

Alternatives[®]

FOR THE HEALTH-CONSCIOUS INDIVIDUAL

May 2009

Volume 12, No. 23



Dr. David G. Williams

Listen Up, Your Body's Talking to You

Excess weight is undoubtedly one of the common and frustrating problems our society faces today. For drug companies, genetic therapists, and stem-cell proponents, finding a quick fix to the problem would be like finding the Holy Grail. It would bring unlimited riches and power.

I've always held the belief that proper diet plus exercise was the key to achieving and maintaining a proper weight. Additionally, one might have to address the ill effects of an underactive thyroid and other hormone imbalances. This idea was based on my undying faith in the human body's ability to both heal itself and achieve its ideal state when given the right environment. Lately, however, I'm beginning to believe that, for many individuals, the drastic changes in their lifestyle may be making the body incapable of doing this. It's important that you understand this situation, and avoid it at all costs.

Ideally, no one should have to diet or count calories. Your body has the innate ability to regulate the amount and type of food it needs, not only to survive but to operate at optimum efficiency. Most of us, however, either neglected or have lost the ability to "listen" to what our bodies tell us. And worse, I'm afraid that changes in our food supply and the widespread use of various drugs are causing our bodies to send the wrong messages.

Paying Attention

The messages our bodies send come in many forms. Food cravings are an example.

The list of food cravings and what they can represent is long and varied. Craving carbohydrates can be indicative of gluten withdrawal, or of low blood sugar levels tied to a lack of high-quality protein and fat in the diet. A craving for meat often shows up in iron deficiencies. The need for salt appears with weak adrenal function. And the list goes on and on.

Other messages come in the form of physical signs or symptoms we experience. For example, headaches can be a sure sign of toxicity, dehydration, a magnesium deficiency, or a hormone imbalance, particularly when they occur at the same time during menstrual cycles. Fatigue and dry skin can indicate a need for more essential fatty acids in the diet or an underactive thyroid gland.

We've been trained to recognize that the red lights on a car's instrument panel indicate there's a problem to be resolved. For some reason, though, when we receive a warning signal from our body, it's regarded as nothing more than a nuisance that's interfering with our normal activity. And by the way some people act, you would think these messages are a sign of a drug deficiency that can be "cured" with some medication.

Mixed Signals

To complicate matters further, in many cases I believe we're confusing our bodies to the point that they are no longer sending us the correct messages.

One of the latest examples involves the artificial sweetener Splenda (its key component being sucralose). Even though it's touted as a natural, safe, no-calorie



In This Issue

Listen Up, Your Body's Talking to You	177
Mailbox: Taking Care of Your Knees	180
Health Hint: Vitamin C Spray for Colds . .	181
News to Use: Pulse Rate; A Novel Pesticide; Plants for Recovery; Local Produce . . .	182
Monitoring Your Vision	184

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

substitute for sugar, the latest research has shown that, even at normal consumption rates, Splenda can reduce the amount of beneficial bacteria in the intestines by up to 50 percent, increase the pH level in the intestines, increase body weight, and cause the re-routing or inactivation of certain drugs through the alteration of certain glycoprotein levels. (*J Toxicol Environ Health A* 08;71:1415–1429)

Knocking out half of the beneficial bacteria in your lower bowel opens up a Pandora's box of health nightmares, including everything from a weakened immune system and secondary, opportunistic infections to an increase in the risk of prostate, breast, and a host of other cancers. How many decades will pass, and how many lives will be lost, before that news gets out?

Part of the problem with all these diet and lifestyle changes is that it's getting harder, if not impossible, to pin one factor down as the primary cause of a particular health problem. Many times it's a combination of factors. Rarely, if ever, do you see a study dealing with a combination of possible causative factors. As such, if something can't be directly linked to a problem then it's deemed safe. The fact that Splenda depletes beneficial bacterial flora by 50 percent should send chills down the medical community's collective spine. Combine Splenda use with an antibiotic prescription and it's like adding gasoline to a five-alarm fire.

A Difficult Decision

Right now this country is experiencing a near epidemic of infections from a hypervirulent strain of bacteria called *Clostridium difficile*. *C. difficile* (or C-diff) is a form of bacteria that normally resides in 3 percent of adult intestines and in 70 percent of healthy infants. Under normal circumstances, it's kept in check by the beneficial bacteria that reside there. (Antibiotic use is usually the initial trigger for developing the disease. And it is acquired primarily during hospital visits.) When an imbalance occurs, *C. difficile* takes over and begins to produce toxins that inflame and cause ulcerations in the intestinal wall. This first results in diarrhea (as many as 40 bouts a day) and cramping, and can progress to com-

mon flu-like symptoms such as dehydration, fever, weakness, nausea, vomiting, and then blood in the stool. If left untreated, it can lead to death—as it does in anywhere from 5 to 15 percent of patients. Of those who survive, 50 percent continue to have multiple recurrences. One report from the Mayo Clinic estimates 3 million cases of these infections each year in North America. There's no way of knowing exact counts, particularly since there are no reporting requirements for *C. difficile*, but the Centers for Disease Control say that, at the very least, the bacterium is directly responsible for 15,000 deaths annually. Currently the only treatment is additional antibiotics, and vancomycin often is the choice of last resort.

It's probably no surprise to *Alternatives* readers, but *C. difficile* infections peak in late winter and early spring. This just happens to follow the winter season when flu patients are routinely prescribed antibiotics (which don't work against flu), according to data analyzed by infectious disease expert Philip Polgreen of the University of Iowa. (*Poster presentation, 48th Annual Meeting of the Interscience Conference on Antimicrobial Agents and Chemotherapy; Washington, DC, October 23–28, 2008*)

Common sense tells you that Splenda use will only increase the incidence and severity of the epidemic.

Revolting, but Effective

One of the most effective treatments for a *C. difficile* infection will probably never be utilized, for two reasons. One, it's practically free, and two, it's aesthetically objectionable to most doctors and patients. It could, however, save your life and is something you need to be aware of.

Dr. Thomas Louie, a physician in Calgary, Canada, has been utilizing what is called fecal transplantation since 1996 to cure *C. difficile* infections, with a 96 percent success rate. And most of those he has treated have no other options, since previous treatment with the antibiotic of last resort, vancomycin, failed.

He first treats the patient with 14 days of oral vancomycin, followed by a three- or four-day washout period to allow time for the vancomycin concentration to



ALTERNATIVES. Author: Dr. David Williams; 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.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to *Alternatives*, PO Box 3262, Lancaster, PA 17604-3262. Copyright © 2009 All rights reserved. Photocopying or reproduction is strictly prohibited without permission from the publisher.

The approaches described in this newsletter are not offered as cures, prescriptions, diagnoses, or a means of diagnoses to different conditions. The author and publisher assume no responsibility in the correct or incorrect use of this information, and no attempt should be made to use any of this information as a form of treatment without the approval and guidance of your doctor.

Dr. Williams works closely with Mountain Home Nutritionals, a division of Doctors' Preferred, LLC and subsidiary of Healthy Directions, LLC, developing his unique formulations that supply many of the hard-to-find nutrients he recommends. Dr. Williams is compensated by Doctors' Preferred, LLC on the sales of these nutritional supplements and health products, which allows him to continue devoting his life to worldwide research and the development of innovative, effective health solutions.

decrease. (He says the use of a Fleet enema allows him to do the procedure the following day after stopping the vancomycin, if necessary.)

He then take a “donor stool” from a first-degree relative (parent, child, or sibling) who hasn’t used antibiotics in the previous six months. Stools are collected for three days, then mixed with 1,500 mL of phosphated buffered saline with added cysteine to preserve organisms that are more oxygen-intolerant. The mixture is strained with a metal or gauze screen to remove solids, then stored in a plastic container in the refrigerator (with a tight lid, I’m sure). The stool is also screened for HIV, hepatitis B and C, ova, and parasites.

Since most hospitals won’t allow Dr. Louie to perform the procedure, he has to do so in the patient’s home. He infuses the prepared donor stool into the rectum over 15 to 45 minutes, and leaves it there for 45 minutes. He then removes 500 mL to 700 mL, hoping to leave 800 mL in the colon for at least several hours or even overnight.

In almost every case, there is no repeat treatment necessary—and the patient experiences normal bowel movements the next day. Dr. Louie reports adverse effects in only four patients, and in all of these the donor stool came from a spouse instead of a relative.

I find it interesting that the bacterial flora of a first-degree relative is more similar than that of a spouse. Even after years of having the same or similar diet as a spouse, it appears that individuals retain the bacterial flora of their immediate family for a lifetime. Although very little attention is placed on the importance of the gut’s bacteria flora, this fact alone helps explain the hereditary connection of certain diseases. I wouldn’t be the least bit surprised, either, if we learn later that antibiotics and other ingested compounds, like Splenda, that destroy our friendly bacteria, are the “triggers” that ultimately lead to the manifestation of many hereditary diseases. It also supports the need for regularly consuming live, fermented foods like sauerkraut and using quality probiotics on a regular, on-going basis. [Editor’s note: For more information about the benefits of probiotics, visit the Alternatives Subscriber Center at www.drdauidwilliams.com.]

Not a day goes by that we don’t learn more about the importance of the beneficial bacteria flora in bowels. However, I need to emphasize the importance of stomach acid and its role in this scenario.

Acid Is Basic to Good Health

Thanks to the propaganda of the pharmaceutical industry (and their development of acid-blocking drugs) over the last couple of decades, the public now equates

stomach acid with health problems. The truth is, however, that it’s a lack of stomach acid that’s causing more problems than ever.

If you were doing an experiment on yourself and wanted to reduce your absorption of nutrients, one of the most effective things you could do would be to lower your stomach’s acidity. The proper digestion and breakdown of proteins, calcium, iron, folic acid, vitamin E, vitamin A, vitamin B12, vitamin B6, and other compounds require an acid environment.

When a properly functioning stomach receives food, it immediately lowers its pH to around 2.0 by secreting hydrochloric acid. This very acidic environment breaks down the food and “cooks” it much like acidic lime juice is used to “cook” the raw fish dish known as ceviche. The acid in your stomach helps destroy pathogens and parasites found in food. Even the most primitive civilizations discovered that lime juice was one of the strongest antibacterials available. They knew that acid was crucial in being able to survive the assault from pathogens entering the body through the digestive tract. Our current research tells us the same thing, but we’ve chosen to ignore it at our own peril.

In a nutshell, insufficient stomach acidity allows undigested proteins to enter the body—resulting in an extra burden on and weakening of the immune system. It also allows the entry of pathogens into the digestive tract and the facilitation of their overgrowth in the small intestine, where the pH is less acidic.

Studies of mice that have been specially bred to be incapable of producing stomach acid find that they experience bacteria overgrowth, chronic inflammation leading to intestinal damage, and precancerous polyps. The same effect is also seen in animals given drugs that reduce stomach acid. (*Regul Pept* 07;139:5–22) (*Scand J Clin Lab Invest* 06;66:607–21) (*Gastroenterology* 06;131:246–258)

Obviously, one of the quickest methods to lower the acidity in your stomach (and start destroying your health) is to take antacids or an acid-blocking drug. Drinking large amounts of liquid with your meals is another way to dilute the acidity. And although chewing rapidly and incompletely won’t decrease the acidity in the stomach, it can result in food particles too large for acid to penetrate and adequately breakdown, leading to the increase of more pathogens and parasites entering the body.

Through the extensive research that has been performed on the bacterium associated with ulcers, *Helicobacter pylori*, we’ve learned some interesting facts.

TAKING CARE OF YOUR KNEES

Question: Overall I'm very healthy, but lately I've become worried about my knees. I try to walk daily and occasionally even jog a little. Recently, however, I've been experiencing knee pain, and my doctor says it's not uncommon at my age (63). X-rays show I probably have a little arthritis in the joint, and he says I may need knee replacement surgery if it continues to worsen. Do you have any suggestions?

—Steve R.
Austin, Texas

Answer: Not everyone will agree, but I've never been a big fan of jogging. I've jogged myself in the past, but no longer do so. When I was in active practice, joggers made up a significant portion of my patients. I worked with recreational joggers, plus several college and high school track teams—and even a couple of Olympic runners. It became obvious to me rather quickly that the activity wreaks havoc on the feet, ankles, knees, and other joints. I don't recommend it as a regular activity. There are far less traumatic forms of aerobic exercise (cycling, rowing, walking, swimming, interval weight training, kettle bells, et cetera).

First I would recommend that you stop jogging. The pounding destroys joints and eventually mobility. When you lose your mobility, you lose your independence and the ability to take care of yourself without assistance. Take up another form of aerobic exercise instead.

Strong quadriceps (front thigh muscles) protect the knee from damage and the pain from arthritis in the joint. A couple of months ago I described some simple squatting and leg extension exercises for these muscles. I also explained why the device called the

Power Plate could be so helpful in these situations.

The Mayo Clinic recently studied 265 patients with painful osteoarthritis of the knee. MRIs (magnetic resonance imaging) were given at the beginning, middle, and end of the 30-month study. The patients' pain and mobility were also evaluated.

Those patients with the strongest quadriceps had less pain and more mobility, and were found to lose less joint cartilage. (*Arthritis Rheum* 09;60:189–198)

Next, you need to give your body the necessary raw materials to protect and rebuild the damaged cartilage in your knee joint. Other studies continue to show that chondroitin sulfate reduces joint pain and the loss of joint cartilage. (*Arthritis Rheum* 09;60:524–533)

Even better results can be obtained when you supplement with the complete cartilage complex and not just one isolated compound like chondroitin sulfate. Cartilage is composed of hundreds of sulfates, hyaluronic acid, collagen, and various glycosaminoglycans. A high-quality supplement will include these items. And one of the most powerful joint-building foods is homemade bone and joint broth. It's definitely one of the most potent, yet overlooked, tools for restoring joint health. [Editor's note: Get Dr. William's bone and joint broth recipe and other joint-building tips in the "More Alternatives" section of the Alternatives Web site, www.drdauidwilliams.com.]

You can prove your doctor right about needing knee replacement surgery by doing nothing, or you can take an active approach to start reversing the situation



First, an overgrowth of *H. pylori* lowers stomach acid. It's part of its survival mechanism: the lower the acid, the higher its survival rate and its ability to spread from the stomach into the small intestine. Second, we've learned that *H. pylori* and several other harmful forms of intestinal bacteria rely on hydrogen gas for their survival. For example, *Salmonella*, the bacteria associated with food poisoning, actually requires hydrogen gas before it can become pathogenic.

The only significant production of hydrogen gas in the body comes from fermentation by bacteria in the digestive tract. And the compound being fermented is fructose. Simply put, if you have enough fructose in the system hanging around for long enough, intestinal bacteria will ferment it—resulting in increased amounts of hydrogen gas to feed pathogenic bacteria. (I won't go into detail here, but non-caloric sweeteners also promote hydrogen gas production.)

Sickeningly Sweet

I've written about aspartame and the other artificial sweeteners in past issues, explaining how they produce the taste sensation of sweetness, but not the satiety (the feeling of fullness) that naturally sweet whole foods and fruits do. This "void" left by artificial sweeteners and other chemical changes they trigger in the body leads to increased consumption of more carbohydrates and weight gain, along with a long list of other problems.

You have similar problems with HFCS (high fructose corn syrup), which has become the sweetener of choice in thousands of products—including everything from ketchup and baked goods to soft drinks. Your pancreas doesn't recognize HFCS as a sugar, and doesn't produce the hormones amylin or leptin which provide that feeling of fullness or satiety I mentioned earlier and influence how fat is deposited within the body.

HEALTH HINTS FROM READERS



VITAMIN C SPRAY FOR COLDS

Based on your recommendations I have used Xlear, the xylitol nasal wash, for some time now. I've been very pleased with the results I get. I especially like the newer bottles that have the pump dispenser. I have also found another use for the bottles after they are empty that you may want to share with other readers.

I remember in Linus Pauling's book *How to Live Longer and Feel Better*, he mentioned how vitamin C was the cure for the common cold. He also said that when vitamin C was introduced directly to the nasal passages in a solution it would concentrate 1,000 times more in the tissues than if it was taken by mouth. Based on this, I now mix about four or five grams of powdered vitamin C in just

enough water to fill an empty Xlear bottle (the newer pump dispenser bottle). At the first sign of a cold I use Xlear, but then a few minutes later I spray the vitamin C solution up my nose as well. I do this about every 20 or 30 minutes. This "one-two punch" works like a dream.

Since I've been doing this, any cold symptoms I have are usually eliminated within half a day or so.

—J. K.
Los Angeles, California

This is a great idea, and certainly one to keep in mind for any type of viral-induced respiratory infection. And in the event of a widespread flu or other respiratory endemic, I think this would be an excellent and inexpensive preventive technique for the whole family to implement before experiencing any actual symptoms.

I can recommend two excellent sources for powdered vitamin C.

One is Freeda Vitamins, 47-25 34th Street, 3rd Floor, Long Island City, New York 11101 or by phone at 800-777-3737 and on the Web at www.freedavitamins.com.

The other is Wholesale Nutrition, P.O. Box 1848, Palatine, Illinois 60078 or by phone at 800-325-2664 and on the Web at www.nutri.com. Their ascorbic acid crystals product contains about 4 grams of vitamin C per level teaspoon and is the best buy, making it ideal for this application.

I would recommend using only the pure ascorbic acid products in an effort to get the maximum amount of vitamin C into the nasal and respiratory tissues. As you mentioned, for maximum effectiveness use the Xlear spray as well.

I don't spend much time watching television, but over the last few weeks I've seen a series of ads that just about knocked me out. The Corn Refiner's Association has been promoting the use of HFCS. Their ads say that HFCS is "made from corn," "has the same nutritional value as sugar," and, the part that really gets me, "is fine in moderation." Study after study indicates that eating or drinking foods that contain HFCS can increase appetite and promote weight gain—and a study released just last year showed that increased consumption of fructose from any source increases your risk of developing a kidney stone by as much as a third. (*Kidney Int* 08;73:207–212)

And now we've learned that HFCS is being contaminated with mercury during the manufacturing process—to such an extent that, based on average consumption rates, Americans could be ingesting close to 30 micrograms of mercury a day. (Not So Sweet: Missing Mercury and High Fructose Corn Syrup *January 2009*, *Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy*)

Mercury gets into HFCS rather directly. The refining process uses a chemical called caustic soda, which can be produced using mercury as a catalyst. Newer technology uses mercury-free methods to generate the caustic soda, but there are still eight caustic soda manufacturing plants in the US that use the mercury method. According to the

EPA, in 2000 more than 65 tons of mercury went unaccounted for out of those eight plants. That's enough mercury—in just one year—to contaminate the entire state of Texas. Some of it undoubtedly ended up in the caustic soda, then made its way into the refined corn syrup.

Fortunately, it appears that the American public is beginning to see the light. Annual per-person consumption of HFCS fell from 66 pounds in 2002 to 55 pounds in 2008. I guess that explains the need for the ads. (*USDA Economic Research Service*)

And even as large as the artificial sweetener problem is, it's only the tip of the iceberg when it comes to confusing the body's natural responses. Drugs are the major problem, particularly when used long-term.

All Actions Have Reactions

All drugs basically do the same thing: They force your body to do either more or less of something it normally does on its own. And regardless of what anyone says, no one knows all of their side effects. Those side effects will vary from individual to individual depending on genetic makeup; what's occurring in the body at the time; varying levels of different nutrients, minerals, or other drugs; the time of day; et cetera. And just because a drug is

(*Body Messages continued on page 183*)



NEWS TO USE FROM AROUND THE WORLD

Pulse Rate and Heart Health

WASHINGTON, DC—A recent multi-center study found that the pulse rate can be a reliable, low-tech predictor for heart attack risk in women.

The study involved 129,135 women over about an eight-year period. Those women with a resting pulse rate of 76 beats a minute or more had a significantly increased risk of future heart attack compared to those with 62 beats per minute or less. (*BMJ* 09;338:b219)

Studies like this are what I like to see. They give individuals the opportunity to assess their own health without the need for expensive testing or procedures.

It was interesting that the resting pulse rate was significant independent of other health factors like diabetes, obesity, et cetera. The results were also the same regardless of the race of the women. The study did show, however, that there was a stronger correlation between the increased pulse and heart attack risk among women ages 50 to 64 than in those from ages 65 to 79.

To check your own pulse, first either make sure you've been at rest for at least five minutes or take it first thing in the morning before getting out of bed. Using your index and middle finger, count the number of pulsations on the opposite wrist for 30 seconds and then multiply that number by 2. And, be sure to take your pulse several times, since it can vary significantly depending on your emotional state and other factors.

A consistently higher pulse rate is a sure sign that you need to make some changes in your diet, amount of exercise, nutritional supplementation, or other areas.

Finally, a Good Use for Sodas

INDIA—You may recall a few years back it was discovered that the water being used in India to make Coke, Pepsi, and some of the local soft drinks was contaminated with pesticides. Not only did locals begin to shun those drinks, some Indian farmers felt contaminated soft drinks might be a cheaper, alternative source of pesticides.

The pesticides they were purchasing from chemical companies like Dow, Shell, and Monsanto were expensive and dangerous to handle, and had to be diluted. They began to experiment with Coke and Pepsi and reportedly have found them effective, inexpensive, and safer to deal with.

Coke and Pepsi have reportedly removed any traces of pesticides and say using their drinks as pesticides is useless. Farmers report otherwise.

Spraying their cotton and chili crops with undiluted soft drinks costs one-fifth as much as commercial pesticides. More importantly, it seems to work. Agriculture

experts think the sugar-laced concoctions attract ants that in turn eat the larvae of insects that can destroy the crops.

We just recently planted our garden, so I haven't yet been able to test this idea, but I thought I'd pass it along just in case anyone else wanted to try it. Let me know if you do.

It's interesting that the whole phenomenon started because these soft drinks actually contained small amounts of pesticides and the farmers saw this as a positive thing instead of a problem.

The Comforts of Home

MANHATTAN, KANSAS—We already know the value of plants in improving indoor air quality. Researchers at Kansas State University have found that putting plants in hospital rooms can help surgical patients recover.

Half of 90 patients who underwent an appendectomy had live plants of various types placed in their recovery rooms. Within just three days, patients in the green rooms needed no pain medication, while those in the control rooms still required moderate pain medications. Those in the plant rooms also had lower blood pressure and heart rates, and reported less fatigue and anxiety. (*HortTechnology* 08;18:563–568)

It seems like an easy, safe way to reduce medical costs and improve patient recovery. I guess we'll have to wait and see if an idea like this gets adopted in hospitals. If someone you know is bedridden or has an extended recovery at home, it's an idea you may want to try.

A "Honey-Don't" List

SEATTLE, WASH.—Buying locally grown food products has always seemed to be a reasonable thing to do, but, as we learn more about the problems with imported foods, it's becoming even more preferable.

An investigation by the *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, which just shut down after 146 years in business, focused on imported honey. What they discovered was pretty shocking.

The US imported 237 million pounds of honey last year. China has been redirecting honey for import into this country in an effort to avoid tariffs. Much of this honey was routed through places like Vietnam, Thailand, Indonesia, Australia, India, and Malaysia. Some was labeled as coming from Russia, and even from other places such as Singapore that don't even have commercial beekeepers.

The problem is worse considering that this Chinese honey is often diluted with sugar water or corn syrup and contaminated with pesticides and/or antibiotics.

NEWS TO USE *(CONTINUED)*

Some of the honey wound up at the oldest and largest honey co-operative in the country, Sue Bee Honey located in Iowa.

If you want all of the health benefits associated with consuming honey, try to buy locally sourced products, or at least be certain where the honey is being pro-

duced. I suspect this will quickly become the safest and best way to buy most all of our food products. [Editor's note: Honey is one of the oldest and most useful natural health substances. For more about its benefits, visit the "More Alternatives" section of the Alternatives Subscriber Center at www.drdauidwilliams.com.]

(Body Messages continued from page 181)

"legal" or sold over the counter doesn't make it any safer. Every month researchers seem to uncover another danger associated with commonly used medications.

Researchers in Denmark just released their findings showing a very significant increase in death rates among patients with a history of heart failure who took either prescription or over-the-counter NSAIDs (nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs). These same researchers earlier found that NSAID use also increased the risk of death in patients with a history of heart attack.

Based on what they found in studying the records of over 107,000 patients, they concluded that the increased risk versus any benefits for pain management didn't justify the use of NSAIDs in patients with heart failure. Unfortunately, this is the type of news that most people will never hear, and NSAIDs are some of the most popular pain medications being used today: both over-the-counter and by prescription. (*Arch Intern Med* 09;169:141-149)

Work With, Not Against, Your Body

Dozens of other compounds we're being exposed to can disrupt the natural balancing mechanisms within our body. Poorly controlled hormone levels and/or exposure to those found in our food and water supplies, pesticides, herbicides, thermogenic (fat-burning) compounds, and stimulants such as caffeine are a few of the many others.

This whole situation reminds me of the computer programming phrase, "garbage in...garbage out."

There also has been the point of view where the body is seen as something to be tricked or outsmarted. There seems to be this idea that the way to better health or weight loss or longevity is by sidetracking the body's natural mechanisms through the use of drugs or genetic manipulation. This is a dangerous concept that mistakenly disregards the fact that every function in the body and life itself is intricately intertwined. Changes in one part or system of the body can have dramatic, but often delayed or unexpected, consequences on another

area. Your body isn't an enemy that needs to be conquered or outwitted through technology. It's you.

If you want clear, precise messages from your body and you want it to retain its ability to control weight and health through regulating the amount and type of food it needs, it may require some diet and lifestyle changes.

Just My Type

One of the best tools I know to give you an insight into the specific needs and inner-workings of your body is called body-typing. This concept has been around for a long time, and, although it has had its share of critics, it has withstood the test of time. Through a simple written survey, most people can, with a high degree of accuracy, learn the types of food and diets that are best for them. I highly recommend it as a starting point in learning how to feed and care for your body. Also, after taking one of the simple body-typing surveys, you'll have a much better understanding of how to read your body's "messages."

There are dozens of good books about body-typing. I have some that date back to the 1920s and are so detailed and complicated they're almost worthless. One of the best and easiest-to-understand explanations of body-typing is done by Paul Chek in his book *How to Eat, Move and Be Healthy!* Also included are details of food groups linked to various body types. The book is a great starting point for developing a better understanding of your body from a chemical and physical standpoint, and it follows much of the philosophy that I write about each month in *Alternatives*. The book is available for \$24.95 from the C.H.E.K. Institute, at www.chekinstitute.com or 800-552-8789. Mention that you're an *Alternatives* subscriber when you call by June 1st and they'll throw in a free poster series that demonstrates stretching activities and zone-specific exercises (a \$50 value).

Having a better understanding of your body type and why it responds differently to various types of food is essential to deciphering the messages your body sends you. Rather than trying to trick or outsmart your body, you can work in harmony with your body's God-given, innate healing and balancing talents.

Monitoring Your Vision

As much as I like to spend time outdoors, unfortunately I end up spending a large amount of time sitting in front of a computer monitor as I prepare *Alternatives* for you every month. As a result, I'm always alert for anything that will help reduce the ill effects of computer use. There's been plenty of research over the last 30 years into the more physical aspects, including carpal tunnel syndrome and neck muscle pain, but attention to the vision effects is relatively recent. And now, as computer use has become more widespread, we're beginning to see a condition that wouldn't have been even thought of 40 years ago: computer vision syndrome.

Symptoms of computer vision syndrome (CVS) include eyestrain, headaches, redness, double vision, and blurred vision (loss of visual acuity). Some users also begin to lose contrast sensitivity, meaning that it becomes harder to distinguish figures, including letters, against a background. The good news is that these changes don't appear to be permanent, but they can be uncomfortable and interfere with your ability to perform other functions that require accurate vision.

In a study conducted at the School of Public Health at Peking University, researchers studied 37 computer users. One group was given 6 mg of lutein daily; a second group received 12 mg daily; and the third group received a placebo. By the end of the 12-week study, the people in the high-lutein group showed an increase in visual acuity, and both lutein groups showed improved contrast sensitivity compared to the control group. (*Br J Nutr* 09 Feb 19; [Epub ahead of print])

The participants in this study were Chinese students ages 22–30, but it stands to reason that older eyes would get even more benefit from the lutein supplement, because older eyes are generally more fragile to begin with.

Lutein is well known for vision support, and practically every good vision formula includes it. You need to read the label carefully, however. Some multivitamin products are advertised as being “with lutein” but contain only 1 mg of lutein. Look for a product with 6–12 mg.

Most of the lutein that's included in nutritional supplements comes from marigolds, but ordinary green vegetables are good sources as well. Eggs (with the yolk), spinach, and greens such as kale and collards are particularly high in lutein; a one-cup serving of cooked spinach contains more than 13 mg. Egg yolks have only about 300 mcg of lutein each, but, because the compound is fat-soluble, the fat in the egg yolk aids absorption. In one study, 1.3 egg yolks a day increased plasma levels of lutein by up to 50 percent. (*Am J Clin Nutr* 99;70:247–251)

Other Ways to Ease Your Eyes

You can also ease eyestrain by moving your computer monitor. In a study performed at the Academia Perpetuo Socorro in Puerto Rico, those users who were able to look downward at their monitor at an angle of 14 degrees or more were significantly less likely to experience CVS. (*Bol Asoc Med P R* 04;96:103–110)

Other helpful actions include taking frequent rest breaks, and, if you use vision correction of any kind (glasses or contacts), making sure that you have a prescription for the proper working distance. When you do take breaks from staring at the screen, be sure to look at objects of various distances, to help maintain what's known as visual accommodation—the ability to adjust focus between near and distant objects. Accommodation begins to decline with age anyway—it's the classic sign of the “aging eye”—so it's important to work to maintain whatever capacity you can.

Though the authors of these two studies didn't make the connection, I'd imagine the same cautions hold true for television screens as for computer monitors. (So Mom was right...again.) If you're going to be looking at a television screen for any length of time (say, to watch a movie or a sporting event), place yourself so you can look downward at the screen, and be sure to give your eyes a rest every now and then.

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:

- For Customer Service matters such as address changes, call 800-527-3044 or write to custsvc@drdavidwilliams.com.
- For more in-depth information about this month's topics, visit the *Alternatives* Subscriber Center, at www.drdavidwilliams.com.
- For back issues or reports, call 800-718-8293.
- To sign a friend up for *Alternatives*, call 800-219-8591.

E-mail us at:

feedback@drdavidwilliams.com

to ask a question or comment on this month's issue.

