Pillars of Health

A Special Report from
Leigh Erin Connealy, M.D.
Editor of the Newport Natural Health Letter

www.newportnaturalhealth.com

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**Introduction**

Medical doctors are trained to attack injuries and disease. Pharmaceutical companies develop and sell chemical band-aids to treat symptoms. In my view, both of these approaches to medical care are wrong. Instead of trying to fix my patients after they have serious problems, my approach is to work with them to promote health and wellness, to address the root causes of disease instead of masking symptoms.

I can’t bring the whole world to my medical clinic, but I started *Newport Natural Health Letter* so that I can share my health knowledge with everyone. My recommendations to you are based on a combination of my ongoing review of medical research and my clinical experience with patients making nutritional and lifestyle changes to live happier, healthier, and longer lives. I want to give you actionable insight so you’re able to make informed decisions about how to manage your health. I want to give you practical tools to make yourself and your family not just feel better but live well.

**Pillars of Health**

I offer you the tools to thrive in health and wellness. I call these tools the **Pillars of Health**. These are eight lifestyle choices that provide the foundation of good health, which include:

- Being active
- Managing stress
- Detoxifying your body and environment
- Sleeping long and well
- Eating nutritious, whole foods
- Drinking pure, filtered water
- Balancing your pH
- Taking targeted supplements

At first glance, making changes in so many areas may seem overwhelming. I’ve found that the secret to success when making these improvements is to start small and focus on one area at a time. So, today, go for a short walk and start being more active. You’ll feel better within a week with more exercise. Then, after you’ve changed your routine so you’re exercising more days than not, you can continue working on the other pillars, one by one, until your lifestyle overhaul has become your lifestyle.

**Being Active**

A vast body of research shows that movement is the closest science has come to finding the Fountain of Youth. Check out this list of exercise’s benefits:

- Burns calories
- Improves circulation
- Promotes detoxification
- Improves sleep, mood, and stress levels
- Strengthens the heart
- Reduces the risk of cancer and other ailments
- **Exercise counteracts the effects of aging**

Despite all that, too many people avoid exercising. As a result, experts estimate that sedentary lifestyles are responsible for about the same number of deaths each year as smoking.
But I’m not here to guilt trip you into training for a marathon. In fact, the news I have to share is quite the opposite.

**You Can Exercise Quickly**
A few years ago, HGH was in the headlines because athletes were injecting it to enhance performance. Levels of human growth hormone (HGH) diminish as we age. But HGH can also be produced by the body during resistance exercise or high-intensity interval training (HIIT). High-intensity interval training (HIIT) is based on a simple premise — alternating short, fast bursts of activity with slower paced movement to get fit quickly.

In one study, researchers compared high-intensity cycling (five one-minute “all out” bouts alternating with three minute recovery bouts, for 20 total minutes) with 45 minutes of non-stop cycling. The results showed that the high intensity session was just as effective as one long session in terms of improved fitness markers.

I’m thrilled with this research, because so many patients dismiss exercise suggestions with “I don’t have time.” Even with my full schedule of 12- to 14-hour days, I manage to squeeze in 20 minutes of high intensity jogging on my mini-trampoline nearly every morning, and I’m certain you can do it, too.

**You Can Exercise Steadily**
If you’re just starting to make exercise a part of your life, I have good news. Moderate exercise has the same benefits. I suggest you buy an inexpensive pedometer and begin a walking program. Build up to walking 10,000 steps each day. Meeting that goal not only provides many of the exercise benefits of more challenging workouts, but also helps otherwise inactive people get moving.

**Or You Can Just Stop Abusing Your Chair**
In separate studies, researchers in England and Australia reached similar conclusions: The more time spent sitting, the worse for your health. In one study, English scientists observed a nearly 150% increase in the risk of heart disease, a 112% increase in risk of developing diabetes, and close to a 50% increase in premature death for those individuals who spent the most time sitting — even if they exercised regularly! The Australian researchers, meanwhile, found that watching tv (a measure of sitting) for six hours a day shortened lives by nearly five whole years. Fortunately, you may be able to get those years back just by being more active, like going for a mini-walk during commercial breaks.

**Ways to Make Exercise Part of Your Routine**
**Make a schedule.** Set aside a regular time for an exercise session, and stick to it. Choose one 30-minute daily session or three 10-minute sessions, but the main thing to remember here is that this part of your daily schedule is set in stone.
Follow the leader. DVDs and online videos are a great way to try different kinds of exercise, like tai chi or belly dancing. I’ve seen patients who swore they would never exercise get hooked on various videos after they discovered how much fun they can be. You might take classes from a real, live expert at many community centers or even take a gym class at your community college. And if you want personal attention, most gyms offer sessions with a personal trainer.

Rotate workouts. Repetitive exercise routines make it easier to overwork one muscle, leading to injury. So, for example, you may walk one day, follow a tai chi video the next, take a ballroom-dancing lesson on the third day, and walk up and down several flights of stairs the day after that.

Bottom Line: Staying active has major pay-offs for your health and longevity. If you’ve been avoiding exercise, start slowly and be patient with your body.

Managing Stress

Few patients complain about being stressed out; instead, they have a laundry list of symptoms that appear unrelated on the surface: weight gain, carbohydrate cravings, irritability, fatigue, colds, insomnia, high blood pressure, and memory problems. But there is one thing that unites all these different symptoms — cortisol.

Your adrenal glands produce the hormone cortisol during stressful events. Cortisol prepares your body for fight or flight. For your earliest ancestors, cortisol was a life saver. But these days, the threats you face rarely involve running from a hungry saber-tooth tiger. If your emotions never slow down from metaphorical battle, the cortisol accumulates and erodes your health, impairing healing, raising blood sugar, and interfering with proper digestion.

Develop an Attitude of Gratitude

Instead of focusing on things going wrong, spend time thinking about the wonderful things in your life. Often, making the internal dialogue we have with ourselves a positive one can make all the difference. So look outside, the day is full of possibilities. Keep a journal recording the good things about each day, and you will notice an improvement in your mood.

Take a Deep Breath

Deep breathing is a fast, free way to minimize stress. But it’s important to do it correctly, by breathing from your abdomen — “belly breathing”.

The best way is to lie on the floor, on top of an exercise mat or towel. Let your back relax into the floor. If that’s uncomfortable, place a pillow under your knees. Keep your shoulders flat, as though
you’re standing up straight, and stretch your torso and neck into a comfortable position. Lie back so your chest is open and your back feels relaxed and comfortable.

In belly breathing, the abdomen expands, like a balloon being filled with air. (Put your hand on your tummy and try it right now!) Stretching the abdomen means the lungs have more space for oxygen. To exhale, simply contract the same abdominal muscles, forcing air out of the lungs.

Belly breathing helps calm the body and interrupts the cascade of cortisol before it can wreak havoc. Practice for a few minutes several times a day or whenever you feel overwhelmed.

**Don’t Hide from Your Feelings**
If you’re emotionally distraught, don’t overlook crying as a quick and easy remedy. Years of studies have proven that tears are a healthy antidote to anxiety. So when you feel overwhelmed, let the tears come. Better to release those emotions and move on rather than stifle them and prolong the misery. And, gentlemen, this one does apply to men as well as women.

**Live in the Moment**
In discussing stress with patients, I realized that some were anxious about situations they feared could happen, not current events. While researching the topic, I found that mindfulness meditation has repeatedly been proven helpful in easing stress. At its most basic level, mindfulness is simply the practice of sitting quietly and observing things that are happening at the moment (birds chirping, water flowing, and so on). Many patients tell me that they have found meditation a life-saver. Invest the time to check out the many websites that explain mindfulness meditation in greater detail.

**Bottom Line:** Chronic stress can undermine your health, so take steps to learn simple stress management techniques.

**Detoxifying Your Body and Environment**
As a practicing physician, I see patients suffering from auto-immune disorders and degenerative diseases that once were rare or found only in the very elderly. Environmental toxins are creating a toxic overload.

As a doctor, I know how difficult it is to detoxify and remove toxins from the body, particularly lead and mercury. Remember, there is no such thing as a safe level of lead, mercury, arsenic, or other heavy metals in the human body. Your body is designed to eliminate these types of toxins through sweating, urination, and bowel movements. Considering the current toxic overload, though, you should be doing everything in your power to help your body with this process.
**Sweat Therapy**
Consider using a Far Infrared Sauna to sweat away some of the compounds that are poisoning you. A regular sauna works, too. You can get similar results with exercise. Pace your favorite activity so that you break a sweat and maintain that level for several minutes. If you’re out of shape, don’t worry — just gradually work your way up to a sweat-producing level.

**Let Your Lymph Run Free**
Another overlooked portion of detoxification is engaging the lymph system. The lymphatic system consists of small channels that are designed specifically to remove waste products. You can stimulate the system through touch. Before bathing, use a natural bristle brush to gently stroke your dry skin. I suggest starting at your feet and brushing up toward your heart, then continue brushing the rest of your body. The whole process takes five to 20 minutes. Remember to be gentle, so your skin isn’t scratched or abraded.

**Dangerous Drugs**
As the number of chronic health problems grows, more people are mixing prescription drugs with over-the-counter medication in combinations that have never been tested for safety. In addition, drug interactions with food, beverages, and nutritional supplements could create additional complications. And nutrient depletions caused by drugs — such as cholesterol lowering statin drugs that deplete the body of coenzyme Q10 (CoQ10) — are a whole other concern.

What can you do to protect yourself from health issues like these? Be aware that every time you take a drug — whether it’s over-the-counter or prescribed — there is some risk involved. You can reduce that risk with these three suggestions.

1. **Talk about it:** Discuss prescription medications with your pharmacist. These highly trained professionals are happy to answer questions, talk about side effects, and provide you with detailed instructions about how to take drugs. In addition, fill all your prescriptions at the same pharmacy. Then your pharmacist will have all of your information available and be better able to help you avoid dangerous drug interactions.

2. **Take notes:** Keeping track of multiple drug instructions can get confusing. That’s why you should write down details from your doctor, nurse, or pharmacist. Keep a notebook with you for this purpose. The notebook is a good place to list everything you are currently taking: prescription, over the counter, or nutritional supplements. If you have a health emergency, that notebook could save your life. One of the biggest frustrations in emergency medicine is trying to figure out what drugs an individual is taking when that person is not able to answer questions.
3. **Be a pickier eater:** Many foods and alcoholic beverages have dangerous drug interactions. Alcohol stops some antibiotics from working well. Grapefruit can lead to a statin overdose, even if you eat grapefruit at a different time than you take the drugs. And here’s just a partial list of foods that interact badly with blood thinners: spinach, broccoli, kale, garlic, and ginger. The package insert that comes with your drugs should list the most common foods and supplements that don’t mix with your medication, but ask your pharmacist to give you an update whenever you refill your prescription.

**Clean Up the Cleaners...**
I think we can all agree that there’s nothing quite like a sparkling clean home. But if you keep the windows and doors shut year-round, product fumes can accumulate to dangerous levels. Chemical pollutants in the air inside homes can be up to 70 times higher than those outdoors, according to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). Since we spend most of our time indoors, we spend hours and hours in an environment loaded with these toxins.

Luckily, there’s plenty you can do to avoid chemical-laden cleaners. Here are three steps I recommend to my patients to help eliminate these dangerous toxins from their lives.

**Avoid any product labeled antibacterial.**
Antibacterial products can create indestructible superbugs, something no one wants. And studies show that hand sanitizers don’t work as well as soap and water. Triclosan, the active ingredient in many antibacterial products, has a profoundly negative effect on our immune system’s natural killer cells, our primary defense against virus and tumor cells.

Good old unscented soap and water has worked for centuries, and there’s no reason to change now. In fact, the phrase “if it’s not broken, don’t fix it” comes to mind! If you must use hand sanitizer, make sure the active ingredient is alcohol.

**Shop for cleaning products carefully.**
Manufacturers of conventional cleaning products usually provide little health information. If you want to know what ingredients a product contains, for example, you’re on your own. Most mainstream product labels neither include ingredients nor do they have to, thanks to trade-secret laws that protect these “recipes.”

Terms like “biodegradable” and “natural” are legally meaningless, so they can be used on products loaded with toxins. Also, don’t be fooled by terms like *free, clear, gentle,* and so on. I just discovered that a major manufacturer’s fragrance- and dye-free laundry detergent contains the cancer-causing liquid 1,4-dioxane.

Instead, concentrate on the ingredients. Most of the ingredients should be recognizable names — citrus or coconut extracts, for example — not what appear to be answers to a chemistry quiz. If you have questions, contact the manufacturer. Those with nothing to hide will give you straightforward answers.
Go homemade.
You can make safe cleaning products yourself. Using the recipes below is cheap and easy. You need some refillable spray bottles and a container for mixing, but you'll have the peace of mind that comes with not worrying about your home’s chemical contamination.

All-Purpose Cleaner and Disinfectant: Mix one part hydrogen peroxide and one part distilled white vinegar with a few drops of your favorite essential oil. Spray it on kitchen counters, bathroom vanities, and other surfaces. This solution kills 90 percent of the bacteria and spores it encounters.

Glass Cleaner: Mix one part distilled white vinegar with one part water and spray on glass. Old newspapers make excellent, lint-free substitutes for paper towels.

Toilet Bowl Cleaner: Pour one-half cup distilled white vinegar into the toilet. Add one-half cup baking soda. This mixture will bubble and foam for a minute or so. Scrub the toilet as usual, and flush.

Wood Cleaner: Mix one cup of mild, biodegradable, vegetable-based liquid soap with one-half cup linseed oil and a few drops of your favorite essential oil. This is a wonderful way to nourish wood, including old wooden floors.

All-Purpose Degreaser: In a large bucket, mix 3 to 4 cups of white vinegar with one cup of baking soda. Expect lots of foam. This is a superior degreaser for walls and woodwork; it leaves no residue and does not need to be rinsed off.

Fruit and Vegetable Cleaner: Fill a large bowl with cold, filtered water, 1/3 cup white vinegar, and two tablespoons sea salt. Let produce sit in the water for about 30 minutes, then rinse with cold, filtered water and prepare as usual.

...and the Kitchen
Why the kitchen? Because this is where many chemicals enter our bodies, primarily through the plastic used for food storage, chemicals in cookware, and toxins and chemicals in our water supply.

Avoiding BPA
- Don’t put your produce in little plastic bags. Bring paper lunch bags or BPA-free plastic bags from home.
- Canned goods often contain BPA. Specifically seek out products from food companies which line their cans to avoid this problem. Alternately, purchase food sold in glass jars or sealed paper.

Avoiding Cookware Chemicals
- Nonstick cookware releases chemicals — including suspected carcinogens PFOA (perfluorooctanoic acid) and PFOS (perfluorooctane sulfonate) — when these items are heated. Replace any nonstick cookware you own with safer choices, such as cast iron, anodized stainless steel, enamel, or glass.
- Don’t buy frozen foods. They are packaged in trays designed for heating in the microwave.
These trays may contain BPA or phthalates, a plasticizing chemical linked to genital deformities and other health issues. Freeze leftovers of your own healthy meals in glass or ceramic containers designed for reheating without damaging your health.

**Bottom Line:** Helping your body avoid toxic overload only requires some changes, but it can make a huge difference in your health.

**Sleeping Long and Well**

Deep, restful sleep gives our bodies a chance to renew, starting at the cellular level. When that process is interrupted, health issues are inevitable. In fact, researchers now know that insufficient sleep is even more harmful to our health than lack of exercise.

**Turn on the Dark**

Sleeping in a room with artificial light is one of the most common causes of poor sleep. Too much light leads to low production of melatonin. Melatonin production is highest between the hours of 10 p.m. and 2 a.m. But that only happens if you’re asleep in a dark room. If you don’t go to bed until 1 a.m., or nod off with the television on, getting eight hours of sleep is not going to make up for the fact that you’ve missed the prime melatonin-producing portion of the night. A high quality sleep mask or a good set of curtains may be all the special sleep equipment that you need.

**What are You Eating**

What you eat and drink can also lead to sleep problems. Many people are not aware of the caffeine content in foods like chocolate. Check ingredient and nutrition labels. If you must have caffeine to function, limit intake to just the morning. Caffeine’s effects on the body last for about eight hours, so a cup of coffee after lunch could create problems at bedtime.

**Drugs Keep You Going**

Medications could be another source of sleeplessness. If you’re on medication and having trouble sleeping, check online or with your physician to find out if insomnia is a possible drug side effect. Each individual reacts differently to medication, so even if you know other people who are taking the same prescription and sleeping well, the medication could still be a problem for you.

Alcohol is another culprit. The notion that having a drink in the evening encourages relaxation or sleep is totally misleading. One drink may soothe, but even that small amount can translate into trouble sleeping. In fact, a new clinical trial from Japan found that even a single drink of alcohol interrupts sleep in several ways, including interfering with the restorative functions that are so important to a fully functioning, healthy body. And those effects become more intense with increasing amounts of alcohol.
Learn Your New Bedtime
Research repeatedly shows that staying in bed when you can’t get to sleep is the wrong approach. Instead, after 15 minutes or so of lying awake, try getting up and doing something that’s not particularly exciting, such as reading, knitting, or working crossword puzzles. After 20 minutes or so, you should be drowsy. You’ll probably have to repeat the process for several nights until your body gets the message, but this method is a proven and effective insomnia remedy.

Mother’s Helper
Long before pharmaceutical companies started selling sleep aids, Mother Nature created her own. When a patient reports sleep problems connected to a “racing mind” or a similar stress-related issue, combination herbal products are often a good bet for resolving the situation. Some of my favorite ingredients include: valerian, hops, lemon balm, chamomile, passionflower, and lavender. These are sometimes combined with an amino acid, such as 5-HTP, or a neurotransmitter, like GABA, to amplify their effect.

The best way to find the right product for you is to choose one and take it as directed. If, after a few days, you’re still having sleep problems, try a different product. I have found a few that work well for me, including melatonin, 5-HTP, and valerian extract. I alternate them through the week to avoid building up a tolerance to any one herb.

Bottom Line: Your body repairs itself while you sleep, so getting lots of rest is essential for good health. If you’re having sleep problems, herbal remedies and supplemental melatonin can help, as can making a few changes in your behavior.

Eating Nutritious, Whole Foods
To function, the human body needs the nutrients in real, live food. When I say “live food,” I simply mean unprocessed, unrefined food, as close to its natural state as possible. Processing and refining removes important nutrients and beneficial substances, such as fiber, vitamins, and minerals.

Your digestive system breaks down what you eat and delivers the nutrients via the bloodstream to cells throughout your body. Carbohydrates, fats, and proteins — known as macronutrients — are key nutrients we obtain from food, along with fiber, water, vitamins, and minerals.

Balance the Big Three Nutrients
Here are the target numbers for each of the three macronutrient categories.

- **Carbohydrates** (carbs) are sugars and starches found in plant-based foods like vegetables, pasta, rice, and beans. Carbs are the body’s primary fuel source. But some are healthier than others. Favorable (complex) carbs, i.e. vegetables and fruits, digest slowly, so you feel full
longer. Complex carbs are necessary for good health. **Carbohydrates should equal 50 to 60 percent of your total daily calories**, approximately 300 grams each day.

- **Fats**, like carbohydrates, have unfairly acquired a bad reputation. Fats provide energy, and some fats are better for us than others. Our bodies cannot produce essential fatty acids (EFAs), so we must obtain them from food or supplements containing omega-3s and omega-6s. **Fat should equal 20 to 35 percent of your total daily calories**, or 45-80 grams. I recommend omega-3 supplements. The Standard American Diet of processed food tends to contain far too many omega-6 fats and not nearly enough omega-3 fats.

- **Protein** is an essential nutrient found in every cell of the body. It is one of the key building blocks of muscles, skin, cartilage, bones, and blood, and produces chemicals your body needs. There are excellent non-meat protein sources, such as beans, whole grains, and nuts. These foods provide vitamins, minerals, and much-needed fiber, too, making them outstanding meat alternatives. **Protein should equal 10 to 15 percent of your total daily calories**. Adult men over the age of 25 should consume about 63 grams, and women should aim for 50 grams. Most Americans consume about 100 grams of protein daily, far more than they need.

Clearly, each of the macronutrients is vitally important for our health. This is why I do not recommend excluding any one of these categories in diets, such as the no or low-carb approaches often touted for weight loss.

Favorable carbs, especially vegetables, are the food I typically find patients are eating in too limited quantity. People who eat the most vegetables, 7 to 10 servings daily, enjoy the following benefits:

- Longer life
- Reduced risk of heart disease
- Fewer negative moods
- Reduced risk of cancer
- Reduced risk of obesity
- Lower blood pressure
- Lower LDL cholesterol

**How to Get More Veggies in Your Meals**

1. **Go local.** For best flavor, buy local, seasonal veggies. Try shopping at a local farmer’s market, where you should be able to find good prices on just-picked produce. And whenever possible, choose organic vegetables, especially potatoes, peppers, and leafy greens (the types of supermarket produce most likely to be loaded with dangerous pesticides).

2. **Buy smart.** Many patients tell me they would like to eat more veggies, but produce goes bad too quickly. Here’s a simple solution: Buy root vegetables, such as carrots, beets, turnips, potatoes, and the like. Root veggies will last for months in a cool, dark place.

3. **Cook simply.** How? By roasting. All you need are vegetables, extra virgin olive oil, garlic, and a few fresh or dried herbs. My patient Arthur, who was not skilled in the kitchen, found that roasting suited him perfectly. “I pop a pan of little potatoes and whatever other ‘roastables’ are in the fridge — into the oven.
Then I set the timer so I know when to stir them up, and before I know it, they’re done,” he explained. “And the best part is, they taste great!”

4. **Make extra.** If you don’t like vegetables because they take extra time to prepare, I suggest doubling recipes and saving the leftovers so you don’t have to reinvent the wheel every day. Slow cookers provide another way to save time because you don’t have to be there while the cooking happens. If you make an 8-serving recipe, put half in the fridge, half in the freezer, and you can eat well for days.

5. **Mix it up.** Here’s a sneaky way to serve more veggies. Make a pot of vegetable soup, and then purée it in the food processor with favorite seasonings. When my children were small, I found this was the best way to get them to eat veggies. Since then, I’ve suggested the same method to countless patients and heard tons of positive feedback. The flavors of puréed vegetables blend together beautifully, creating a nutritious, delicious way to begin a meal.

6. **Hide it.** Sneak veggies into favorite dishes, such as casseroles, burgers, or meat loaf. Simply grate a few different veggies — carrots, zucchini, and turnips, for example — or finely chop broccoli or cauliflower florets, and add them to your favorite dishes. The vegetable flavor blends into the other ingredients, and you still get the health benefits.

7. **Just juice it.** Collard greens, kale, mustard greens, rutabaga, peppers, carrots, beets, ginger, avocados, and cabbage are some of the top juicing choices. With juicing you can skip cooking and take advantage of the nutrients not compromised by heat. Furthermore, with the indigestible fiber removed, the nutrients are much more bioavailable, so your body actually gets more nutrition from juice than from the same vegetables if they were cooked. Another benefit: Juicing only non-starchy vegetables prevents blood sugar and insulin spikes.

8. **Make it fun.** Finally, here’s a trick I learned from a patient I’ll call Katie. Katie had been very resistant to improving her diet before her diagnosis of pre-diabetes, but now she was motivated. Katie decided to make the kitchen more fun. She installed a radio in one corner and made meal preparation an event she and her husband Joe could share. “We listen to the news while we wash and cut the veggies, or we turn on a music channel and have a glass of wine while we’re cooking,” she explained. “It’s fun, almost like a little party! Now instead of dreading the ‘What are we having for dinner’ question, I look forward to evenings when we figure that out.”

**Bottom Line:** Eating real food — and avoiding processed and fast foods — are among the most health-enhancing changes you can make.

**Drinking Pure, Filtered Water**

We need water to digest food and remove waste through the kidneys and skin. Water provides cushioning and lubrication for our joints, keeps our skin cells plump, assists delivery of nutrients via the bloodstream, and protects the intestinal tract lining from damage by enzymes that digest food. Water plays a role in breathing, body temperature management, brain functions, and a long list of other processes. In short, we need water — and plenty of it — to maintain good health.
**Water Is Thinner Than Blood**

Drinking plenty of water can significantly reduce the risk of a healthy individual having a fatal heart attack, according to a study of more than 20,000 men and women. Researchers found that drinking five or more glasses of plain water daily is as important as a nutritious diet, regular exercise, and not smoking when it comes to preventing a fatal heart attack. Dehydration increases blood’s “stickiness,” and raises levels of several heart-disease risk factors. So simply staying hydrated protects the heart by making it easier to do its job.

**Don’t Risk Dehydration**

Often, patients tell me they use thirst as a guide to drinking water. Thirst is a sign of dangerous dehydration. First of all, many people misinterpret thirst as hunger, so, instead of water, they reach for a snack. In addition, our sense of thirst diminishes as we age, so thirst is not a very good indicator of the need for water.

Conventional wisdom says that we should drink eight glasses of water daily. I prefer to tell patients that they should be drinking half an ounce of water for every pound they weigh. In other words, if you weigh 160 pounds, half of that is 80 — the number of ounces of water you should be drinking. Anything less short-changes your entire body of a vitally important nutrient.

**Water, Water Everywhere**

I’ve spoken to many people who insist their local water is undrinkable, either due to odor, bad taste, cloudiness, or other factors, even though their city water officials claim it’s fine. Part of the problem could be that so much municipal water is treated with chlorine and fluoride. Both are highly toxic themselves, especially in large quantities. So if you’re considering investing in a water filter, be sure to get one that removes chlorine and fluoride.

Even if your city’s water seems clean, don’t forget that plumbing plays a role here, too. Older homes may have lead pipes that leach lead into water, and lead poisoning is a very real possibility. Most homes built since the mid-1980s have plastic, galvanized metal, or copper pipes. While these won’t leach lead, they can still be dangerous to your health. Galvanized metal pipes can contaminate water with cadmium, an extremely toxic metal. Health consequences from the plastic pipes are under debate, but water passed through them tastes like plastic. Copper has been linked to Alzheimer’s disease. So, you should not assume that water traveling through new plumbing is free of unsafe substances.

**What’s Wrong with Bottled Water?**

As for bottled water, I am concerned about the plastic containers. Chemicals from the plastic can leach into water, as a study from the Harvard School of Public Health demonstrated. For one week, study participants drank water from standard plastic (polycarbonate) bottles. At the end
of the week, scientists found a shocking two-thirds increase in the concentration of a chemical known as bisphenol A (BPA) in the participants’ urine.

BPA has been linked to heart disease and diabetes, and it also increases levels of circulating estrogen in the body. That may not sound dangerous, but high levels of estrogen have been linked to heart disease, cancer, and diabetes.

So where do you get fresh, clean water? I highly recommend a home water filter so you can use pure water for cooking and drinking, as well as washing fruits and veggies. Need to take water with you? Purchase a reusable glass or stainless steel water bottle.

Bottom Line: There is no substitute for fresh, pure water when it comes to maintaining good, overall health.

Balancing Your pH

Acidosis is a condition caused by an acid-alkaline imbalance in the body. Recent studies show that chronic, low-grade acidosis has an impact on everything from decreased bone and muscle mass to the formation of kidney stones in adults. Other research indicates that an acid imbalance may be linked to heart disease and diabetes.

Are You on an Acid Trip?

Acidosis is unhealthy because it creates an imbalance in the body’s pH levels. Ideally, the body’s pH should be slightly alkaline, in the range of 7.2 to 7.4. If measurements show a lower pH, that means you are in a state of acidosis.

Acidosis can have a significant impact on your health, especially the body’s mineral stores. If the pH level drops below 7.2 — even by a very small amount — the body goes to work neutralizing the extra acid. To do that, the body needs alkaline minerals, like calcium, manganese, magnesium, iron, and potassium. The easiest way for the body to access these minerals is by taking them from food or supplements we consume. But if it needs more alkaline, it will steal minerals from the bones or the body’s tissues.

Balancing Act

Needless to say, acid-forming foods are not necessarily “bad.” Ideally, we should be eating both acid and alkaline foods. However, intake needs to be balanced. Instead, the Standard American Diet (SAD) is loaded with foods that create acidity, including sugar, salt, coffee, animal products, alcohol, and processed and fast foods. Meanwhile, on the alkaline side, we have vegetables and most fruit — the sort of nutritious, whole foods that most people promise to start eating more of tomorrow — but seldom do.
Eating Low on the Acid Scale
Correcting an acid imbalance is not difficult, and it doesn’t take a long time. It won’t repair existing bone damage or kidney stones, but it will prevent them from getting worse. The first thing to do is determine your own pH levels with a simple test. Use pH test strips (available at most pharmacies or medical supply companies). Follow the directions on the product to check the second urine of the day.

If the test shows excess acid (the result is lower than 7.2), make a few simple dietary changes. Eliminate or cut back on foods that promote acidity and increase your intake of fruits and vegetables. Almost all fruits and vegetables are alkalizing. Surprisingly, in spite of their citric acid content, most citrus fruits have an alkalinizing effect when consumed, so enjoy lemons and related fruits without worrying about contributing to acid levels.

If you’re not getting enough vegetables in your diet, consider using one of the greens supplements on the market today. These can be an effective solution, especially for people who are just not able to balance their intake of acid-producing food for one reason or another.

A Quick Fix
You may be unhappy about having to give up some of your favorite foods and beverages. But the change is temporary! After a few days, retest urine with pH test strips daily to check your pH level. When it reaches a normal range, you can slowly begin eating more protein and flour-based foods, while making sure you’re balancing them with fruits and veggies. Do retest pH levels now and then, and adjust your diet as necessary to maintain a healthy pH.

If you’re eating from the list of acidic foods, round out the meal with something from the alkaline side. I recommend that you eat a salad first. Since we tend to focus on a meal’s main course, salad is often an afterthought. Reverse the process and have a stellar salad first.

Acid Producing Foods

- Meat, including seafood
- Eggs
- Dairy products
- Foods high in sugar or salt
- Flour-based foods like pasta, bread, etc.
- Processed and fast foods
- Coffee and sodas
- Alcohol
- Grains
- Cranberries
- Tomatoes
- Blueberries
- Oranges

Bottom Line: Correcting acidosis can set the stage for better health by eliminating an imbalance that is largely ignored by mainstream medicine.
Taking Targeted Supplements

As a practicing physician, my patients frequently ask about dietary supplements. Here are the top two questions:

*Do I need to take vitamins?*

*Which vitamins should I take?*

**Do You Need to Take Vitamins?**

Everyone needs to take vitamins, even those who eat carefully. Studies show that basic nutrients, such as those in a simple multivitamin, can improve everything from markers of aging and heart disease to memory and mood. Furthermore, I’ve seen patients reverse diabetes, high blood pressure, and a number of other ailments by taking the right combination of vitamins. Several of my patients have even been able to cancel surgery after taking appropriate supplements.

Even if you eat a healthy diet, you can’t get all the nutrients you need. Over-farming depletes minerals and lowers important nutrient levels in many foods. In addition, several nutrients are lost to pesticides and herbicides, and are reduced further during transportation, storage, and cooking. As a result, it’s next to impossible to obtain the recommended amounts of many key nutrients from food alone.

**Which Vitamins Should You Take?**

Unfortunately, there is no simple answer to this question because individual differences play a huge role here. Age, gender, ethnicity, existing health conditions and medication, occupation, medical history, family history, activity level, food preferences, stress levels, sleep patterns, exposures to pollution and toxins, and many other factors play a role in answering this question.

That said, here is my list of the top 8 supplements that I believe most people should be taking. I recommend purchasing products from an established company, rather than a generic, cut-rate brand.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Supplement</th>
<th>Daily Dose</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Omega-3 essential fatty acids (EFAs)</td>
<td>2,000-3,000 mg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vitamin D3</td>
<td>1,500 IU</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coenzyme Q10 (CoQ10)</td>
<td>100-200 mg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Melatonin</td>
<td>3-5 mg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curcumin</td>
<td>500-1,500 mg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Probiotics</td>
<td>Minimum 10 billion live organisms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natural Vitamin E</td>
<td>400 IU</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vitamin C</td>
<td>1,000 mg</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Omega-3s**

Omega-3s provide protection against a wide range of conditions involving our cardiovascular, emotional, immune, and neurological systems, including:
Vitamin D3

Vitamin D is produced in your body through exposure to sunshine. Most people are deficient in vitamin D because they don’t spend enough time in the sun, wear sunscreen when they spend large amounts of time outdoors, and lose the ability to manufacture vitamin D as they age. Deficiencies of vitamin D have been linked to the following:

- Certain types of cancer
- Heart disease
- Type 2 diabetes
- Prediabetes
- Multiple sclerosis
- Insulin resistance (pre-diabetes)
- Asthma and allergies
- Multiple sclerosis
- Mood disorders, including depression and bipolar disorder
- Blood clots
- Memory and attention span issues

Coenzyme Q10 (CoQ10)

CoQ10 is a basic requirement for effective mitochondrial function. Mitochondria are the energy-producing “power plants” in every cell in your body. Other benefits of CoQ10 include:

- Boosts the immune system
- Fights periodontal (gum) disease
- Reduces histamine production, benefitting those with allergies, asthma, and lung difficulties
- Increases circulation
- Provides oxygen to tissues throughout the body
- Counteracts damage due to aging
- Assists in the treatment and prevention of heart disease
- May ease symptoms of Alzheimer’s, Parkinson’s, and Huntington’s diseases, as well as amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS)
- Helps with weight management, diabetes, multiple sclerosis, and high blood pressure
- Depression
- Tuberculosis
- Dementia
- Obesity and weight difficulties

Melatonin

Melatonin is essential for receiving all of the mental and physical benefits of healing sleep. It also has important effects on emotional regulation. Other benefits include:
Curcumin
I have never been as impressed with the healing abilities of any substance as I am by curcumin, which has been shown to work as an:

• Antioxidant
• Anti-inflammatory, without the danger of traditional NSAIDS like acetaminophen
• Anti-bacterial infection fighter
• Anti-tumor agent, in test tubes and real life
• Anti-beta amyloid substance, helping protect the brain from the plaque involved in Alzheimer’s
• Pain reliever

Probiotics
Probiotics are a safe, natural way to boost immunity. Here are just a few of the good things we get from probiotics:

• Healthy digestion and elimination
• Help with weight management
• Lower LDL (bad) cholesterol
• Strong immune system
• Fewer allergies
• Better mood and brain functions
• Increased longevity
• Reduced likelihood of cancer

Vitamins E & C
These two vitamins are powerful antioxidants. Antioxidants fight off free radicals, unstable molecules or groups of molecules that are missing an electron. Free radicals try to attach to other cells, damaging or destroying them in the process. As soon as a free radical steals a molecule to stabilize itself, the victimized molecule is itself transformed into a free radical, looking to steal a stabilizing molecule, in an endless cycle of damage which vitamins E and C can help fight off.

In addition, I suggest that you take a comprehensive daily multivitamin. It will take about 4-6 weeks to see the results, so start taking supplements today.

Bottom line: Nutritional supplements are the way you can control and ensure that your body has the appropriate nutrition to deal with our toxic environment, and your body loses the ability to manufacture certain substances as it ages.

This is my complete program for controlling and maintaining your own health. Your body is under your control, and this is the plan that will allow you to enjoy it now and for many years into the future.
LEIGH ERIN CONNEALY, M.D.

Dr. Connealy graduated from the University of Texas School of Public Health and the University of Health Sciences Chicago Medical School. She then completed her postgraduate training at the Harbor/UCLA Medical Center in Los Angeles, California.

A genuine health leader, Dr. Connealy has been published in the Journal of the American Nutraceutical Association (JANA), as well as in numerous health articles and magazines. She’s also a frequent guest on TV and radio programs and a guest speaker for professional organizations all over the country.

During the early days in her medical practice, Dr. Connealy realized that there were serious flaws with the mainstream approach to health care. Time and time again she saw patients get sicker and sicker as medications were prescribed and true healing was seldom realized.

It wasn’t long before she understood that this was a result of health practitioners focusing on treating trauma and disease, rather than understanding the root causes of those conditions. Dr. Connealy made it her mission to find a better, smarter way to heal.

She began to explore homeopathic, nutritional, and lifestyle approaches to health, while staying plugged-in to the latest developments in disease, chronic illness, and cancer treatments.

As her “best of both worlds” methods began to make waves, Dr. Connealy gained a reputation of being a doctor who took the time to get to the root of her patients’ problems, and people began flocking to her practice.

Today, almost 20 years later, Dr. Connealy is the Medical Director of the Center for New Medicine in Orange County, California and the author of the Newport Natural Health Letter. Dr. Connealy’s e-newsletter and website feature the same outlook she provides to the patients in her clinic — a combination of honest information, unique solutions, simple marching orders, and tough love. You’ll find that the advice Dr. Connealy has to share is thorough, effective, and supported by medical science — yet it’s easy to understand and act upon.