

WELLNESS MAGAZINE

JULY 2023



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**GRANDES
CIENTIFICOS**
*Rita Levi
Montalcini*



WELCOME

to the Floridacare Family

Prevention rather than cure should be the watchword of each person for their health care, in order to avoid risk factors that can lead us to suffer from a disease. We must promote a healthy physical and mental lifestyle, and that is the objective of this magazine, that whoever reads it, can know the importance of preventive health.

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Why is wellness important?

Over the past year, we have all experienced new challenges that have affected our physical, mental, and social well-being. Many of us have felt tired and stressed, which is why wellness and self-care are more important than ever. Below, we share some new ideas to achieve your well-being in all its dimensions and you can nourish your mind and body.

1. Do exercises
2. Drink water regularly.
3. Track your fitness.
4. Take multivitamins.
5. At the office, stand up every 30 minutes.
6. Go outside
7. Get enough sleep.
8. Eat organic food if possible.
9. Practice gratitude.
10. Read books.
11. Eat more fruits and vegetables.
12. Correct your posture.
13. Take a daily probiotic.
14. Get vaccinated.
15. Minimize sugar intake.
16. Meditate.
17. Listen to music.
18. Share with friends and family.
19. Do not abuse electronic equipment.
20. Organize your days.



TOP 10 EASIEST SUPERFOODS TO GROW IN YOUR GARDEN



1. Strawberries

Strawberries are packed with heart-healthy phytochemicals. Research indicates that regularly eating strawberries may enhance circulation to your heart, the key to preventing conditions such as a type of chest pain called angina.

How to grow them: To enjoy strawberries for a season, sow your seeds of choice a half-inch deep in seedling trays, spaced 6 inches apart. When seedlings are 3 inches tall, thin them out by removing the weakest of the bunch and transfer into a classic strawberry pot or window box, spaced at least 18 inches apart. Allow no more than three runners, horizontal stems that yield “baby” clone plants, per container. Grow in at least six hours of sunlight a day, but 10 or more hours are ideal. Grow perennial strawberries in raised garden beds or in-ground garden beds, using straw mulch to protect against the cold in fall or winter.



2. Sunchokes

Sunchokes are a healthy, high-fiber root vegetable that look like crinklier, knobbier white potatoes — with far fewer carbohydrates. And they yield a beautiful sunflower that gives them their name. A study in the journal *Horticulturae* found the tubers are unusually high in inulin, a prebiotic that helps control blood sugar. Another study, in the journal *Nutrients*, found older adults who eat sunchokes (technically *Helianthus tuberosus*) for breakfast have healthier digestion. Unlike potatoes, you don’t have to peel sunchokes before cooking them, but they are prepared the same way: diced and boiled, baked or pan-fried into a yummy substitute for chips.

How to grow them: Sunchokes are usually grown from tubers with the eyes facing skyward. For indoor gardens, plant no more than 5 inches deep, spaced at least 1-3 feet apart. For outdoor gardens, plant tubers with the same technique in a 5-gallon container (grow bags also work nicely), a raised garden bed or an in-ground bed. Grow in six to eight hours of full sun per day. Enjoy extra-sweet sunchokes by harvesting them when the flowers die down after the first killing frost.



3. Sunflowers

We’re used to snacking on sunflower seeds, but you can also eat the petals. While nibbling on flowers may seem unconventional, “edible flowers have been used in traditional diets throughout the millennia,” Palmer says. “They can add beautiful color and phytochemicals to your diet.” The seeds may also promote healthy blood pressure levels by delivering peptides that mirror the effects of ACE inhibitors, according to researchers from Nanjing Agricultural University in China.

How to grow them: Plant seeds no more than 1-inch deep, spaced about 6 inches apart in seedling trays. Lightly water growing seedlings and thin out at 6 inches tall, spacing the strongest 12 inches apart. Transfer mature seedlings into pots 6-8 inches deep and 10 inches wide. For outdoor gardens, space seedlings 24 inches apart. Grow in six to eight hours of full sun per day.





4. Chives

Chives contain nanoparticles that could lower inflammation linked to heart disease, stroke and obesity.

How to grow them: Plant seeds one-quarter inch deep, 2 to 3 inches apart in seedling trays. Transplant mature seedlings into a container at least 8 inches deep. You can also sow the seeds directly outdoors as soon as soil is workable in the spring. Chives also make for hardy perennial plants in outdoor gardens: Plant four to six weeks before the last frost. Chives are more shade-tolerant, so they can be grown indoors with four to six hours of sunlight per day. However, they do best grown in eight full hours of sunlight per day.



5. Oregano

There's a reason the ancient Greeks raved about oregano: Not only is the herb a hallmark of the Mediterranean diet, but according to research it may also fight harmful bacteria and fungi. One study published in Nutrition Today found oregano oil stopped *H. pylori*, a bacterium that causes ulcers.

How to grow it: Plant the seeds one-quarter inch deep, 12 inches apart. Lightly cover with soil. Transplant mature seedlings into a terra cotta clay pot or window box. After seedlings are 2 inches tall, thin out to 18 inches apart, and cut back on watering to avoid tamping down the flavor. Grow in at least six hours of full sunlight per day. For outdoor gardens, sow oregano seeds directly in the soil once temperatures reach around 70°F. In warmer climates, oregano is best grown in pots or window boxes with partial shade.



6. Radishes

A 2019 study from the National Institute of Horticultural and Herbal Science has found that this sweet and spicy superfood could halt the growth of cervical, lung and prostate cancer cells. Plus, the leaves can be eaten for extra calcium and protein.

How to grow them: Plant smaller varieties one-quarter to one-half inch deep and larger varieties up to 1 inch deep, spaced at least 1 inch apart, in a container or radish bed with loose soil at least 6 inches deep. When seedlings are 2 inches tall, thin and space 2 inches apart. Grow in six to eight hours of full sunlight per day.



7. Zucchini

Zucchini is not only high in essential minerals, such as vitamins C and A and folate, but science also shows it may have cancer-fighting properties. "One healthy plant can supply you with dozens of zucchini that can be picked daily during the warm months," Palmer says. Of course, there are many ways to enjoy them fresh: Whip up "zoodles," toss or dice into pasta salads, or skewer chunks onto veggie kebabs.

How to grow it: Plant one to two seeds 1 inch deep, spaced 3-4 inches apart, in a container at least 12 inches wide and 12 inches deep, but 24 inches wide is a plus. When seedlings are 3-4 inches tall, thin out and transplant them into your container at least 6-8 inches apart. Grow in six to eight hours of full sun per day to maximize the yield.

8. Green Beans

Green beans stand out for their natural blood thinning properties, which may lower the risk of stroke, according to a study from Bellarmine University in Louisville, Kentucky. The study also shows green beans are high in folate, which has been shown in some studies to help ease depression.

How to grow them: Green beans have fragile root networks, so avoid transplanting. Begin green beans seeds in a container least 15 inches wide; bush beans need containers at least 6 inches deep, while pole beans need containers at least 9 inches deep. Plant seeds 1 inch deep, spaced 6 inches apart. For outdoor gardens, plant seeds 1 inch deep, 6 inches apart after the last spring frost. When the seedlings are 2-3 inches tall, thin to one plant every 4 inches apart. Grow in six to eight hours of full sun per day.



9. Romaine Lettuce

Romaine lettuce is a nutrient-rich salad green. Simply pluck the leaves and more will grow. In one study, eating romaine lettuce helped prevent blood sugar spikes after mealtimes.

How to grow it: Plant seeds one-eighth of an inch apart. Cover with a minimal amount of soil. To prevent drowning the seeds, mist thoroughly until they mature. When seedlings are 4-6 inches tall, thin out and plant in plastic containers 18 inches apart. Grow in eight hours of full sunlight per day.



10. Cucumbers

Rich in water, cucumbers may help prevent fine lines and wrinkles by restoring skin elasticity, one study shows. They're abundant in vitamin C, an essential nutrient for better eye health. So, grow the slicing variety for an on-hand remedy for puffiness and swelling. You can also add a cool touch to summer by adding them to ice pops, salads, and more.

How to grow them: Plant seeds 1 inch deep in soil, spaced 6 inches apart. When seedlings are at least 3 inches tall and have twin leaves, thin out and transplant into a container at least 1 foot deep, with each plant spaced at least 12 inches apart. For outdoor gardens, plant after the last spring frost. Grow in a minimum of six hours and an ideal of eight to 10 hours of sunlight per day.



Healthy Food

HERBED CHICKEN MARSALA

INGREDIENTS

- Four 4-ounce boneless, skinless chicken breast cutlets
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper
- $\frac{1}{3}$ cup whole wheat flour
- $1\frac{1}{2}$ tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup low-sodium chicken broth
- $\frac{1}{3}$ cup sun-dried tomatoes (not packed in oil; not rehydrated), finely chopped or very thinly sliced
- $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon finely chopped rosemary
- 10 ounces white button or cremini (baby bella) mushrooms, sliced
- $\frac{1}{3}$ cup sweet marsala wine
- 2 teaspoons unsalted butter
- 1 to 2 tablespoons roughly chopped flat-leaf parsley

DIRECTIONS

1. Place the chicken cutlets between 2 pieces of plastic wrap and pound with a meat mallet (or the flat side of a chef's knife) until about $\frac{1}{3}$ -inch thick. Sprinkle with $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon salt and $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon pepper.
2. Put the flour on a medium plate. Heat the oil in a large nonstick skillet over medium-high heat. Dredge the chicken in the flour to fully coat, shaking off any excess. Add the chicken to the skillet and fry until fully cooked and golden brown, about 4 minutes per side. Transfer to a platter and tent with foil to keep warm.
3. Add $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of the broth, the sun-dried tomatoes and rosemary to any remaining drippings in the skillet and cook, stirring frequently, for 1 minute to plump the tomatoes. Add the mushrooms, $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon salt and $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon pepper and cook until the mushrooms are soft, about 5 minutes. Add the marsala and bring to a boil. Add the remaining $\frac{1}{4}$ cup broth and the butter and simmer until the butter is fully melted, about 30 seconds.
4. Spoon the mushroom mixture and sauce over the chicken, sprinkle with the parsley and serve.



5 FOODS TO RELIEVE CONSTIPATION

About 16 percent of U.S. adults experience constipation, according to the National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases (NIDDK). And when it comes to adults 60 and older, that percentage more than doubles.

The good news is constipation can often be managed at home. Plenty of water and regular exercise can get — and keep — things moving. So can a few standout foods.

1. Prunes

Prunes are often hailed as the number one food to help you go number two — and for good reason. Prunes, which are just dehydrated plums, are packed with fiber, which helps keep food moving through the digestive system.

They also contain the sugar alcohol sorbitol, which has a laxative effect. One study even found prunes to be more effective than psyllium (the active ingredient in Metamucil) for the treatment of mild to moderate constipation. Similarly, studies have found that prune juice is a safe and effective way to relieve constipation.

There is a downside to prunes, however. They can cause gas and bloating — and the more you eat, the more likely you are to notice these effects.



2. Kiwi

Can't deal with the unpleasant side effects from prunes? Grab a kiwi instead. Actually, make it two. A new study published in the American Journal of Gastroenterology found that two kiwifruit a day helped to relieve constipation. Plus, research has shown that kiwi is better tolerated than prunes or psyllium.



3. Oatmeal

Oatmeal contains soluble fiber, which helps to absorb water. Think of when you mix hot water into oatmeal and it starts to gel — that's because of the soluble fiber, explains Ashley Baumohl, a registered dietitian in the division of gastroenterology at Northwell Lenox Hill Hospital in New York City.

“Not only does [the fiber in oatmeal] help regulate your bowel movements, but it's also actually softening them, making them easier to pass,” Baumohl says. Chia seeds — which also form a gel-like consistency when combined with water — is another example of a food high in soluble fiber.



4. Papaya

Known for the beautiful orange hue of its ripened flesh, papaya can help jump-start a stalled digestive system. Papaya has a lot of digestive enzymes, a lot of fiber and also some fructose, which for some people can cause a laxative effect. Mango is another fruit with similar traits.



5. Aloe vera juice

Cruise the beverage aisle at your local grocery store and you may spot a thick liquid made from the aloe vera plant. A bottle of the stuff, known as aloe vera juice, comes packed with purported health benefits — from clearer skin to heartburn relief. The low-sugar juice can also help with constipation, along with another plant, fresh rhubarb.

They actually offer a stimulant effect; they stimulate your colon to contract and can help with constipation in that way.

A few other tips: In addition to the foods above, a wide range of fiber-filled fruits, veggies and other snacks can help keep you regular.

- Berries, though small in size, are mighty when it comes to gut health due to their fiber content. They're also versatile, Baumohl says. You can put them in yogurt, pile them on top of oatmeal or enjoy them in a smoothie.
- If you're reaching for an apple or pear, keep the skin on to up your fiber intake. And add vegetables like artichokes to pasta, Baumohl recommends.
- Reach for nuts and seeds, which are a good source of fiber and healthy fats.
- Keep your meals varied and avoid an all-white diet (white bread, potatoes), which can disrupt regularity, Baumohl says.
- Fiber is key when it comes to staying regular, but if you aren't used to a fiber-rich diet, make sure you add it in slowly. It can be a shock to your GI system if you suddenly load up, Baumohl says.

Beyond food, pay attention to your posture on the toilet since this can affect your bowel movements. Raising your feet, leaning back or squatting may make going to the bathroom a bit easier. If your constipation doesn't let up, call your doctor. Medication may be able to help. You should also see a health care provider if constipation is a new problem for you, you see blood in your stool, you are losing weight unintentionally or you have severe pain with your bowel movements.



Foods to avoid

If you're constipated, or are prone to it, best to steer clear of matzo, which is dehydrated unleavened bread. In fact, doctors often recommend it for people who have diarrhea. The NIDDK also suggests avoiding fast food, highly processed food (hot dogs, frozen pizza, microwave dinners) and meat.

Wondering about bananas? Go ahead and grab one. They're known to help with diarrhea, but they can also help with constipation.

Bananas contain a substance called pectin, which has water-holding capacity. So if you have excess water in your stool, it'll bind up the water and make your stool more fully formed. But the nice thing about pectin is that if your stools are too hard, it'll also hang on to water and make your stool softer.

6 SUPPLEMENTS THAT DON'T ALWAYS MIX WITH PRESCRIPTION DRUGS



Over-the-counter vitamins, herbs and minerals aren't without potential risks

Turmeric, ginseng, a probiotic, even vitamin C — all of these, when taken in packaged form, are supplements. Some have lined store shelves for decades. Others are ancient cures processed and packaged for 21st-century consumers.

Whatever their history, supplements are everywhere these days, and consumers are eating them up, spending billions each year on capsules, powders and gummies. More than half of adults age 20 and older have taken one in the past 30 days, data from the National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey found — and that percentage increases with age. About 80 percent of women over age 60 take dietary supplements, the same report shows.

But what many adults don't realize is that taking some of these supplements alongside prescription drugs and other medicines can have dangerous and even life-threatening effects. A number of supplements can enhance, diminish or negate a prescription drug in ways that can be consequential and unpredictable. Still, federal research shows about 34 percent of survey participants — representing roughly 72 million people in the United States — take some kind of dietary supplement along with a prescription medication. Wondering which supplement-prescription pairings can be risky? Here are six popular supplements and their known effects on some common medications.



1. St. John's wort

Derived from a flowering shrub native to Europe, St. John's wort is often taken to treat mild to moderate depression, or to reduce menopausal symptoms such as hot flashes. But it has numerous drug interactions and can reduce the potency of birth control pills and hormone replacement therapy. It can also interfere with omeprazole (Prilosec), alprazolam (Xanax), certain statins and some antihistamines, Mayo Clinic reports.

What's more, St. John's wort can render the COVID-19 antiviral treatment Paxlovid powerless. If a person is being treated with Paxlovid and is taking St. John's wort, that means essentially that the Paxlovid may not work.

2. CoQ10

Coenzyme Q10 (CoQ10) is an antioxidant produced by our bodies to promote cell growth and maintenance; the levels of it in our body can decrease as we age.

In supplement form, it's taken by way of capsules, tablets and syrups for numerous conditions, including heart disease, diabetes and migraine. But CoQ10 can also interfere with the ability of blood thinners to do their job, which is to prevent blood clots from forming. As a result, people could have a breakthrough blood clot.





3. Turmeric

The ancient spice has been shown to have many health benefits, from improving memory to lowering inflammation and even decreasing the risk of heart disease. It also has anticoagulant effects, which means you don't want to mix turmeric supplements with a blood thinner or even, possibly, aspirin, due to the risk of internal bleeding.

Ginkgo biloba (an herb) and vitamin E are two other dietary supplements that can thin the blood, according to the Food and Drug Administration (FDA). So taking them with an anticoagulant can augment the effect.

Cooking with turmeric? It's still fine to use in the kitchen. When products are used as foods, we don't think it's that much of an issue at all.



4. Probiotics

Full of beneficial bacteria, probiotics are often taken to aid digestion and improve gut health. But don't take one within two hours of taking an antibiotic, or you could reduce the effectiveness of the prescription medication.

5. Vitamin C

Vitamin C occurs naturally in citrus fruits, strawberries, broccoli and tomatoes, among other foods. It's also consumed as a supplement for a myriad of reasons, ranging from warding off the common cold to preventing cancer.

But high-dose vitamin C supplements may reduce the effectiveness of some types of cancer chemotherapy, says Courtney Rhodes, a spokeswoman for the FDA. It can also interfere with niacin and statins and affect estrogen levels, according to Mayo Clinic.



6. Milk thistle

A flowering plant related to daisies, milk thistle is taken as a supplement to promote liver and heart health. It may also lower blood sugar, which could be a concern for someone who's on diabetes medication. When combined with insulin, it can be like taking a little bit too much glucose-lowering medication.



Bottom line: Talk to your doctor

Ideally, to head off trouble, patients would be talking to their doctors about the supplements they are taking. But these conversations don't happen as often as they should.

A study found that fewer than 50 percent of patients disclose the use of dietary supplements, and even among those who do, only about one-third of the supplements taken are mentioned to doctors.

One reason for the disconnect: Patients may not realize the over-the-counter herbs or extra vitamins they're working into their daily pile of pills count as anything that needs to be discussed with a doctor, so they leave them off the list when their provider asks. It's also not uncommon for consumers to confuse "natural" with "safe" and fail to fully recognize the potency of some of these products.

To help avoid any health hazards that can arise from mixing supplements and medications, it's important to ask your doctor about possible adverse reactions before starting any new medication or supplement.





ARE YOU GETTING ENOUGH?

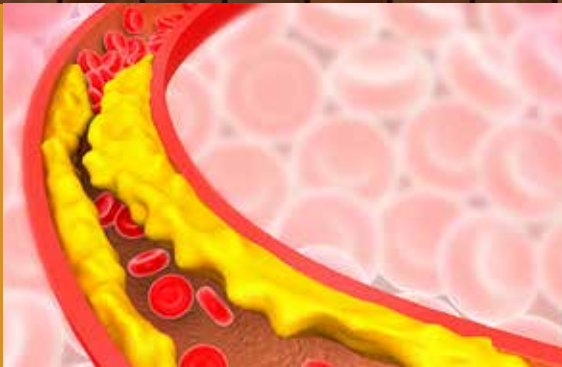
Research shows this lesser-known nutrient helps keep your heart healthy, your bones strong and more — yet many older adults fall short. If Vitamin K is not already on your radar, it probably should be.

The lesser-known nutrient has long been understood to play a key role in blood clotting. Now, a growing body of research suggests that getting adequate amounts can help ward off heart disease, cognitive problems, osteoarthritis and physical disability, making it especially important to healthy aging.

Yet many older Americans aren't getting enough of it.

About 60 percent of men and 40 percent of women ages 51 and older don't get the recommended amounts of vitamin K — 120 micrograms (mcg) for men and 90 mcg for women.

Among men over age 70, two-thirds don't get enough vitamin K, a the study found.



Vitamin K was discovered by a Danish biochemist in the 1920s because of its role in preventing excessive bleeding after an injury. The “K” comes from the Danish and German word koagulation. People who take the blood thinner warfarin (Coumadin) are among those advised to keep their dietary intake of vitamin K steady; without it their medication can become less effective.

There are actually many forms of vitamin K, but the two most studied are vitamin K1, which is mostly in plant-based foods, and vitamin K2, which seems to be mostly in animal products and fermented foods.

Some researchers make distinctions between the two types, but it doesn't matter what form vitamin K you eat in your diet; they all seem to have same effect.

Researchers have learned in recent years that vitamin K contributes to many types of molecular reactions in our bodies.

Perhaps most important, it appears to play a role in slowing calcification, the buildup of calcium in blood vessels, bone and other body tissue that happens as you age, can lead to osteoarthritis.

Largely because of how it fights calcification, research also shows these specific benefits with the vitamin:

Cardiovascular disease

Studies going back to the early 2000s have found that people who eat less vitamin K are more likely to have coronary heart disease, possibly because the blood vessels that feed the heart get stiffer and narrower without it. In one study, researchers looked at data on 7,216 people who were at high risk of cardiovascular disease and found that “an increase in dietary intake of vitamin K is associated with a reduced risk of cardiovascular, cancer or all-cause mortality.”

Cognition

At least six research studies have found a link between adequate vitamin K levels and cognition in older adults, according to a 2019 review in *Frontiers in Neurology*. In one study, healthy adults over age 70 with the highest average blood levels of the vitamin had better recall of specific past personal experiences than those with lower levels.



So should you take a Vitamin K supplement?

Because vitamin K is involved in blood clotting, you don't want to play around with it. Some researchers recommend not to take vitamin K supplements, but getting more vitamin K from your diet, or taking a multivitamin that contains it.

Osteoporosis/osteoarthritis

Several studies have found people who eat more vitamin-K-rich foods have stronger bones and are less likely to break a hip. In some parts of the world, vitamin K is prescribed as a treatment for osteoporosis. The European Food Safety Authority, for instance, allows companies to make the claim that foods with vitamin K help bone health, but the Food & Drug Administration has not authorized a health claim for the vitamin in the U.S.

Mobility

Booth and her researchers followed over 1,300 older adults and tracked their ability to walk a quarter-mile and climb 10 steps without resting. They found that those with low blood levels of vitamin K were twice as likely to have trouble with those tasks compared to those with sufficient levels.

Booth notes that while there have been a few small randomized double-blind studies of vitamin K, many of the larger ones have been observational, which means researchers found associations, but they don't necessarily prove cause and effect. More research is underway that will hopefully present a clearer picture of the benefits of vitamin K.

Foods High in Vitamin K	
Mcg per serving	Food
145	Spinach, raw, 1 cup
113	Kale, raw, 1 cup
110	Broccoli, chopped, boiled, ½ cup
43	Soy beans, roasted, ½ cup
25	Soy bean oil, 1 tablespoon
21	Edamame, frozen, ½ cup, prepared
20	Pumpkin, canned, ½ cup
19	Pomegranate juice, ¾ cup
16	Okra, raw, ½ cup
15	Salad dressing, Caesar, 1 tablespoon
15	Pine nuts, dried, 1 ounce
14	Blueberries, raw, ½ cup
14	Iceberg lettuce, raw, 1 cup
13	Chicken breast, rotisserie, 3 ounces (as MK-4)
11	Grapes, ½ cup
10	Vegetable juice cocktail, ¾ cup
10	Canola oil, 1 tablespoon
10	Cashews, dry roasted, 1 ounce
8	Carrots, raw, 1 medium
8	Olive oil, 1 tablespoon
6	Ground beef, broiled, 3 ounces (as MK-4)

STRUGGLING WITH ALCOHOL?

Medication May Be Able to Help



During the first year of the COVID-19 pandemic, adults 50 and older led the way as most likely to increase their alcohol consumption, according to a 2022 study from researchers in California. And for many individuals, that spike has been maintained. That's bad news when it comes to the health of older adults. The latest research indicates that alcohol consumption increases risks for more than 200 health problems, including heart disease, liver disease, depression, anxiety, stroke and cancer. And experts stress that those increased risks are incurred at every level of consumption — from a drink or two a day to heavier habits. Scaling back alcohol use, however, can be difficult for many, including the more than 14

million U.S. adults with alcohol use disorder (AUD), which is defined as an impaired ability to stop or control alcohol use despite its known consequences. A variety of factors can play into people's drinking patterns, including genetics, depression, anxiety and stress. And stigma often keeps people who are affected by alcohol from seeking help, according to the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA).

The good news: There are a variety of treatment options that can help people curb — or quit — drinking. And what many people don't know is that medication is one option on the menu.

What to know about medications for AUD

If you want to stop drinking, Nancy Beste, an addiction therapist in Steamboat Springs, Colorado, recommends talking to your doctor about the best way to do so. It may turn out that you're a good candidate for one of three federally approved medications on the market.



Disulfiram, which can be used after at least 12 hours without alcohol, causes unpleasant symptoms (nausea, vomiting, chest pain, sweating and weakness) if alcohol is consumed. The dosage is one pill a day.



Acamprosate can be used after alcohol abstinence to alleviate anxiety, restlessness, dysphoria and insomnia as your brain adjusts to life without drinking. Typically, two pills are taken, three times a day.



Naltrexone, which comes in pill form and as an injection, is generally useful for people at the lower levels of alcohol use severity. In fact, a recent study published in the American Journal of Psychiatry found that naltrexone helped to significantly reduce binge drinking among men with mild to moderate alcohol use disorder. It also reduces alcohol cravings and has helped patients curb overeating and smoking.

All of these are very safe, and none of them are addictive,” and that means that your family doctor or internist should feel comfortable prescribing them. What’s more, most of these medications are covered by health insurance plans; generic options are also available.

Not everyone will respond to medication, the NIAAA says, but for those who do, Beste finds it gives them the boost they need to meet their goals. Still, studies show these medications are widely underutilized.

In 2019, only 1.6 percent of adults with AUD took a pill to help them stop drinking, according to a report published in JAMA Psychiatry that looked at national survey data.

Starting the conversation

Curious if medication is right for you? Start out by letting your health care provider know you'd like to make a lifestyle change but need some help — just like many get for smoking cessation. You might say: In stressful times, I drink more, and I'd like to address that with some medical support.

At this point, it's vital that you give your health care provider complete information on your health and drinking history, including how long you have been drinking, the amount you actually drink, any medical conditions you have and all the medications you take.

And don't be surprised if medication is just one treatment your health care provider recommends. Fehling says the medications work best "when they're blended with even brief counseling by a doctor or a therapist."

What to expect when you stop drinking

Up to half of people with AUD will experience some withdrawal symptoms when easing off alcohol, experts say. These can include irritability, agitation, elevated blood pressure, increased heart rate, insomnia, increased anxiety, sweating, nausea and vomiting. Heavy drinkers may need hands-on medical care and monitoring, or a proper "detox" in a health care facility, to manage their symptoms.

When quitting alcohol, it's key to rebalance your body and brain, Beste stresses. Eating healthy foods and having a balanced diet are important. So is exercise. Beste also advises her patients to take a vitamin B1 supplement (also known as thiamin), since many people with alcohol dependence become deficient.

Another tip: Form a support team. Plenty of individuals find that working with an addiction therapist and/or joining a group of other people with the same goal is very helpful. Ask your health care provider for a list of addiction therapists and groups near you (or online), like A.A. (Alcoholics Anonymous), SMART Recovery, Women for Sobriety, Secular AA, LifeRing Secular Recovery and Secular Organizations for Sobriety (SOS).



GREATEST SCIENTISTS

Rita Levi Montalcini

- **Born: April 22, 1909, Turin, Italia**
- **Died: December 30, 2012, Rome, Italy**

Family

Rita Levi-Montalcini was the daughter of a wealthy Italian Jewish family. Her father, Adamo Levi, was an electrical engineer and mathematician and her mother, Adele Montalcini, was a painter. Together with her identical twin sister, Levi-Montalcini was the youngest of four children. During the Second World War, Levi-Montalcini and her family were forced to abandon Turin with the invasion of Italy by the German army. They fled first to Piemonte and then to Florence where they lived underground until the end of the war. Seeing her mother play second-fiddle to her father and the subordination of many women around her, Levi-Montalcini made the decision early in life never to marry or have children. In her twenties she decided to pursue a life in medical research after seeing a close family friend die from stomach cancer.

Education

Brought up by a father who believed that a professional career interfered with the duties of a wife and mother, Rita Levi-Montalcini was initially discouraged from going to university. Eventually, however, at the age of 20 Levi-Montalcini persuaded her father to let her attend medical school at the University of Turin. While at the university Levi-Montalcini was taught by the neurohistologist Giuseppe Levi who awakened her interest to study the developing nervous system. Two of her contemporaries at university were Salvador Luria and Renato Dulbecco, both of whom would go on to receive the Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine. Rita graduated in 1936 with a summa cum laude degree in Medicine and Surgery and then enrolled in a three year specialisation in neurology and psychiatry. Her studies, however, were cut short when, in 1938, Mussolini issued his Manifesto of Race which barred non-Aryan Italian citizens from academic and professional careers. This promoted her to go to Belgium where she was a guest at a neurological institute in Brussels until the German invasion in the spring of 1940.

Career



Levi-Montalcini worked briefly as an assistant to the histologist Giuseppe Levi who taught her the technique of silver-staining nerve cells so that they could be seen more clearly under the microscope. Once banned by Mussolini's laws from working in academia, Levi-Montalcini set up a makeshift laboratory in her bedroom where, using scalpels constructed from sewing needles, she conducted experiments with chicken embryos to understand how embryonic nerves grow into a fully developed nervous system. This work was inspired by an article she read by the American embryologist Viktor Hamburger which suggested that limb buds produce an attractive chemical signal. She was assisted in this work by Giuseppe Levi. Towards the end of the War she worked briefly as a volunteer physician for the Allied armies, treating cases of typhoid and other infectious diseases in refugee camps. After the war ended, Levi-Montalcini took up an academic position at the University of Turin and then in 1946 moved to Washington University in St Louis to take up a research position under the supervision of Hamburger. Levi-Montalcini remained at Washington University for thirty years. In 1962 she established a research unit in Rome, dividing her time between there and St Louis. Between 1961 and 1969 Levi-Montalcini directed the Research Center of Neurobiology and the Laboratory of Cellular Biology between 1969 and 1979. In 2002 Levi-Montalcini founded the European Brain Research Institute.

Achievements

In 1986 Levi-Montalcini shared the Nobel Prize in Physiology of Medicine with her colleague Stanley Cohen for the discovery of nerve growth factor (NGF). The Prize was awarded on the basis of her discovery in 1952 that tumours from mice transplanted into chick embryos induced potent growth of the chick embryo nervous system. She managed with Cohen to purify nerve growth factor and in 1971 published the elusive protein's structure. Subsequently, she showed NGF to be important in the immune system. She was also one of the first to determine the importance of the mast cell in human pathology and identify the endogenous compound palmitoylethanolamide which established as an important modulator of this cell. Her work on palmitoylethanolamide helped lay the foundation for its use as a drug to treat chronic pain and neuroinflammation. In addition to her research, Levi-Montalcini was an ardent champion of scientific training for women.



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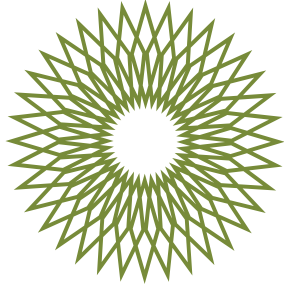
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