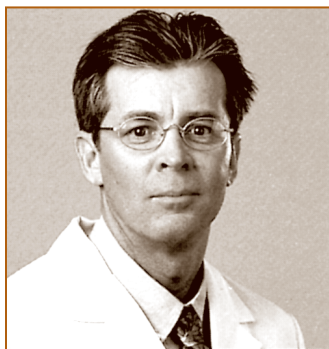


# Alternatives<sup>®</sup>

## FOR THE HEALTH-CONSCIOUS INDIVIDUAL

May 2006

Volume 11, No. 11



Dr. David G. Williams  
circa 1995

## Peering Under Every Rock

I recently had a question-and-answer session with a fairly large group of individuals. As you might expect, most of the questions involved very specific personal health matters or questions about the problems of loved ones. There was an enormous variety of health conditions to address, and everyone was seeking a sure-fire solution to his or her concerns. As always, I hope the information I provided was helpful. But the large number of topics, lack of background information, inability to actually examine or evaluate the patient, and time constraints made some issues hard to resolve with a short recommendation. In my discussions, I tried to impress on the audience a very important underlying idea when it comes to health. It is the very same idea that I hope you receive as a reader of *Alternatives*.

Namely, it's perfectly fine to treat a condition or complaint and get rid of the pain or symptoms, but true health comes from addressing the reason the problem occurred in the first place. Instead of just treating symptoms, you'll have the opportunity to eliminate the problem. Once upon a time, doctors treated patients in this manner, but it seems that only a handful do so anymore.

Ideally, when a doctor is presented with a problem, the thought process should work like a flow chart. By analyzing the symptoms, he or she will relate this information to the various findings in the history and examination. In addition to dealing with the immediate problem, the doctor should explain to the patient not only how but why the problem started. And, most importantly, a doctor should teach the patient exactly what changes to make in

diet, physical activities, and/or the mental or spiritual aspect to prevent future problems.

Instead of a flow-chart system, however, most doctors now use the cookbook method. They note the symptoms or lab tests that allow them to put a name on the problem. Then they go to the latest cookbook-style treatment guide and find a list of drugs, vitamins, or therapies for the condition. (Most doctors treat the lab test rather than the patient.) An office visit that ends with only a written prescription now lasts just a few minutes.

A doctor's visit today reminds me of Sergeant Joe Friday on the television show *Dragnet* that I used to watch as a kid. When interviewing a witness, he never wanted the whole story. All he wanted was "the facts, ma'am." Most doctors don't get a comprehensive patient history or perform a full examination. As a result, the low-tech diagnostic skills of most doctors have been lost.

Doctors used to be able to detect dehydration, digestive disturbances, kidney disease, and even cancer just by observing the color, characteristics,

## In This Issue <sup>20<sup>th</sup></sup> Anniversary

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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*

and smell of a patient's urine. They would be alerted to hormonal abnormalities or vitamin and mineral deficiencies by examining the qualities of the skin and hair. Picking up on these early signs can be vital. The primary key to remaining healthy is to intervene at the very first signs of trouble instead of waiting for irreparable damage to occur. Unfortunately, intervention generally isn't happening anymore. Unless you have a specific complaint, abnormal lab test, or obvious disease, no one seems to take much interest—which becomes most evident when you look at the health of our children.

## Reaping What You Sow

Our society has already failed to protect the health of our last two generations of children. Pediatricians and other doctors have failed miserably at educating people to change this horrible trend. I've been trying to sound a warning bell for the last 15 years, but it has obviously fallen on deaf ears. If you think our health care system is in trouble now, just wait and see what will be happening in the next 10 or 15 years as the problems of these younger generations begin to surface.

The myth in this country is that nutritional deficiencies are a thing of the past. In reality, most people may be over-fed, but at the same time they are grossly under-nourished. Repeated studies show that deficiencies in iron, zinc, B vitamins, and protein are common—particularly in children and obese adults. Consuming highly refined foods that contain white flour, sugar, and high-fructose corn syrup depletes these vitamins and minerals—and most people don't consume the variety of wholesome foods necessary to replenish them.

A 2004 study confirmed that poor nutrition (including a lack of the above vitamins, minerals, and nutrients) during early childhood leads to behavior problems later in life. Researchers followed the nutritional, behavioral, and cognitive development of 3,000 children over a 14-year period, start-

ing at age 3. Of the participants, 1,795 had signs of malnutrition at age 3.

The researchers discovered that “poor nutrition, characterized by zinc, iron, vitamin B, and protein deficiencies, leads to low IQ, which leads to later antisocial behavior.” In contrast to the group that didn't suffer from nutritional deficiencies, the malnourished children exhibited a 41 percent increase in aggression at age 8, a 10 percent increase in aggression and delinquency at age 11, and a 515 percent increase in violence and antisocial behavior at age 17. (*Am J Psychiatr* 04;161:2005–2013)

While I was unable to find specific figures on protein deficiencies in this country, zinc deficiencies are well-documented in practically all age groups in both sexes. As for iron, studies indicate that at least seven percent of toddlers in the US have a deficiency—and that level increases to between 9 and 16 percent in adolescents and females. Iron deficiency is even greater in African American and Mexican American women—typically between 19 and 22 percent.

With the current diet in this country, I'm certain additional studies could help identify large segments of the population where these deficiencies exist—particularly during early childhood. The malnutrition and behavior study clearly demonstrates how these nutritional deficiencies distort mental function and make individuals incapable of responding normally to stress and the pressures of society. Pinpointing the people with nutritional deficiencies would be time and money well-spent. Rather than dealing with their possible criminal activities and treating the individuals with therapy and incarceration later in life, we could nip the problem in the bud by improving nutritional habits—perhaps simply by supplying a good multivitamin/mineral and protein source. This scenario would be a prime example of treating the cause of a problem instead of the symptom.



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

ISSN# 0893-5025. Published monthly for \$69.99/yr. by Mountain Home Publishing at 7811 Montrose Road, Potomac, MD 20854. Editorial Office: 7811 Montrose Road, Potomac, MD 20854. Periodicals postage paid at Rockville, MD and at additional mailing offices.

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## Trouble in Body, Trouble in Mind

The list of other conditions that could benefit from attention to the root cause is almost endless.

**Obesity** is becoming epidemic in our country, and is often the result of the same diet that leads to nutritional deficiencies. Childhood obesity alone has tripled in the last two decades. Currently, one out of every five children (6 to 11 years old) and adolescents (12 to 17 years old) are obese. Not just overweight, but obese. (*JAMA* 02;288(14):1728–1733)

Along with obesity comes all the related problems that were previously seen only in adults—such as high blood pressure, high cholesterol, and liver and kidney disease. And believe it or not, sleep apnea is now a common problem among overweight children.

Dealing with obesity obviously involves educating children more about the consequences of poor dietary choices and lack of exercise. Even simple changes can have dramatic effects. Researchers recently found that drinking one 12-ounce soft drink per day can result in about one pound of weight gain over three to four weeks. (*Pediatrics* 06;117(3):673–680)

**Diabetes** among juveniles has increased over 100 percent in the last 25 years. Type 2 diabetes, formerly called adult-onset because it was seen only in older people, is now being found in children as young as six years of age. Sadly, 10 percent of children that develop type 2 diabetes develop renal failure—which requires dialysis or results in death by early adulthood. (*Diabetes* 02;51:A24(abstr))

**ADHD** was officially considered a recognized condition beginning in 1980. In 2003, approximately 4.4 million children between the ages of 4 and 17 had been diagnosed with ADHD at some point in their lives. Of these children, 2.5 million were being prescribed stimulant drugs—not only for attention deficit disorder, but for all types of “disruptive” behavior. Stimulant drug use in children increased five-fold from 1995 to 2002, and it continues to increase. (*MMWR Morb Mortal Wkly Rep* 05;54(34):842–847) (*Arch Pediatr Adolesc Med* 04;156(8):753–759)

**Autism** was once considered a rare genetic problem. In the time frame of one generation, however, the incidence of autism has increased a thousand-fold. There is evidence suggesting that the increased

use of antibiotics in children and the very aggressive vaccination program are to blame. (*Med Hypothesis* 05;64:312–315) (*Adverse Drug React Toxicol Rev* 01;20(1):60–63)

**Asthma** and **food allergies** among children are at all-time highs. One recent survey found that the incidence of life-threatening food allergies doubled in just the last ten years, and asthma is up almost 75 percent. (*Chest* 04;125(5):1685–1692) (*Allergy* 05;60(4):443–451) (*J Allergy Clin Immunol* 05;116(2):377–383)

## Adults Aren't Immune

Unfortunately, I don't know a simple solution to the developing crisis. If there's a lesson to learn, it would be the idea I stated earlier: understanding the cause of a health problem is as important as, if not more important than, alleviating the symptoms. I only hope everyone is able to find a doctor with the same philosophy and follow his or her advice. In the real world, that is not always possible—so some people will need to continue to do additional research on their own. The difficulty in finding a compatible doctor is one fact I always keep in mind while doing research and writing *Alternatives*.

I'll give you a few additional examples of common health concerns that are often treated or dismissed without taking a closer look at what could be a more serious underlying problem that needs to be addressed. Maybe one or more of these will hit home and stir you to take action, or at least help you develop another way of looking at health issues.

**Erectile dysfunction** is now considered to be a common aging problem easily treated with Viagra or some other similar drug. In reality, one of the primary causes of ED is poor micro-circulation throughout the body. ED can be a warning sign, and if steps aren't taken to improve circulation then it shouldn't be the least bit surprising to see a stroke, heart attack, or advanced cardiovascular disease symptoms appear within five years.

**Depression** is often linked to a chronic underactive thyroid, which can result from a lack of iodine in the diet. Many of the early tell-tale symptoms are overlooked—such as dry and cracked skin (particularly on the heels), hair loss or brittleness, loss of the outside third of the eyebrow, weight gain, cold hands and feet, and constant fatigue. If you overlook these

(Source of the Problem continued on page 85)





## NEWS TO USE FROM AROUND THE WORLD

### Eat All Your Vegetables...

BARCELONA, SPAIN—When I was a kid, my parents used to tell me to eat all my vegetables. (They didn't just tell me, I had to eat them all before I could leave the table.) They may not have been able to say exactly why it was a good idea, but they were on the right track. In fact, it may have been a good idea to eat what they threw away, too. It turns out that what we used to call scraps—apple peels and cores, potato peelings, et cetera—are loaded with antioxidants.

Researchers at the University of Barcelona and in Artern, Germany, looked at extracts of what they called “waste products” of the food-processing industry. They discovered that the trimmings left over after canning, for example, still contained significant antioxidant power. Of the foods they examined, apples, pears, tomatoes, and artichokes were the highest in residual value. (*Food Chem* 06;97:137–150)

The idea of using food waste isn't all that new. For instance, the olive pulp left over after oil pressing is known to contain a variety of antioxidant compounds. What is new is the variety of foods that may be valuable in this way. On numerous occasions, I've met with government agriculture employees in Australia who were trying to find uses for crop waste. The potential is enormous. Pineapple stems are the source of bromelain, and byproducts of the wine industry result in grape seed extract and resveratrol. I wouldn't be surprised to soon see on store shelves food or even cosmetics that are preserved with fruit extracts.

One of the food processes the researchers looked at was the making of juice. I've written about the benefits of juicing before—particularly for people who have digestive trouble, or as part of a detox routine. [See “The Test of Time” on page 86 for more on the benefits of juicing.] I still believe juicing should be a part of your health plan, but based on this new information I'll be looking for ways to use the leftover pulp. If you have suggestions, send them to me and I'll share them with other readers.

### ...and Take Those Vitamins

ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI—If your doctor is telling you that you can get all the nutrition you need out of a balanced diet, maybe you should show him or her the work of Dr. Donald Davis of the University of Texas. In a presentation at the latest meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, Dr. Davis showed that vitamin, mineral, and protein levels in fruits, vegetables, and wheat are 5 to 35 percent lower than they were 50 years ago. (*AAAS Annual Meeting, St. Louis, February 06*)

Dr. Davis was following up on earlier work in which he compared published nutrient values from 1950 and 1999. There he found that for 43 selected garden crops, levels declined for seven different nutrients. The smallest drop was in protein, at six percent, and the largest was in riboflavin (vitamin B2), at 38 percent. (*J Am Coll Nutr* 04;23:669–682)

The trouble seems to come from higher yields in crop production. As plants take up more water to support the higher yield, they can't take up proportionate amounts of micronutrients—creating a “dilution effect.” Neither study looked at levels of such important compounds as carotenoids and anthocyanidins—but my money's on a decline there too.

Food scientists and crop researchers are looking for ways to improve the nutritional value of crops while maintaining high yield levels. Meanwhile, if you're planting a garden this spring, don't go for the plants that promise you the biggest or most from your crop. Instead, look for the “heirloom” varieties that will give you better taste and, I'd bet, better nutrition. Try Heirloom seeds, [www.HeirloomSeeds.com](http://www.HeirloomSeeds.com) (412-384-0852); or Seeds Trust, [www.SeedsTrust.com](http://www.SeedsTrust.com) (928-649-3315).

### Getting an Experiment Off the Ground

As I write this, I haven't planted my garden yet—but intend to very soon. Despite some misgivings, I may experiment with a hydroponics system. While it seems to be a very effective and efficient way to garden, for some reason hydroponic vegetables never seem to taste quite as good—nor do I feel the same effect after eating them. I was never quite certain why, but I may have found the answer.

I've always believed in the importance of the “grounded” connection to the earth, and the health ramifications it can have in humans and animals. I'm a firm believer in walking barefoot outside whenever possible. If you haven't tried it for a while, I urge you to do so. Older people tend to leave their shoes on and watch the kids go barefoot. I now think a lack of adequate grounding in the hydroponic method may help explain the taste difference. I'll keep you informed as my experiment progresses.

While I'm on the topic, the one question I always get about gardening is, “What is non-toxic that can be used to keep insects off the plants?” Although I don't claim to be an expert in this area, several items have always worked well for me. The cheapest and easiest is a quarter teaspoon of cayenne and a tablespoon of dishwashing soap added to a sprayer bottle of water.

I also recommend the EcoSmart products that I have mentioned in the past (800-723-3991, or [www.EcoSmart.com](http://www.EcoSmart.com)). Additionally, there is a diatomaceous earth

## NEWS TO USE (CONTINUED)

product called Perma-Guard that will protect stored grain as well. You can contact them at 505-243-1460 or [www.perma-guard.com](http://www.perma-guard.com).

Another favorite is hydrogen peroxide, which is very inexpensive. If you buy the 35 percent solution, remember it needs to be diluted with water until you have about an 8 to 10 percent solution (eight percent works just fine and will save you even more money). Dilute one part 35 percent hydrogen peroxide with three parts water and then spray it directly on the plants. It works like a dream.

### Antibiotic Alibi

SEATTLE and BOSTON—It seems like only a few months ago that several “news” magazines and television reporters announced a breakthrough treatment that could end heart disease. At the time, it was explained in great detail how the underlying cause of cardiovascular disease was inflammation—which in turn was caused by infectious bacteria entering the bloodstream. The breaking news was that the entire process could easily be stopped through the continuous use of antibiotics.

The truth of the matter is that cardiovascular disease is a multi-faceted problem, just like cancer and many of the other common health problems we face today. Although the pharmaceutical industry would love for the public to buy into the story that drug deficiencies are the cause of all problems, that’s obviously not the case. There’s no magic bullet that will correct all cardiovascular problems, cancer, diabetes, et cetera.

Just-released results of two large studies show that continuous, long-term use of antibiotics doesn’t prevent future cardiovascular events or reduce the risk of death from any other cause. (*N Engl J Med* 05;352(16):1637–1645) (*N Engl J Med* 05;352(16):1646–1654)

It would be nice if these publications were required to do a follow-up on these so-called “breakthroughs”—or, at the very least, be held accountable for the information they disperse as being fact. But that never seems to happen. Instead, they leave the public with a false sense of hope and security and quickly move on to the next miraculous pharmaceutical discovery.

(Source of the Problem continued from page 83)

initial signs, as most doctors still do, you’re setting yourself up for heart problems.

**Heart disease** will often respond to thyroid treatment as well. During decades of research, Dr. Broda Barnes demonstrated that treating an underactive thyroid can normalize levels of blood fats (which are, of course, implicated in some forms of heart disease). Similarly, correcting an underactive thyroid will return elevated homocysteine levels to normal. (Individuals with high homocysteine levels can have three times the risk of heart attack as those with normal levels.) Current treatment for elevated homocysteine levels involves the intake of additional amounts of B6, B12, and folic acid, but lowering homocysteine levels strictly with vitamins may actually mask an underlying hypothyroid condition.

**Sleeping patterns** and one’s **work shift** are another area that is still given very little consideration. Poor sleeping habits are considered to be normal today, despite the fact they can *dramatically* increase the risk of breast cancer in women and possibly increase the risk of prostate cancer in men. At your last medical examination or doctor’s visit, were you asked about your sleeping habits? I doubt it.

The latest research *directly* links less sleep in women to the development of breast tumors. Women

who slept nine or more hours a night had less than one-third the risk of developing a breast tumor compared to women who got only seven or eight hours of sleep a night. Female night shift workers have a 50 percent greater risk of developing breast cancer than do daytime workers. The key factor was a decreased production of melatonin, which the body produces mainly in the dark.

The link between prostate cancer and sleep (or melatonin production at night) isn’t as strong yet, but additional research is underway and I suspect it’s only a matter of time before the link is discovered. The fact that beta-blocker medications used to treat high blood pressure suppress melatonin production should also be relayed to patients.

If you told your doctor you frequently crave salt and retain water, he or she might have discounted the problem entirely or, at best, prescribed diuretics or “water pills” to get rid of the excess fluid. The underlying problem, however, is **weakened adrenal glands**.

Unresolved stress, skipping meals, excess refined carbohydrates in the diet, and a lack of B vitamins can all lead to weakened adrenals. The adrenals help regulate sodium and potassium levels and produce blood sugar-regulating hormones and

# The Test of Time: *Juicing*

20<sup>th</sup>  
Anniversary

**I**f you have access to a juicer, you should make fresh juice a part of your daily routine. It's a great way to get 3,000 to 5,000 ORAC units a day (Oxygen Radical Absorbance Capacity—see the April 1999 issue of *Alternatives*). Beet juice is particularly good in this respect. Adding beet juice to carrot juice not only sweetens the taste, but also significantly increases your blood's antioxidant capacity. Plus, beet juice stimulates the production and excretion of bile from the liver and gall bladder—further reducing toxin removal from the liver.

Vegetable juice's ability to nullify these free radicals and stop oxidation is one of the reasons I recommend a juice fast (as opposed to a water fast). It's important that the toxins being released during a fast be neutralized and removed from the body as quickly as possible. Juicing takes care of the problem. A juice fast for two or three days each year can do wonders for your overall health.

For those who are extremely toxic or have never fasted before, there are two other techniques that will significantly improve the results. First, I generally recommend that these people take milk thistle, which both protects and helps

increase liver function. The active ingredient in milk thistle is a bioflavonoid complex called silymarin. Studies have shown that silymarin can prevent damage to liver cells. It also has the unique ability to stimulate regeneration of damaged liver cells.

The best products for this purpose are concentrated extracts standardized to 70 to 80 percent silymarin content. I recommend that you take 420 to 450 milligrams a day (half with breakfast and half with dinner) for 30 days starting about a week before you begin a juice fast. The only possible side effect you might notice with this program is loose stools—which are likely due as much to the juice fast as to the milk thistle.

Also, a daily warm water enema should be taken for the first three to five days of any fast. It's simply another method of quickly getting rid of toxins being released. The longer these toxins remain in the lower bowel, the more likely they will be re-absorbed into your system.

*Tip from Vol. 7, April 1999*

other essential compounds—so, if they are left untreated, you can expect a variety of potential problems down the road. Mood swings and fatigue are two early signs that can eventually contribute to a diabetes problem. The mineral imbalances can affect nerve transmission. Additionally, one of the most common complaints becomes heart palpitations (where your heart races for no reason and feels like it's going to jump out of your chest).

Hopefully, you can find a doctor in your area who approaches health from a “flow chart” perspective rather than using the cookbook method. The best way to locate such a doctor is through word of mouth. Recommendations from friends, family, and those at the local health food store are usually good sources for locating this type of doctor. If none of these pan out, you can try contacting the following organizations for recommended doctors in your area.

## ***For chiropractors, contact:***

- The International College of Applied Kinesiology, 6405 Metcalf Ave., Suite 503, Shawnee Mission, Kansas 66202-3929. Their

phone number is 913-384-5336. You can search for doctors by state on their Web site at [www.icakusa.com](http://www.icakusa.com).

- The Sacro Occipital Research Society International also lists doctors by state on their Web site at [www.sorsi.com](http://www.sorsi.com).

## ***For medical practitioners, contact:***

- The American College for Advancement in Medicine at 23121 Verdugo Drive, Suite 204, Laguna Hills, California 92653, phone 800-532-3688. They also have a doctor locator on their Web site at [www.acam.org](http://www.acam.org).
- The International College of Integrative Medicine, 707 Stanbridge St., Norristown, PA 19401. Their phone number is 866-464-5226 and their Web site, which lists doctors by city and state, is [www.icimed.com](http://www.icimed.com).

## **Grape Expectations**

Two years ago, I informed you about some amazing research on resveratrol. I hope it's one supplement that you've added to your daily program. If



for some reason you haven't, I would suggest reading that issue again (Vol. 10, No. 13, July 2004). The researchers I spoke with at the time felt it wasn't unreasonable for people to add as many as 10 healthy years to their lives by utilizing these latest findings.

At the time, I briefly touched on several other areas where resveratrol has been shown to be helpful. These included areas like the prevention of cancer, Alzheimer's, osteoporosis, and heart disease. I have continued to stay in contact with some of the world's top researchers in this field, and the news just keeps getting better. I urge you once again to not discount resveratrol as just another fad supplement. Over the next decade, if not sooner, I think it will become one of the greatest tools we have for maintaining and restoring our health.

On the cancer front, resveratrol turns out to be a powerful agent in both prevention and treatment. Researchers in Denmark have found that it was effective at stopping the destruction that occurs in the cancer called multiple myeloma, which is characterized by the growth of malignant cells in the bone marrow. Multiple myeloma also involves an increase in the production of cells called osteoclasts (which break down bone) and a reduction in the production of cells called osteoblasts (which build bone).

Not only did resveratrol directly trigger the death of the cancer cells, it had a direct influence on the bone's stem cells. Remarkably, it changed the "expression" of the stem cells—resulting in an increase in the number of osteoblasts and a decrease in the number of osteoclasts. *In simple terms, not only did resveratrol kill the cancer cells, it also triggered the regrowth of new bone.* (*Cancer Res* 05;65(21):9943–9952)

As I mentioned before, resveratrol has also exhibited positive effects in the treatment of estrogen-related cancers—such as those of the breast and prostate. It also helps block the metastasis (spread) of breast, pancreatic, and kidney cancer to the bone. Another new study has found that resveratrol use can make cancer cells more sensitive to radiation therapy while having no adverse effect on normal cells. (*Int J Mol Med* 04;13(6):895-902)

On another front, Italian researchers have informed me that the combination of resveratrol and propolis extract may be a "natural form of chemotherapy" in the treatment of prostate therapy. Apparently resveratrol and propolis kill prostate cancer cells through different mecha-

nisms—so when you combine the two you get a "double whammy" without any of the side effects commonly associated with conventional chemotherapy. (*Oncol Res* 06;15(9):409–421)

Obviously, more work needs to be done with the combination of these two compounds before it will get any mainstream attention. However, based on the current research and the fact that both substances are safe and non-toxic, I wouldn't hesitate to use them now. It will take years, if not decades, before this therapy receives the blessing of conventional medicine. I never thought I'd be talking about the "poor man's chemotherapy," but this combo appears to be just that.

## More Kudos to Curry

While we're on the subject of prostate cancer, you should be aware of another study that was just released. Researchers found that curcumin, combined with phenethyl isothiocyanate (PEITC), becomes even more effective in the prevention (and possibly the treatment) of prostate cancer. PEITC is the compound found in the cruciferous vegetables that I've been talking about for years: cabbage, cauliflower, bok choy, cress, rutabaga, horseradish, broccoli, Brussels sprouts, kale, kohlrabi, turnips, and radishes. These same vegetables contain indole-3-carbinol (I-3-C) which is converted by the body to another indole called diindolylmethane (DIM for short). DIM is a powerful regulator of estrogen metabolism that can be effective in treating such estrogen-related cancers as those of the cervix, breast, uterus, and prostate—and even such unrelated conditions as lupus erythematosus.

(By the way, DIM—as well as the cruciferous vegetables—is another tool you can utilize to naturally raise testosterone levels in the body. Even small increases in testosterone have now been shown to be beneficial in increasing libido in both men and women—particularly as we get older. It can also increase energy levels, help you lose weight loss, and address many other problems associated with aging.)

In this latest animal research, both curcumin and PEITC had little effect independently in preventing the growth of implanted prostate tumors. When used in combination, though, they had significant protective effects and possible "chemotherapeutic" effects. (*Cancer Res* 06;66(2):613–621)

It appears we can strengthen the "poor man's chemotherapy" by adding curried cabbage to the

propolis and resveratrol. Coming back to resveratrol, if you're not already convinced to add it to your daily supplement regimen, then the next item may make you reconsider.

## Memory Masters

Alzheimer's disease is a progressive, degenerative disorder that attacks nerve cells in the brain and leads to a disruption of memory, thinking, and normal behavior. Although the disease can run from two to twenty years, the average person lives only eight years following diagnosis. It currently affects about five million people in the US, and that number is expected to more than triple over the next few decades. Currently one out of every 10 people over 65 has Alzheimer's, and nearly half of those 85 or older have the disease. It's the most common cause of dementia (loss of intellectual function) among those over the age of 65, and the eighth-leading cause of death in this country.

What makes Alzheimer's worse is the fact that there isn't much in the way of treatment—and there is currently no cure. I have, however, discussed compounds that have been shown to help *prevent the disease or slow its progression*—such as curcumin in turmeric, acetyl-L-carnitine, alpha lipoic acid, and glutathione.

In Alzheimer's, waxy clumps of protein fragments called beta-amyloid plaques form around and inside nerve cells—breaking vital connections and leading to nerve destruction. The most recent research indicates that the omega-3 fatty acid DHA (found in fish) can have a dramatic effect on preventing the formation of those clumps. Mice on a DHA-rich diet were found to have only about 30 percent of the amount of waxy plaque formation in their brains, compared to mice given little or no DHA in their diet. (*J Neurosci* 05;25(12):3032–3040)

The same researchers fed curcumin to Alzheimer's-susceptible mice at a dosage similar

to that consumed daily by individuals in India (derived from turmeric in their curry). The mice that received curcumin had roughly half as many waxy brain plaques as the mice that did not receive it. While the protein fragments still form in the presence of curcumin, it appears that the spice component blocks them from combining into waxy clumps. (Perhaps it would be smart to incorporate some curried fish dishes into your diet.) (*J Biol Chem* 05;280(7):5892–5901)

Many of the above compounds either slow or prevent the formation of these plaques, but the ultimate goal of treatment programs is something that could break down plaques that have already formed. I've suggested that DMSO might help, but no one has done research to support that idea. On the other hand, new research on resveratrol indicates it could be the cure we've been looking for.

Researchers in Manhasset, New York, found that while resveratrol doesn't inhibit the production of beta-amyloid plaques, it does promote their degradation or breakdown—at least in a laboratory setting. (*J Biol Chem* 05;280(45):37377–37382)

Obviously, additional tests need to be performed in animals and humans. However, knowing there is no viable therapy, I wouldn't hesitate to recommend using it in Alzheimer's patients now. In fact, it could be something that might very well benefit others with memory loss, dementia, and other brain-related problems.

I take a form of resveratrol every day, and I highly recommend you do the same. To borrow one of my dad's phrases, "it's cheap insurance"—and that's becoming a very rare commodity these days.

Take Care,

*Dr. David Williams*

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:

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