suppress the immune system, which can propel relapse after stem cell transplants. The research, which was conducted on both mice and T cells from patients before and after transplantation, explains why patients frequently relapse after treatment. Acute myeloid leukemia (AML) cells suppress the spread of donated T cells by secreting lactic acid. Complete response rates can be as low as 17% after 100 days. But treating cells with sodium bicarbonate reversed the effects of lactic acid and boosted the anticancer effects of stem-cell transplants. The new research lays the foundation to conduct tests of baking soda as a safe and simple therapy to reduce relapse rates. □

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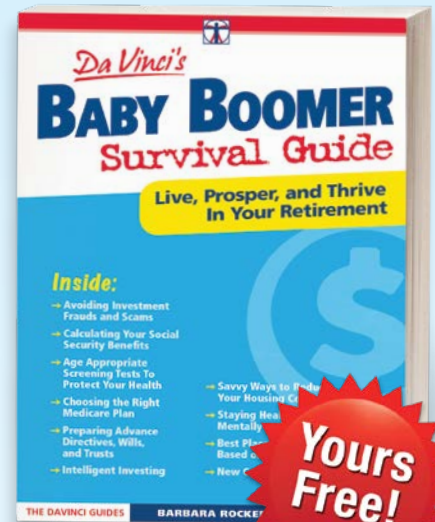
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