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FOR THE HEALTH-CONSCIOUS INDIVIDUAL

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Dr. David G. Williams

Your Money and Your Life

I don't think I'm going out on a limb or that I would surprise anyone when I say we may be going through some very difficult times in the next few years. I have no doubt that, as a nation, we'll be able to weather the storm. There may be monumental, unexpected changes and turmoil

along the way, but when the dust settles I believe that, by going back to the ideas and morals this country was founded on, we'll be in a better place. My concern, however, is the toll it could take on your health.

Once you lose your health, it can be very difficult to regain it. While adjusting to changes in finances or your social and working environments may not always be easy, you can do so. But trying to deal with any of this additional stress or uncertainty can become overwhelming when your body is failing you as well. Never before has it been more important for you to begin focusing on how to maintain and preserve your health.

As a subscriber to *Alternatives*, you're someone who understands the enormous benefits of natural healing and the wisdom of using drugs or surgery only as a last resort. You've seen the various attacks and propaganda aimed at vitamins, herbs, supplements, and other natural therapies. As the government succeeds in becoming more and more involved in our personal lives, it's a no-brainer that our access to these therapies could (will) be restricted or curtailed even more. I certainly hope that's not the case, but, based on the past and what's happened in other countries around the world, I'm afraid that's what we may be seeing in the near future.

It's Your Life; Take Charge

I hate to belabor the point, or "beat a dead horse," as they say here in Texas, but, I think it's important to keep in mind that ultimately we are each responsible for our own health. Many people seem to have forgotten that.

Some people think they can continue the worst habits until something goes wrong, then just run to the doctor after a problem surfaces. Nowadays, however, just trying to get an appointment with a doctor is difficult enough, much less finding one who has the time, or takes the effort, to do anything more than write a prescription based on your symptoms. The sense of comfort that used to come with the idea of turning the responsibility of one's health over to a doctor is becoming a thing of the past. And unfortunately, no matter how good of a doctor or caregiver you're lucky enough to find, none will ever care as much, or have as much vested in your outcome, as you do.

Taking responsibility for your health involves a little more than just popping a few vitamins every day. As many of my baby-boomer friends and family transition into retirement, their health starts to become more of a priority. I start to get letters, e-mails, phone calls, et cetera, asking what vitamins I personally take and what vitamins they should be taking. Many even get this newsletter every month but are still confused about where to start. I tell them the same thing I tell you every month.



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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

Start With the Basics

Each of us comes into the world with different biological and genetic strengths and weaknesses. If your family has a history of early heart disease or thyroid problems, for example, then in addition to the daily multivitamin/mineral supplement, you should make sure you're taking the additional supplements that are used to treat these problems. The supplements that can effectively treat a problem are the same ones that will prevent the problem in the first place.

Heart disease is a problem for both sexes, and needs to be addressed by everyone. I've always looked at the daily multi-vitamin/mineral supplement as the basic starting point, which is then complemented through diet and other specific vitamins or minerals as needed.

Sex is a factor. Men should be *treating* prostate problems before they occur—as I wrote about in extreme detail last month. Women would be wise to adjust diet, lifestyle, and supplement programs to address potential problems like breast cancer, osteoporosis, and depression.

Toxins often mimic hormones and, as I discuss later, are stored primarily in fat tissue like the breast. Exercise burns fat and induces sweat—which, in turn, helps release these toxins. (Saunas are also beneficial in this regard.) It's important as well to consume clean, uncontaminated water, and eat a clean diet. Increase essential fatty acids (like the omega-3 oils from flax, fish, and/or chia seed) and the omega-6 fatty acid CLA (conjugated linoleic acid). Include the sulfur-containing cruciferous vegetables regularly. Follow the practice of not wearing a bra at night and performing breast massage, which allows for proper lymphatic drainage of the breast tissue.

Weight-bearing exercise and eliminating soft drinks are two of the many habits that can fight osteoporosis.

Depression has reached epidemic levels in this country, particularly in women. Natural thyroid treatment with iodine-rich foods and/or a daily iodine supplement like Iosol can work wonders at improving mood and restoring metabolic rates.

And to further complicate matters, each of us carry our own personalized load of toxic waste based on our lifetime environmental exposure to such things as heavy metals, chemicals, drugs, food additives, and pesticides.

Just Say "No" to Drugs

Most people seem to grasp the dangers that are posed by exposure to industrial chemicals. These same individuals, however, don't seem to realize that drugs can be a major source of toxins as well. I'm fully aware that in some instances drugs may be needed, but, as you know, in almost every situation there are natural remedies and/or lifestyle changes that can work just as well, if not better. It just takes the initiative to educate yourself and make the changes. Since you're already a subscriber, I'm obviously preaching to the choir in this case.

Environmental studies have shown the cumulative effect that pharmaceutical drug exposure has had on fish, reptiles, and mammals. Most waterways, water supplies, and domestic food animals in this country exhibit drug contamination and, while the contaminants may exist as only a few parts per million or per billion, birth deformities and changes in sexual behavior, organ development, and reproductive capacity are rampant. The changes we're seeing are similar to the canary in the coal mine. The "early warning" sign has been there for the last couple of decades. If we're seeing changes in the animal population, why is it so hard to comprehend the fact that humans are being subjected to the same influences?

After being ingested, drugs and drug residue are typically stored in fat cells. When this happens in lower animals, their fat cells become part of the food chain—and drugs and other toxins get more and more concentrated the higher you get in the food chain. Add this to widespread use of prescribed and over-the-counter drugs, and the toxicity problems only become worse.

At first, trying to figure out what you need to do may seem futile. Fortunately, that's not the case at all.



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HEALTH HINTS FROM READERS



FIG SAP FOR WARTS

I recently did a search of my back issues to see what could be done to get rid of my son's warts. I found the article about using duct tape, which I thought was interesting. The technique that we used successfully wasn't listed, though, so I thought other readers might find it helpful.

My neighbor has a fig tree and told me the sap or latex that comes from the leave and stems of the tree would remove warts. We started applying the sap a couple of times a day and covered it with an adhesive bandage. In just a couple of weeks the warts were gone. They haven't returned, and it's been over 6 months. It worked great.

—Ben K.
Los Angeles, California

The word about using fig tree latex seems to be spreading faster probably since our military involvement in Iran. In that country, fig tree latex is a well-recognized folk treatment for warts. There was even a medical study out of Iran that compared its effectiveness to that of cryotherapy

(freezing). In that study it was found applying fig tree latex was practically just as effective, without the side effects or the expense. (*Int J Dermatol* 07;46:524–526) [Editor's note: For more treatments for warts from the pages of *Alternatives*, visit the *Alternatives Subscriber Center*, at www.drdauidwilliams.com]

IODINE FOR IMMUNE HEALTH

There continues to be a lot of news about a possible swine flu epidemic and I know you've addressed it on several occasions. I don't recall you mentioning the use of the liquid iodine supplement you recommend in treating colds and flu. I take 5 or 6 drops at the first sign of a sore throat or cold. I refrain from drinking any liquid for about 30 minutes and it always seem to knock the cold out almost immediately. Sometimes I have to repeat it a couple of times during the day, but my problems are usually over the next day at the latest.

—D.C.
Falls Church, Virginia

I've used and recommended using the iodine drops in a gargle to treat throat infections and sore throats. It works well. I add several drops to the warm, concentrated, salt solution I use to gargle.

If you get to a cold, flu, or sore throat soon enough, iodine can definitely be beneficial. The direct contact of the pathogens with either iodine, elderberry extract, or the saline nasal wash Xlear seems to be the key.

It's definitely okay to use the iodine like this for two or three times, but keep in mind overloading your system with iodine can actually temporarily suppress the thyroid gland. I've used this technique on several patients who were scheduled to undergo radiation therapy for an overactive thyroid. By having them take 10 drops of Iosol every 15 minutes for 1½ to 2 hours, their thyroid almost always began to operate normally. I would follow this up with additional testing. The situation normally required daily drops of iodine and the use of a thyroid glandular supplement—which is preferable to destroying the thyroid gland.

Take Three Steps Toward Health

Start with the basics, and as you begin to see and feel the improvement in your health and energy levels you will quickly learn what works for you and how to “fine tune” your personal program. That's the first step in taking responsibility for your health.

In addition to the daily multi-vitamin/mineral supplement, here are some of the items I consider basics.

1) Help your body get rid of waste. There are many ways to do this, including sweating, saunas, exercise, and detoxifying herbs, but the most overlooked one is simply to make sure you're having as many daily bowel movements as you are meals. If that's not happening, then toxins are building up throughout your body.

The remains of digested food should stay in the intestinal tract no longer than 12 hours or so. Your body doesn't discontinue its natural process of absorption based on what's in the intestinal tract or how long it's

been there. Waste or toxic material that isn't eliminated in a timely manner is absorbed and then has to be detoxified a second time by the liver and kidneys. Chronic constipation places a constant burden on these organs and your immune system. It's like having a 24-hour intravenous drip of toxins into your bloodstream.

The first order of business for anyone should be to get their bowels in the best working order possible. Something as simple as increasing your water intake to 8 glasses a day or adding fiber (roughage or even Metamucil) can work. Most people seem to know what helps them achieve regularity. I've seen so many different things work, including iced tea, sauerkraut, macadamia nuts, flax, probiotic supplements, yogurt, various cereals, and chia. If you know what works for you, then faithfully incorporate it on a regular basis.

Taking antioxidants, vitamins, minerals, and herbs while you're dealing with chronic constipation is similar to trying to put out a forest fire with a garden hose.

DMSO COMFORT

Question: I know you have recommended DMSO for arthritis and other joint problems. I recently started using a DMSO gel and I have itching after applying it. Is this normal? Also how often can I apply it to a joint?

—Carolyn C.
Kemah, Texas

Answer: I recommending using only the 99.9 percent liquid, not any of the creams, gels, et cetera. For all you know, some of the ingredients may be carried into the body (bloodstream) and causing irritation. Mix 1/3 water and 2/3 DMSO (usually one capful of water and 2 capfuls of DMSO) and store it in a glass container so you don't get it leaching out some plastic chemical and causing more irritation.

This may stop the itching, but some people have a little reaction anyway because one of the effects of DMSO is to increase the blood supply to the area. This may result in warmth and temporary itching at the site of application.

I would suggest applying it at least 3 times a day.

MANAGING THE NIACIN FLUSH

Question: I was on statin drugs for elevated cholesterol for a couple of years until I decided to try niacin as an alternative you mentioned in the newsletter. I have faith that it will work as you say, but I don't care for the "flush" that results.

My doctor has suggested that I take either Benadryl or aspirin to stop the flush. This sounds like a reasonable suggestion, but I wanted to hear your thoughts first.

—Jack H.
Baldwin, Illinois

2) Next, start limiting the toxins that enter your body: cleaning fluids, pesticides, herbicides, and other chemicals that get in either from absorption through the skin or through inhalation.

Make sure the water you drink is pure. Most city tap water contains chlorine—and, in all probability, residue from dozens of herbicides, pesticides, industrial chemicals, and traces of pharmaceutical drugs that conventional water sanitation procedures can't remove.

3) Pay particular attention to your oral health.

One commonly overlooked source of deadly toxins is your oral cavity. I've never understood why there hasn't been much emphasis placed on this area as a source of toxins or systemic infections. Research has repeatedly shown gingivitis (an early stage of gum disease that can

Answer: New research suggests that the molecule responsible for the flushing action is prostaglandin D2 (PGD2). When this molecule is released in the skin, flushing occurs. It just so happens also that one of the areas with the greatest capacity for the production of PGD2 is the heart. In animal studies when PGD2 was increased it protected the heart from injury, both when the blood supply was cut off and when it was reperfused or restored afterwards. (*J Clin Invest* 09;119:1477-1488)



(Damage occurs when the blood supply gets cut off from an organ or tissue, because there's no longer any oxygen reaching the affected area. Even more damage, however, occurs when the blood supply returns [reperfusion]. This has always been one of the major factors that cardiologists face when they restore blood flow after an angioplasty; that transplant surgeons face after replacing an organ or limb; or even plastic surgeons face after doing some of their procedures. It's a major factor when a critically ill patient is resuscitated but then dies from multi-organ failure due to the reperfusion damage that occurs.)

Aspirin has been shown to cut the production of prostaglandins of all types. It seems that by blocking the production of PGD2 you might be successful at stopping flushing in the skin, but at the same time you would probably be blocking its production in the heart and greatly reducing niacin's heart-protective benefits.

Normally, as you continue to take niacin on a regular basis the flushing action subsides. The fear of not knowing what's causing the problem frightens most people who feel uncomfortable with a flush. Personally, I like the feeling. I think the effectiveness of the niacin might be significantly reduced if you took the items you mentioned.

lead to the bone loss associated with periodontitis) provides the perfect environment for several forms of bacteria to flourish. Pathogenic oral bacteria can play a role in the development of diseases such as diabetes, heart disease, osteoporosis, and possibly autoimmune diseases such as Crohn's disease, rheumatoid arthritis, and lupus. Although at least 75 percent of adults in this country have some degree of gum disease, how many doctors discuss the problem with their patients who have diabetes, heart disease, or autoimmune disease?

Oral Health Leads to Total Health

On a related note, studies have found that about 20 percent of the elderly develop pneumonia following major surgery. To date there hasn't been much research to determine if there is any connection between post-

surgical pneumonia and oral health. But a recent study out of Hungary now sheds some light on just how dangerous the presence of periodontal disease can be.

Researchers at the University of Debrecen compared the presence of bad oral health with the incidence of pneumonia following brain surgery. Of the 23 patients undergoing the surgery, five developed pneumonia. All five were found to have bad oral health when compared to the others. The researchers found that someone with periodontal disease is 3.5 times more likely to develop pneumonia following surgery when compared to someone without the disease. (*BMC Infect Dis* 09;9:104)

This is an extremely important point to remember if you're ever scheduled to undergo surgery. Pneumonia can be a serious and threatening complication. Getting gum disease under control prior to a surgical procedure could prove to be a lifesaver. And, it should go without saying that chronic gum disease will be a constant drain on your immune system and a potential cause of any number of serious diseases.

More serious cases of gum disease will require dental intervention, but less severe cases can be corrected with regular brushing, flossing, and the use of mouthwash and/or diluted hydrogen peroxide. For some people it's a never-ending battle to keep their oral health under control, but the benefits are well worth the effort. [*Editor's note: A complete program for dental health can be found in Vol. 10, No. 15 of Alternatives (September 2004). That issue can be found in the Subscriber Center of the Alternatives Web site, www.drdauidwilliams.com.*]

While we're discussing the topic of pneumonia, there's something else you need to know.

The class of drugs called proton-pump inhibitors has now also been linked to an increase in the risk of hospital-acquired pneumonia.

Proton-pump inhibitors are the second highest-selling class of drugs in the world, with sales of over \$10 billion a year. These are the drugs used to reduce stomach acid: Prilosec, Nexium, Prevacid, Protonix, et cetera.

Researchers studied the records of over 40,000 patients over a four-year period and found that in those taking these acid-suppressive medications, there was a 30 percent increased risk of developing hospital-acquired pneumonia. (*JAMA* 09;301:2120-2128)

Another study found that individuals taking one of these acid inhibitors along with the blood thinning agent clopidogrel (Plavix) had an increased risk as high as 15 percent in being readmitted to the hospital for a second heart attack. (*CMAJ* 09;180:713-718)

Blocking Acid Blocks Your Health

If there's one thing that I've stressed continually in the 20-plus years that I've been writing this newsletter, it's the importance of maintaining high levels of beneficial bacteria in the body. Your GI tract is one continuous tube that starts at your mouth and nasal passages and ends (no pun intended) you know where. From what we eat, drink, and breathe, this tube constantly exposes us to the outside environment. Components like stomach acid and beneficial bacteria are the gatekeepers that help protect us from entering pathogens. Blocking the production of stomach acid does a couple of things.

First, it decreases your ability to properly digest food and nutrients. Digestion is a pretty complex event, in which stomach acid plays a major role. The decreasing level of acid that comes with aging is one of the reasons we experience incomplete digestion of protein and deficiencies of various minerals. It also explains why so many problems associated with aging can be remedied by adding a quality digestive acid/enzyme supplement. Proteins that aren't properly broken down can enter the bloodstream and trigger allergic responses. Poor protein digestion also lessens the building blocks the body has available for maintenance and repair of tissue.

Second, lowering the levels of stomach acid allows pathogenic bacteria to colonize the upper GI tract (the stomach and small intestine). Since the respiratory tract is directly connected to the GI tract, it's not surprising when individuals complain of chronic sinus or other respiratory infections when taking acid-inhibiting medications. Some research has even suggested that these medications increase the incidence of community-acquired pneumonia. It would be interesting to see research to determine whether there is any connection between the use of acid-blocking medications and the incidence of flu infection. I wouldn't be surprised to learn that they increase your susceptibility to colds, flu, and other airborne pathogens. Knowing this would have major ramifications on the sale of these drugs, particularly with the current concern over swine flu and similar threats.

Other studies also suggest that problems like colitis, where pathogenic bacteria set up house in the lower gastrointestinal tract, may be more prevalent in individuals who use acid blockers.

In regard to the question about what vitamins, minerals, and nutrients one needs to take, it can become a moot point if an individual is blocking the very components like stomach acid that are needed to help digest and assimilate these supplements.

(*Health Basics continued on page 23*)



NEWS TO USE FROM AROUND THE WORLD

Another Poison in Our Food Supply

MADISON, WISCONSIN—Researchers at the University of Wisconsin have been performing animal studies to determine if the fatty insulating sheath (myelin) around nerves can regenerate after being destroyed by diseases such as multiple sclerosis.

They fed pregnant cats a diet of irradiated food for a period of three to four months. During that time, demyelination of the central nervous system occurred and resulted in many of the classic symptoms of multiple sclerosis: loss of mobility, loss of vision, and paralysis.

After changing the animals back to a normal diet, not all of the myelin returned, but enough of the layer did that most of the problems were resolved. The researchers' conclusion was that the nervous system could repair itself and even recover from a severe neurological disease. (*Proc Natl Acad Sci USA* 09;106:6832–6836)

What caught my eye was how they were able to effectively destroy the myelin sheath simply by feeding the animals an irradiated-food diet. The FDA has steadily been approving the use of radiation to treat more and more food products. One of the primary complaints from several watchdog groups opposing these approvals has been the fact that very little research had been conducted on the effects of consuming irradiated food over the long term. From what I found, the longest study on the health effects on humans lasted about 15 weeks.

What led to this research was a discovery that came out of a cat-food study. A company that was investigating the effects of irradiated food on pregnant cats found that those cats on the irradiated diet soon developed a widespread neurological disease—and that the disease slowly cleared up after the cats were placed on a diet of non-irradiated food.

This study was designed to get to the specifics of those issues, but, obviously, if these researchers knew irradiated food was a simple and quick way to mimic the effects of multiple sclerosis there's more to the story than we're being told. In one report, I read that the researchers commented that it would be highly unlikely that irradiated food would become a problem to humans. I know if I was one of the researchers watching what happened then I would be steering my family and friends away from irradiated food products. I suggest you do the same.

Hot Peppers for Pain Relief

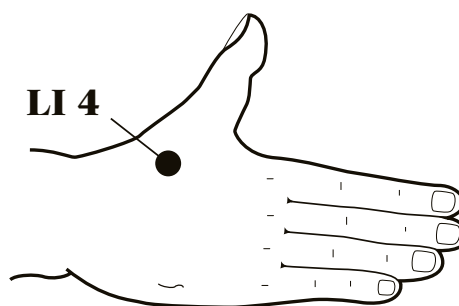
SEOUL, KOREA—Researchers here continue to report the effectiveness of using capsaicin patches on various acupuncture points. The technique is very simple to perform and inexpensive. It's also a way you

can significantly decrease the need for pain medication following several types of surgical procedures.

Their latest study involved patients undergoing corrective jaw surgery (orthognathic surgery).

A small, capsaicin-impregnated, rubber patch was placed over the Hegu (or Large Intestine 4, LI 4) acupuncture point before any anesthesia was given to the surgical patients, and then maintained on the point for 8 hours per day for 3 days following surgery. The patients were able to self-administer additional pain-relieving medication as they felt the need.

When compared to those who received placebo patches, or a patch at a different non-acupuncture point, those with the patch at the Hegu point used 40 percent less pain medication in the first 24-hour period. Additionally, they experienced less postoperative nausea and vomiting, and their overall satisfaction with the treatment was greater. (*Anesth Analg* 09;108:992–996)



These little patches (about 1½ by 2½ inches) are great and easy to use. The ones I've utilized have a peel-and-stick side so they stay in place and continue to deliver the pepper extract for several hours. They are available at most places that sell acupuncture supplies, and a box of 200 can be purchased from several suppliers that advertise on the Internet, including *Amazon.com*.

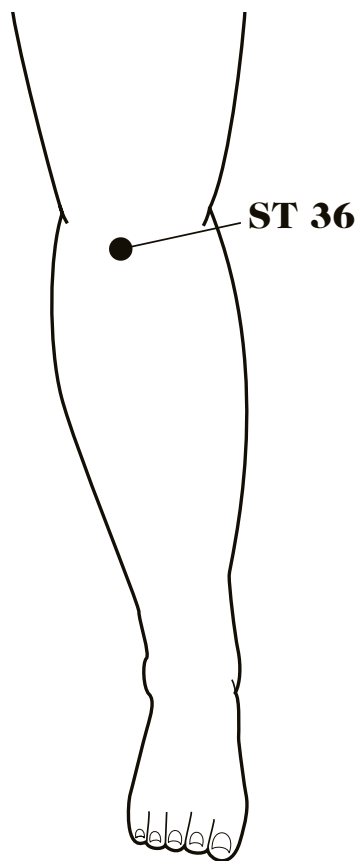
Another supplier is Herbs Direct USA, which sells Chilli Brand Porous Capsicum Plaster made by the German company Vorwerk & Sohn GmbH & Company. The 200-count box sells for \$36.95 plus shipping. You can contact them at *www.maxnature.com* or 626-575-1920.

The same company sells larger patches if needed. Both sizes work very well for temporarily quelling the pain of arthritic joints.

In earlier studies these same researchers showed how these same type patches could be used to significantly reduce pain following either a hysterectomy or inguinal hernia repair in children. (*Anesth Analg* 06;103:709–713) (*Paediatr Anaesth* 06;16:1036–1041)

In both of these studies the capsaicin plaster was placed on the acupuncture point referred to as Zusanli (or Stomach 36, ST 36. In the children, however, the

NEWS TO USE (CONTINUED)



plaster didn't seem to kick in until about six hours following the surgery.

All of these studies were double-blind so no one, including the doctors, knew who was receiving a sham treatment, a placebo, or the capsicum plaster.

Based on acupuncture principles it would be reasonable to assume that the pain involved with most other abdominal-located surgeries could be also be treated successfully using the ST 36 point.

For many people, the pain medication following surgery is one of the more difficult hurdles to overcome. It can result in a horrible feeling of nausea and often vomiting. These simple plasters could be a godsend.

In the hernia repair study, the 108 children ranged in age from just 4 months to 9 years. Administering pain medication to young children is difficult, and anything that's safe and effective, such as these plasters, can truly be a blessing.

If you or a loved one has to undergo surgery like this and requires pain medication, I would highly recommend utilizing these inexpensive plasters. The only caution I'm aware of is for someone who is allergic to latex. The patch holding the pepper extract is made of natural rubber latex. Obviously, since the plaster contains pepper extract, you wouldn't want to rub your eyes or mucous membranes after handling it and would need to wash your hands to remove any residue.

(Health Basics continued from page 21)

The point I'm trying to make is, don't get discouraged and don't be dissuaded by the conventional media when it comes to figuring out what supplements to add to your daily regimen. Don't always expect instant gratification or monumental results. And, know that most of the vitamins, minerals, and nutrients are working quietly behind the scenes to improve your overall health and longevity. Just follow the above advice so they at least have a chance to work.

A Reliable Home Remedy Rediscovered

Years ago, practically every household had a bottle of castor oil in the kitchen cabinet. Many mothers swore by its benefits as a tonic, basically good for whatever the current ailment was. Many people became more aware of it due to the trance readings of Edgar Cayce in the 1920s and '30s. During these readings, Cayce would often make recommendations regarding an individual's health situation—and castor oil was one of his favorite remedies, for everything from headaches and constipation to arthritis and gallstones.

It seems hard to believe that such a simple remedy could have benefits in so many different areas, but when you look more closely at castor oil, the picture becomes a little clearer.

Castor oil's actions appear to be due to its stimulation of a compound called prostaglandin E2 (PGE2). Among its many functions, this derivative of fatty acids increases the output of neurotransmitters in the brain; makes blood platelets more sensitive to natural clotting factors; and affects smooth muscles in the airway, bladder, uterus, and blood vessels. Interestingly, PGE2 can have opposite effects on the same tissue, depending on which receptors are in use at the moment. Here are some of the uses for castor oil.

There's no doubt that castor oil is an effective **laxative**. In fact, it's so effective that it's commonly used in experiments to induce diarrhea (to test the effectiveness of anti-diarrheal medications). A recent study also found that castor oil is just as effective as sodium phosphate (the ingredient in Fleet enemas) at clearing out the bowel in preparation for a colonoscopy or other procedure. Those patients who used the castor oil also needed fewer bowel

movements to accomplish the job. (*J Med Assoc Thai* 09;92:243–249)

Castor oil exerts its effects on your bowel in two ways. First, it simply lubricates the digestive system, so everything moves along more smoothly. And second, it stimulates the smooth muscles of the bowel to push against any material that's present. When castor oil makes its way into the bowel, it stimulates the release of PGE2, which increases gut muscle movement. Caution: PGE2 also stimulates contractions of uterine muscles, so pregnant women *should not* use castor oil as a laxative.

Castor oil is also an **immune stimulant**. I've written extensively before about castor oil and your immune system, so there's no need repeat it all here. Recent research, however, helps explain the mechanism at work. [Editor's note: For a more complete explanation of the immune benefits of castor oil, including how to use it to relieve edema, visit the Alternatives Subscriber Center at www.drdauidwilliams.com.]

Components of your immune system known as dendritic cells act as scouts, to seek out danger (pathogens and allergens) and report back to the T cells that are concentrated in lymph nodes. While the dendritic cells are searching, they move about on foot-like organs called podosomes. These podosomes are sticky, however, which means that they would slow the dendritic cells down as they moved to carry the message of an invader back to the T cells. The solution is that the podosomes break off as soon as a dendritic cell identifies an invader. This breakup happens only in the presence of PGE2.

Castor oil relieves **arthritis pain**. In a study conducted in Chandigarh and New Delhi, India, researchers tested the effectiveness of 900 mg of castor oil three times daily against 50 mg of the NSAID diclofenac sodium (Voltaren) three times daily. Patients reported equivalent relief of their knee pain, but the castor oil had no side effects, while the drug created many. PGE2 relaxes the muscles in blood vessels, increasing local circulation to bring in healing nutrients and carry away waste products. (*Phytother Res* 09 Mar 13. [E-pub ahead of print])

One of the most useful and least utilized methods of using castor oil is to employ packs—an economical and efficient method of delivering the healing components of castor oil directly into body tissues.

To make a castor oil pack you will need the following items: cold pressed castor oil, a standard heating pad, a plastic garbage bag, two or three one-foot square pieces of wool or cotton flannel, and one large bath towel.

1. Place the heating pad on a flat surface and turn the setting to high.
2. Lay the plastic garbage bag on top of the pad. Next, soak the flannel pieces with castor oil (about 1/2 cup) and lay them on top of the bag and pad.
3. The entire pack can now be placed against the body with the oil-soaked flannel on the skin. For general conditions the pack should be placed on the abdomen. (For treating lower back problems or joint pain, the pack can be placed there.) To help hold the pack in place and to keep oil from getting on bedding, et cetera, the body can be wrapped in a large bath towel.
4. The pack should remain in place for at least one hour and the temperature of the heating pad should be kept at the highest temperature tolerable.
5. When you remove the pack, the remaining oil can be massaged into the skin or cleaned off using a little soda water made from 1 quart of warm water and 2 tablespoons of baking soda.
6. The flannel can be reused if stored properly after removing the pack. Put the flannel in either a zippered freezer bag or plastic container and place it in the refrigerator. Before using it next time, let it warm up, and always add another 1 or 2 tablespoons of fresh cold-pressed castor oil. (After a month of use I would recommend using new flannel.)

Whether you choose to take castor oil orally or use it topically, it's one remedy every home should have.

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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- If you are a licensed health professional and would like to learn how to begin reselling MHN supplements to your patients, please e-mail practitionerinquiries@davidwilliamsmail.com.
- For back issues or reports, call **800-718-8293**.
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