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Dr. David G. Williams

SOME IMPORTANT HEALTH LESSONS FROM BEER AND RACE HORSES

For the last several years, I have spent a considerable amount of time working to help uncover natural remedies and cures in Australia. In what little spare time I have "down under," I have often been involved in trying to improve the health and performance of race horses through the use of herbs and nutrition. Although I was raised around horses in the Texas panhandle, I've never seen any place that compares with Australia when it comes to a general interest in things equine. The whole country seems to be obsessed with horses.

Horse racing is Australia's third largest industry. Everyone from children to grandparents seems to live and breathe the sport. County fairs and city celebrations revolve around race days. School and public holidays are scheduled to coincide with races. Horses and horse lovers are everywhere and from all walks of life. And as in all sports, every participant is looking for an edge over the competition. For me, this situation provides an unusual opportunity to study the beneficial effects of various herbs, minerals, and nutrients on hundreds of well-trained and willing equine athletes. Much of what I discover can be applied to improving our own health. A good example occurred on my last trip.

One of the horses I was asked to look at was suffering from chronic drainage of an old injury that just wouldn't heal. Additionally the horse seemed very nervous and timid. It had all the symptoms commonly associated with a deficiency in silicon, so I instructed the owner to supplement the horse's

IN THIS MONTH'S ISSUE

SOME IMPORTANT HEALTH LESSONS FROM
BEER AND RACE HORSES
Help for Alzheimer's from Silicon
Are You Well-Grounded?
Like Computers, We Just Don't Function without Silicon90
Steps You Can Take to Replenish Your Silicon Levels91
A Crucial Problem Easily Solved91
HEARING LOSS FROM WAX IMPACTION 91A Safe Way to Remove Wax
WHERE HAVE ALL THE YOUNG MEN GONE? 92
The Developmental Influence of Hormones 93
Protect Yourself—and Your Family93
MAILBOX
Obsessive-Compulsive? Stop and Smell the Roses
The Dangers of Corticosteroids94
Breast Feeding: Garbage In, Garbage Out 95
NEWS TO USE FROM AROUND THE WORLD 95
Tylenol and Asthma95
AN UPDATE ON TENS THERAPY96

diet with this important mineral. The animal began to improve almost miraculously over the next few weeks.

Since horses are often fed a diet containing oats—which are rich in silicon—deficiencies in this mineral are not common and can easily be overlooked. With humans, however, the problem might be far more prevalent. Newer research has suggested that this problem might exist in significant portions of the population.

Help for Alzheimer's from Silicon

Researchers have long speculated that Alzheimer's disease is linked to an accumulation of aluminum in the brain. Links between aluminum in drinking water supplies and Alzheimer's have now been established. One factor that has been overlooked, however, is that silicon reduces the accumulation of aluminum. (*Alzheimer Dis Assoc Disord 98*; 12(2):83-7) (*J Inorg Biochem 98*;69(3):171-6) (*Lancet* 93;342:211-212) (*Chem Toxic 93*;31(9)679-685)

When researchers added silicon to aluminum-laced water supplies, the silicon prevented the aluminum from being absorbed. Silicon also caused an increase in the excretion of aluminum in the urine and lowered the aluminum concentrations in the brain, liver, bone, spleen, and kidneys.

From all early indications, it appears that silicon may be a very important factor not only in the prevention of Alzheimer's but also in its treatment. However, there are several other reasons to make sure you get adequate amounts of silicon in your diet.

Are You Well-Grounded?

If I had to list the number one health complaint I hear from people, I would have to say that it is a lack of energy. Obviously, there are literally dozens of reasons for the depletion of our energy levels, but a silicon deficiency isn't one that generally gets much attention. And while very little in-depth research has been carried out in this area, silicon plays a very important part in the maintenance of energy. This is true because silicon is required for the conduction of energy throughout the body.

Humans and all other living organisms emit measurable electromagnetic energy fields. To balance these fields we often need to be "grounded." You may have experienced such a grounding when walking barefooted on a sandy beach or walking in wet grass. Both of these experiences have a known grounding effect and can give you a noticeable increase in energy. For the phenomenon to occur, however, your body must contain adequate amounts of silicon.

Like Computers, We Just Don't Function without Silicon

Silicon is also essential in the formation of bone and joint cartilage and in the health of nerve tissue. But as with the body stores of many substances, silicon levels tend to decline as we get older. This decline can be responsible for many of the complaints commonly associated with aging.

The following is a list of problems that have been linked to silicon deficiencies.

- 1. Dry hair
- 2. Dry skin
- 3. Weak, thin, brittle nails
- 4. Weak bone structure
- 5. Nervousness
- 6. Poor energy levels
- 7. Sweaty odorous feet
- 8. Diabetes (The pancreas has the highest content of silicon in the body and diabetics routinely require additional amounts of silicon.)
- 9. Hair loss
- 10. Sties on the eyelids
- 11. Flabbiness of the skin (Silicon is necessary for collagen synthesis which helps form the framework for the skin, keeping it firm and unwrinkled.)
- 12. Arthritis (Silicon is required in the formation of articular or joint cartilage.)
- 13. Atherosclerosis (Some research has shown that silicon concentrations in the arterial walls begin to drop just before fatty deposits begin to form. Other studies have shown that adequate amounts of dietary silicon can inhibit the formation of artery-clogging plaque.)

While silicon is one of the most abundant minerals on the planet, there are very few foods that have a high enough silicon content to supply your dietary needs. Ground corn meal, oats, oat straw tea, and horsetail or shavegrass tea are some of the best sources. And while you won't find it listed anywhere, beer also happens to be a good silicon source because the grains used to make the beer are subjected to a hot mashing technique. Except for possibly the beer (and maybe the cornbread we Southerner's eat), the above foods and teas aren't very popular dietary items. It's easy to see how we might not be getting adequate amounts of silicon in our diet.

Steps You Can Take to Replenish Your Silicon Levels

One of the first recommendations I would make for most everyone, particularly if you have several of the complaints I've listed above, is to include oats or oatmeal in your diet. Oats are extremely nutritious and great for babies, children, and the elderly. They are a quick way to replenish silicon and other trace minerals. Oats, no doubt partly due to their silicon content, have been shown to be beneficial in lowering cholesterol, healing ulcers, calming down gallbladders, relaxing the nervous system, improving skin and circulation problems, and helping restore function to the thyroid, pancreas, and reproductive glands. Practically every system of healing (Greek, Ayurvedic, Eastern, etc.) praises the benefits of oats.

If oats, oatmeal, and corn meal aren't foods that you can include in your diet, then horsetail tea can help you replenish your silicon levels. This tea can be found in any health food store. Take 1 to 2 cups per day. Shavegrass tea is also an option.

There are also supplemental forms of silicon that you can use. First check to see if your multivitamin/mineral complex has the trace mineral. If it does, you'll usually see it listed as a powder from the horsetail herb. Daily Advantage provides 25 milligrams per day, which is a good maintenance dosage.

Jarrow Formulas makes an excellent silicon supplement called BioSil. It consists of a stabilized form of orthosilicic acid which quickly raises serum silicon levels. I've found it to be especially helpful in individuals with bone problems. The recommended dosage is six drops a day (three drops in the morning and three in the evening). This acid form of silicon is easily assimilated, but it tastes pretty nasty. Most people put the drops in either fruit or vegetable juice to solve that problem.

Jarrow Formulas can be found in many health food stores. You can contact them by phone at 800-726-0886 or by mail at 1824 S. Robertson Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90035.

Another way to replenish silicon is with the homeopathic cell salt called Silicea (with a strength

of 6X). It comes as very tiny pills which quickly melt in your mouth. I would suggest taking six of the little tablets three times a day for a total of 18 a day. (You can't overdose on these cell salts and they are very inexpensive. Standard Homeopathic markets them in bottles that contain 1000 tablets and cost less than \$10. You can find them in health food stores.

A Crucial Problem Easily Solved

Restoring silicon levels is easy, inexpensive, and can be very beneficial. Best of all, it can help prevent and heal many problems like the ones I've mentioned above. One of the most dramatic changes I've seen time and time again is the rapid resolution of chronic, sweaty, odorous foot problems. Using either the drops from Jarrow or the homeopathic cell salts from Standard, it's not uncommon to see the problem begin to resolve in a week or so.

And don't forget to kick off your shoes and take a regular stroll along the beach or through the wet grass once your silicon levels are on the rise again. You'll be pleasantly surprised to find a surge of newfound energy. As hot as it's been down here in Texas, a nice stroll along the beach with a cold, siliconrich beer sounds pretty good to me right now.

HEARING LOSS FROM WAX IMPACTION

A common problem with aging seems to be the accumulation and hardening of earwax. The problem is so prevalent that I overheard an ear, nose, and throat (ENT) doctor comment to one of his colleagues the other day that removing ear wax from his elderly patients has become virtually the "bread and butter" of his practice. I couldn't help but think that this doctor should be teaching his patients how to save money and doctor visits by removing the wax themselves. I'm sure he would have disagreed with me, but here's how to do it yourself if the problem arises.

First, remember that a little earwax is a good thing. It has antibacterial properties and helps keep

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Author: Dr. David G. Williams

Publisher: Erica Bullard

Editor: Robert Kroening

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the ear canal free of infections. Normally it stays soft and moves out of the canal on its own due to vibrations initiated by jaw movement. When it doesn't move and hardens, it can block the ear canal and impede your ability to hear.

A Safe Way to Remove Wax

Removing earwax can be performed safely using a small rubber bulb syringe that can be purchased in any drug store. (It's the same type of syringe used to clean mucus out of babies' nostrils.)

While you're in the shower or tub, fill the syringe with warm water and gently insert the syringe just inside the ear canal with the tip points slightly upwards. Squeeze the tube and as the water flushes upward into the canal the wax should come out the bottom of the ear. If the wax has hardened, you can use one of the commercially available wax softeners or simply make your own: Mix a teaspoon of baking soda in four ounces of water and put several drops of this liquid into your ear three or four times a day. Within four or five days the wax should be soft enough to flush out.

A Faster Way for Those Who Can't Wait

If you can't wait that long, you can purchase a liquid stool softener for children at the drug store. Check the labels of the available products and get the one with the ingredient docusate sulfate. This ingredient is safe and non-irritating. It works by attracting water, as does baking soda. Water absorption makes the stool softer and easier to pass through the intestine. Likewise, moistened earwax softens and becomes easier to extract.

Put three or four drops of the stool-softener in your ear and let it sit for 5 to 10 minutes. By then, the wax should be soft enough for you to wash it out with warm water from the bulb syringe.

Never use Q-tips or other probes to remove earwax, or you'll run the risk of puncturing your eardrum. And while it might sound like a good idea, forget about using water-pik type devices. They, too, can blow out your eardrum.

WHERE HAVE ALL THE YOUNG MEN GONE?

The evidence from research is increasingly indicating that, through pollution and diet changes, we are exposing ourselves to ever-higher levels of estrogen-like compounds. Scientists around the world are already seeing the feminizing effects of these pollutants on many species. Numerous bird, fish, and reptile populations are declining as the number of male species decline or become less fertile. And although the effects in humans are less evident at this point, the reason is simply that humans have a longer time period between each generation.

This problem might seem very distant to many of us. After all, if a species dies out, it probably won't happen during our lifetimes. Extinction is a gradual process that will continue long after we're gone. But apart from the political, philosophical and emotional arguments for taking care of other species, this problem has ominous overtones for humans, too.

Many of the health problems we're starting to see are directly linked to the estrogen-mimicking compounds in our water and food supplies. Infertility, impotence, prostate disease, breast and ovarian cancer, early puberty in young girls, atherosclerosis, chronic fatigue, obesity, muscle wasting, arthritic diseases, depression, and senility have all been linked to these hormone imbalances.

Besides the above health problems, recent research has also linked exposure to estrogen-like compounds to other determinative outcomes in human beings. For instance, researchers have suggested that hormone imbalances or exposure to estrogen-like compounds in the womb could determine such things as sexuality, spacial awareness, and the ability to excel in subjects like math and music.

Measuring fetal hormone levels during pregnancy is difficult, to say the least. Accordingly, researchers have found a simpler, less invasive method of predicting sperm numbers and concentrations of testosterone, luteinizing hormone, and estrogen.

It seems that a single type of gene (Hox genes) determines both the development of the fingers and the differentiation of the urinogenital system into male or female. Because of this fact, the way that a person's fingers develop can tell us what hormones were at work in the womb when that person was being formed. And as a further result, researchers now say that they can determine a variety of personal characteristics simply by measuring the comparative lengths of different fingers.

Normally, the index finger (2nd digit) of women is generally about the same length as the ring finger (4th digit). In males, the ring finger is often considerably longer. This difference is very clear from infancy and is now believed to be due to increased exposure to testosterone during fetal development. (Int J Neurosci 90;53(2-4):157-65)

The Developmental Influence of Hormones

Building on animal studies in which prenatal exposure to the male sex hormone, testosterone, has been shown to have a direct influence on sexual orientation, researchers have theorized similar responses in humans. Accordingly, University of California researchers, led by Marc Breedlove, surveyed and measured finger lengths and ratios of over 720 adults.

The ratios revealed that gay women had ringfinger-to-index-finger ratios that closely resembled those of heterosexual men. And while research done by John Manning at the University of Liverpool in England didn't find such clear-cut differences in gay men, Manning did find that the finger ratios of gay men more closely resembled those of women than heterosexual men.

Manning has been studying the relationship between finger length and masculinity for years. His earlier research even found that a longer ring finger in men was linked to higher sperm counts. (*Hum Reprod* 98;13(11):3000-4) (*Hum Reprod* 96;11(11):2477-80)

It is Manning's conclusion that higher testosterone levels in the womb are directly responsible for the development of masculine characteristics in the nervous system. Based on his latest study, one of these characteristics, spacial awareness, would be of help in subjects like map reading and math, and can be a predictor of musical ability.

In fact, Manning feels that parents can tell if a child has the potential to become a gifted musician by looking at the length of the child's ring fingers. Manning measured ring finger lengths of players in symphony orchestras and compared them to the population at large. He found that found all of the musicians had dramatically longer ring fingers than the non-musicians.

Protect Yourself—and Your Family

The more research I see on this subject, the more convinced I am that hormones fundamentally influence many areas of human development and behavior. With that in mind, the growing presence of environmental substances that act like hormones in the human body is ominous. The handwriting is on the wall. Pesticide and chemical exposure is a problem that will only get worse with time. It's time to start protecting yourself now.

1. Make certain your drinking water is pure. Conventional tap water is most likely contaminated with dozens of chemicals that are being overlooked by public health authorities.

- 2. Try to minimize highly processed foods. The more processed foods you eat, the worse your health will become. If organic foods are available and reasonably priced in your area, switch to those.
- 3. Don't store acidic foods in plastic containers. Estrogen-mimicking compounds from the plastic have been shown to leach into the foods.
- 4. Avoid fried foods, especially commercially prepared foods like chips and snacks and those at fast food restaurants. The trans fatty acids contained in the foods replace essential fatty acids in the diet which are essential to the formation of hormones and cell walls. Avoid margarine altogether. It is one of the primary sources of trans-fatty acids in the American diet. (One recent study found that mother's breast milk in the United States has become one of the richest sources of trans fatty acids. We can only imagine the problems these children will have as they mature.)
- 5. Include flaxseed and flax oil daily in your diet. It contains the building blocks your body needs to make adequate amounts of natural hormones. The best source I've found is Flora, Inc. at 800-446-2110.

Estrogen-mimicking substances have become difficult to avoid in our society. You can find them almost everywhere. But by taking the above steps, you'll be protecting yourself—and your family—from the majority of them.



Question: "Our daughter has been diagnosed with obsessive-compulsive behavior and we haven't had much luck dealing with the problem. We've tried the medication route, but the side effects were worse than the problem. We also have been to four different nutritionists without much help. If there are any suggestions you have, we would be open to trying them."

Steven M. Houston, Texas **Answer:** Obsessive-compulsive behavior is a difficult problem to treat, and an effective treatment program will undoubtedly consist of several components. Accordingly, while I don't think the following will be a complete answer, it should help.

In the past I wrote briefly about the connection between right and left brain activity and nasal breathing. A little knowledge in this area could be of help in your daughter's case.

Studies have shown that, during waking hours, air moves predominately through one nostril for anywhere from 25 to 200 minutes and then switches to the other nostril. The changing rhythm of our breathing has been linked with rhythmic changes in heart and nervous system activity, pituitary hormones, and insulin levels. Research has also shown that the electrical activity in each side of the brain is greatest when the airflow is greatest in the opposite nostril. In other words, when you breathe through your right nostril, the left side of your brain becomes more active—and vice versa.

As you may recall, the right lobe or hemisphere of our brain has been associated with creative functions, spacial skills, and "rest." The left hemisphere of the brain has been associated with rational thought, verbal skills, and "activity." Often, we can take advantage of the special functions and skills of one side of the brain by "forced nostril breathing" though one nostril or the other.

In one small randomized clinical trial involving individuals exhibiting obsessive-compulsive behavior, forced nostril breathing was found to help considerably.

The individuals were taught to hold the right nostril closed and breath slowly only through their left nostril. They were to completely relax and breathe through the left nostril only once a minute for a period of 31 minutes each day. At the end of three months, the obsessive-compulsive symptoms of these individuals were significantly reduced when compared to those not following the procedure. (*Lancet 98;351:1038*)

Although airflow from a nostril activates the opposite lobe of the brain, sensory information from odors entering a nostril has been found to be processed in the brain on the same side as the nostril. At this point, I'm not sure what practical application we can make based on this last tidbit of information. Just for your information, though, a nice odor sniffed through your right nostril generally seems more pleasant than the same odor sniffed through the left nostril. Possibly, this is because the right lobe of the brain controls emotions processing. On the other hand, research has shown that when individuals sniff through the left nostril, they identify what they are smelling more accurately. This tendency makes sense because the left hemisphere of your brain processes analytical data. (*Chemical Senses* 99;24(6):691-5)

I can't help but think that a better working knowledge of our sense of smell would improve numerous aspects of our lives. Hopefully, some day we'll be able to incorporate a more sophisticated form of aromatherapy into things like education, healing, and stress reduction.

Question: "On numerous occasions, you have been critical about the use of both prescription and overthe-counter corticosteroids. I think this is highly unwarranted. These are extremely useful tools in medicine. I equate them with antibiotics in their importance. I'll agree that there is a tendency for their overuse, but when used short-term their effects can be miraculous and their side effects practically nil. After reviewing the evidence, I think you might change or at least soften your stand on these products."

> Dr. K. H. Plano, Texas

Answer: I'm not a fan of corticosteroid use and I doubt I ever will be. I've seen far too many patients who have suffered from their ill effects. And I'm certain there are hundreds of thousands more who are unaware that many of their problems stem from corticosteroid use.

Allowing the sale of corticosteroid creams over-the-counter is something I will never understand. As with many pharmaceutical products, the problems they cause may not be readily apparent. Unfortunately, most individuals will never make the connection between casual, short-term steroid use and a long list of serious health problems. I'll list a few examples that make my blood boil. After researching these, maybe you'll change your mind or at least harden your position.

Studies have shown that rub-on steroids have caused a serious adrenal disease called Cushing's syndrome in children after only a month of use. (*Arch Dis Child 82; 57:204-7*)

One percent hydrocortisone ointments being sold over-the-counter can result in vision loss, eye damage, and an increase in eye pressure after only two weeks of use. (*BMJ Aug 20-27, 1994*)

Inhaled steroids used to treat childhood

asthma, eczema, and arthritis can delay puberty and retard growth. (*Lancet 66; 2 (463):569-72*) (*Clin* & *Exp Rheum 91; 9 Suppl 6:37-40*)

After only four months of use, steroids cause an 8 percent loss of bone mass, setting a person up for osteoporosis and possibly leading to the need for joint replacement. (Ann Int Med Nov 15, 1993) (Arthro 85; 1(1):68-72)

Low doses (10 to 15 mg) of the steroid prednisone taken for a year can result in the formation of cataracts. (*Surv Ophthalmol 86; 31:260-2*)

I don't recommend the use of prescription steroids or over-the-counter steroid creams. Neither is safe, and both the short-and long-term effects are unpredictable and serious.

Question: My sister-in-law is pregnant and will be giving birth any time now, so I showed her your article on the importance of breast feeding.

I think she is now convinced to breast feed the child, but honestly her diet is horrible. She eats fried and fast foods most of the time. Will the baby still get the essential fatty acids you discussed?

> Cindy J. San Francisco, California

Answer: It's hard to say. When a mother eats fried foods, margarine, commercially baked goods, and other foods high in hydrogenated or trans fatty acids, those same harmful, plastic-like fat compounds will pass through the breast milk and into the baby.

A recent study found that breast milk was one of the richest sources of trans fatty acids. If your sister-in-law has been consuming hydrogenated fats throughout her pregnancy then these same fats have been used as building blocks in the body of the unborn child. This will set the stage for problems like clogging of the arteries, heart attack, and stroke later in the child's life.

When you consider the standard diet in this country it easy to see why there are signs of heart and artery disease showing up in children as young and 12 and 13 years of age.

To help turn things around, your sister-inlaw needs to clean up her diet immediately. She needs to avoid margarine, which is practically liquid plastic, and switch to small amounts of butter. She should stick to olive oil for cooking, and take flaxseed and flax oil to help supply the necessary essential fatty acids. Such steps might be difficult, but they are necessary for the health of the baby.



TYLENOL AND ASTHMA

LONDON, ENGLAND__Researchers have linked the use of the painkiller acetaminophen (Tylenol) to both asthma and rhinitis. Individuals who used acetaminophen on a daily or weekly basis were shown to exhibit far more severe symptoms of asthma and rhinitis than those who didn't use the drug. (*Thorax 00;55(4):266-70*)

Acetaminophen has been shown to deplete the compound glutathione from lung tissue. Glutathione is a very important antioxidant that can limit lung tissue inflammation. In fact, glutathione is such an important component of your health that I devoted a full issue to the subject in May 1996. In that issue, I explained that glutathione deficiencies are a primary cause of premature aging, and I gave details on a very inexpensive way to reverse that trend. Now might be a good time to reread that issue.

In light of this new research, we can clearly see an important trend: Many overthe-counter drugs that are generally considered harmless are instead shortening our lives and contributing to serious health problems. Contrary to what the public is being told, drugs are not the answer to our every ache and pain. They might be necessary when the disease process has progressed to the point that a person's body can no longer heal itself, even with the best of natural therapies, but they are not without risk. The latest figures show that roughly 2 million people are now being hospitalized each year from drug side effects and more than 100,000 of them die from those effects. That's enough to make drug side effects the fourth leading cause of death in the U.S.

AN UPDATE ON TENS THERAPY

Since I wrote about the amazing work being done by Dr. Merrill Allen in the treatment of macular degeneration and retinitis pigmentosa in the March 2000 issue, some very positive developments have taken place.

As you may recall, Dr. Allen has been successfully reversing the devastating effects of these diseases using a form of electrical micro-current. Dr. Allen has now informed me that my report on his work has generated a great deal of publicity and interest among both sufferers of these diseases and the scientific community.

As a result, Dr. Allen is now working with Altoona Medical Supply (one of the sources I mentioned) to develop both a very simple, inexpensive, hand-held electrode for stimulating both eyes, and a special circuit board that can be incorporated into an existing TENS unit. Both Dr. Allen and the people at Altoona have now confirmed that a TENS unit with all the features necessary for proper treatment should be available to health professionals in the very near future. As soon as it's available, I'll let you know.

As I mentioned at the time, I am still testing Dr. Allen's prototype unit and compiling the results for a later report. I will also try to obtain one of the new units as soon as they are available. Currently, I am also testing to see if the microampere therapy will affect the normal vision loss that occurs with aging. In conjunction with the regular micro-amperage stimulation of the eyes, I am continuing to take Daily Advantage, the multi-vitamin/mineral/herbal formula I developed several years ago, and Vision Advantage, the new eye-health formula I recently formulated. I believe that the nutrients in these products are essential to achieve the best results. I'll report on any changes in a few months. Keep in mind that using this microampere stimulation works mainly to increase circulation within the small blood vessels of the eye. For proper healing and repair to take place, adequate amounts of nutrients and other building blocks must also be present in the bloodstream. By including the highest quality supplements, especially those needed for vision, in your diet, you can greatly improve your odds of both preventing and reversing these diseases.

Therapies like this one will turn out to be a Godsend for all of us. Vision loss and blindness are two of the major problems we all face with advancing age. But, unfortunately, no one else has uncovered or written about this therapy. As *ALTERNATIVES* readers, you are probably the only people who know about this breakthrough. This is one of many exciting areas of research that I'll continue to follow for you. As usual, you'll have detailed, practical information you can put to immediate use. With it, you'll be able to stop, and maybe even reverse macular degeneration and retinitis pigmentosa. Not only that, you'll have this information months, if not years, ahead of the rest of the world.

This is incredible research with far-reaching implications. Thank you Dr. Allen.

Dr. David Will

P.S. Looking at the calendar, I notice that I will have been writing *ALTERNATIVES* for 15 years next month. That's a lot of alternatives! If you've been a subscriber since the premier issue back in July 1985, would you send me a letter or an email message to let me know? I'd like to find out how many of you have hung in there with me for that long. Thanks in advance.

We Hope To Hear From You!

Dr. Williams greatly appreciates hearing from you, and gears his research to the concerns you express to him in your letters. Of course, practical and ethical constraints prevent him from answering personal medical questions by mail or email, but he'll answer as many letters in the Mailbox section of *ALTERNATIVES* as he can. For our part, we'll do our best to direct you to his issues, reports, and products related to the subject of your interest.

Here's how you can reach us:

• To send in Mailbox questions or Health Hints, write to P.O. Box 829, Ingram, TX 78025 or mailbox@DrDavidWilliams.com

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