

# Parasites

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meat--if you eat any--and eggs thoroughly, and not relying on microwaves to do so, since they have been shown to leave cold spots in food, which can harbour parasites. Paul Pitchford, author of *Healing With Whole Foods*, warns that "microwave ovens do not heat foods, particularly animal products, sufficiently to destroy parasites. . . ." Also, all surfaces used to prepare foods should be washed thoroughly. And although it feels wonderful to walk barefoot, especially in the woods, this can also be problematic.

Drink bottled water, or water with iodine and/or grapefruit seed extract in it, and avoid drinking from streams and rivers. Oxygen added to water can also kill bacteria. Grapefruit seed extract and limes sprinkled over foods can also prevent infestations, as can a healthy and strong immune system.

Essentially, if your body is strong, especially your digestive system, then parasites have a much harder time gaining entrance and staying in your body. Those with low stomach acid are particularly at risk. To prevent infestations, take digestive enzymes or use bitter herbs to increase the enzyme activity and acid content of the digestive system.

Also consider taking immune herbs like echinacea or astragalus to keep your immune system strong. And avoid antibiotics and immune suppressing drugs, since these weaken immunity.

## Whole Foods for Parasite Prevention and Treatment

To keep the immune system strong and to prevent infestation, there are many whole foods that can offer protection. Strengthening the immune system also requires avoidance of sugar, alcohol, and dietary allergens. Parasites don't like certain foods, so the more of them you eat, the better your defenses will be. Eat plenty of garlic, onions, raw carrots, raw beets, figs, papaya seeds, pomegranate seeds, cayenne pepper, pumpkin seeds and bitter melon. Drink plenty of vegetable juices, such as carrot, dandelion, beet, ginger and garlic, everyday to keep parasites away. These foods are particularly effective against parasites and have been known to expel parasites from the body.

### Supplements for Parasites:

#### Giardia and Grapefruitseed Extract

For those who have picked up giardia (giardia is a protozoa that causes stomach

cramps and diarrhoea), try using grapefruit seed extract for several months. Grapefruit seed extract is one of the best remedies for treating and preventing parasites: it has powerful anti-fungal, anti-parasite, anti-bacterial and anti-viral properties and is effective against over 800 strains of organisms. It is also a good idea to take probiotics to strengthen the digestive system, such as acidophilus and bifidus. Goldenseal is also effective against giardia.

#### Ringworm

For those who have a fungal skin infection, like the misleadingly named ringworm, try using tea tree oil topically and black walnut hulls or grapefruit seed extract internally, as well as probiotics. Soothing skin creams like calendula or aloe (anti fungal) can also be used to stop the irritation.

#### Threadworm

For threadworm, probably the best herb is quassia, which needs to be taken both as an enema and as a tea.

Let's take a closer look at some of the remedies that can be used for the many different kinds of parasitic infections.

🌿 **Tea Tree Oil** is a powerful antimicrobial agent that is particularly helpful against fungal infections. Use topically for skin infections.

🌿 **Black Walnut** is used for skin parasites and against amoebic dysentery, giardia and tape worm.

🌿 **Cloves** gets rid of intestinal parasites and helps to prevent them.

🌿 **Garlic** is used to kill intestinal parasites, including roundworm and hookworm; fungus and harmful bacteria. It is most potent in its raw form.

🌿 **Gentian** is a herbal bitter that tones the entire digestive system, increasing bile and other digestive enzymes, which is important in preventing intestinal parasites. It is also a powerful antifungal aid.

🌿 **Male Fern** expels intestinal worms and is especially effective against tapeworms.

🌿 **Neem** is used to eliminate worms and is also effective against giardia. When applied topically, it is also effective against skin fungus.

🌿 **Rhubarb** is a powerful antifungal herb that cleanses the intestines as well.

🌿 **Wormwood** is a bitter herb used to expel intestinal worms, especially roundworms and tapeworms. It increases gastrointestinal secretions; cleanse out the bowels by promoting bowel movements; reduces liver congestion and promotes bile flow and urination: all helpful when trying to both prevent and to treat parasites.

🌿 **Goldenseal** is a powerful natural antibiotic that is effective against many of the common strains of bacteria and parasites that causes diarrhoea, including traveler's diarrhoea.

🌿 **Betel Nut Palms:** These nuts are chewed to help expel intestinal worms and are highly effective in treating tape worm.

It is a good idea to take probiotics and bitters on a daily basis to help keep your digestive system, and therefore your immune system, strong to help fight off parasites.

If you are traveling or camping, to help keep your vacation healthy, you may want to take probiotics, grapefruit seed extract and goldenseal on a daily basis, if needed, to prevent infestations. And, of course, eat plenty of the above mentioned foods.

Grapefruit  
Photo by Ted Snider



Wormwood



Garlic  
Photo by Ted Snider

## THE NATURAL PATH

The Natural Path is written by Ted Snider and Linda Woolven, a master herbalist, acupuncturist and solution-focused counselor who provides consultations in the Toronto area. For an appointment, call (416) 782-8211. Linda is the author of *The Vegetarian Passport Cookbook*. Linda and Ted's new book, *Healthy Herbs*, is available in stores now. This newsletter is intended for educational purposes only and is in no way intended for self-diagnosis or self-treatment. For health problems, consult a qualified health practitioner.



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A Canadian Leader in Trusted, Cutting Edge Natural Health Information

by Linda Woolven, B.A., Master Herbalist, Acupuncturist and Ted Snider, B.Ed., M.A.

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# Parasites

Some estimate that one out of every two to three people have parasites. Parasites are everywhere: in food, in water, on surfaces--every thing you come into contact with. Whether you get parasites or not, and whether they become an issue or not, greatly depends on your health and your immune function. Parasites have a harder time entering a system where the immune system is strong.

Common parasites include roundworm, which lives in the intestines; threadworm, the most common parasite in children; tapeworm, which can grow up to several feet long; whipworm and hook worm. There are also several protozoan parasites, like giardia, found in contaminated rivers, oceans and lakes; entamoeba which can cause dysentery; blastocystis hominis which is linked to chronic illnesses, and many more.

Symptoms of a parasite infestation include diarrhoea or constipation or both, bloating, gas, food sensitivities, headache, fatigue, muscle aches, weakness, increased hunger, dark circles under the eyes, teeth grinding, bad breath, flu like symptoms, abdominal pain, fever, chemical sensitivities, memory problems, weight loss and irritability. Some people have all of the symptoms and some have a few of them, or even none, but, left untreated, parasitic infections will weaken the immune system, which can lead to other illnesses.

Parasites can be contagious. Prevention from infestation includes washing all fruits and vegetables with nutrients like grapefruit seed extract, which contains a powerful anti-parasite oil called paracan. Other preventative measures include cooking all meat--if you eat any--and eggs thoroughly, and not relying on microwaves to do so,

**ALSO INSIDE**

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- Garlic Prevents Colorectal Cancer

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## Weight Loss

That's Healthy and Long Lasting

Can it Be Done?



The overweight epidemic is one of the most serious health threats facing North Americans today. All kinds of weight loss diets have emerged out of this epidemic. But, though most of them will lead to weight loss in the short term--following almost any controlled diet will be better than the out of control diet many of us follow--the really hard part is maintaining the weight loss. And there is virtually no research proving which, if any, of these diets is actually effective for the long term weight loss that leads to real improvements in health. Just as disturbing, there is scant research on the long term healthfulness of these weight loss diets. So it would be crucially important to the health of North Americans to know which weight loss diets and supplements really increase our chances of maintaining a healthy weight and which ones are really healthy for us to use.

### Which Diet Really Keeps Weight Off?

In one of the few, and perhaps the only, studies to look at long term, sustainable weight loss, sixty-four overweight women were put on either a low fat diet or a vegan diet. Vegan diets exclude all animal products, and the one used in this study also limited nuts, seeds and avocados. The women on the vegan diet lost significantly more weight. After a year, the vegans had lost 11 pounds compared to only 4 in the low fat group, and they were still 7 pounds lighter after two years, while the women in the low fat group were only 2 pounds lighter (*Obesity* 2007). So the vegan diet just may be the first one to have proven itself effective over the long run.

These researchers probably restricted nuts, seeds and avocados because of the common conception that they are fattening. But the

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## Lifesaver: The Evidence for Herbs is Strong

Natural medicine's critics used to say--and some who clearly don't look at the literature still do--that there was no scientific research behind its claims. With the explosion of studies in the past several years, that criticism is no longer available. So the critics said that the research there was was of a lower quality than the research on drugs. So researchers put that criticism to the test . . . and now it's no longer available either. They matched herb studies with drug studies for the same conditions and found that 21% of the herb studies were of high quality methodology while only 5% of the drug studies were. They concluded that " . . . the quality of trials of . . . herbal medicine is on average superior to trials of conventional medicine" (*Journal of Clinical Epidemiology* 2007;60:787-94).







# Weight Loss

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because of the common conception that they are fattening. But the restriction was unnecessary. Studies consistently show that, despite the difficult to shake reputation, nuts are not fattening and are great for your heart. Various nuts have been shown in various studies to lower the heart damaging LDL cholesterol while raising the heart healthy HDL cholesterol without increasing weight (*Am J Clin Nutr* 2001; *Journal of Nutrition* 2003; *J Am Dietetic Association* 2005). Nuts have also been shown to reduce your risk of dying from heart disease (*Arch Intern Med* 2002). Similarly, recent research has also acquitted the avocado from charges of being fattening.

Which Diets are Healthy for You?

The good news is that the same sort of diet that really works is the same sort of diet that is really good for you.

A new study has finally compared how good for you the different weight loss diets are. And it turns out the popular low carb diets are the worst, while the high complex carb ones are the best.

Which one is the very healthiest? Dean Ornish’s plan came first. His diet is a vegetarian diet that is high in fiber and complex carbs and very low in cholesterol and saturated fat. The second best was the Weight Watcher’s high carb (but not low carb) version. The unhealthiest of all was the low carb Atkin’s diet. (*J Am Diet Assoc* 2007).

So want to lose weight and maintain it in a way that is safe and healthy for you? Science says eat a vegetarian/vegan diet that is high in fiber and complex carbs from legumes, whole grains, fruits and vegetables and very low in animal fats and proteins. And go ahead and throw in the nuts and seeds.

And what about the supplements? Which ones really work?

Fiber

It should now not be a surprise that fiber really helps. A review of studies found that, even when you don’t restrict calories, high fiber diets improve weight loss (*Nutr Rev* 2001). Fiber makes you feel full, so you eat less (*J Nutr* 2000). But it does more than that. Fiber helps control blood sugar and insulin, and blood sugar and insulin control is crucial for weight control. Psyllium, pectin, guar gum and glucomannan are especially good fiber supplements for weight loss. People given 3g of glucomannan for two months

have been shown to lose between 5.5 and 8.14 pounds while people given a placebo continued to gain weight (*Int J Obes* 1984; *Curr Ther Res* 1989). Other studies also testify to the weight loss power of glucomannan (*Minerva Med* 1992; *Pediatr Med Chir* 1992).

5-HTP: The Undiscovered Secret

5-HTP raises serotonin. That’s why it’s one of the best nutrients for depression and insomnia. But less know is that serotonin signals your brain that you are full and that you should stop eating. So if your serotonin is low, your brain thinks you’re hungry and sends out a red alert for food. You start craving the fastest possible energy source and binge on sugary and refined foods. So serotonin deficiency is a big contributor to weight gain.

5-HTP corrects the deficiency. When obese women were given 200mg of 5-HTP three times a day, twenty minutes before meals, their calorie intake went down by 37% and they lost three pounds in five weeks even though they were not exercising and were allowed to eat whatever they wanted. A placebo-control group lost only one pound (*Journal of Neural Transmission* 1989).

Two other weight loss studies gave either 5-HTP or a placebo to obese women, half an hour before each meal. In the first, the placebo group lost 2.28 pounds in six weeks and the 5-HTP group lost 10.34 (*Adv Exp Med Biol* 1991). In the second, the placebo group lost 1.87 pounds in twelve week, while the 5-HTP group lost 11.63 (*Am J Clin Nutr* 1992). Those are impressive numbers!

Hydroxycitrate: Eat Less; Make Less Fat

Hydroxycitrate comes from the Malibar tamarind (*Garcinia cambogia*). Hydroxycitrate inhibits appetite, so less calories go in, and inhibits fat production from carbohydrates, so less calories become fat. Though there has been one negative study, several preliminary studies suggest that hydroxycitrate is a powerful inhibitor of fat production. A recent double-blind study found that this herb significantly improves results of weight loss diets (*Physiol Behav* 2000). Terry Willard, Ph.D. says that he has seen people get really good results using this herb.

Drink the Pounds Away

A very healthy, effective, inexpensive and delicious way to lose weight is green tea. Green tea helps weight loss by stimulating thermogenesis (*Am J Clin Nutr* 1999). Thermogenic substances turn up the body heat and literally burn the calories away. Green tea especially targets weight loss in the waist, which is important because losing weight in the abdominal area may be the

most important kind of weight loss for living longer. Obese women who were given 250mg of powdered green tea eight times a day in a double-blind, placebo-controlled study, lost 1.9kg in thirty days and significantly decreased their waist measurement (*Revue De L’assoc Mondiale de Phytother* 1985). Another study produced a 4.6% decrease in weight and a 4.5% decrease in waist size (*Phytomedicine* 2002).

Burn the Calories Away

Another herb that increases the amount of calories you burn through thermogenesis is citrus aurantium, or bitter orange (*Obes Res* 2005). Citrus aurantium also helps by building lean muscle and making fat available for energy. You probably should not combine this herb with caffeine though.

Here’s A New One: 7-Keto

7-keto, a supplement that comes from DHEA, up-regulates metabolism and stimulates thermogenesis. Double-blind research found that when either 100mg of 7-keto or a placebo was given twice a day to people who were exercising and controlling their calories, only the 7-keto group lost a significant amount of weight: 6.34 pounds in eight weeks (*J Exercise Physiology* 1999).

Calcium: Building Bone, Losing Weight?

Could weight loss be a new use of calcium? If you’re diet is low in calcium it could. In a huge seven year double-blind study of 36,282 postmenopausal women, those who got less than 1,200mg of calcium a day going into the study were less likely to gain weight when given 1,000mg of supplemental calcium and 400IU of vitamin D than when they were given a placebo (*Arch Intern Med* 2007). In a second study, people on a low calorie diet lost significantly more weight when they were given 800mg of calcium than when they were given a placebo (*Obes Res* 2004).

Spice Up Your Food

And finally, cayenne may reduce your hunger and calorie consumption while increasing your calorie burning.



THE YEAR IN REVIEW

The Latest in Healthy Eating

This year's big winner: Whole grains!

Whole Grains and Heart Health

When researchers analyzed almost 150,000 people from seven previous studies, they found that people who eat at least two and a half servings of whole grains a day have a 21% lower risk of suffering from cardiovascular problems than people who eat .2 servings or less a day. Surveys show that almost half of us eat less than one serving a day. So switching from refined grains to whole grains is an easy and delicious way to decrease your risk of heart disease (*Nutr Metabolism Cardiovasc Dis* 2007 ).

In a second study, almost 29,000 healthy women who were forty-five years old or more were followed for ten years. The more whole grains they ate, the less high blood pressure they had. Women who ate more than four servings of whole grains a day were 23% less likely to get high blood pressure than women who ate less than half a serving a day (*Am J Clin Nutr* 2007).

And in yet another whole grain and heart study, when researchers followed 21,376 men for twenty years, they found that the men who ate seven or more servings of cold breakfast cereal a week had a 29% lower risk of heart failure. However, the cereal only offered the heart protection if it was made from whole

grains, not refined grains (*Arch Intern Med* 2007).

More Heart Protection: Fruits & Vegies

A thrombus is a blood clot in the blood vessel that can cause a heart attack or stroke. But this study found that the people who eat the most fruit and vegetables are the least likely to have thrombi. Conversely, people who eat one and a half servings of red meat or processed meat a day double their risk of thrombi.

The study also found that diets high in folic acid, B6 and essential omega-3 fatty acids were protective (*Circulation* 2007).

From Fruit to Fruit Juice

This study compared clear apple juice without pulp to cloudy apple juice with pulp. Both were rich in health promoting antioxidants, but the cloudy juice was richer. The juice made from one variety of apples was 50% richer and the juice from another variety 80% richer in antioxidant flavonoids. Not surprisingly, then, the cloudy juices also had more antioxidant activity (*J Sci Food Agric*).

Two More Reasons to Eat Soy

Metabolic syndrome is a combination of obesity, cholesterol problems, elevated triglycerides, high blood pressure and insulin and glucose problems. It is an important risk factor for

many diseases, including heart disease. When 42 postmenopausal women with metabolic syndrome were put either on the heart healthy DASH diet + red meat or the DASH diet + soy, the soy diet improved total and LDL cholesterol as well as insulin resistance (*Am J Clin Nutr* 2007).


A second soy study, this time of men, found that those who get 5.1mg or more of soy isoflavones in their daily diet have fewer symptoms of benign prostate hyperplasia than men who get less (*Br J Nutr* 2007).




Two Trans-Fats Studies

A new study has confirmed that higher trans fatty acids are associated with high levels of the dangerous LDL cholesterol, low levels of the beneficial HDL cholesterol and increased risk of coronary heart disease. The study found that women with the most trans fats had a whopping triple the risk of coronary heart disease (*Circulation* 2007)!

But the latest news on trans fats is that they are also linked to infertility. When only 2% of omega-6 polyunsaturated fats are replaced with trans fats, the risk of infertility in women goes up 79%. When monounsaturated fats are replaced, the risk more than doubles (*Am J Clin Nutr* 2007)!

# NATURAL PATH NEWSFLASH



<h2>Drinking Green Tea Prevents Cancer</h2> <p>This massive study followed 69,710 women for six years, looking at the effect green tea had on colorectal cancer. What it found was amazing. The women who consistently drank green tea on a regular basis from the time they were first asked to the end of the study six years later, had a 57% lower risk of colorectal cancer than nonregular green tea drinkers.</p>  <p>(<i>Cancer Epidemiol Biomarkers Prev</i> 2007;16:1219-1223) Photo by Ted Snider</p>	<h2>Menopause Making You Suffer? This May Be Your Lucky Clover!</h2> <p>Red clover contains several isoflavones with phytoestrogenic activity. And now a meta-analysis of five studies on red clover and hot flashes has found that the herb produces a statistically significantly decrease in hot flashes. Women on red clover had 1.45 fewer hot flashes a day than women on a placebo.</p>  <p>(<i>Phytomed</i> 2007;14:153-9) Photo by Ted Snider</p>	<h2>Garlic Protects Against Colorectal Cancer</h2> <p>Garlic is a great anticancer food. And now a review of twenty-one studies of garlic and colorectal cancer has found that both eating garlic and supplementing with aged garlic extract protects against colorectal cancer. Colorectal cancer is the second leading cause of cancer related death in Canada.</p>  <p>(<i>J Nutr</i> 2007;137:2264-9) Photo by Ted Snider</p>
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