

Natural Health Journal

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Liquid Assets:

Why you should consider a liquid multivitamin supplement.

Like most adults looking to maintain good health, you faithfully take a one-a-day multivitamin tablet and assume you've covered the most important nutritional bases. Mission accomplished, right? Well, maybe not.

Many experts now believe that consuming vitamin supplements in

liquid form is substantially more beneficial than relying on solid pills—a belief that is supported by research studies. According to Gerhard N. Schrauzer, DSc, FACN, Professor Emeritus at the University of California, San Diego, "liquid supplements contain the nutrients in a more highly bio-available form, are gentler to the stomach, and sometimes are more suitable than solid supplements, especially for children and elderly patients."

No matter how good the quality of a multivitamin, the fact is that

many people may not be able to adequately break down a hard, compressed tablet and allow its contents to be fully absorbed through the digestive tract and into the bloodstream.

The reason for this is two-fold. One, the vitamin tablet may be formulated using materials that interfere with proper dissolution and absorption. Two, the person taking the vitamin supplement, especially if an older adult, may be lacking the digestive function necessary to effectively break it down. In cases where one or both factors are at play, the end result is an unfortunate waste of money and an unexpected shortage of needed nutrients.

That is not to say that all supplements offered in tablets or capsules are necessarily a bad choice. Indeed, many reputable manufacturers go to great lengths to maximize absorption from pills and will have conducted testing to ensure adequate dissolution. In addition, certain vitamins, minerals and herbs are simply not suitable for a liquid format due to unpleasant taste, oral or digestive irritation, a need for refrigeration, and so on. While liquid formulations may be the format of choice, sometimes it just isn't possible.



Heart Disease: At a glance

Heart disease includes a number of separate but often related conditions, such as angina, congestive heart failure, high blood pressure, high cholesterol and atherosclerosis. As the number one cause of death in North America, heart

disease is strongly linked to diet and lifestyle choices, though genetic predisposition can be a factor.

Facts & figures

- According to the Heart & Stroke Foundation, 32% of all male deaths in Canada in 2002 were due to heart diseases, diseases of the blood vessels and stroke.
- For women, the toll was even higher: 34% of all female deaths in 2002 were due to cardiovascular disease.
- Heart disease ends the lives of more women each year than all types of cancer combined.

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The problem with pills

To maintain their shape and consistency, tablets may contain a range of fillers and binders, and some utilize coating materials to improve the appearance, taste, texture or ease of swallowing. These extra ingredients (excipients) only add to the challenge the digestive system already has of thoroughly breaking down the solid structure to allow the dissolution and absorption of nutrients.

The problem is well illustrated in a recent study on the dissolution of 27 brands of calcium carbonate tablets. Using United States Pharmacopeia (USP) standards for testing dissolution rates, the researchers found that 17 (63%) of the products were still less than 50% dissolved after 90 minutes. They also found that the amount of filler material in the tablets correlated with the decreased dissolution.

For those with the most healthy and robust digestive systems, breaking down solid tablets may be relatively efficient. However, digestive capacity can be hampered temporarily or persistently by a number of factors, including stress, sickness, medications, yeast overgrowth and stomach acidity, to name a few. Moreover, as we age our production of both stomach acid and digestive enzymes decreases dramatically. Therefore, the 50+ population who likely need a multivitamin supplement the most, may be the very same ones who stand to lose the most by taking that multivitamin in a solid form.

Missing the mark

Another shortfall of solid-form multivitamins was illustrated

by scientists at the School of Pharmacy, University of Maryland at Baltimore. They studied the dissolution of folic acid in 9 brands of prescription prenatal multivitamin tablets. They found that only 3 met the USP standards for the release of folic acid, a nutrient well known to help prevent birth defects. In fact, "folic acid dissolution from 2 products was less than 25%."

The researchers further explained that certain nutrients have a particular location along the gastrointestinal tract at which they are best absorbed. Therefore, if dissolution is incomplete by the time the tablet reaches that area, the absorption of the nutrient may be significantly decreased.

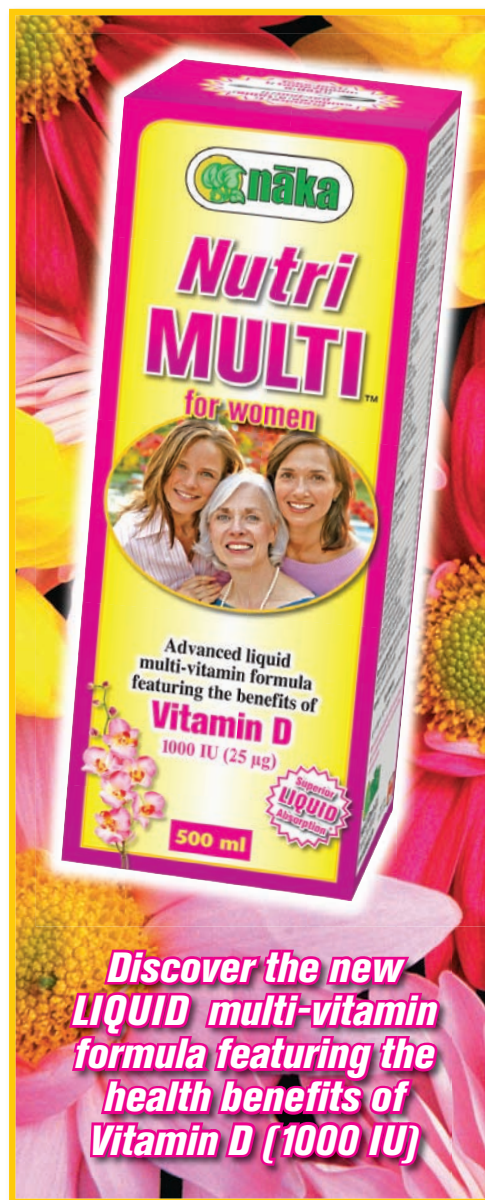
The liquid advantage

A liquid multivitamin supplement offers a number of benefits over solid forms for people of all ages, but especially for older adults or those with known digestive issues. Among the benefits are the following:

- Liquids are quickly and readily absorbed, as they do not first need to be broken down.
- Liquids contain no fillers, binders or coatings that may interfere with proper dissolution.
- Liquids are fully dissolved upon ingestion, and allow for absorption of key nutrients along the entire gastrointestinal tract.
- Liquids are a welcome alternative for people who have trouble swallowing solid pills, particularly children, the elderly and those who are ill or convalescing.
- Due to enhanced absorption of nutrients, liquids may allow for lower general dosing than with solid pills.

As usual, Europe has been ahead of other countries in the availability of liquid vitamin and herbal products, as liquid format products have been a mainstay there for decades. Fortunately, interest among both consumers and medical practitioners is now spurring the manufacture of quality liquid supplements here in North America.

Sources: Journal of Medicinal Food, 1998 1(3); Calcif Tissue Int 1991 49:308-312; J Am Pharm Assoc (Wash). 1997 Jul-Aug;NS37(4):397-400; Prescription for Nutritional Healing by James Balch, MD and Phyllis Balch, CNC, Avery:1997



Arthritis

Natural approaches worth exploring



Joint pain and arthritis can be frustrating but the good news is this: Everyone who has it can take steps to improve their health and well-being. Even apart from medication, there are ways to take control and bring about pain relief.

A surprisingly large number of people have arthritis: about one in every six Canadians age 15 years and over, according to the Arthritis Society of Canada.

Arthritis means “joint inflammation” (“arth” means “joint” and “itis” means “inflammation”). Osteoarthritis is the most common form, but there are also many others, such as rheumatoid arthritis, gout, lupus and fibromyalgia, to name a few. In fact, arthritis consists of more than 100 different conditions, and people of all ages, not just the elderly, are affected. The common theme among these conditions is joint and musculoskeletal pain, often caused by inflammation of the joint lining.

Arthritis varies widely in sever-

ity, and symptoms can fluctuate on a daily basis. Although medications are available to treat the disease and help control symptoms, more and more people are seeking ways to minimize their drug use and avoid potentially dangerous side effects.

Drug options dwindling

The relatively new COX-2 drugs, for example, were initially a welcome alternative to traditional non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs), associated with damage to the stomach’s protective mucous lining. However, COX-2 drugs—which block an enzyme called COX-2 and slow the production of chemical messengers that cause arthritic pain and swelling—have recently been shown to cause heart problems in some patients, Mayo Clinic rheumatology specialist Dr. Gene Hunder warns.

The Arthritis Society of Canada suggests numerous complementary therapies that people with joint pain or arthritis, in conjunction with their doctors, may want to

explore, whether to minimize or avoid the use of drugs or offset side effects.

Among these therapies are acupuncture, biofeedback, creams and gels, heat and cold, imagery and self-hypnosis, laughter, massage, physical activity, relaxation, rest and energy conservation, sleep and dietary supplements.

Some natural dietary supplements that have proven popular over the last decade, and for which research exists to validate safety and effectiveness, include glucosamine sulfate, chondroitin sulfate, methylsulfonylmethane (MSM), omega-3 essential fatty acids (EFAs) and devil’s claw.

Other supplements that may not come to mind to the average person suffering joint pain include calcium and vitamin D to maintain bone strength, since both arthritis and the use of steroid medications are linked with osteoporosis; and folic acid, because the drug methotrexate, used to treat rheumatoid arthritis, interferes with folic acid metabolism. Folic acid may ease the gastrointestinal symptoms that can result from the use of this drug.

Arthritis at a glance

- Arthritis is one of the most prevalent diseases in Canada. It ranks second and third among the most commonly reported chronic conditions in women and men, respectively.
- About one in every six Canadians age 15 years and over has arthritis. That’s about four million people in total.
- Two-thirds of those affected are women.

Continued on page 4...

- Nearly three of every five people with arthritis are under age 65.

Source: Arthritis in Canada Fact Sheet citing Badley, Elizabeth and DesMeules, Marie, eds. Arthritis in Canada (September 2003)

Supplement Spotlight

Most people with joint pain have heard of, or have first-hand experience with, popular and proven remedies like glucosamine, chondroitin and MSM. Here are a few you may not be so familiar with that have a growing body of research supporting their use:

Hydrolyzed Gelatine

What is it? A protein produced by the partial hydrolysis of animal collagen. It is easily digestible and contains all the essential amino acids except tryptophan.

Uses & Research: Gelatine has long been used to fortify the hair, skin and nails, particularly in Europe. It has also been shown to be helpful for stomach ulcers. Most research, however, has focused on the potential of gelatine to promote joint health. One study at Ball State University found that gelatine supplementation relieved knee joint pain and stiffness in athletes. In a similar study by Dr. Med Beuker, director of the Department of Sports Medicine at the University of Dusseldorf, Germany, athletes taking hydrolyzed gelatine had “clearly reduced” joint problems.

Turmeric

What is it? A yellow spice ground from the roots of the turmeric plant and commonly used for colour and flavour in Indian cuisine.

Uses & Research: As an arthritis treatment in traditional Chinese and Indian Ayurvedic medicine. In one study, researchers found a decrease in pain when people with osteoarthritis took turmeric along with boswellia and zinc. Two other studies found that turmeric, combined with boswellia, ginger and aswangandha, relieved the pain and inflammation associated with rheumatoid arthritis.

Bromelain

What is it? An enzyme mixture derived from pineapples.

Uses & Research: Appears to have anti-inflammatory and pain-relieving effects. In one study, a bromelain supplement relieved pain and improved function in people with knee osteoarthritis. The effect was similar, in fact, to taking a non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drug (NSAID).



Arthritis-busting exercise

If you’ve got achy joints, you may feel that you’re in too much pain to exercise. Or maybe you’re afraid that physical activity will

only make the situation worse.

Research shows, however, that exercise is critical for people with joint pain—and that it actually improves arthritic symptoms.

Here are a few tips for exercising for optimum joint health:

- Be patient. According to Vickie Spainhour, exercise physiologist with the Duke University Center for Living in Chapel Hill, NC, exercise reduces arthritic pain but relief can take four to eight weeks. “The effect is dose related,” she says. “The more you exercise, the more benefit you see. You have to keep it up.”

- Don’t overdo it. Instead of exercising 30 minutes every day, as people without joint pain might be advised, exercise one day and rest the next. “There’s a fine line between doing enough and doing too much,” Spainhour says.

- Try water. Because water supports your body weight, the Arthritis Foundation recommends aquatic exercise such as water aerobics, strength training or simply walking in water. In one study, 115 patients with rheumatoid arthritis were randomized to do either a weekly 30-minute session of exercises in water, or similar exercises on land. After six weeks, 87% of patients who exercised in water reported feeling “much better” or “very much better” compared to 47.5% of those who exercised on land. Similarly, a recent research review says that pool exercise has been shown to be as effective as land-based exercise for people with fibromyalgia, and may improve mood and sleep more.

Sources: Arthritis Foundation; BMC Musculoskelet Disord. 2007 Mar 1;8(1):23 [Epub ahead of print]; Curr Opin Rheumatol. 2007 Mar;19(2):168-73

“Quotable”

“First, everyone (not just arthritis patients) should eat a healthy, balanced diet. Second, stay fit. I once read a fortune cookie message that said, ‘It is better to wear out than rust out.’ That is a great philosophy of life and is especially important for arthritis patients.”

Dr. Gary Firestein

(Chief of Rheumatology, Allergy and Immunology at the University of California, San Diego Medical Center)

What to eat, what to avoid

A healthy diet is important for everyone but especially for people with arthritis and other chronic conditions. The Arthritis Foundation recommends that people with arthritis consume a variety of foods; maintain a healthy weight; use fat, sugar and salt in moderation; and eat plenty of vegetables, fruits and whole-grain products.

Fresh juices useful for arthritis include celery root, dandelion, watercress, apple, black cherry, lemon and papaya, according to Phyllis Balch and Dr James Balch, in their book *Prescription for Dietary Wellness*.

Top five foods to avoid, in their opinion:

- Dairy products
- Fried foods
- Nightshade vegetables
- Red meat
- Saturated fats

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George W., Edmonton AB

Heart Disease continued from page 1...

- 54% of all cardiovascular deaths are due to coronary artery disease; 21% to stroke; 16% to other forms of heart disease such as problems with the electrical system of the heart, viral heart infections, and heart muscle disease, and the remaining 9% to vascular problems such as high blood pressure and hardening of the arteries.

- A heart attack happens when an artery becomes blocked, preventing oxygen and nutrients from getting to the heart.

- A stroke results from a lack of blood flow to the brain, or, in some cases, bleeding in the brain.

4 simple ways to boost your heart health and add years to your life!

Let's face it: change is never easy. But if you were offered the chance to extend your lifetime by 5 or 10 years, wouldn't you take it?

Researchers who looked at close to 18,000 postmenopausal women found that the most important risk factors to health that could be changed were smoking, being in poor physical shape, having more abdominal fat and having high blood pressure.

According to health scientists, making just a few positive changes to your diet and lifestyle habits that address some of these factors can mean healthier hearts and longer lives.

1. Move, move, move! + 2 to 4 years

Women who perform moderate to high-intensity exercise, such as running for a half hour 5 times

per week, can live 2 to 4 years longer than their sedentary counterparts, say researchers.

Women on the move can also live up to 3 more years free of heart disease. However, if running isn't your forté, even walking for 30 minutes per day can cut your risk of heart attack by half, according to Carol Rosenberg, MD, lead investigator of the Women's Health Initiative study.

2. Choose super foods + 4 or more years

A daily dose of fish, fruits and vegetables, garlic, almonds, red wine and dark chocolate could lower heart disease risk by 76% and add almost 5 years to a woman's life (6.6 for a man), say researchers from The Netherlands. Their so-called "Polymeal" is a hypothetical blend of proven anti-aging foods that, based on a mathematical model, could work together for significant cardiovascular benefits. While no one is likely to eat each of these foods every day, working them into a weekly meal regimen would still go a long way toward better health.

3. Trim down +3 to 4 years

Results of the Framingham Health Study indicate that the risk of heart failure is 34% higher for overweight people and 104% higher for obese people. Other research links excess body weight to high cholesterol, high blood pres-



sure, heart disease and stroke. All told, obesity can rob you of 3 to 4 years of life.

4. Butt out! +2 to 10 years

Those with a well-established smoking habit may find this change the toughest, but it also has the highest payoff. A *British Medical Journal* study reveals that, on average, smokers die 10 years younger than non-smokers and that 1 in 8 deaths caused by heart disease is due to smoking. The good news: smokers who quit at 40 can reclaim all but one of those 10 years.

Sources: Arch Intern Med 2006; 2469-77, Health, Jan/Feb 2007; American Fitness, Sept 1999; BMJ 2004; 328: 1519

Supplement Spotlight

You've likely heard of the heart health benefits of hawthorn, garlic, co-enzyme Q10, magnesium and vitamin E. Research continues to validate the use of these favourites in the prevention and treatment of heart disease. Now here are a few proven natural heart remedies you may not have heard so much about...yet!

Dan Shen

What is it? A Chinese herbal remedy prepared from the root of the plant *Salvia miltiorrhiza*, also known as Red Sage.

Uses & Research: To improve circulation, reduce blood clotting, relax blood vessels. Among the hundreds of studies on this herb, scientists in China have reported improvements in people taking dan shen for angina (chest pain) and stroke. Animal studies indicate that dan shen may prevent recurrence of blockages after angioplasty.

Noto Ginseng

What is it? A relative of Asian ginseng, also known as Panax notoginseng, Pseudoginseng or San Qi.

Uses & Research: As a general blood and heart tonic. Research suggests noto ginseng increases blood flow to the coronary arteries, brings oxygen to the heart muscle, lowers blood pressure and regulates heart rhythm. Also reported to lower cholesterol and help dissolve clots.

Top 5 heart healthy foods

According to Kathleen Zelman, MPH, RD, LD, director of nutrition for WebMD.com, these foods top the list for great taste and better heart health:

1. Blueberries
2. Salmon
3. Soy protein
4. Oatmeal
5. Spinach



“Quotable”

“An estimated 16% of heart attacks and about 24% of strokes can be prevented just by taking a folic acid supplement every day.”

David Wald, MD,
Clinical Cardiologist,
Barts and the London
School of Medicine.

Waltz your way to a healthier heart

Exercise is good medicine for heart failure patients, according to the American Heart Association, and a new study finds that waltz-

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ing may be a great choice.

“It seems counterintuitive, but walking, biking, swimming, dancing—all kinds of aerobic exercises—can help improve the patient’s sense of well-being,” says Ileana Piña, MD, chair of AHA’s Committee on Exercise, Rehabilitation and Prevention.

“The patient should start slowly and build up gradually,” Piña says. “We generally recommend 20 to 30 minutes of aerobic exercise three to five times a week.”

But for heart failure patients who may be uncomfortable with the thought of typical aerobic exercises, dancing may be a great alternative, reported researchers at the AHA’s Scientific Sessions 2006.

“Our research suggests that dancing is a new choice of exercise training for patients with heart failure,” said Romualdo Belardinelli, MD, lead author of the study. “This is good news,

because if we want patients to take part in lifelong aerobic exercise at least three times a week, it should be something that’s fun and makes them want to continue.”

In a previous study, he found that dance—specifically, slow and fast waltz—was safe and improved functional capacity and quality of life for people who suffered from heart disease and previous heart attacks.

“We repeated the study in patients with chronic heart failure, and the results were identical,” Belardinelli said. “The amount of work during a session of dance is very similar to that of a session of traditional aerobic exercise.”

Sources: American Heart Association, Mar 4, 2003; American Heart Association, Nov 13, 2006



Awaken your energy

Why you may be fatigued and what to do about it



We all have days when we just can't seem to shake that tired feeling, when our legs seem twice as heavy and we feel as though we're thinking through a fog. But if "one of those days" becomes a week- or month-long complaint, it may be time to take account of your lifestyle choices and even explore potential underlying health issues.

Fatigue is one of the most common reasons people see their doctors. At any given time, one in 10 people feel tired or lethargic. Experts estimate that about 20% of North Americans suffer intense fatigue that interferes with daily living. The trouble is that a lack of energy is a symptom of so many different diseases and health conditions that doctors may have a difficult time accurately

diagnosing a problem and offering a solution.

Quick fixes for fatigue

According to Mayo Clinic experts, most cases of fatigue can be traced to one or more of your daily habits or routines.

"Taking a quick inventory of the things that might be responsible for your fatigue is the first step toward relief," they say.

Here's their checklist for weeding out common causes of fatigue, as well as a few tips to help remedy the problems:

Cause: Lack of sleep

Even one hour less sleep than you need can leave you drowsy and unable to manage a daily routine.

Solutions: Establish a regular routine for going to bed and getting up; avoid reading or watching

TV in bed; and don't eat or workout too close to bedtime.

Cause: Stress and anxiety

Multi-tasking without a break will eventually wear you down and keep you from relaxing and getting needed rest.

Solutions: Set priorities and learn to say no; take a 15-minute midday stroll; if stress is work-related, talk to superiors and clarify what is expected of you.

Cause: Inactivity

Too tired to exercise? Or tiring easily when you do? It's a viscous circle that must be broken, hard as it may seem. Studies show moderate physical activity for a half-hour or longer most days of the week can decrease stress, improve mood and leave you feeling energized.

Solutions: Find the time to get

at least 30 minutes of moderate physical activity into your day.

Cause: Unhealthy eating habits

Poor nutrition and inadequate fluid intake leave the body starving for fuel and running in a state of low energy. Caffeine, especially if consumed late in the day, will only worsen the problem.

Solutions: Never skip meals; start the day with a high-fibre breakfast with whole grains and fresh fruit; consider a daily energy-boosting greens drink.

Cause: Certain medications

A host of prescription medications, including beta-blockers and antihistamines, can cause fatigue. Over-the-counter remedies may also cause tiredness.

Solutions: While some medications may be necessary, talk to a health professional about potential interactions or side-effects that may be occurring, and any changes that may be possible to avoid them.

Energy-draining disorders

In some cases, fatigue may be the result of a more serious underlying health condition - particularly if the fatigue is sudden, persistent and the above measures have not had an impact on energy levels. Some possible energy-robbing conditions include the following:

- Adrenal dysfunction
- Allergies
- Anemia
- Cancer
- Chronic fatigue syndrome
- Depression
- Diabetes
- Restless leg syndrome

- Sleep disorders, including sleep apnea
- Thyroid imbalances

If you suspect any of these more serious conditions may be involved in on-going fatigue, work with a qualified health care practitioner to examine your health further and come up with an appropriate course of action.

Sources: "Fatigue: When to rest, when to worry," by Mayo Clinic staff, www.mayoclinic.com, Aug. 16, 2006; Vitamin Research News, May 2006

Home thyroid test

Dr Broda Barnes, author of *Hypothyroidism: The Unsuspected Illness*, advocates this simple home test for thyroid function, and contends that it is 85% accurate...more accurate than a blood test. If you have unexplained fatigue, consider trying out the test as a precursor to consulting with a qualified health care practitioner:

First thing in the morning upon waking but before getting out of bed, take your basal temperature using a digital thermometer and record the reading. Repeat for 4 days (30 days for menstruating women) and average the results. Normal basal temperatures should fall between 97.8 and 98.2 degrees Fahrenheit (36.3 and 36.8 degrees Celsius). A consistently lower temperature may indicate hypothyroidism.

Aromatherapy energizer!

According to Kurt Schnaubelt, PhD, founder of the Pacific Institute of Aromatherapy in California, certain natural scents can stimulate energizing effects in the body.

"The number-one choice to im-

prove alertness is lemon oil," he says. "Put a drop on your pillow or use a burner or diffuser," he suggests. Peppermint and rosemary essential oils are also known for their energizing properties.

Source: Delicious Magazine, Mar 2007

Supplement Spotlight

Siberian ginseng

What is it? Also called eleuthero, it is a botanical cousin of the better-known Panax ginseng. Siberian ginseng is derived from *Eleutherococcus senticosus*, a plant native to China, Japan, Korea and eastern Russia. It has been used in Chinese medicine for thousands of years, primarily as a means to enhance vital energy (qi), prevent infection and restore memory.

Uses & Research: German health officials advocate Siberian ginseng as a tonic for invigoration during times of fatigue and debility, and for declining work capacity and concentration. Research indicates the herb also has immune-enhancing properties, and can protect against various physical stressors, including cold, heat, radiation and altitude changes. In one three-month human study of Siberian ginseng among middle aged volunteers, there was a significant improvement in memory and concentration as compared to placebo. A Russian study with over 2,000 healthy adults concluded that the herb improved physical labour performance, proofreading accuracy and motion sickness among other things.

Chlorophyll

What is it? The natural pigment that gives plants their green co-

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Awaken continued from page 9...

lour and allows them to perform photosynthesis—the conversion of sunlight to usable energy. Interestingly, the molecular structure of chlorophyll is nearly identical to heme, the deep red, oxygen-carrying iron portion of our own hemoglobin. Chlorophyll is also a powerful antioxidant.

Uses & Research: Chlorophyll is used for a variety of reasons, most notably to enhance energy, help detoxify the liver and eliminate body odour and bad breath. Some research indicates that chlorophyll may have anticancer properties. A study by researchers at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health showed that supplementing with chlorophyll reduced the amounts of aflatoxin-DNA damage by 55%, compared with placebo, among a group at high-risk for liver cancer.

“Taking [water-soluble chlorophyll] or eating green vegetables, like spinach, that are rich in chlorophyll may be a practical way of reducing the risk of liver

cancer and other cancers caused by environmental triggers,” explained Thomas Kensler, PhD, professor at Johns Hopkins.

Chlorophyll Content of Selected Raw Vegetables

Source: Linus Pauling Institute

Food	Chlorophyll (mg)	Serving
Spinach	23.7	1 cup
Parsley	19.0	½ cup
Cress, garden	15.6	1 cup
Green beans	8.3	1 cup
Arugula (rocket)	8.2	1 cup
Leeks	7.7	1 cup
Endive	5.2	1 cup
Sugar peas	4.8	1 cup
Chinese cabbage	4.1	1 cup

Vital signs: What your body may be telling you

Some of the most important energy-promoting nutrients

include the B-vitamins, iron, zinc and coenzyme Q10. Here are a few physical clues to watch for that may indicate selected deficiencies:

- Vertical ridges in fingernails: low in iron or B-12
- Horizontal ridges in fingernails: low in zinc or B-12
- Spoon-shaped nails: low in iron
- Mouth sores: low in vitamin B-2
- Cracked, sore lips: low in vitamin B-6
- Chronic gum disease: low in coenzyme Q10
- Bloodshot eyes: low in vitamin B-2
- Dark circles under eyes: low in iron (or tired adrenals)
- Brittle hair or hair loss: low in iron or silica

Sources: Prescription for Nutritional Healing by J & P Balch, Avery:1997; Delicious Magazine, Mar 2007; The Healing Power of Vitamins, Minerals & Herbs, Reader’s Digest: 1999



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Get cleansed!

Boosting health through detoxification

Cleansing is an ancient practice and can take on many forms—from simply fasting, to drastically changing the diet, to adding supplements that support and cleanse the colon, liver and other body systems of detoxification. Whichever form cleansing may take, the underlying purpose is basically the same: to help rid the body of accumulated toxins by supporting the organs of elimination and detoxification.

Experts tell us that within the last 70 years, the average North American has been exposed to more toxins through water and air pollution, household cleaning supplies, pesticides, disinfectants and food additives than ever before in human history. In one study, researchers found an average of 91 industrial compounds, pollutants and other chemicals in the blood and urine in a group of volunteers. Stored in fat and tissue for years, these toxins can eventually overwhelm the body and open the door to chronic health problems and disease.

Detox: the missing link?

Elson Hass, MD, author of *The Detox Diet: The How-to and When-to Guide For Clearing Your Body of Toxic Substances*, considers the detoxification process to be “the missing link in Western nutrition and a key to the health and vitality of our civilization.”

Among the many benefits

Hass sees in detoxification are improved mental clarity, physical well being and spiritual energy. He also notes many health problems that could potentially improve following an effective detoxification program, including obesity, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, sinus and allergy problems, skin rashes and digestive disturbances.

“In my 25 years of medical practice in which I have utilized extensively various detox and healing/rejuvenation practices,” says Hass, “I can tell you that I truly believe that cleansing and detoxification is virtually one of the most powerful healing (real healing of ailments and not just suppression of symptoms) therapies I have seen.”

Liver Support

One easy and effective option for cleansing is to simply concentrate on rejuvenating the liver, the body’s hardest working and most important organ of detoxification. As the liver constantly filters the blood to help remove countless harmful chemicals and bacteria, it inevitably becomes “congested”—just like the oil filter on our car.

Signs of a congested liver may include low energy, poor digestion (gas, bloating, nausea), skin changes (“liver spots”), frequent headaches and insomnia.

As herbalist Christopher Hobbs



explains, certain herbs “stimulate increased blood flow through the liver, removing debris, old cells, toxins, etc. At the same time, they protect and stimulate the liver cells, thus...helping to maintain a proper biochemical environment.”

One of the most powerful and well-known liver-supporting herbs is milk thistle. A bioflavonoid complex in milk thistle called silymarin can both prevent and repair damage to liver cells caused by toxins. In studies, hepatitis patients given milk thistle extract actually showed a reversal of liver cell damage. Milk thistle also increases glutathione, an antioxidant critical in the liver’s ability to detoxify the blood.

Experts recommend some form of detoxification program at least once per year, typically in the spring season. Better yet, repeat the process or engage in a different cleansing program in the fall for optimum wellness.

Note: If approached reasonably and responsibly, cleansing is safe. However, do seek the advice of a naturopath if you have a medical condition or rely on medications.

Sources: “The Purification Process: Healing for Modern Times” by Elson Haas, MD:2002; The Ottawa Citizen, Mar 5, 2006; The Green Pharmacy by J. Duke, St Martin’s:1997; Natural Liver Therapy by C. Hobbs, Botanica:1997

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Supplement Spotlight

Milk Thistle

What is it? *Silybum marianum* L. Gaertn, a member of the daisies and thistles family of plants, which also includes artichoke. Milk thistle is native to the Mediterranean region but also grows in many parts of Europe and North America. Concentrations of silymarin, its active compound, are highest in the fruit, seeds and leaves.

Uses & Research: A potent antioxidant, milk thistle is known to protect fat cells from free radicals (oxidation) and to shield the liver against damage from alcohol and hepatitis. Amazingly, it even helps regenerate damaged liver cells. Human studies show that milk thistle can improve overall liver function in alcoholic liver cirrhosis patients after only four weeks. Other studies show improvements in symptoms for hepatitis patients, as well as those with chemical or drug induced liver toxicity.

Sea Buckthorn Berry

What is it? The nutrient-rich yellow or orange fruit of *Hippophae rhamnoides* L., a hardy shrub native to Europe and Asia.

Uses & Research: Sea buckthorn has been used in Asian medicine for over 1,000 years and is currently being researched for a wide variety of health benefits. One of these is liver health and protection. In one trial, sea buckthorn extracts helped normalize liver enzymes and immune system markers of liver inflammation and degeneration. Laboratory studies also show that sea buckthorn can protect the liver from the damaging effects of toxic chemicals.

Top 10 Detox fruits

According to Michelle Schoffro-Cook, author of *The 4-Week Ultimate Body Detox Plan*, here are the top 10 detoxifying fruits you can easily add to a daily healthy food regimen:

- Apples - high in pectin, fibre that binds to cholesterol and heavy metals
- Avocados - contain glutathione, which helps liver detoxify
- Bananas - contain potassium, which helps reduce excess fluid in tissues
- Blueberries - help block toxins from crossing blood-brain barrier
- Cherries - detoxify inflammatory toxins; also contain pectin like apples
- Cranberries - cleanse urinary tract of harmful bacteria and viruses
- Grapefruit - intestinal and liver detoxifier; also contain pectin
- Lemons - liver detoxifier, with vitamin C to make glutathione
- Raspberries - cleanse tissue of toxins; anticancer properties
- Watermelons - contain liver-cleansing glutathione

Detoxify and revitalize with Milk Thistle

The natural liver cleanse choice.



- **Detoxify your body**
- **Support long-term liver health**
- **Weight management and digestive aid**
- **Excellent for people who smoke, eat fatty foods or consume alcohol**



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