

# Alternatives

## FOR THE HEALTH-CONSCIOUS

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Dr. David G. Williams

## Living in the Aftermath

Finding the right words to describe or react to the events of September 11th is very difficult. The events are just too horrible to comprehend. I'd like to offer my heartfelt condolences to those of you who have

been deeply affected by this crisis through the death or injury of a loved one or through personal injury. And I'd also like to offer my sincere thanks to those who were involved in the rescue effort or helped out in countless other ways.

Like most of you, I believe the U.S. will weather this storm. We have already seen disaster bring out the best in many Americans. Unfortunately, however, I think most of us assume that terrorists will hit America again in the future—perhaps more than once. When I think about that expectation, the doctor in me takes over and I want to make sure everyone remembers what we've talked about in past newsletters. It's easy to read about a therapy and forget it, when remembering it might save your life or the life of someone you love. The stakes are very high.

Remember that it's important to have alternatives to traditional drugs and surgery on hand. Once a disaster occurs, there may be no time to get help from others and we may need to use the tools and techniques we have immediate access to. A few important remedies to remember are DMSO for burns, pain, bruising, head injuries and more; cayenne pepper to stop bleeding and heart problems; chlorine bleach for infections and water purification; natural antibiotics such as garlic, honey, a mixture of sugar and iodine ointment, and grapefruit seed extract—which can also be used to disinfect water supplies.

Also, though it's not well accepted, I might as well tell you a secret that has saved many people

from dying from dehydration after being trapped in rubble for 10 or 12 days. The secret is that a person can safely drink his or her own urine. It's not a pleasant thought, but we're talking about survival here.

This might be a good time to leaf through past *Alternatives* issues and review such simple remedies in preparation for the emergencies in life, large and small. Hopefully, no one will have to experience the horrors we've all witnessed on television recently, but knowing what to use and having it available may save your life or the life of someone you love.

If you can't locate the articles you're looking for, you can find a free list of *Alternatives* article references on [drdavidwilliams.com](http://drdavidwilliams.com) in the Health Library. If you don't have a computer, you can use one at the library, or you can have a friend or family member print out the appropriate references for you.



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*You will observe with concern how long a useful truth may be known and exist, before it is generally received and practiced on.*

—Benjamin Franklin

## An Alternative to LASIK: The Eyes Have It

Last month, I discussed many of the unreported dangers associated with the surgical procedure called LASIK. LASIK has become a popular method of reshaping the cornea of the eye in an attempt to eliminate the need for eyeglasses. For some individuals, the surgery appears to have been a Godsend. For others, it has resulted in a permanent nightmare.

Since I am slightly nearsighted, the idea of being able to correct visual problems without the need for glasses has always interested me. My vision is essentially good, so it would mainly be a matter of convenience for me to eliminate my glasses. I often misplace them since I put them on and take them off constantly throughout the day. For other people, however, the constant need for glasses or contacts can be more than just an inconvenience. Professional athletes or individuals who work in constantly wet or dusty environments may perform better without glasses or contacts.

I have found a viable alternative to surgeries such as LASIK. It is called Eccentricity Zero Molding, or EZM (also known as orthokeratology). EZM was developed by an Australian optometrist named Donald Ezekiel. I first spoke with Dr. Ezekiel almost a year ago when I began to investigate the procedure. At the time, I was on the eastern coast of Australia and Dr. Ezekiel offered to show me his procedure firsthand. However, I would have had to travel to Western Australia where his offices are located. Due to other commitments, that wasn't possible at the time. Fortunately there are about 40 doctors in the United States that have trained to use his technique. Over the last few months, I have utilized EZM under the guidance of Dr. Gary White, an optometrist practicing in San Antonio, Texas.

Like LASIK, the EZM procedure reshapes the cornea to act like a corrective lens. Unlike LASIK, the EZM procedure doesn't require surgery.

EZM reshapes the cornea through the use of a unique contact lens made by Dr. Ezekiel in his Australian laboratory (Gelflex Laboratories, 3 Hutton Street, Osborne Park, Western Australia). The hard contact lens is specially designed to be worn overnight while sleeping. As you sleep, your cornea is reshaped and molded in a way that makes it possible to see normally during

waking hours without having to wear glasses or contact lenses.

The procedure does have some limitations. Currently, it corrects for only myopia (near-sightedness) and astigmatism (irregular surfaces in the cornea). It is limited to a correction of about 4 diopters of myopia and about 2 diopters of astigmatism. Also, if you have very dry eyes, this procedure might not be for you.

To determine if EZM will work for you, the optometrist will first perform a computerized mapping of each eye (topography). In most instances, this mapping, along with a consultation, will be performed at no charge.

Next, you'll be fitted with a set of EZM contact lenses that are tailor-made for your eyes. These hard contact lenses are worn every night, and quickly begin to reshape the elastic cornea so you can see perfectly during the day without glasses or contacts. After my first night of wearing the EZM lens, my vision was already halfway back to normal. In most individuals, the improvements occur rapidly within the first few days to weeks.

Molding the cornea and "fine-tuning" the whole process usually takes longer—between 3 and 6 months. The process may require two or three sets of lenses and several visits to the doctor. Once the cornea molding has occurred, however, the cornea's shape stabilizes. At that point, the doctor will give you a set of "retainer" lenses to be worn each night. These lenses maintain the proper shape of the cornea and eliminate the need to wear glasses or contacts during the day. The soft, pliable nature of the cornea requires that the lenses be worn every night, otherwise it will return to its original shape. Unlike LASIK surgery, the procedure is totally reversible.

I have spoken with dozens of individuals who love the EZM technique. They've found a safe way to get rid of their glasses without risking the loss of their eyesight. They simply sleep with contacts at night, remove them first thing in the morning, and go on about their regular business. Since the retainer contacts last for years, these people need to see their eye doctors for only the routine six-month or yearly exam.

Unfortunately for me, my hectic schedule prevented me from taking full advantage of EZM. When I started the procedure, I underestimated the time and number of office visits required to get the final results. I couldn't seem to stay in

one place long enough to complete the program and get the retainer lenses.

Not only does the EZM program initially require several regular visits to the doctor, it can cost about as much as LASIK surgery—as much as \$2,000 to \$3,000 or more—depending on the amount of correction required and the individual doctor's fee schedule. Personally, I've never been able to wear contact lenses, and I found the hard EZM lens quite irritating in the beginning. However, that's something most people adapt to quickly, I'm told.

EZM certainly has its drawbacks, but, unlike LASIK surgery, it's totally safe and reversible. As we age, our eyes continue to change and we can easily change the prescription on our glasses or contacts to account for the change. In the same way, EZM contacts can also be changed. With LASIK, you just don't have that option. Good or bad, the results are often permanent and unchangeable.

EZM also provides a possible method of treating children and young adults who often seem to suddenly become nearsighted. In some instances, EZM has been able to stop and even reverse the vision loss.

Dr. Ezekiel's program and EZM lenses are marketed here in the United States through a company called Scioptic. If you call them and let them know you're a subscriber to *Alternatives*, they can refer you to a doctor in your area trained in the procedure. You can call Scioptic at 800-462-7560.

## Two Overlooked Causes of Osteoporosis

For decades, the debate over the use of salt has raged on and on. For the most part, the discussion has focused on salt's effects on blood pressure. Lately, however, researchers have been taking a closer look at the link between

salt intake and osteoporosis. Osteoporosis, as I'm sure you recall, involves the decalcification and weakening of bones, which results in fractures.

Increased salt intake causes the kidneys to remove increased amounts of calcium from the blood and deposit it in the urine. Obviously, as more calcium exits the body, the bones become weaker. (*Eur J Clin Nutr* 97;51(8):561-565) (*JAMA* 01;285(18):2323-2324)

It goes without saying that you should minimize the amount of extra salt you add to your foods. The biggest problem, however, may be from prepared and processed foods in the diet. As a society, we consume more processed foods every year, and salt is a major ingredient in most of these foods. When you take a close look at the steady increase in the incidence of osteoporosis over the past two or three decades, you'll see that it coincides with the increased use of processed foods.

With the increased awareness of osteoporosis, several new calcium-sparing drugs and hormone-like compounds have come to market. However, if you have problems with this disease, or want to avoid problems in the future, lowering your salt intake should be one of the first steps you take.

In addition to not picking up the salt shaker as often, and substituting fresh foods for prepared foods, you can help counteract the effects of sodium by including more potassium-rich foods in your diet. Such foods include bananas, oranges, all of the green leafy vegetables, whole grains, potatoes (especially the skins), and my favorite, sunflower seeds. In fact, a craving for oranges or bananas is often a fairly good indicator that you are deficient in potassium.

On the other side of the scale, sugar, alcohol, diuretics, profuse sweating, vomiting, stress, diarrhea, and salt consumption deplete potassium levels.



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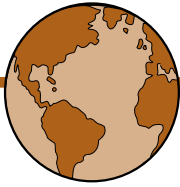
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## News to Use from Around the World

### Margarine's Asthma Connection

MELBOURNE, AUSTRALIA \_\_\_\_\_ Researchers at the Royal Children's Hospital have linked the dramatic increase in childhood asthma to an increased consumption of polyunsaturated fats. Surveys were done on 974 children between the ages of 3 and 5 to determine potential risk factors for asthma in pre-school children. Twenty-two percent of the children in this group had asthma. These children showed four major risk factors:

- having a parent with a history of asthma;
- having had a serious respiratory infection in the first 2 years of life;
- hypersensitivity to common environmental allergens; and
- a high dietary intake of polyunsaturated fats. (Thorax 01:56(8):589-595)

Polyunsaturated fats in the form of margarines and cooking oils have long been promoted as foods that

can reduce cholesterol and prevent heart disease. As a result, margarine consumption has increased dramatically in most Western societies. These unnatural forms of polyunsaturates, however, haven't been shown to stop heart disease. In fact, they may be contributing to an increase in heart disease, as well as increasing the risk of developing cancer, asthma, arthritis, inflammatory conditions, and overall pain.

Polyunsaturated fats contain high levels of omega-6 fatty acids, which increase the production of chemicals that cause inflammation. On the other hand, omega-3 fatty acids tend to reduce the inflammatory process.

I've written before explaining that our diet nowadays contains far too many omega-6 fatty acids and is generally deficient in omega-3 fatty acids. You can help reverse this trend by consuming more omega-3 rich foods such as fish and flaxseed or flax oil. These foods will help reduce your risk of heart attack, pain

*Continued on page 29*

### If Your Muscles Aren't Getting Stronger, Your Bones Might Be Getting Weaker

While I'm on the topic of osteoporosis, there's another aspect that for some reason everyone seems to be overlooking. One of the more frequent questions I hear from osteoporosis patients is, "I'm taking everything my doctor suggested, so why aren't my bones getting stronger?"

Bone growth and strengthening is not just a function of how much calcium, magnesium, vitamin D, hormones, or prescription medication you take. You can't force a bone to remineralize simply by taking supplements or hormones. Bones grow and remineralize in response to the forces of stress placed on them.

Everyone seems to have forgotten the basic physiology of bone growth. Bones are living. They adapt, grow, and change their internal structure according to the stress that is placed on them. If you were to look at the inside mesh-like structure of the bone in your leg it would be much different than the inside of, say, a bone in your skull. The bone in your leg is weight bearing, while the skull isn't. Your body is constantly building and rebuilding the weight-bearing bones with internal scaffolding to support weight. What this means is that, the more weight you

force your body to lift, the stronger your body will build your bones.

If you want to strengthen your bones, you must perform exercises that exert a force along the axis of the bone. In simple terms, you need to engage in some type of progressive resistance exercise. To put it even more simply, you need to lift weights. Your bones are going to grow only when you stress them by gradually increasing the weight they must support.

When stress is placed on your bones along their axis, the crushing of the bone molecules together creates something called piezoelectricity. This micro-current electricity then stimulates the building of new bone material. In this way, your bones adapt themselves to the stresses that are put on them.

If you have a problem with bone loss, I can tell you that drugs, hormones, and minerals are going to be useless if your daily routine remains the same as it has for the last 10 or 20 years. To reverse osteoporosis, you need to find a degreed exercise physiologist (not a "certified" personal trainer at the local gym, whose training won't be adequate in this area). Such a physiologist will understand exactly how the various muscles in the body work and their effect on bone growth. He or she can help you set up a customized, per-

## News to Use...Continued

and inflammation, and asthma (see the May 2001 issue of *Alternatives* for information on which types of fish are the best sources of omega-3).

The researchers in the above study estimated that 17 percent of the asthma cases in the children they studied were a direct result of consuming margarine and foods fried in polyunsaturated vegetable oils. But rather than recommend a reduction in polyunsaturated fats, the researchers predictably stated that “the children shouldn’t be changing their diet...this is the subject of ongoing investigation.”

Another area not addressed in this particular study was that of trans fatty acids. These are the fatty compounds created when oils are converted to solids, such as margarines, during the process of hydrogenation. Not only do diets that include margarine increase the incidence of asthma, they are also setting these children up for future problems with heart disease.

A recent study done in the Netherlands illustrated just how dangerous trans fatty acids can be. A group of 29 individuals were placed on a high trans fatty acid diet for four weeks and then switched to a diet high in saturated fats. When compared to the saturated fat diet, the trans fatty acids reduced the ability of the blood vessels to dilate by a shocking 29 percent and lowered HDL cholesterol by 21 percent.

*In just four weeks, the blood vessels of these individuals lost almost a third of their ability to expand. By being able to expand, your blood vessels can help keep your blood pressure from skyrocketing under periods of stress or exertion. Without this ability, you become more susceptible to stroke and heart attack. This one study alone should be enough to make everyone avoid margarine like the plague. No one should be eating margarine. If you haven’t done so already, make the switch to butter and olive oil. Margarine is a killer. (Arterioscler Thromb Vasc Biol 01;21(7):1233-1237)*

sonal weight program to help rebuild demineralized bone. Only when you create the demand for additional calcium, magnesium, and other minerals will your bones begin to grow.

### Metabolism Is as Metabolism Does

Lifting weights has another often-overlooked benefit. Most people have the impression that, as we age, our metabolic rate just naturally slows down. And, as our bodies burn fewer calories, the extra pounds gradually begin to accumulate. It has always been thought that changes in our hormone levels, our immune system, and other factors were responsible for the change in our metabolism. New research indicates that this may not be the case.

It now appears that a large part of the reason our metabolic rate slows as we age has to do with the fact that we lose muscle mass. Muscle cells consume high amounts of energy. Even when you’re at rest, your muscles continue to “fire,” or work, by maintaining posture and tone throughout the body.

If you want to regain the metabolic rate of your youth, you need to increase the number of muscle cells in your body. Even small increases can have a dramatic effect on your metabolism and your ability to attain and maintain your proper weight. Increasing the amount of muscle in your body requires two things that are often

absent as we get older, lifting weight and adequate amounts of protein in the diet.

At the gym where I work out, there are dozens of senior citizens of both sexes that have begun to enjoy the benefits of lifting weights. Many started out at home using things like milk jugs filled with water or the smaller sand—and lead shot—filled leg weights available from sporting good stores. Gradually, they progressed to the weight machines in the gym. Nowadays, almost every town has a gym and programs to help seniors get started on a fitness program. Joining one of these programs is one of the best health investments a person can make. I highly recommend a regular program of weight lifting.

If you embark on such a program, don’t forget to include adequate amounts of protein in your diet. This is best accomplished by simply adding a scoop or two of protein powder to your diet each morning. I recommend “Designer Protein” by Next Nutrition, which can be found in health food stores or ordered from suppliers like Nutrition Express by calling 800-338-7979 or going online at [www.nutritionexpress.com](http://www.nutritionexpress.com). I’ve discussed in the past how this particular type of whey protein also increases glutathione levels in the body, which can also help slow the aging process and boost the immune system.

## A Bitter Remedy That Brings Sweet Relief

With the hot dry summer we've been having, it's hard to imagine that winter is just around the corner. Cooler weather will certainly be a welcome change, but along with the change will come an increased risk of developing colds and flu. Fortunately, we now have two of the most reliable and effective cold and flu remedies, elderberry extract and herbal throat lozenges, readily available. At the first sign of problems, these two substances can generally stop a cold or flu in its tracks within a matter of just hours. If you're caught without them or need additional support, there's a little known herb from Asia that you should also be familiar with.

When I was in Thailand several years ago, the locals were using a very bitter-tasting native plant that grew along the roadsides to treat cold and flu symptoms. Around the Bangkok area it was called Fa thalaai. I later discovered that its botanical name was *Andrographis paniculata*. It seemed to work quite well, and, as a result, I continued to keep track of research efforts regarding the plant.

The Chinese have also used *Andrographis paniculata* for centuries. They use it as a supporting ingredient in medicines used for treating problems of the lungs and throat. In Thailand, cigarette manufacturers add the herb to their products for its soothing effect on the throat. I found that the herb is also well known and widely used in India. In the 1919 Indian flu epidemic, the herb was one of the primary forms of treatment that finally brought the epidemic under control. In that country, the herb is called the King of Bitters. This name may have caught the eye of researchers in Sweden, where much of the current research is now being conducted.

"Swedish Bitters" have been a popular tonic in parts of Europe for over 400 years. In just the last year or so, this relatively "new" herb has quickly become one of their hottest-selling cold remedies. Its popularity has undoubtedly been fueled by modern research.

During the past few years, researchers have shown that *Andrographis* is effective, not only in treating the symptoms of colds and flu, but also in providing a non-toxic method of preventing

these problems in the first place. (*Phytomedicine* 99;6(4):217-223) (*Phytomedicine* 97;4:101-104)

Based on various studies, the dosage of *Andrographis* has varied anywhere from 400 milligrams three times a day to between 1,000 and 2,000 milligrams three times a day. With a standardized product (containing 5 percent of the active ingredient andrographolide), a dosage of 400 milligrams given three times a day should be good for treating existing cold symptoms, and a dosage of 100 milligrams taken two times a day should be enough to help prevent colds.

Currently, there aren't too many *Andrographis* products available in this country, and the ones that are available usually contain a combination of ingredients (which decreases the amount of *Andrographis* you get). When the word finally gets out that this Asian herb is more effective than echinacea, I'm sure that this will change. In the meantime, if you have access to a Chinese pharmacy, they should be able to sell you the herb in either bulk or capsules. Swedish Herbal Institute sells *Andrographis* in capsules. Their product is called Kan Jang and they can be reached by calling 800-774-9444. (Much of the latest research has been performed using the Kan Jang product.) A product called Maria Treben's Original Swedish Bitters is available from Food Reserves, Inc. at 800-944-1511. And a product called Metagenics *Andrographis Plus* is available from Doctor's Health Supply at 800-578-5939.

I'm going to continue to monitor the research on *Andrographis paniculata*, since it's beginning to appear that its usefulness extends beyond that of treating cold and flu symptoms. Preliminary animal research indicates that it protects the liver against damage from certain forms of toxins. Indications are that *Andrographis* might be even more effective than milk thistle, but we can't know for sure unless studies comparing the two herbs are conducted. (*Indian J Med Res* 90;92:276-283) (*Indian J Exp Biol* 01;39(1):41-46)

*Andrographis* also has been shown to exhibit anti-malarial activity (*J Ethnopharmacol* 99;64(3):249-254) and may be helpful at lowering high blood sugar levels in diabetic patients (*Clin Exp Pharmacol Physiol* 00;27(5-6):358-363). As more research on this herb becomes available, we may discover that it's really the king of much more than bitters.

## Vitamin D: A Vital Component of Physical and Mental Health

**A**s winter and cold weather begin to set in, keep in mind that your body still has a need for sunlight and the vitamin D that sunlight helps produce. I've gone into great detail over the years about the importance of getting adequate amounts of sunlight exposure. If you're taking your flaxseed (or flax oil) and minimizing your consumption of fried foods, cooking oils, margarine, and other artificial and chemically altered fat products, you're taking some of the most important steps to stay healthy. However, you'll still find that sunlight is necessary to complete the picture.

Most individuals' vitamin D levels are directly linked to the amount of sunlight they receive, and vitamin D levels have been falling over the last few decades. As a result, we've begun to see more problems with osteoporosis and rickets, and the resulting fractures of the hip and vertebra. And we're seeing more cases of breast and colon cancer, cataracts, skin disorders, and heart disease, all of which have links to low vitamin D levels. (I feel so strongly about the problem that I doubled the amount of vitamin D in Daily Advantage a couple of years ago.)

Every time I mention vitamin D, I get dozens of letters from individuals concerned about vitamin D toxicity. It's really not much of an issue. Some people have estimated that if you spend a full day unclothed in the sun, you would get the equivalent of about 10,000 IU of vitamin D. At the recommended daily dosage of Daily Advantage, you get 800 IU of vitamin D. The levels at which vitamin D has shown toxicity have always been at least 40,000 IU per day.

This winter, try to get at least 15 to 30 minutes of direct sunlight exposure each day. It will lower your risk of hip fractures, heart disease, and cancer; strengthen your bones; and, best of all, stave off any bouts of depression. If you're pregnant, a little winter sunshine may be the key to preventing your child from developing schizophrenia and other mental problems later in life.

## Schizophrenia's Early Roots

Roughly 60 million people in the world now suffer from schizophrenia. It's a hard-to-define mental condition that normally appears during early adulthood. Schizophrenics exhibit a variety of symptoms, but some of the more common ones include biting of fingernails; hearing voices; the illusion that objects tend to grow, shrink, or change colors; depression; fear; hallucinations; extreme fatigue; inability to concentrate; insomnia; isolation; repetitive gesturing; obsession with "great truths"; delusions of persecution; and constant paranoia.

From outside appearances, schizophrenics appear normal. A closer look at the brain, however, reveals changes in structure that had to have taken place during early development. The brain contains fluid-filled ventricles that provide physical separation and a fluid cushioning effect between the lobes of the brain, as well as a reservoir for cerebral spinal fluid. In schizophrenics, these ventricles are up to 30 percent larger than in non-schizophrenics, while other parts of the brain, responsible for memory, concentration, language, etc., are much smaller. In other words, the hollow parts of the brain are enlarged, while the brain tissue is reduced.

Schizophrenia may include a long list of confusing symptoms, depending on the individual, and treating the problem can also be very confusing. Using either drugs or a combination of vitamins, herbs, and amino acids has been only marginally successful. Prevention is clearly the ideal solution, but until recently we haven't been able to identify the primary cause of schizophrenia. Fortunately, an Australian researcher may have found the key.

All sorts of theories have been proposed as to the cause of schizophrenia. Some have thought it was linked to increased sugar intake, industrialization, pesticide use, genetic aberrations, and even the flu virus. Most of these theories haven't held up under scrutiny. However, the flu theory has been the most persistent because schizophrenic births in North America and Europe peak between the months of February and April. For the last hundred years or so, a 10 percent increase over any other three-month period has been observed during this time. The only other significant risk factor that has proved to be consistent is being born in a city.



## Sunlight, Son Bright

John McGrath, a psychiatrist at the Queensland Center for Schizophrenia Research in Brisbane, now feels that the problem stems from a mother's lack of UV light during pregnancy. If he's right, and I think he may be, preventing millions of cases of mental illness may require nothing more than increasing a mother's exposure to sunlight and/or increasing her intake of vitamin D.

Investigations have revealed that schizophrenia has always been far more prevalent in continents that have lower levels of sunshine in the winter, such as Europe and North America. McGrath found that, in the Northern Hemisphere, the further North one went, the higher the rates of schizophrenia. Countries closer to the equator, with higher sunlight exposure, have very low rates of schizophrenia.

He also found that, in the Southern Hemisphere, the incidence of schizophrenia increased as you got further away from the equator. There was one glaring inconsistency, however. The fact that sun-drenched Australia ranked third behind North America and Europe at first seemed to contradict McGrath's theory. When he took a closer look, however, he found that there was a peak in Australian schizophrenic births every three or so years, and it wasn't related to any type of flu outbreak. It did, however, coincide with the El Nino weather system that shielded the area with cloud cover and blocked UV light transmission.

Not everyone has accepted Dr. McGrath's theory linking schizophrenia to a lack of UV exposure during pregnancy. For one thing, vitamin D's role in nervous system development isn't fully understood. McGrath and his colleagues, however, have just recently shown that, when pregnant rats are deprived of UV light,

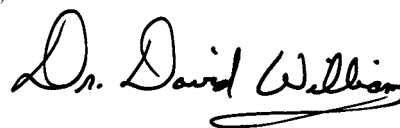
their offspring exhibit brain ventricles enlarged in the same way as those found in schizophrenics. (*Schizophr Res* 01;49:48) (*Schizophr Res* 01:48:227) (*Schizophr Res* 99;40(3):173-3)

Obviously, more research must be done to determine vitamin D's role in schizophrenia, but McGrath's work has opened up a whole new avenue to explore. His critics feel there isn't enough research to support the idea that vitamin D is critical in the development of brain tissue. It could take decades before everyone is convinced that sunlight (or vitamin D) may be the key to preventing this problem. The public is now so afraid of sunlight that I guess another 60 million people will have to develop this preventable illness before the truth becomes known.

Vitamin D is integral to your body's ability to regulate cholesterol, and cholesterol is an essential component of the brain and nervous system. Your brain consists of between 60 and 70 percent cholesterol, and cholesterol provides the insulation along nerve fibers. It helps cushion your vital organs, retain fluids within cells, and is the basis of many hormones your body makes.

If anyone among your family or friends is pregnant, make sure she knows that moderate, regular amounts of sunlight are essential to good health. And don't forget about the newborn. I recently read where the incidence of jaundice among babies kept in sunlit hospital wards was 0.5 percent. In wards with no natural sunlight, 17 percent of the babies were jaundiced. *Everyone* needs a little sunshine in their life.

Take care,



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## 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 as he can in the Mailbox section of . 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 61010, Potomac, MD 20859-1010 or [mailbox@drdavidwilliams.com](mailto:mailbox@drdavidwilliams.com)
- For Customer Service matters such as address changes, call 800-527-3044 or write to [custsve@drdavidwilliams.com](mailto:custsve@drdavidwilliams.com)
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- To order back issues or reports, call 800-718-8293
- To sign a friend up for *Alternatives*, call 800-219-8591

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—The *Alternatives* Customer Service Team