Health Breakthroughs

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Hoodia:

Does It Live Up to the Hype?

Debate Rages Over Popular Bone/Joint Supplement

Can Chocolate
Help You
Lose Weight?

How to Keep Energy Up During Autumn



Reasons Why Men Aren't Having Good Sex p. 26

The Glucosamine/ Chondroitin Controversy: What They're NOT Telling You



Despite inaccurate reporting from the mainstream media, large study exposes real truth about nutrient combination for those with joint health issues.

by Dr. Peter Siroka, DPM Medical Advisor

uring the recent controversy over Glucosamine and Chondroitin, the truly legitimate headlines were the ones you didn't see. While the media would have been more truthful running headlines such as: "Authoritative Study Finds Celebrex a Failure for Arthritis Pain," reporters instead chose to side with the pharmaceutical giants and inaccurately suggested that Glucosamine and Chondroitin did not work for people with arthritis.

But if you take the time to really understand how the GAIT study (Glucosamine-Chondroitin Arthritis Intervention Trial) was conducted—and what it found—you would realize that the opposite is true. In fact, after careful analysis, the study actually reveals that a combination of Glucosamine and Chondroitin is perhaps more impressive than previously thought, and may be an effective first option for those with problematic bones and joints.

Strong Statements Baseless?

Conducted at 16 U.S. rheumatology treatment centers and funded by the National Institutes of Health, the GAIT study was designed as a scientific evaluation of the safety and efficacy of Glucosamine, Chondroitin or a combination of both, versus a placebo or the prescription medication Celebrex in 1,258 people (Clegg et al, 2006). After months of study, the findings were published in the February, 2006 issue of *The New England Journal of Medicine*.

The GAIT study was published along with an editorial expressing doubt about the use of supplements as a viable option for people with poor joint health. "On the basis of the results from GAIT," the journal opined, "it seems prudent to tell our patients neither glucosamine hydrochloride nor chondroitin sulfate has been shown to be more efficacious than placebo for the treatment of

knee pain." While that may seem a strong and conclusive statement against the supplements, one has to wonder if the editors of the journal considered the data carefully—or if the members of the mainstream media who reported on the study in actuality read it at all. So, here's what they missed...and what they neglected to tell you.

"Set Up to Fail"

The first thing to notice about the GAIT study is that it only concerns knee pain. Arthritis typically causes discomfort either directly on the front or in the back of the knee, but bursitis and Baker's cyst (two non-arthritic conditions) can also cause problems in the same locations. Supplements like Glucosamine and Chondroitin are not typically recommended for bursitis or Baker's cyst because these nutrients seem to operate on mechanisms in the body not associated with these two types of problems.

But while the researchers in charge of the GAIT study excluded many volunteers with a variety of other health problems from participating in the study, they did not

Dr. Peter Siroka, DPM, F.A.C.F.S., is a Fellow of the American College of Foot Surgery and a board-



certified Diplomate of the American Board of Podiatric Surgery. Licensed in both New York and Connecticut, Dr. Siroka currently runs private practices in Stamford, CT and Maspeth, NY. He is also a Podiatric/Surgical staff member at three medical centers. Dr. Siroka received his

medical degree from the New York College of Podiatric Medicine. He specializes in corrective surgery, diabetic footcare, enhancing athletic performance, body biomechanics and other areas of bone/joint health.

RELIGHT YOUR FIRE THIS FALL



RESEARCHERS HIGHLIGHT NATURAL WAYS TO REV-UP YOUR VITALITY AND REFRESH BODY AND MIND

By Diane Tishkoff, Copy Editor

It may mean leaves turning colors, but the end of summer also can make you feel drained, like a wading-pool with a slow leak. All those sunburns, sandy bathing-suit bottoms and heat exhaustion have taken their toll.

Futhermore, no matter how much you promised yourself you'd stop to smell some roses or relax this past summer, triple-digit temperatures and days of frazzled, frenzied sprints probably wore you down and kept you from enjoying the energized feelings that were supposed to come with the fun fall season.

Well, it's the perfect time to bust a new move. Shake free from that sluggish, dormant state! Get up and out of the hammock—embrace the urge to do things and go places. If you've burned yourself out with non-stop stress and frantic fretting so far, make it your goal—ASAP—to avoid mental pressure, anxiety, tension and physical exhaustion before the leaves start to change. To help you on your own revitalization journey, here are some simple, effective ways to acquire a youthful va-va-voom feeling and emerge rejuvenated.

Plan Ahead...With a Twist

Check that your upcoming plans are realistic and reasonable, as well as time-manageable and—here's the twist—pleasurable. Are there annual rituals or events (tiring transcontinental travel, football tailgating parties...) that you just dread spearheading,

WITH ENERGY TO BURN

or things that cut into your precious free time? Consider opting out this year. It's not popular to say no, but it is possible. Instead, make some plans for *you*, whether it's trying out that chic spa that's the talk of the town or visiting a new art exhibit in the neighborhood.

Pencil-in Some "Me Time"

Speaking of you, try to include an hour or two where you know you can just relax and prepare yourself mentally and physically for the next task. Try a 15-minute walk outside. Nature's "natural lighting" (especially during daylight saving time) is an automatic, easy pick-me-up. Better yet, why not hike a new trail or take a rambling bike ride with no set destination? See where you end up—and watch your energy levels soar as a result of your spontaneity. Or grab a buddy, partner or pet and turn "me time" it into memorable "we" time. But make it on *your* terms.

Drinking Without the Dip

Keeping your body hydrated is one of the most important fatigue-fighters in your arsenal. Make sure that you're getting the recommended eight-to-ten full glasses of pure, clean water each day. As tempting as it may be to stop at the cantina for a *cerveza* or frozen margarita after work or make iced-frappuccino trips to your local coffeehouse, those may not be the wisest choices.

Alcohol, sugar-laden beverages and the caffeine in coffee can zap you of zest over the long haul. That initial jolt may pep you up, but eventually your energy will drop lower than before you downed that cup o' Joe or designer "energy drink" (Yoshioka et al, 2001).

To avoid energy level spikes and dips, you may want to find healthier forms of caffeine. Green Tea makes a terrific choice to stay alert without the jitters or the crash (Geleijnse et al, 2002). Green Tea extract in supplement form is even better, since taking a capsule is a lot easier than drinking cup after cup of tea.

Moreover, in order to get the amount of nutrients from Green Tea to feel its protective antioxidant benefits, you'd need to drink 40 cups each day—but your caffeine overload limit would have been exceeded after just a single cup (Henning et al, 2004).

Nutrition Matters

First, be certain to get enough sleep to reboot your brain. Next, ensure that your body is fed and getting the proper nutrients, especially during anxiety-filled times or workday stress. Frequent "mini-meals" are ideal—but this means dividing the typical three meals a day into six smaller segments to be eaten every three hours. Choose iron-rich, energy-filled, nutrient-dense foods, plus fresh fruit and vegetables. Lean protein supplies your muscles with the amino-acids needed to keep you ready for action (Jacobson et al, 1993). When you eat carbs, try whole-grain varieties that digest slowly, packed with essential B-Vitamins like Riboflavin, Thiamin and the key amino-acid Methionine, to rev up body and mind.



Spark Up with Supplements

Speaking of vitamins and nutrients, consider dietary supplements as your convenient, healthy allies for peak perkiness. Several vitamins, minerals, enzymes and natural herbal extracts can help ward off mental and

3 Nutrients to Combat Burn-Out

Coenzyme Q10 (CoQ10) is particularly abundant in energy-demanding cells, such as those in the heart. Because the body's production of CoQ10 slows with age, some doctors routinely recommend supplementation for those over 50. Today, many adults take this nutrient to help enhance overall vitality, provide the spark that generates energy on the cellular level and ensure proper muscle functioning (wholehealthMD.com, 2004).

Chlorella is a natural, nutrient-dense "superfood" derived from blue-green sea algae that provides more than 20 vitamins, including an abundance of naturallyoccurring Beta Carotene and Vitamin B-12 as well as 18 amino acids and all of the Essential Fatty Acids. Chlorella is one of the richest natural sources of chlorophyll, offering much more chlorophyll than spirulina and wheatarass. Chlorella is also particularly rich in lysine and a variety of minerals like iron, iodine and zinc (Jordan, 2002).

Rhodiola Rosea is an herb that helps reduce the symptoms of stress-related fatigue and improves short-term memory (Brown, Gerbarg & Ramazanov, 2002). A double-blind study of 56 healthy physicians on night duty found that—after using Rhodiola Rosea daily—these subjects all displayed improved speed of audiovisual perception, calculation and concentration (Kelly, 2001). In another study of 128 patients aged 17-55 with signs of asthenia (fatigue, decline in work capability and poor sleep patterns), Rhodiola Rosea reduced symptoms in 64% of the cases (Ganzera, Yayla & Khan, 2001).



physical exhaustion-particularly if you work out frequently or have a taxing job that pushes your body and brain to the limit (Suzuki & Itokawa, 1996).

The connection between Vitamin B deficiencies and fatigue is well-founded. British scientists at the Institute of Health and Sports Sciences at King's College School of Medicine in London completed studies suggesting that reduced levels of B-Vitamins are linked to chronic fatigue (Heap, Peters & Wessely, 1999). Researchers conducting animal studies at the University Institute of Pharmaceutical Sciences in India demonstrated several benefits to using Green Tea extract in fighting fatigue (Singal et al, 2005). For additional energy-amplifying nutrients, check out the box on this page ("3 Nutrients to Combat Burn-Out").

Whatever the season, everyday life doesn't have to be a mental and physical drain. There are simple, natural ways to keep you from feeling weary.

Hopefully, following some of these easy, healthy suggestions can help you find your hidden stores of vitality, vim and vigor...and help turn the many seasonal stressors into an invigorating and brisk autumn breeze.

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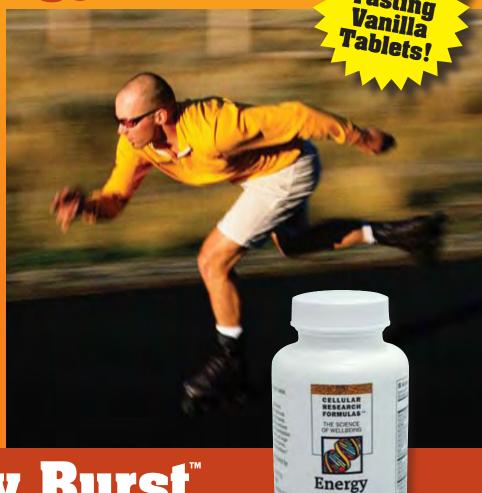
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Healthy WOMEN



Report: Women Still Neglect Heart Risks

> Australian research team reveals astonishing news about nutrient that impacts arterial elasticity.

by Dr. Koren Barrett, N.D. Medical Advisor

If you see a heart attack portrayed on television or in a movie, you can almost bet that the actor is a man. Similarly, if you see an advertisement for a drug to prevent cardiovascular disease, more than likely the person in the picture also will be male. But if you were an actual ER physician treating a heart attack victim in real life, chances are the person wheeled in on the gurney would be a woman.

And if the media seems to be missing the sad, stark reality—that women remain more at risk for heart attack and stroke than ever before—you better believe that most women are not aware of the fact either. In a recent survey of 1,008 women conducted by the American Heart Association, only 55% knew that heart disease is the number-one killer of U.S. women over the age of 25 (Mosca et al, 2006). Even worse, a study published in the *Journal of the American College of Cardiology* reported that the 9.1 million American women who have heart disease or had a stroke do not get the same care, attention or treatment as men do (Lerman & Sopko, 2006).

While these facts may seem daunting, the good news is that you can take steps right now to enhance your heart health. Perhaps the first is becoming active and losing as much excess weight as possible. "Obese, sedentary women have 9.4 times the risk of coronary heart disease compared to lean, active women," says Dr. Frank Hu, an associate professor of nutrition and epidemiology at Harvard School of Public Health (Fox, 2006). You also can make certain lifestyle and dietary changes—including the addition of supplemental nutrients—to support a healthy cardiovascular system.

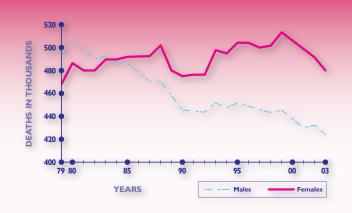
Helps Arteries Stay Elastic

Regular consumption of the high-quality Essential Fatty Acids (EFAs) found in Flaxseed Oil seems to be a viable option for both female and male heart health. Animal, clinical and epidemiological studies suggest that adding Flaxseed Oil to your diet may help arteries stay elastic, which is an important factor in a healthy cardiovascular system (Kruger & Horrobin, 1997; Cappuccio et al, 2000).

The elasticity or compliance of the arterial system is an important index of circulatory function. As compliance decreases, cardiovascular risk increases. Conversely, increasing the compliance of arteries reduces the risk of adverse events (Hall et al, 1993).

Beginning in the 90s, medical scientists at Australia's prestigious Baker Research Institute clinically tested the idea that increasing dietary EFAs could make arteries more flexible. The team focused their research efforts on Alpha-Linolenic Acid (ALA), an Essential Fatty Acid particularly concentrated in Flaxseed Oil.





After matching levels in 1984, the number of female deaths from cardiovascular disease has since far exceeded those for males.

Source: CDC/NCHS, Preliminary underlying mortality for 2003

The physicians compared a low-fat diet featuring this vegetarian oil (supplementing participants with 20 grams daily) against both a typical metropolitan diet high in saturated fat as well as a different low-fat eating plan featuring Oleic Acid, the fatty acid in sunflower oil. Changes in the subjects' blood-lipids (fats) were measured before and after each volunteer consumed the test diets.

Increases Flexibility by 83%

Oddly enough, the scientists encountered a rather curious challenge during the study. One of the test participants eating the Flaxseed Oil diet became so enthusiastic about how much better she was feeling that the scientists did not know how to interpret her vastly-improved triglyceride and cholesterol levels. She lost so much weight that the research team could



Koren Barrett, N.D. earned her medical degree in naturopathy at the National College of Naturopathic Medicine in Portland, Oregon. Dr. Barrett finished residency at NCNM Natural Health Center where she was extensively trained in

women's medicine, with advanced education in bio-identical hormone replacement therapy and natural gynecology. Barrett, a DAN (Defeat Autism Now) doctor, is a licensed naturopathic practitioner in Irvine, California, specializing in Family Medicine. Dr. Barrett is a member of the American Association of Naturopathic Physicians and The California Association of Naturopathic Doctors.

Omega-3s May Help Body Fat Content

New research suggests that Omega-3 Essential Fatty Acids (EFAs) may soon become a required part of any weight-loss program. Because these nutrients help keep cells healthy, they may play a key role in cellular energy production—especially for the energy-dependent cells in your heart.

Recently, scientists discovered a unique property of Omega-3s: They may inhibit the production of the enzyme synthase, which plays a role in the storage of calories as body fat. In addition, Omega-3 may promote the process known as "fuel partitioning," allowing the body to store carbohydrates in the form of glycogen rather than as hard-to-lose body fat.

Fuel-partitioning works synergistically with exercise to enhance weight loss. By helping you access ready-energy glycogen, Omega-3 EFAs ensure that the body has available energy any time, night or day, for vigorous physical activity.



not determine whether her healthier circulation was due to the calorie-restricted diet or the Flaxseed Oil itself...or both.

For the rest of the study participants, a precise interpretation of the results proved far easier. Adding Flaxseed Oil in to the diet for just four weeks increased arterial flexibility by an astonishing 83%.

The researchers estimated that this arterial compliance increase made arteries up to 43% less likely to be impacted by a clot and further intensified circulation further to surprisingly high healthy levels (Nestel et al, 1997).

Better Than Animals & Other Plants

It would seem logical that seeking plant sources of ALA would be a wise course of action, since animal sources (such as red meat, butter and cream) are not only high in fat but may also contain hormones and preservatives that could counteract any benefit from the nutrient. Plus, with recent news about polluted fish with a high mercury content, there could be something fishy—in addition to the taste and smell—about fish oil.

Fish oil is a good source of Essential Fatty Acids, but many people object to its peculiar odor and flavor as well as how large doses of fish oil can cause nausea, diarrhea, belching and malodorous breath with a persistent aftertaste.

Unfortunately, two other common non-fish sources of ALA—mayonnaise and salad dressings—feature canola or soybean oils that are refined, bleached and

deodorized by a harsh chemical process containing solvents that are commonly found in gasoline. These over-refined, non-organic oils also can contain carcinogenic herbicides, insecticides and fungicides.

In contrast, consuming a dietary supplement that features natural Flaxseed Oil—which possesses none of these drawbacks—may be a better choice.

If you can find a formula that contains this heart-friendly nutrient in liquid soft-gel form, which keeps the oils in their natural, easily absorbed state, you may be even better off.

By combining dietary supplementation with sufficient exercise and a healthy eating plan, one that features plenty of fresh vegetables as well as high-fiber, low-sugar carbohydrates, you can proactively benefit your own cardiovascular health.

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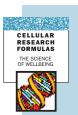
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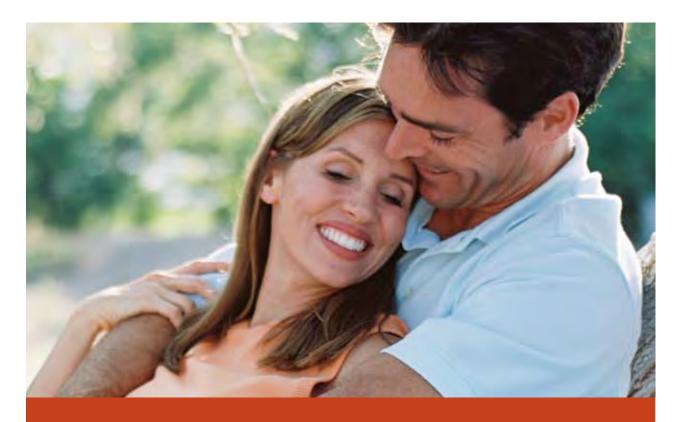


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Healthy **Men**



5 Reasons Why You're **Not Having Great Sex**

 Men looking for more sizzle beneath the sheets now have several natural tools at their disposal.

By Thomas Badzey, Editor

If you find yourself remembering good sex more than you're having it, you may be tempted to believe that your best bedroom days are behind you. The emotional fallout from a lackluster libido can have serious consequences that may threaten the possibility of a healthy relationship for you and your mate.

Some men react by seeking other sources of sexual satisfaction, ranging from such seemingly-benign pursuits as online flirtation to relationship-killers like full-blown adultery. Other men may withdraw from their partners, remaining silent and perhaps blaming themselves for their fate.

Even men who attempt to be proactive by discussing their problem with a health professional can be duped by slick advertising and pin their hopes on "little blue pills," only to be disappointed when synthetic solutions fall short.

Fortunately, breaking news suggests that better sex may lie ahead...if you are ready, willing and able to put forth a little bit of effort. In fact, a study published by researchers in Norway suggests that your 40s and 50s may be the *optimum* time for sexual satisfaction. Even

better, advances in nutraceutical science have revealed a wide array of natural options—less potent than drugs yet powerful in their own right-to enhance your sex life.

5 Reasons Why Sex Fades

With sexuality, just as with any health issue, dozens of factors can cause problems, so the list here is not comprehensive. But many experts agree that the following five reasons commonly occur in many men over 40:

1. You're not doing enough talking about sex.

Many men may find sex relatively easy to perform, but they find it almost impossible to talk about, especially if problems exist. Unfortunately, silence makes the problem worse, as each partner is left wondering why sex has faded-or worse-jumps to conclusions or jealousy ("she doesn't find me attractive" or "she's having an affair").

Sex has become a BIG issue.

Often, the longer that sex has remained sub-par, the more likely it is to become a major issue in the relationship. Whenever any conflicts come up, they invariably turn back to sex. A man may say: "I wouldn't be so distant if she would just have sex with me." The moment that sex gets discussed as a problem and not a pleasure, a whole host of emotions (anger, resentment, mistrust, bitterness) can surface...and poison any likelihood of passion.

3. You've stopped the seduction.

Remember when you and your partner first fell in love? Back then, you seduced them with whispered words, thoughtful gifts and extra attention. But any couple can fall into a comfort zone that is familiar and not "fiery" anymore. Several commitments-work, hobbies, difficulties with children, aging parents—can take up more of the time that a man used to devote to treating his partner as sexy and special.

Your desire has diminished.

Often, men simply feel their sexual desire dampen, without knowing why. According to the Masters and Johnson Institute, at least 33% of American couples experience a lack of sexual desire (Painter, 2005). Stress, anxiety and a wide array of physical problems (ranging from obesity to poor blood circulation to

Best Sex During Your 50s?

During a study in Norway, research professor Sophie Fossa and fellow scientists surveyed 1,185 men between the ages of 20 and 79, asking them an array of questions regarding their sex drive, satisfaction, erection quality and more. The team grouped the results by decade.

As expected, the youngest group (men in their 20s) scored higher on average than the others. But the second-highest ranking came from men in their 50s, who reported almost the same sexual satisfaction as their youthful counterparts. Even though the 50 year-olds admitted to frequent erectile issues, researchers attributed their mental and emotional maturity as keys to good sex (Hitti, 2006).



prescription drug side-effects) can damage your interest in sex.

5. You lack sexual energy.

Even when you and your partner desire sex, sometimes men find it hard to gather the energy needed for a satisfying experience. Many of the same reasons behind a drop in desire can also affect sexual energy, including fatigue, stress, alcohol and tobacco use, illness and prescription drugs.

Try These Simple Steps

If you currently struggle with any of these problems, perhaps the first and best step is to seek emotional counseling. A trained therapist can help break through these "bedroom barriers" and get you and your partner back to an honest and loving relationship.

You can also start by making a few creative changes yourself. Try some simple things, like a phone call just to say "I love you." You don't have to go overboard, but maybe a note in the lingerie drawer or a single rose on the pillow will open up your partner's heart—and they'll be more likely to receive your advances. Consider new techniques, like new sexual positions or places (when

Healthy **Men**

was the last time you had sex on the table...in the shower...on your balcony?). The key is to approach lovemaking as an art. Make it a hobby that the two of you can share—discover the sensual bonds created by massages, Tantra, Kama Sutra...or a sizzling dose of erotic fiction or film. Taking small steps will automatically lead to more desire and may even give you jolts of sexual energy you didn't know you still had.

What About Sex Supplements?

Sometimes, poor sexual health involves physical issues. Thankfully, scientific studies suggest that many key nutrients, now available as non-prescription dietary supplements, may help spark both desire and energy.

Maca. Touted as the "Peruvian Viagra," Maca Root has been used to enhance strength and libido since the days of the ancient Incas. Modern research reveals that this natural aphrodisiac may boost sexual energy (Peruvian-Maca.com, 2005). Maca Root may also ease stress and enhance overall mood for improved sex drive. A study from Italy showed that when administered to rats, even low doses of Maca seemed to promote vigorous sexual activity (Cicero et al, 2001).



Ginseng. The most commonly used and widely researched root extract of the Ginseng family is Panax Ginseng. This specific variety can be traced to early Asian cultures, which used it to fight fatigue. While Panax Ginseng is often found in energy beverages, its libido-lifting properties have helped its reputation as a bedroom booster. Researchers found Panax Ginseng beneficial for enhancing erection, sexual desire and intercourse satisfaction. Animal studies suggest that it targets low sex drive by supporting mood (Murphy & Lee, 2002; Kiefer & Pantuso, 2003).

L-Arginine. This naturally-occurring amino-acid has been linked to an assortment of benefits, including erection enhancement and the body's production of human growth hormone. Many red meats are rich in

L-Arginine, but their high fat content can actually counteract any benefit by saturating the blood vessels. For that reason, many men consider L-Arginine via a dietary supplement to be a lot more convenient. In a preliminary study, participants with weak erections showed marked signs of improvement after taking L-Arginine supplements (PDRHealth.com, 2005).

Yohimbe. This natural root may encourage healthy blood flow to the genitals, thereby enhancing sexual sensation. Years ago, Yohimbe became famous when the first-ever FDA-approved impotence drug called yohimbine (a derivative of the natural root) was approved. Even though synthetic yohimbine has been overshadowed by newer drugs, some health practitioners have renewed interest in Yohimbe, the original natural source. One study suggests that pairing L-Arginine with yohimbine can be a powerful combination for upping sexual vigor and staying power (Lebret et al, 2002). This may mean that Yohimbe herb used along with L-Arginine might perform a similar function.

Make the Right Time NOW

If your lovemaking has become lackluster, you now have several natural tools at your disposal. Take proactive steps to rekindle the passion and make your sex life as satisfying as possible. Making the emotional effort, plus remaining open to supplemental nutrients, can offer you and your partner orgasmic opportunities you may have never thought possible. If you are considering dietary supplements, it seems wise to seek out a liquid soft-gel combination of these nutrients for rapid delivery and absorption. Remember: Now is the time to liberate your libido.

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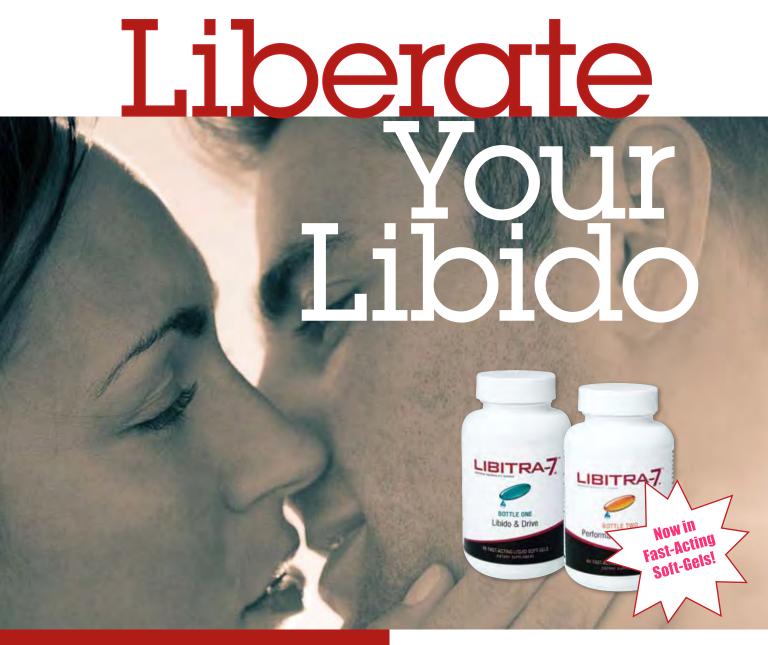
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Healthy lungs



Alert: Study Shows Asthma Sufferers Face New Risks

•••> Research reveals startling new dangers for those with poor breathing, while natural methods of lung fortification emerge.

> by Dr. Pamela Maloney, Ph.D. Medical Advisor

A recent Australian study of 7,619 participants reported that those with asthma or related breathing



Dr. Pamela Maloney, Ph.D., LAc, DHM, has been practicing for 20 years in Santa Monica, California, with a specialization in Homeopathic Medicine, Naturopathic Medicine, Acupuncture & Chinese Herbology.

Dr. Maloney is a member of the

American Naturopathic Medical Association, the California Homeopathic Medical Society and the California Acupuncture Association, among others. Her "A-list" clients include some of the top members of the film, sports, theater, dance, business and financial industries.

problems may be at as much as *nine* times greater risk for heart attack, stroke, arthritis, diabetes and depression after age 55, compared to those who do not suffer asthma (Adams et al, 2006). This is daunting news, especially coupled with the fact that the American Academy of Asthma, Allergy and Immunology estimates that by 2020 more than one out of every four "Baby Boomers" will be affected by asthma.

What is causing what some have called a 21st century epidemic of breathing problems? More importantly, is there anything that you can do to lower your risk or fortify your lungs?

Fortunately, recent studies suggest that several key nutrients—including a common food—can provide powerful support for healthy lungs and may be vital to your entire respiratory system.

How Breathing Problems Begin

Most breathing problems, including asthma, often begin in childhood. Stressful events (such as severe illness, trauma or dramatic exposure to environmental aggravators like smog and air pollution) can leave a physical imprint on the receptor sites of cells in the lungs. Scientists reporting in the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* note that a stressful event in childhood can leave the lungs about 80% less responsive to the body's natural hormones later in life (Miller & Chen, 2006).

To compensate for this insensitivity, pediatric doctors routinely prescribe inhalers filled with synthetic prescription steroid-hormone drugs. Unfortunately, a child may develop a dependency on inhalers, relying on those steroid hormones before engaging in any physical activity.

While some so-called health experts continue to rail against this phenomenon and urge people to throw away their inhalers, to do so without a "back-up plan" is not only irresponsible but also medically inaccurate. Unless directed to do so by a doctor, no person with asthma should throw away an emergency inhaler. However, there may be natural ways to make attacks less frequent, especially if one makes use of certain supplemental nutrients that can support healthy lung tissue and encourage respiratory system health.

An Apple a Week?

It may surprise you to learn that one method includes a new take on the old "apple a day" adage. Apples are a rich source of potassium, which is particularly important for those who use inhalers on a regular basis. High doses of steroids or overuse of inhalers can deplete potassium to dangerous levels requiring emergency-room treatment. Just one apple a week can prevent this depletion.

A study of 13,000 adults in the Netherlands found that regular consumption of apples (and pears, also a good source of potassium) was positively correlated with strong lung capacity and negatively correlated with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease. Scientists at the Keck School of Medicine at the University of Southern California found that children who consumed the lowest levels of potassium-rich fruits and vegetables also demonstrated the lowest breathing capacity (Gilliland et al, 2002).

Herbs and Botanicals Support Healthy Breathing

In addition to munching on apples and pears, it may be wise to add a few more exotic nutrients to your dietary regimen. For example, the Chinese herb *Scutellaria*—first listed some 2,200 years ago in *The Divine Husbandman's Classic of the Materia Medica*, the oldest known textbook of medicine—has been touted as a method for helping ease "hot lungs," coughing, fever and tension. Modern testing has found that this herb impacts histamine without sedation, possibly affecting the number of asthma attacks triggered by allergies (Nakajima et al, 2001).

Throw Away Your Salt Shaker!

A new study funded by the British health organization Asthma UK will attempt to elaborate on the newest culprit behind sudden asthma attacks—excess dietary salt. Although the British study will seek to provide the last word on whether too much salt can really trigger asthma, there's already a growing body of evidence that people at risk for constricted airways should limit their consumption of sodium.

Sodium seems to interfere with cellular uptake of the mineral magnesium, which plays a key role in lung health. In fact, injections of magnesium are standard treatment in the emergency room for severe asthma attacks.

The good news about the relationship between sodium and asthma is that a small decrease in the consumption of salt can promote a big decrease in the frequency of exercise-induced asthma attacks (Mickelborough, Lindley & Ray, 2005). The simplest way to lower your body's sodium levels? Drink more water!

If you are open to adding a specially-formulated nutritional supplement in order to maximize your own lung health, the following also may be some noteworthy nutrients to consider:

- Capsaicin (Cayenne extract) and *Glycyrrhiza Glabra* (licorice) seem to have a soothing effect on the throat, which can sometimes become irritated in people with asthma.
- The authoritative *Complete German Commission E Monographs* states that Fenugreek gently soothes the lining of the throat.
- Marshmallow and Mullein provide mucilages to add bulk to phlegm, making it easier to expectorate.
- Turnip Powder is a terrific natural source of the amino-acid histidine, which is particularly helpful in supporting nose, eyes and throat health.

Lifestyle Changes for Your Lungs

Even though no one who has asthma or other breathing difficulties should discontinue prescribed medication without medical advice, it seems wise to

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make some simple modifications to your diet and supplementation habits that can greatly impact and support healthy lungs. You may also consider making other lifestyle changes, such as limiting your intake of salt (see "Throw Away Your Salt Shaker!").

In addition, drinking water can help. Some medical literature suggests that dehydrated cells in the linings of the bronchial passageways are especially susceptible to inflammation and rupture. Proper hydration will not prevent asthma attacks unrelated to exercise, but it may significantly reduce the severity of an adverse event (Yun, Lee & Bazar, 2005).

Whichever strategy you choose, the good news is that there are several simple and proactive steps that you can take right now to foster your improved health and maximize the healthy outlook for your lungs and respiratory system. \blacksquare

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