

# Alternatives<sup>®</sup>

## FOR THE HEALTH-CONSCIOUS INDIVIDUAL

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Dr. David G. Williams  
I'm writing this issue from Australia again. And although I love Australia, this is one time I'd rather be back in Texas. When I spoke to my wife this morning she told me the latest addition to our family, our nine-month-old son, took his first steps. It's not an event I wanted to miss. When I left he was crawling. By the time I get back he'll be walking. In the meantime, I'll be the one who continues to crawl...through the rainforests in search of new remedies.

Speaking of babies, Australia is in the midst of a baby boom. In a move that would be unusual in most parts of the world, the Australian government is actually offering a "baby payment" of \$3,000 to mothers who bear children. It is reportedly to help offset the costs of caring for a newborn. And, if the goal is to increase the Australian population "from within," then it's obviously working—everywhere you look there are strollers with newborns. Unfortunately, like many government programs, the end results may be fraught with problems the bureaucrats didn't anticipate.

Young, unmarried women in record numbers are suspected of having children just to get the money. For a short-sighted teenager it looks like a quick, easy way to earn some money. The longer-term social and economic ramifications of thousands of young, single-parent families have apparently been either underestimated or overlooked. Like many of our own social programs, it seems a little short-sighted to me.

It reminds me of a story by an Aborigine about an injured bird recuperating high in a tree. It was confronted with a hungry python who had climbed the tree looking for a meal. To save itself, the bird convinced the python it too

## Lessons Learned Late

could fly. Excited about the possibility, the snake released its grip and dropped from the tall tree. About half-way down, the elated snake hollered back up to the bird, "I'm doing okay so far!"

## Teeth and Gums Tell the Tale

A couple of months ago I discussed the possible benefits of cleaning teeth using regular bar soap, as opposed to toothpaste. I've been following that program, and have seen a noticeable improvement in both the health of my gums and the build-up of tartar. Surprisingly, the switch is very easy to get used to. My favorite new "toothpaste" is a neem soap bar from the Ayurvedic Institute, at [www.ayurveda.com](http://www.ayurveda.com), or 505-291-9698. I have a couple of bars of Auromere, and figure they will last me at least another 3 or 4 years. I've written about the benefits of neem in the past (Vol. 5, No. 8, February 1994); I also like this soap because it doesn't contain any glycerin.

In the same article, I briefly discussed how acidity quickly erodes your tooth enamel and causes serious dental problems. Along those same lines, researchers



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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*

at the University of Maryland recently tested 15 popular beverages to determine their effects on tooth enamel. Surprisingly, canned ice teas were at the top of the list when it came to enamel erosion—they created their damage three times faster than sodas and 30 times faster than freshly brewed iced tea or coffee. The canned variety of iced tea contains the additives malic and tartaric acids, which are very erosive to tooth enamel. Canned iced tea is one drink you'll want to avoid.

Another product that quickly strips tooth enamel is chewable aspirin. Its acidic nature also irritates the gum tissue, and can even result in ulcerations. In the past, chewable aspirin was primarily given to children, but, with the current trend of taking aspirin to help prevent heart attacks, many adults are now using these products. I've never been convinced that it's either the best or the safest method to prevent heart attacks, but there's little doubt its regular use may prevent you from maintaining healthy gums and teeth.

## The Gums' Story

Gingivitis, or inflammation of the gum tissue, is becoming an almost universal problem in this country, particularly among the elderly. I have no doubt that much of the problem stems not only from the toothpaste we use, but also from the widespread use of various medications. Years ago I discussed research showing that one of the many symptoms associated with low levels of coenzyme Q10 (CoQ10) was gum disease. Simply by increasing the intake of this supplement, dramatic changes can often be seen in even the most severe cases of gum disease. As you're probably aware by now, the most popular anti-cholesterol drugs, called statins, suppress production of CoQ10.

Gingivitis should be a warning sign that you are more than likely low on CoQ10. It should also be considered a strong risk factor in the development of heart disease.

It has been established that heart and artery disease can be triggered by chronic infections in the body. Infections lead to the release of white blood cells (WBCs) from the bone marrow in an effort to help defend against infectious agents. Chronic infection and WBC activity is one of the known risk factors for heart disease.

(You probably recall that within the last year the media and drug companies were pushing the idea that heart disease could be eliminated if everyone would start taking regular doses of antibiotics. Not surprisingly, this has not been shown to be effective, and I'm sure widespread antibiotic use would cause even more problems. We're already trying to deal with the "super bugs" created through antibiotic overuse.)

There are some other warning signs you should be aware of that are indicative of a CoQ10 deficiency, in addition to gum disease.

One of the primary symptoms is that of fatigue. If you can barely make it through the day, and/or tire easily after the least amount of exercise, then I would suspect a CoQ10 deficiency. Getting "winded" during work or exercise, experiencing chest pain on exertion (angina), or developing practically any type of heart problem are other signs. I've seen these problems subside within days after beginning 100 mg to 300 mg of CoQ10. (It's difficult, if not impossible, to get therapeutic doses of CoQ10 from your diet, but foods rich in the compound include organ meats and one of my favorites—sardines. If you're one of those people who can stomach the taste of liver, then consuming it regularly will help. Personally, I'll stick with sardines. They're available at the grocery, or from Mountain Home Solutions, at 800-211-8562.)

## Circulation Affects Sex

Heart disease remains the number-one killer in the U.S. and most Westernized countries,



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Author: Dr. David Williams; Publisher: Robert Kroening, Editor: Bill Todd

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but most men aren't aware of one of the most tell-tale signs of the impending danger. Even before experiencing chest pain or angina, which is generally considered the first warning flag, many men will experience erectile dysfunction (ED). That should immediately be considered an almost sure sign of having cardiovascular disease. (I say "almost" because a small percentage of ED cases are caused by psychological factors.) (*Int J Impot Res* 03:15(4):231-6)

The same circulation problems that cause ED will also limit proper circulation to the heart. The pharmaceutical companies are aware of this. Drugs for the treatment of high cholesterol, high blood pressure, and heart problems are always among their top sellers, so it shouldn't come as any surprise that products like Viagra, Cialis, and Levitra have also become major homeruns in the marketplace. Unfortunately, these drugs only treat the symptoms, not the underlying problem of poor circulation. And, even worse, most men feel they are correcting the problem instead of recognizing it as a tell-tale sign of a deeper, more life-threatening disease. (These ED drugs work mainly by increasing the production of nitric oxide, which in turn relaxes the muscles in the walls of blood vessels, allowing an increase in blood flow. And while they may be successful in doing so in the urinary tract, it is only a temporary effect and it doesn't have the same effect on the heart muscle. *It would be very reasonable to assume that the men in which these drugs were unsuccessful probably have some very serious circulation problems and need to immediately change their nutrition, lifestyle, etc.*)

One of the best methods of naturally increasing nitric oxide is exercise. Studies have found that ED is worse in men who spend most of their days in sitting positions (taxi and bus drivers are at high risk) or in high-stress situations.

In addition to CoQ10, other supplements can help with the problem. Most are the same ones that you would use to treat and/or prevent heart disease. These include: niacin (due to the "flushing" sensation, you might have to start with only 50 to 100 mg a day, then gradually work up to as much as 1,000 mg spread out into numerous smaller doses throughout the day), choline (1 to 3 grams daily), B5 (500 to 1,000 mg a day), and a B-complex if it is not included in your daily multi-vitamin/mineral. (It just so happens that

royal jelly, which I've made a point to include in my daily formulation, is probably the richest food source of vitamin B5.)

If ED is a problem, I would also add the amino acid precursor to nitric oxide, L-arginine. Studies have shown that as little as 4 grams daily can be a safe and effective dose in such cases. (*J Urol* 73;110:311-313) Others have suggested that the best results can be achieved with higher daily dosages, in the range of 12 to 14 grams. If you decide to use the higher doses, I would suggest starting with probably one-fourth that amount and gradually increasing the dosage over a week or two. It's totally safe at the higher doses, but initially it might cause diarrhea or stomach cramping until your body becomes accustomed to the dosage. JoMar Laboratories is a reliable source for L-arginine, at [www.jomarlabs.com](http://www.jomarlabs.com) or 800-538-4545.

## The Beat Goes On

Another commonly overlooked sign of impending heart failure or stroke is having an irregular heartbeat. Instead of beating regularly, the upper two chambers more or less quiver, and blood remains in the chambers instead of being pushed out. The stagnant blood has a tendency to clot. If the clots leave the heart and travel through the bloodstream, they can block blood vessels in the brain, resulting in an ischemic-type stroke. New research has indicated that the problem is more common than even I ever imagined.

In one very recent study on irregular heartbeat (or atrial fibrillation), the medical data from over 8,000 men and women in the famous Framingham Heart Study was examined. Based on this data and other records, researchers determined that one out of every four adults over the age of 40 will develop an irregular heartbeat. (The lifetime risk for men over 40 was 26 percent; for women it was slightly less, at 23 percent). The older one gets, the greater the likelihood of the problem occurring. There's an even greater risk in those individuals who have already experienced a heart attack or heart failure, have high blood pressure, or have heart valve defects or problems.

Currently about 2.2 million individuals in the US alone have been diagnosed with irregular heartbeats, and studies show that the problem is directly responsible for at least 20 percent



of all strokes. The number is probably much higher, however, because in many cases irregular heartbeat goes undetected and/or undiagnosed. Oftentimes the individual doesn't notice a change in heart rhythm. For others, however, the problem is very pronounced. They will often describe their heart "racing" for no apparent reason. Fortunately, rather than waiting for the other shoe to drop, there are several steps that can be taken to help normalize irregular heartbeat. (*Circulation* 04:110:1042-46)

One of the more common causes of an irregular heartbeat is a mineral imbalance. As such, the first order of business would be to make certain you're getting enough magnesium in your diet. A daily intake of 500 mg should do the trick. (You'll also need 1 mg of copper for it to work properly.) I would also recommend 500 mg to 1 gram of potassium gluconate, which will give you 90 to 200 mg of potassium. Nature Made and Now potassium gluconate are available in health food stores.

Many times the mineral depletion is a direct result of the use of diuretics, either as prescription drugs or in the form of caffeine and/or alcohol. I've seen more cases of irregular heartbeat due to the overconsumption of caffeine and the use of diuretics than from any other cause.

## Adrenal Involvement

Hypoadrenia, or poorly functioning adrenal glands, is another factor that will cause irregular heartbeat. The adrenals play a key role in regulating your body's blood volume by helping the kidneys regulate the balance between potassium and sodium in the body. With weakened adrenals, there is often a resulting depletion of sodium and a drop in fluid retention and blood volume. When the blood volume is low, the heart will "race" or speed up in order to maintain blood supply throughout the body. This effect is also noticeable as lightheadedness when you change positions, such as going from a lying to a standing position.

Correcting hypoadrenia usually requires that you cut out sugar, simple starches, caffeine, and alcohol. Then rebuild the glands by eating several small meals throughout the day and by taking B-complex vitamins, vitamin C, and often adrenal glandular products. I've covered the details of how to do this many times in the past. [Publisher's note: For details on ways to sup-

port the adrenal glands, please see Vol. 6, No. 6, December 1995.]

## More Power Isn't Always Best

Lately I have talked with several people who have experienced problems with irregular heartbeat when in the presence of transmitters for wireless Internet products. In addition to the heartbeat irregularities, they experienced varying degrees of tightness in the chest, fatigue, difficulty sleeping, dizziness, and unexplained irritability. I've been thinking about purchasing one of these transmitters, but as yet haven't done so. The idea of being able to work on the Internet without being attached to a phone wire or TV cable is definitely appealing, but I'm thinking twice about it now.

I haven't seen any studies on the effects of being in the field of transmission for days at a time, so I'm not sure how widespread the problem is. Each of the people I spoke with that had these problems said as soon as the transmitter was turned off or removed, their problems resolved within one to two days. The grand plan is to have these transmitters operating practically everywhere in the next few years, even on airplanes. I would have thought that the radiation wouldn't be much different from the type in radio signals that have been broadcast for decades. I'll keep tabs on any research in the area. In the meantime, if you use a wireless modem and transmitter, and have a problem with irregular heartbeat or the other items I've mentioned, it wouldn't hurt to unplug the transmitter and see if there's any improvement.

## Avoid Cancer in Kids

Excess radiation exposure is also one of the known risk factors in the development of childhood leukemia. Researchers are discovering that many forms of cancer and other diseases like diabetes and cardiovascular problems have their beginnings in the womb.

Leukemia is the most common form of childhood cancer, and is responsible for approximately 30 percent of all cancers in children under the age of 16. It generally arises between the ages of 2 and 8, with the peak at age 4.

Childhood leukemia is basically a cancer of the white blood cells (WBCs). Large numbers of defective WBCs are produced in the bone mar-

row and begin to spread to different parts of the body. Their huge numbers interfere with the production of other blood cells like platelets and red blood cells. This interference results in anemia and bleeding problems. The success rate for curing this type of cancer depends on exactly which category the leukemia falls into—fast-developing or slow-developing, with several varieties of each. Over the last few decades more targeted methods of radiation therapy, chemotherapy, and bone marrow transplants have improved the odds of patient survival, but recurring bouts of the disease are still a major problem.

As with other diseases, it now appears that genetic mutation can lead to the beginnings of leukemia while the child is still in the womb. Exposure to radiation, toxic chemicals (cleaning products, pesticides, tobacco smoke, etc.), and other toxins can mutate the genes of growing blood cells—which is yet another reason expectant mothers should avoid x-rays, chemical exposure, and smoking for at least 12 months prior to giving birth, if possible.

While it's almost impossible to totally avoid contact with all the substances that can lead to problems in today's environment, new research indicates that adequate amounts of specific antioxidants play a major role in offsetting exposure.

In one report, the diet of 138 mothers whose children developed leukemia was compared to that of 138 mothers whose children remained cancer-free. The survey asked about the intake of 76 different foods during the 12 months before birth.

It wasn't any surprise to learn that children from mothers with the highest intake of vegetables and fruit had lower rates of leukemia. This was attributed to the carotenoid content. The best vegetables appeared to be carrots, string beans, and cantaloupe.

What was somewhat of a surprise, however, was that even more protective effects were found in the diets that included more protein in the form of meat, beans, fish, and nuts. A closer evaluation found that the key nutrient in these protein-rich foods that lowered the cancer risk was glutathione. (*Cancer Causes Control* 04;15(6):559-70)

## Glutathione for Cell Health

Several years ago I was preaching about the benefits of glutathione (Vol. 6, No. 11, May 1996). I would highly suggest going back and reviewing that issue. Studies have consistently shown that individuals who live the longest and healthiest lives also have the highest levels of glutathione in their tissues. This also holds true for the individuals who survive diseases like cancer and AIDS. (I should caution you, as I did in great detail in the article several years ago, it may not be wise to raise glutathione levels during the active or acute stages of cancer. Glutathione doesn't appear to recognize the difference between normal cells and cancer cells. As a result, it may make the cancer worse during an active stage. Glutathione should be used only for prevention or during remission.)

I won't go into all the benefits of glutathione again here, but let me just say it is crucial in preventing disease from the womb to the grave. In the above study, glutathione's ability to detoxify toxins and help in the synthesis and repair of DNA plays a key role in preventing childhood leukemia.

There are several ways to increase glutathione levels. Certain vegetables, particularly those of the cruciferous family, are helpful (Brussels sprouts, cauliflower, broccoli [the flowers, not the stem], cabbage, kale, bok choy, cress, mustard, horseradish, turnip, rutabagas, and kohlrabi). Avocados are also good.

Another method of raising glutathione levels is whey protein powder, which is one of the very reasons I recommend a fruit and whey protein shake for breakfast each morning. It's one of the easiest and simplest ways to help satisfy your hunger, regulate blood sugar levels, increase glutathione levels, and receive dozens of other benefits.

You can buy glutathione supplements, but they are both unstable and outrageously expensive. The most economical alternative is supplementing with N-acetylcysteine (NAC) to the tune of about 600 milligrams a day. One very new study has found that NAC supplementation works as we've suspected, by protecting against genetic instability. I would suspect the effects are actually from the glutathione the body makes from NAC. The best source of NAC and other individual amino acids is Jo Mar Laboratories, at 800-538-4545 or [www.jomarlabs.com](http://www.jomarlabs.com). Buying in bulk can save you money, and it's easier to add

the powder to your daily shake as I do, rather than filling your own capsules.

## A Berry Good Solution

I also now add flavor to my shake with a spoonful of berry powder concentrate, which has become one of my favorite supplements. I not only love the taste of these concentrates, but I also love the health benefits they provide. I'm working on getting a reliable source for the berry powder. It should be ready for you in a month or so.

There's been a lot of press lately on the antioxidant properties of blueberries, and I'm sure in the very near future we'll begin to see similar attributes associated with raspberries, blackberries, cranberries, strawberries, etc. Newer research indicates that in animal studies regular consumption of blueberries can prevent age-related memory problems. (*Nutr Neurosci* 04;7(2):75-83)

In another study, researchers with the Department of Agriculture at Tufts University tested the effects of blueberry supplementation on older animals. Their results were so impressive they included the following statement in the summary of their research report: "*our data indicate for the first time that it may be possible to overcome genetic predisposition to Alzheimer disease through diet.*" I'm astounded that something this important wasn't reported by the mainstream media. This one simple suggestion may have the power to save thousands of individuals and their families the intense suffering and sadness caused by this horrible disease. (*Nutr Neurosci* 03;6(3):153-62)

One of the very latest discoveries is that blueberries contain a compound called pterostilbene. As of this writing, very few people know about this discovery, but I suspect you'll begin to read more about the amazing properties of pterostilbene in the next few years. Many of its effects are similar to those caused by the compound resveratrol, which is found in red wine. Like resveratrol, pterostilbene has strong antioxidant capabilities, is a potent cancer-preventive agent, and helps protect the heart and cardiovascular system. But pterostilbene also has a unique capability not associated with resveratrol. Pterostilbene appears to be a very potent agent against diabetes.

In one study, pterostilbene lowered glucose levels in animals with high blood sugar by

42 percent. This indication makes it as effective as the popular diabetes drug metformin (Glucophage). But unlike the drug, it was shown to have no toxicity problems. Metformin, as you probably recall, has been associated with numerous side effects: one called lactic acidosis begins with muscle soreness and pain, and half the time results in death. (*J Nat Prod* 97;60(6):609-10)

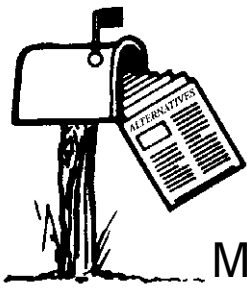
It may be possible that other types of berries contain pterostilbene, but so far blueberries seem to be the primary source. Pterostilbene is also found in darker grapes, but not in red wine as it doesn't seem to survive the winemaking process. There's a product in Ayurvedic medicine called *Drakshasava* that has been prescribed as a heart tonic for hundreds of years. It's difficult to find in this country, and not that well-known. French researchers analyzed the product a few years ago, and found it contained both resveratrol and pterostilbene, which we now know inhibit platelet aggregation and increase the "good" HDL form of cholesterol. The fact that ancient healers were able to determine the benefits of such products never ceases to amaze me. (*J Ethnopharmacol* 99;68(1-3):71-6)

I can't stress highly enough the importance of adding berries to your diet, and the use of concentrated berry powders makes the process even easier when fresh berries aren't available. I sprinkle the powder on yogurt, on fruit salad, and in teas. I also love to eat a spoonful directly out of the container. (It may make my tongue and mouth look like a kid who's just finished a Popsicle, but it tastes great and sure freshens my breath.)

## Tastes Great, Less Filling

Dr. Alan Hirsch, who has written extensively on how scents can alter thinking and behavior, now claims that adding intense flavor in the form of sprinkles to food can help facilitate weight loss. One of the flavor sprinkles he's tested is raspberry (which happens to be both my favorite berry and my favorite berry concentrate powder). Other flavors he tested included cheddar cheese and banana.

At last year's meeting of the American Society of Bariatric Physicians, Hirsch reported that 108 overweight subjects, who sprinkled different flavors on their food, averaged more than a 30-pound loss over a six-month period. The



## MAILBOX

### More Psoriasis Therapy

**Question:** I've read past issues dealing with psoriasis, and the information you've given has definitely been helpful. I make sure I'm getting plenty of vitamin D and sunlight. I also take fish oil supplements and eat the fatty varieties of fish on a regular basis. I still notice outbreaks on my scalp, however, when things become too stressful. Do you have any additional insight or suggestions?

Karen T.  
San Antonio, Texas

**Answer:** I would certainly suggest trying a gluten-free diet, and check your family health history to see if any relatives had the problem and if they also had digestive or liver problems.

It might be wise to also have your hydrochloric acid production tested. Almost universally, individuals suffering from psoriasis have difficulty digesting and assimilating their fats

and/or proteins. Even if you don't get your hydrochloric acid levels checked, I would suggest trying a good digestive enzyme formula with each meal. Make sure it contains betaine hydrochloride, protease, and ox bile or bile salts, all of which are necessary for the proper breakdown of protein and fats. A shortage of these digestive compounds is frequently a problem in cases of psoriasis. The condition can also worsen when taking certain drugs like beta-blockers, steroids, and the anti-inflammatory indomethacin.

I would also suggest taking a good probiotic supplement to strengthen the mucosal barriers in the large intestine, which can be a point of entry for undigested protein fragments. These fragments can cause inflammation and make it easier for toxins to enter the bloodstream and be excreted later by the skin, causing even more problems.

Certain foods may also be causing an allergic-type reaction. You'll have to be a pretty good detective to figure those out, but they generally include alcohol, sugar, meat, animal fat, and dairy products. These foods contain amino-acid derivatives called polyamines that can stimulate the over-production of skin cells. The bioflavonoid quercetin can help inhibit the formation of polyamines. I would suggest taking between 100

and 200 mg. Vitamin A (25,000 to 50,000 IU daily) also helps inhibit production of polyamines, which explains why it is often helpful.

One herb that you might find helpful is Oregon grape root (*Mahonia aquifolium*). It helps with inflammation and the associated itching in more moderate cases of psoriasis. It's relatively inexpensive and worth a try. I would start by taking a 600 milligram capsule twice a day, and adjusting the dose as needed. One good source for the product is Viable Herbal Solutions, P.O. Box 969, Morrisville, PA 19067-0969. They can also be reached by calling 800-505-9475. They sell 30-, 60-, and 350-count bottles of the herb. I would think you would know if it was going to help after 30 days (a 60-count bottle).

Topically, I would suggest applying avocado oil. Get the pure, extra-virgin, cold-pressed oil. It should be easy to find locally in either your health food store or gourmet grocery store. It is rapidly becoming more popular in cooking, because it has a higher burning or smoke point than olive oil (500 degrees F compared to 374 degrees F for olive oil). It, along with fresh avocados and a variety of nuts, nut butters, and even coconut oil, is great for your skin.

participants sprinkled the flavors on their food every time they ate, but did not change their diet or exercise habits. The control group, which didn't use the sprinkles, had an average gain of 1.1 pounds.

Dr. Hirsch believes the intense flavors fool the brain into thinking that more food has been consumed than has actually taken place. This, in turn, triggers the feeling of fullness and stops the desire to eat more food. Obviously more research needs to be conducted to verify this, but if it works it would be great. It wouldn't be the primary reason I would suggest you add berries and/or berry powder concentrates to your diet, but it certainly wouldn't be a bad side benefit. I'd love to hear your feedback if you have this experience.

### Mom's Diet, Kid's Health

Getting back to childhood leukemia...another recent study found the use of turmeric may be why rates of childhood leukemia are lower in Asia than in Western countries. Dr. Moolky Nagabhushan (wouldn't that be a hard name to learn to spell as a child!), of Loyola University Medical Center in Chicago, reported that his research shows turmeric inhibits the multiplication of leukemia cells and appears to protect against the damage from cigarette smoke or from eating certain processed foods. (*Sept. 2004 International Scientific Conference on Childhood Leukaemia*)

In a separate study, it was shown that green tea may be of benefit to leukemia patients.



When cancerous cells taken from patients with B-cell chronic lymphocytic leukemia, a non-curable form of the disease, were exposed to green tea, the cells were immediately killed. This research is very preliminary, but there is past data to indicate that a compound called EGCG (epigallocatechin-3-gallate) could be beneficial in preventing, or even treating, certain forms of cancer. There's certainly no downside for those who already have leukemia to include green tea and/or a green tea extract in their treatment program.

Although some children may have a predisposition to develop leukemia, their mother's diet can have a strong bearing on whether or not the disease actually manifests. While all doctors are quick to point out to expectant mothers the dangers of radiation, smoking, and poor diets, very few outline the enormous benefits of increasing glutathione levels through either diet or supplementation.

I guess that's to be expected in a country where prevention of a disease has always taken a backseat to treatment. But it's a shame that thousands of children will have to suffer a horrendous disease, or even death, that, in many cases, could be avoided by a simple change in diet by their mothers.

## The Great Scan Scam

One of the latest trends involves full-body CT scans. These scans are a series of x-rays that are computer-enhanced to provide a detailed picture of the entire body. Not only are scans being performed as part of the "extreme" physicals that can take several days to perform, some doctors have set up shops in malls to promote the procedure, which can cost a thousand dollars or more.

The idea behind using the full-body scan is to help detect cancer, calcium buildup in the arter-

ies of the heart, or other problems so they may be treated in the early stages. It is promoted as a non-invasive way to see what's happening inside your body. This might be a blessing in a small number of cases, but for most patients the risk of developing cancer from these scans far outweighs any possible benefits. And, even worse, most people who undergo these scans aren't even aware that they can cause cancer.

The radiation dose from these full-body scans can be 500 times the amount of a standard x-ray. Researchers who have studied the victims of the Hiroshima and Nagasaki blasts of World War II have determined that full-body scans expose the recipients to about the same amount of radiation received by victims about two kilometers from the blast point of these atomic bombs.

Based on their studies, this amount of radiation would result in a 1-in-1,200 chance of developing cancer. Of course the risk increases with additional scans. Many of the clinics offering these "super physicals" are recommending that the scans be performed yearly. The researchers above found that if one underwent a yearly scan for 30 years, the risk of developing cancer from the procedure alone would increase to one chance in 50. (*Radiology*. 04 Sep;232(3):735-8)

Some studies suggest that small amounts of radiation exposure might even be good for you, but body scans certainly don't fall within those limits. In some cases, the scans may be justified and even beneficial (the clinics certainly love them at \$1,000 or more a pop), but for most people, the potential benefits don't outweigh the risk.

Take Care,



If you have questions or comments for Dr. Williams, please send them to the mail or e-mail addresses listed to the right. Of course, practical and ethical constraints prevent him from answering personal medical questions by mail or e-mail, but he'll answer as many as he can in the Mailbox section of *Alternatives*. 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:

- For Customer Service matters such as address changes, call 800-527-3044 or write to [custsvc@drdavidwilliams.com](mailto:custsvc@drdavidwilliams.com).
- To order nutritional supplements from Mountain Home Nutritionals (MHN), call 800-888-1415 or visit [drdavidwilliams.com](http://drdavidwilliams.com).
- If you are a licensed health professional and would like to learn how to begin reselling MHN supplements to your patients, please send an e-mail to [practitionerinquiries@davidwilliamsmail.com](mailto:practitionerinquiries@davidwilliamsmail.com).
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