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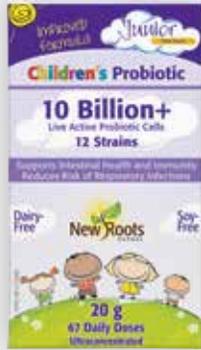
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Summer 2024

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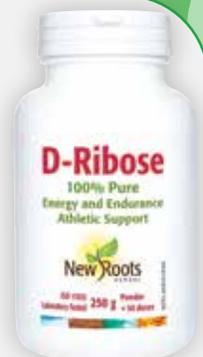
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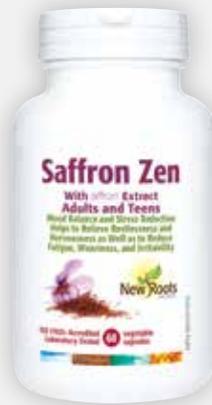
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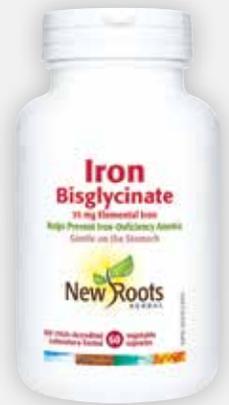
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Editor's Letter



Beaming rays of sunshine, green grass, colourful flowers, birds chirping, and spending time with those you care for most. Ask anyone who knows me, and they will attest to summer being my absolute favourite season. After months of frosty cold winter temperatures and spring seasons that are unpredictable at best, summer brings an abundance of magical warmth and happiness.

It's more than just the balmy temperature: It's the opportunities that come with it. Dinner with the family on the deck, walks in the park with your furry companion, a game of tennis with your best friend, or watching an incredible sunset with your special someone.

Given my exceptional love of the season, we have curated some articles to help you make the most of it and cope with some of its less appealing aspects. Discover our contributors' recommendations for keeping cool under pressure, staying well-hydrated, getting ample rest, delighting in summer flavours, and keeping mosquitoes at bay! We'll explore how we can take our health to the next level this summer, feeling and looking our very best, so we can flourish today and well into the summers of our golden years.

Before we know it, we'll be wishing summer could last a few more weeks, even a few more days. So, let's take advantage of bright mornings, sunny days, and mild evenings to make every moment count and have an unforgettable summer!

Happy reading!

Sophia Golanowski, BCom, MBA
Editor-in-Chief

Flourish

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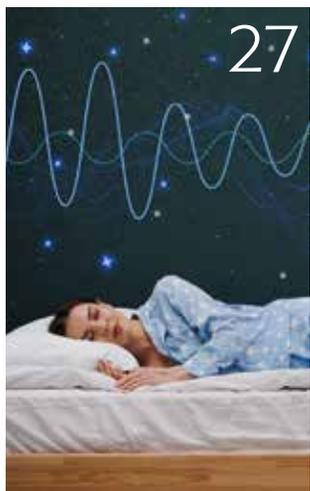


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Saffron

(*Crocus sativa*)

An Ancient Herb for Everyday Health

by Colleen Hartwick, ND

Saffron (*Crocus sativus*), as many of you *Flourish* readers may already know, is one of the most expensive spices known worldwide—this is thanks to its colour, flavour, and wide array of medicinal properties.

These active components have shown several useful pharmacological effects such as anticonvulsant, antidepressant, anti-inflammatory, antitumour, radical-scavenging effects, and learning- and memory-improving effects.

Saffron belongs to the Iridaceae family and is a perennial herb widely cultivated in Iran as well as India and Greece. Saffron, the spice, is derived from the dried red stigma with a small portion of the yellowish stamen attached to the flower of *Crocus sativus*. In China, it is known as *Fan-Hong-Hua*, and it has been used there as a medicine for over 3,000 years.

Saffron stigmas contain over 150 compounds, four of which are responsible for the observed health effects of this herb. The four major bioactive compounds are crocin, crocetin (made through the hydrolysis of crocin), picrocrocin, and safranal. These active components exert several useful pharmacological effects such as anticonvulsant, antidepressant, anti-inflammatory, antitumour, radical scavenging, as well as learning and memory improvement. Let's explore some of the many ways saffron is used in medicine today.

Saffron and Menopause

A 12-week parallel-group, double-blind, randomized controlled trial was conducted where 86 perimenopausal women experiencing menopausal complaints received either a placebo or 14 mg of a saffron extract. The PANAS scale (a scale measuring both positive and negative emotions) as well as the Greene Climacteric Scale were used to measure change in the trial subjects.

At the end of the 12-week trial, researchers observed a 33% reduction in anxiety as well as a 32% reduction in depression scores from baseline to week 12. There was also a significantly greater reduction in negative emotions (e.g., anger, contempt, fear) on the PANAS scale in the saffron group as compared to the placebo.

At the end of the study, participants who received the saffron extract experienced a significant reduction in the number of hot flashes.

In another study, 60 postmenopausal subjects experiencing hot flashes were randomized to receive either 30 mg/d of saffron or a placebo during the 6-week trial period. At the end of the study, participants who received the saffron extract experienced a significant reduction in the number of hot flashes as well as an additional reduction in depressive symptoms when compared to the placebo group.

Saffron and Sleep Regulation

In a study conducted over a 28-day period, the effects of saffron on sleep quality as well as melatonin and cortisol levels were explored. In this parallel-group, double-blind, randomized controlled trial, 120 adults experiencing unsatisfactory sleep received either a placebo, 14 mg, or 28 mg of a standardized saffron extract one hour before bed.

Most notably, when compared to the placebo, saffron supplementation was associated with increases in evening melatonin concentrations.

Compared to the placebo, saffron supplementation was associated with greater improvements in sleep-quality ratings. These improvements in sleep were observed at both the 14 mg and 28 mg saffron doses. Sleep improvements were similar for the two administered saffron doses. Most notably, when compared to the placebo, saffron supplementation was associated with increases in evening melatonin concentrations.

Saffron and Mood Regulation

In a double-blind and randomized trial, patients were randomly assigned to receive a capsule of 15 mg of saffron petal twice daily or fluoxetine (Prozac®), a selective

serotonin reuptake inhibitor used in the treatment of depression as well as anxiety disorders (10 mg twice daily) for an 8-week study. At the end of the trial, saffron petal was found to be as effective as fluoxetine in reducing symptoms of mild-to-moderate depression.

Based on youth self-reports, saffron extract was associated with greater improvements in overall internalizing symptoms, separation anxiety, social phobia, and depression.

In yet another randomized, double-blind, placebo-controlled study, youth aged 12–16 years with mild to moderate anxiety or depressive symptoms were given tablets containing placebo or a proprietary saffron extract (14 mg twice daily). Eighty (80) participants were enrolled, and 68 completed the study. Based on youth self-reports, saffron extract was associated with greater improvements in overall internalizing symptoms, separation anxiety, social phobia, and depression. Total internalizing scores decreased by an average of 33% compared to 17% in the placebo group.



Saffron has been widely used over the last 3,000 years as a medicinal plant to promote human health, especially in Asia as well as Europe. As we have explored, saffron has been shown to improve mood; reduce symptoms of depression; reduce hot flashes in menopausal women; and improve sleep quality, likely through enhancing melatonin production. While the evidence of saffron improving mood, sleep, and hormonal health is overwhelmingly positive, it is as always of paramount importance to determine with your health-care practitioner whether saffron is both safe and appropriate to address your mental-health needs. It is wise to stay within the recommended dose as this herb, when used at higher doses (typically above 200 mg/d) is also associated with reductions in blood pressure, reductions in hemoglobin, decreases in platelet count, abnormal bleeding, nausea, and sedation.



Dr. Colleen Hartwick, ND

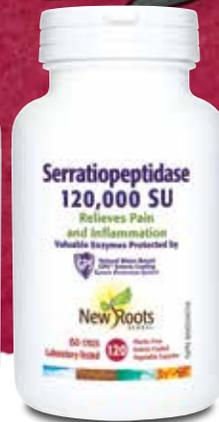
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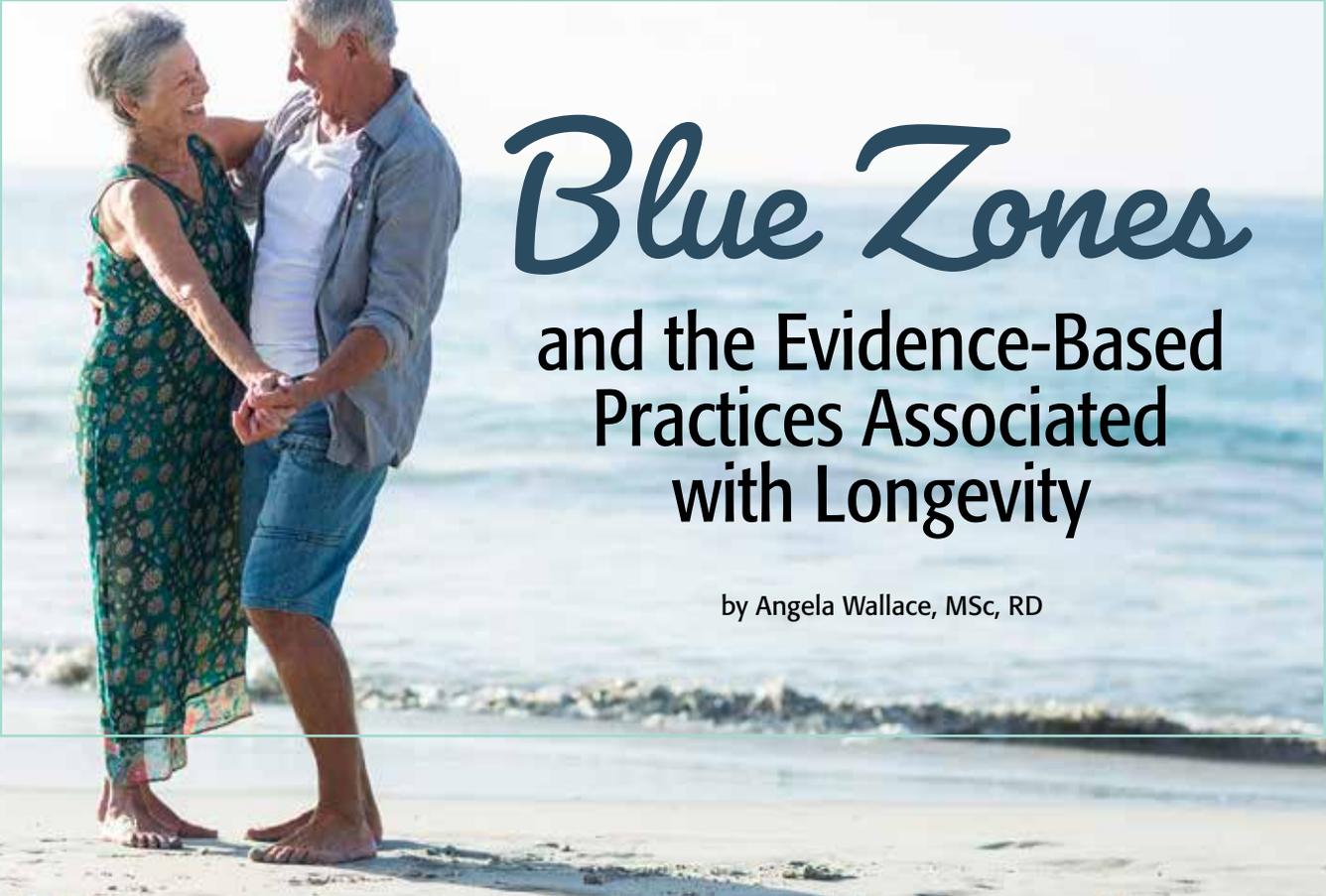


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An elderly couple is shown from the waist up, dancing on a sandy beach. The woman is wearing a green patterned dress and the man is wearing a light blue shirt and shorts. They are both smiling and looking at each other. The background shows the ocean and a clear sky.

Blue Zones

and the Evidence-Based Practices Associated with Longevity

by Angela Wallace, MSc, RD

With the global population aging at an unprecedented rate, there is a growing urgency to uncover ways to improve the health of our extended lifespans. In this quest for longevity, the spotlight turns to the enigmatic “blue zones”—regions of the world where individuals commonly live past 100 years with remarkable vitality.

Research has found that genetics only influences longevity by approximately 25%. This means that the other 75% is influenced by lifestyle factors including diet and environmental factors.

Blue zones are specific regions around the world where people tend to live longer, healthier lives.



Where Are the Blue Zones?

- Sardinia, Italy
- Okinawa, Japan
- Loma Linda, United States
- Nicoya, Costa Rica
- Ikaria, Greece

These regions are identified as blue zones due to their people achieving the age of 100 at rates ten times higher than in other parts of the world. In fact, many individuals in blue zones demonstrate the ability to reach their 90s without experiencing chronic diseases.

Given the widespread desire for longevity, scientists have extensively examined these areas to uncover shared lifestyle and dietary practices that contribute to the remarkable longevity observed by their populations. Research has identified nine evidence-based factors, common among the world’s oldest individuals, believed to have a slowing effect on the aging process.



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Purpose

Evidence suggests that knowing your sense of purpose can increase your life expectancy by up to 7 years. Okinawans call this “ikigai,” and Nicoyans call it “plan de vida.” Both translate to “why I wake up in the morning.” Purpose is about your existence, why you want to be here.

Move Naturally

The longest-living individuals live in environments that encourage movement in their daily living. They do not specifically go to the gym or attend specialized workout classes; instead, activity is built into their daily living. This could include gardening, cooking, walking, and other daily work activities.



Downshift

In the context of lifestyle, this means simplification. It is about adopting a simpler lifestyle and a less chaotic way of life. It may involve reducing work hours, embracing a slower pace, and prioritizing personal wellbeing. Essentially, it is about reducing stress, as stress can lead to chronic inflammation, which is associated with every major chronic disease.

For example, Okinawans spend a few moments per day remembering their ancestors, Sardinians do happy hour, and Ikarians take naps.

The 80% Rule

This rule has to do with caloric intake. Essentially, individuals eat until they are 80% full instead of 100% full. This 20% gap is the difference between not being hungry and not overconsuming. By practicing the 80% rule, individuals may avoid the negative health impacts associated with excessive caloric intake. This can lead to better weight management and, potentially, a reduction in chronic disease. In addition, research has found that people in the blue zones eat their smallest meal in the late afternoon or early evening.

Reduced calorie intake along with some fasting are common practices in people of blue zones.



Plant Slant

The concept emphasizes a diet that is predominantly plant-based. In blue zones, individuals tend to consume a variety of plant-derived foods such as fruits, vegetables, legumes, and whole grains. Meat is consumed in blue zone regions: mostly pork, eaten a few times per month.

Wine Consumption

People in most blue zones drink both moderately and regularly. Common practices include drinking 1–2 glasses of wine daily in company and with food. There is mixed evidence on alcohol consumption as it relates to mortality, with more recent research suggesting there is no protective effect of regular alcohol consumption in comparison to abstinence or occasional drinking.

Belonging

This refers to belonging to some faith or religious community. Research shows that having a faith-based practice can lower your risk of death and extend your life expectancy by 5–15 years.



Angela Wallace, MSc, RD

A registered dietitian with the College of Dietitians of Ontario, personal trainer, and family food expert who specializes in women and child nutrition and fitness, she loves helping families get healthy together.

eatrightfeelright.ca

Loved Ones First

This refers to a family-first mentality. This means keeping aging parents or grandparents nearby (or in home), committing to a life partner, and investing in children in terms of love and time together. Studies have shown that grandparents who care for their grandchildren have a lower risk of disease and mortality—but interestingly, these effects can also support the health of children in the home too.

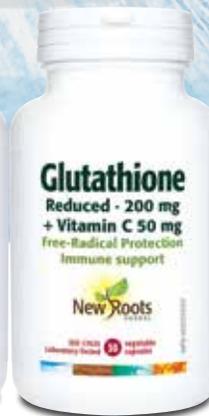
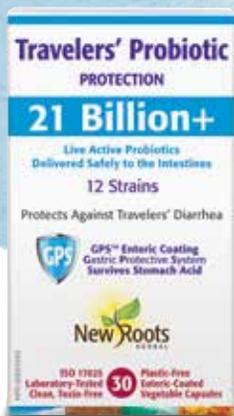
Right Tribe

This includes your social circle (those you choose as your family). Ideally, the people in your circle support and motivate you to engage in healthy behaviours.

As you reflect on your current lifestyle and that of blue zone regions, what can you do differently? Is there something you can take from this information and use to better your life? Can you work on your stress management? Can you incorporate more plant-based meals? Can you spend more quality time with the people you love? You may not live in a blue zone, but you can do your best to incorporate some of their practices into your daily living to support your health and longevity. Even the smallest changes can make a difference.

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Next-Level Health with an ND

by Odessa Gill, ND

As it is now estimated that 1 in 5 Canadians do not have a family doctor, naturopathic doctors are poised to play an essential role in our health-care system. As experts in the area of natural and preventative medicine, naturopathic doctors primarily operate within private practices and multidisciplinary clinics throughout Canada. In certain provinces, they can also be found working in hospitals. NDs offer treatment and support for health concerns as diverse as the common cold, IBS, or fibromyalgia, and they can also assist with physical exams, lab testing, and so much more. Their services are not covered under provincial health plans yet, but they are covered under most extended health-care benefits.

The pandemic really highlighted the struggles of our current health-care system. Fortunately, there are over 3,000 naturopathic doctors in Canada who can be consulted by patients to support them with their health needs and goals.



During the pandemic, I realized from my own practice how essential our services became. We had patients who were not able to see their family doctor for timely appointments and as a result opted for our services. Most days, we were able to provide same-day services either in person or via telemedicine. During that time, our clinic had requisitioned so

many lab tests, more than we ever have before. We had more tests being performed in a single week than we would normally see in a month.

With lengthy consultations, NDs could listen and provide that essential counselling or make referrals when necessary.

Besides access to timely appointments, we were able to support individuals really struggling with mental concerns such as anxiety and depression. With lengthy consultations, NDs could listen and provide essential counselling or make referrals when necessary. NDs support clients in the self-healing process by incorporating counselling and other mind-body techniques. Acupuncture is another tool used by some NDs that can support overall wellbeing.

I do not write prescriptions for pharmaceutical drugs, but I can help evaluate my patient's health status and identify many chronic diseases such as high cholesterol, hypertension, and diabetes.

The pandemic really highlighted the struggles of our current health-care system. Fortunately, there are over 3,000 naturopathic doctors in Canada that can be consulted by patients to support them with their health needs and goals. NDs are well positioned to support our overburdened health-care system.



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As a naturopathic doctor, I do not write prescriptions for pharmaceutical drugs, but I can help evaluate my patient's health status and identify many chronic diseases such as high cholesterol, hypertension, and diabetes. NDs can offer nutritional support via diet therapy and recommendations as well as vitamin and nutritional supplementation. Some NDs also have the ability to provide vitamin injections or intravenous therapy. The goal is simple: Identify health concerns and treat with natural supportive therapies, and address these concerns from a holistic perspective.

Prevention is key. NDs will look for trends in bloodwork by comparing previous test results to current lab reports. If there is an increase in cholesterol levels, a treatment protocol will focus on prevention. If there is a family member with a chronic illness or an uncle with an autoimmune condition, your ND can recommend appropriate testing to see if this may be a concern for you.

As most visits are 30 minutes to 1 hour in length, most NDs get to know their patients on a more personal level.

Optimal health is so important. Why go through the day feeling tired or awaking still fatigued? What could be the cause? Is it perhaps a vitamin deficiency—a B₁₂ or iron deficiency, maybe? Naturopathic doctors search for the possible cause to explain these symptoms. There is no limit in age for aspiring towards optimal health.

If you are interested in finding a health-care practitioner who is dedicated to helping you achieve your best health, a naturopathic doctor may be exactly who you are looking for.



As most visits are 30 minutes to 1 hour in length, most NDs get to know their patients on a more personal level. A lengthier consult allows an ND to learn about a patient's journey—their past medical history, their current stressors, diet and level of activity, their family's health history, etc. All these are factors contribute to an individual's health status.

With so many individuals turning to Dr. Google for answers, this means that now, more than ever before, patients are actively interested in increasing their knowledge about their health. They want to understand their symptoms and they want options. With such an increased demand for more natural approaches to health care, NDs can act as a guide on this journey working towards better health.

Whether you are looking to treat a current health concern or work towards specific health goals, your ND can be that perfect partner you have been looking for.

How do we do this? One of the most powerful tools available to NDs is lab testing. In most provinces, NDs have the ability to run all blood tests, like the ones recommended by family doctors. At this time, most patients pay out of pocket for this additional service, but some patients are able to have testing covered through extended health insurance. These labs are the same used by family doctors, such as Gamma Dynacare, LifeLabs, or Biron. In addition to routine testing, NDs can also do more unique tests such as food-sensitivity testing, hormone testing, and stool testing (as they search for inflammatory gastrointestinal markers.) These tests are unique to naturopathic practitioners and they can identify other health markers too. NDs can review which lab testing would be the most appropriate for each patient's needs.



If you have never experienced the benefit of seeing a naturopathic doctor, it may be time for you to take your health care to the next level. Whether you are looking to treat a current health concern or work towards specific health goals, your ND can be that perfect partner you have been looking for.



Dr. Odessa Gill, ND

Dr. Gill has been in practice for 20 years and is the co-owner of a naturopathic clinic in Bloor West Village, Toronto. She has a focus on stress management, fertility, and hormonal health.

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Mosquitoes Crashing Your Party?

by Felicia Assenza, HBSc, ND

Often-unwelcome guests at backyard parties and barbecues, mosquitoes can really interrupt your summer party vibe. Here are some natural ways to help keep the mosquitoes at bay this season so you can enjoy your warm summer evenings.

Remove Standing Water

This is a basic one that you may have heard before. Mosquitoes lay their eggs in water. Less water means less opportunity for new mosquitoes. If you have water fixtures in your backyard—like a birdbath or water bowls for pets—change the water frequently to prevent mosquitoes from having the opportunity to lay eggs, hatch, and grow. If you have a pond in your outdoor entertainment space, try having fish in the pond that eat mosquito larvae, like mosquitofish, goldfish, guppies, or koi carp.



Plant a Native Garden

What better way to control mosquitoes than to invite some of their potentially less annoying predators like birds or dragonflies? Do some research to find out which plants are native to your area and which animals they attract. You may also be making your space a beautiful sanctuary, not only for wildlife but for yourself and your party guests as well.

Using Catnip for More Than Just Cats

Did you know that catnip essential oil can be an effective tool for repelling mosquitoes? It appears that a chemical, called nepetalactone, found in the oil acts as an irritant that repels mosquitoes as well as other insects. In fact, following a study that found catnip was comparable to DEET in repelling mosquitoes, there has been more research into catnip essential oil's mosquito-repellent properties.

Other Essential Oils That May Be Helpful

We talked about the potential power of catnip essential oil. Other essential oils have been researched as well for their use in helping to repel mosquitoes.



Some common examples are citronella, patchouli, and clove. These essential oils can be used in a diffuser in your party area or diluted in a spray bottle with water and applied to yourself or nearby surfaces.

Wear Protective Clothing

Plan your party outfit accordingly. Long sleeves and long pants are ideal for deterring mosquito bites, especially if you are attending an outdoor evening party. Bonus points if these can be cinched at the wrists and ankles! In warm or hot outside temperatures, opt for thermal-regulating fabrics that will keep you cool, like cotton, bamboo, linen, or silk.

Be Mindful of Nutrition and Diet

Ensuring a balanced nutrition intake is a key recommendation for overall wellbeing. Moreover, there has been significant interest and debate surrounding the correlation between nutrition and one's susceptibility or attractiveness to mosquitoes. Vitamin B₁ or thiamine is a nutrient that has been associated with vulnerability to mosquito bites. However, the research does not seem to support its use in repelling mosquitoes. Despite this, ensuring adequate thiamine or vitamin B₁ levels is important for overall health and is still worth investigating with your naturopathic doctor.

Several foods have been traditionally used to lower the risk of mosquito bites or decrease a person's attractiveness to mosquitoes. These include garlic, onion, vanilla, citrus fruits, lemongrass, apple cider vinegar, and chilies. There is limited research on their effectiveness when it comes to mosquitoes. Whole foods, including the ones listed above, and a healthy diet are a great way to prevent nutrient deficiencies and can also go a long way in supporting your body's immune system and resilience.

Collaborating with your naturopathic doctor or nutritionist to customize a diet based on your individual needs can contribute to overall health. Addressing nutrient deficiencies serves as a valuable approach to bolstering your immune system and enhancing your body's resilience.



Incorporate Nonalcoholic Beverages at Your Party

Did you know that drinking alcohol may make you more attractive to mosquitoes? A study revealed that after drinking even one beer, there was an increased risk of mosquito bites. Limiting or eliminating alcohol doesn't necessarily mean fewer fun drinks at your summer party, though. Try your hand at some herbal mocktails and botanical brews like elderflower cordial, frozen mint lemonade, or agua fresca with in-season fruits—these are some of my summer favourites.

Hopefully, this gives you some helpful ideas in managing mosquitoes at your next summer party. Have a happy, safe, and healthy summer!



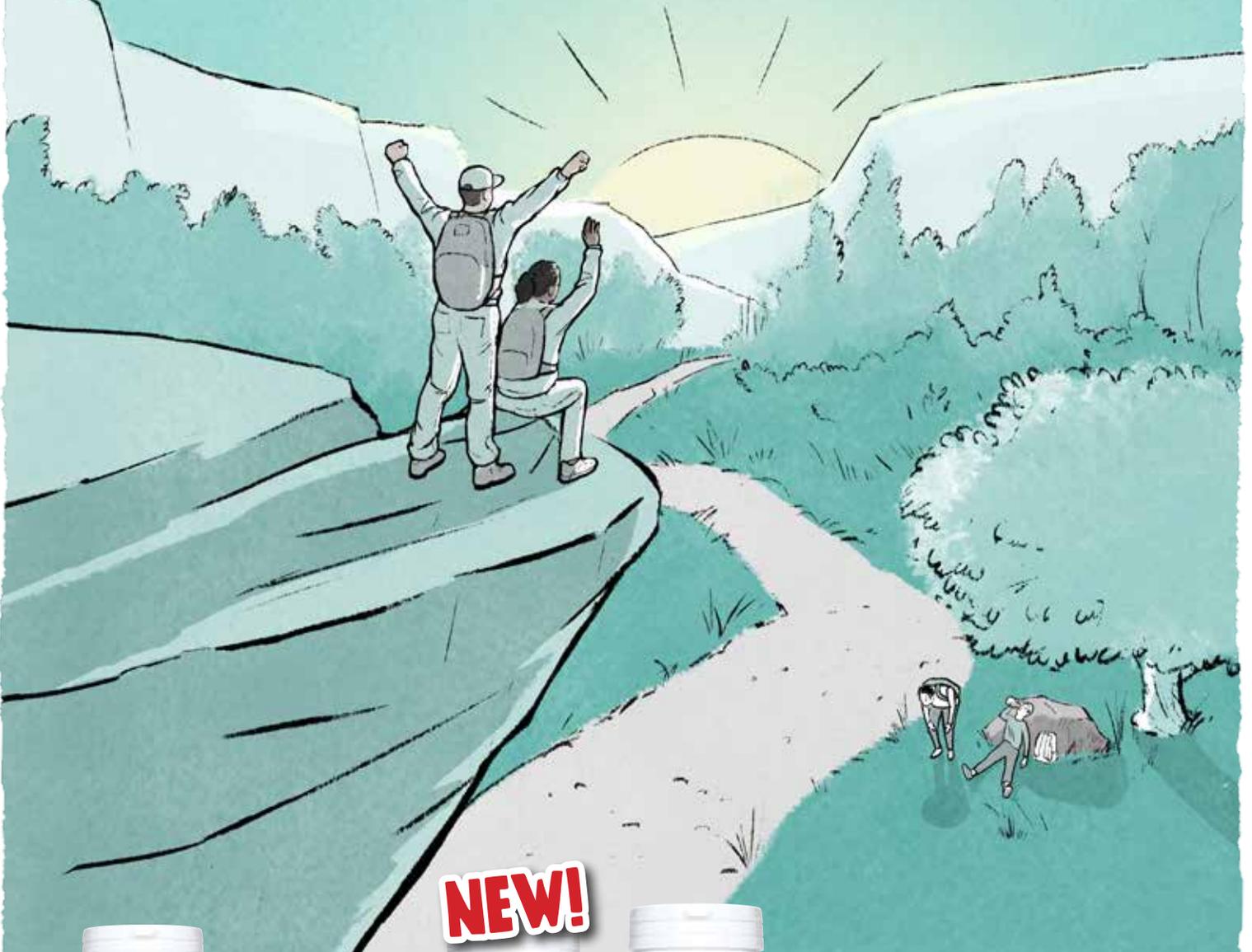
Dr. Felicia Assenza, HBSc, ND

A Hamilton-based naturopathic doctor whose goal in every patient visit is to share the knowledge and experiences that she gained on her own journey.

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Balancing Sunshine, Safety, and Vitamin D

by Felicia Assenza, HBSc, ND

As the sunny weather is upon us, it is a great time to take advantage of our body's wonderful ability to work with the sun in order to produce the very important vitamin D. As is the case with many things in life, moderation is key, so it is also a good time to talk about safe sun exposure and the rewards the right amount of time in the sun can bring.

First off, the sun is an important part of life! Not only does it help our bodies to produce vitamin D, but it also helps to regulate mood and sleep. Vitamin D supports bone health, the immune system, and so much more. This being said, too much of a good thing can have consequences. In the case of the sun, too much can lead to sunburn. Over time, repeated sunburns can lead to skin-cell damage, premature aging, or, in the worst case, skin cancer.

So, How Much Sun Is Enough?

It seems that sun exposure done right looks like small amounts of time in the sun on a daily basis. Ten to fifteen minutes is suggested for those with lighter skin, and 20–25 minutes is suggested for those with darker skin. This amount of daily sun exposure seems to be enough to prevent a vitamin D deficiency (at least in the spring and summer months) while not causing sunburn or overexposure.

There are many ways to protect yourself from overexposure on long summer days spent out in the sun. The simplest and most effective ways to protect your skin are to cover up to shield it from the sun. For example, wear a hat, use a parasol, or find a shady spot under a tree. If these options do not appeal to you or you are planning a beach day out on the water with minimal shade, then you need to look at sunscreens.

Which Sunscreen Is Best?

Not all sunscreens are created equal. Some sunscreens contain chemicals that may lead to skin cancer or harm the environment, especially coral and other marine life. There are so many different sunscreens out there, and at every price point too, that it can be overwhelming to choose. I suggest looking for a broad-spectrum sunscreen. This means it protects against both UVA and UVB rays (*more on these later*). I also suggest looking for particular ingredients and keeping it simple. The shorter the ingredient list, the better.

Zinc oxide or titanium dioxide are two great ingredients to look for in a sunscreen, as they provide a physical barrier that deflects ultraviolet (UV) rays and protects the skin. Since they are physical barriers that do not get absorbed well by the skin, you will often be left with a bit of a white coat on your skin. The other ingredients in these physical sunscreens are often there to help make it easier to apply or blend.



Would Avoiding the Sun Be Better?

This is not advisable, as it does provide health benefits. When UVB rays hit our skin, they interact with cholesterol within, leading to the formation of vitamin D that our bodies use for various health functions. Recent studies indicate an inverse relationship between vitamin D levels and the occurrence of various diseases such as cancer, cardiovascular issues, and neurodegenerative conditions. There are some food sources of vitamin D—like certain fish, egg yolks, and beef liver—but the reality is that 25% of Canadians do not have optimal vitamin D levels, and that number jumps to 40% in winter months.

Which Ingredients to Avoid?

In general, chemical sunscreens do not offer the same amount of protection as physical ones, and they often come with more risk to human health and the environment. Some ingredients to watch out for in these sunscreens include oxybenzone, octinoacetate, retinyl palmitate, parabens, phthalate, PEG, parfum, and sodium lauryl/laureth sulfate. Many of these chemicals have been identified as hormone disruptors, are linked to skin cancer, or are damaging to the environment. If you are wondering about the ingredients in your sunscreen, the Environmental Working Group Sunscreen Guide is a great resource to check the safety of sunscreen ingredients.

What about SPF, UPF, UVA, and UVB?

SPF refers to the sun protection factor of a sunscreen and measures the sunscreen's ability to protect the skin against UVB rays, but it does not account for UVA rays. **UPF** refers to the ultraviolet protection factor of clothing and measures its ability to block out both UVA and UVB rays to prevent them from reaching the skin.

UVB are short waves that reach more superficial layers of your skin. They account for only 5% of the UV rays we are exposed to, yet can still lead to sunburns and premature aging. Repeated sunburns can cause skin damage and lead to cancer. UVB rays are more intense between 10:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m.

UVA are long waves and account for 95% of the UV rays we are exposed to. They reach the deeper layers of the epidermis and can cause premature aging, wrinkles, and skin cancer. They are continuously present, regardless of the time or weather.

The World Health Organization recommends a generous application of a broad spectrum, minimum SPF of 15, and reapplying every 2 hours—more frequently if you've been sweating or swimming. Some sunscreens may be water-resistant for short periods, but none are really waterproof.

Finding Balance

Summer is a great time to harness the power of the sun and vitamin D after the cold, dark winter months. Like all good things, take the sun in moderation, keep your skin safe, and perhaps consider testing your vitamin D levels with your naturopathic doctor and introducing a vitamin D supplement, especially in winter months.



Dr. Felicia Assenza, HBSc, ND

A Hamilton-based naturopathic doctor whose goal in every patient visit is to share the knowledge and experiences that she gained on her own journey.

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Sea Buckthorn Berry Oil

Your Secret Weapon for Sensitive, Dry, or Reactive Skin

by Melanie Kusznireckij, BSc, ND



Sunny days are here, and while many women simplify their regular skincare routines, those with sensitive or problem skin might be more hesitant to go make-up-free. Nurturing your body from the inside out is always ideal, but complementing your nutrition with nutrient-rich topical products can help heal and protect your skin from the outside.

Sea buckthorn berry oil, a true gift from nature, is rich in complex phytonutrients, omegas, and antioxidants. Read on to discover how this little berry oil can help revitalize your skin, from replenishing moisture to supporting cellular rejuvenation.

Beneficial for Various Skin Conditions

Sea buckthorn berry oil is particularly effective for a variety of skin conditions. For those suffering from eczema, the oil's anti-inflammatory properties can help soothe irritation and reduce redness. It also aids in managing rosacea by calming inflamed skin and minimizing flare-ups. Acne-prone individuals can benefit from its low comedogenic rating, ensuring hydration without clogging pores. Additionally, the oil's regenerative properties make it an excellent choice for healing scars or sunburned skin and for reducing the appearance of fine lines and wrinkles.

You will love the benefits of sea buckthorn berry oil for nutrient-rich, pore-friendly hydration and rejuvenation.

Key Components and Benefits

Essential Fatty Acids

Sea buckthorn oil is rich in essential fatty acids, including omega-3, -6, and -9, which are crucial for maintaining healthy skin. They help strengthen the skin's natural barrier, preventing moisture loss and dehydration due

to environmental stressors like pollution and UV radiation. Rare omega-7, abundant in sea buckthorn berries, aids in skin repair and regeneration, benefiting problem skin and supporting overall skin health.

Antioxidants and Vitamins

Sea buckthorn contains a high concentration of antioxidants, such as vitamins C and E, flavonoids, and carotenoids. These antioxidants neutralize free radicals, protect the skin from oxidative stress, and reduce inflammation and redness. Vitamin C is essential for collagen production, which gives the skin structure and elasticity. By promoting collagen synthesis, sea buckthorn berry oil helps reduce signs of aging, such as fine lines and wrinkles.

Lipids and Sterols

The complexity of sea buckthorn berry oil lies in its composition of intricate lipids, each playing a vital role in nurturing healthy skin.

Sterols fortify the epidermal barrier, locking in moisture and restoring the skin's firmness and elasticity at a cellular level. Glycolipids and phospholipids, other essential lipids present in sea buckthorn berry oil, exhibit anti-inflammatory properties and support cellular health, fostering skin regeneration.



Application Guide

- ✓ Pull hair away from your face (tied back or with a headband). Have a designated cloth on hand, because sea buckthorn berry oil permanently stains fabrics.
- ✓ Place up to 15 drops in your hand and gently massage into face, neck, décolletage, dry patches, or any other area requiring extra care.
- ✓ Wash your hands and relax for 30 minutes (or longer) to let the oil's nutrients get absorbed.
- ✓ Using a gentle soap or cleanser, wash away pigment and excess oil with warm water and pat dry with your designated cloth.

NOTE: Always be mindful of where you apply the oil and where you will relax, as oil transfer can easily happen, and it will permanently stain whatever material it touches.

How often is best for you?*

SKIN TYPE	MASK FREQUENCY
Dry, scarred, sunburned	2-3 times per week
Mature	1-2 times per week
Oily, acne-prone	1-2 times per week
Sensitive, eczema, rosacea	1 per week

*Ensure you patch-test before use to avoid any potential reactions.



Dr. Melanie Kusznireckyj, BSc, ND

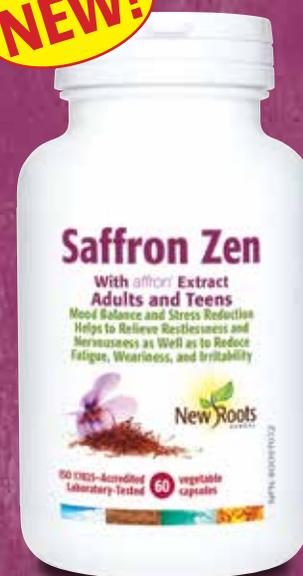
A naturopathic doctor, graduate from the CCNM. She has a private family practice in Montreal, is the VP for the Quebec Association of Naturopathic Medicine, and is the Chief Operating Officer at Vitazan Professional.

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Metabolic Syndrome

Act before It's Too Late

by Annick Moffatt, ND

Metabolic syndrome is a collection of risk factors that significantly increase the likelihood of developing cardiovascular diseases.

These factors include abdominal obesity, high blood sugar, and high blood pressure. Additionally, an abnormal lipid profile (elevated triglycerides and/or decreased HDL cholesterol levels) is often present. Individuals with metabolic syndrome also have an increased susceptibility to insulin resistance, a condition that can progress to type 2 diabetes. To be diagnosed with metabolic syndrome, a person needs to meet at least three of the following five criteria.

Metabolic Syndrome Criteria	Thresholds and Indicators
Excess abdominal fat	Men: Waist circumference > 102 cm Women: Waist circumference > 88 cm
Triglyceride levels	Triglycerides \geq 1.7 mmol/L
Blood pressure	Blood pressure \geq 130/85 mmHg
"Good" cholesterol (HDL) levels	Men: HDL < 1.03 mmol/L Women: HDL < 1.30 mmol/L
Fasting blood glucose	Blood glucose \geq 6.1 mmol/L

Fortunately, these criteria are modifiable through lifestyle changes and, if necessary, the addition of supplements. At the metabolic syndrome stage, it is still possible to turn things around and avoid long-term medication use before more severe conditions develop. Here are some recommendations.

Adopt a Mediterranean Diet

This diet recommends a significant intake of vegetables, fruits, olive oil, nuts, and seeds, complemented by a moderate amount of whole grains. It also emphasizes consuming fish and seafood at least twice a week, a moderate intake of poultry, eggs, and dairy products, and occasional consumption of red meat.

Move and Manage Your Stress

Regardless of your fitness level, start slowly but move daily. Aim for at least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity physical activity per week or 75 minutes of vigorous activity. Physical activity helps manage weight, blood pressure, and stress. Practices like meditation, deep breathing, or yoga can also help to reduce stress levels.

Supplements

Here are some of my favourites: Berberine helps maintain healthy cholesterol levels and glucose metabolism. Omega-3 supports cardiovascular functions and reduces blood triglycerides.

Above all, the key is to know your risk factors, monitor your numbers, and act now to prevent the development of cardiovascular diseases or type 2 diabetes in the future.



Annick Moffatt, ND

With more than 20 years of experience in the health domain, first in psychology, then as a naturopathic doctor, she brings a holistic approach to health problems.

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Resetting your Circadian Rhythms

by Wendy Present, RHNC, CFMP

Tick-tock, how's your clock? To be accurate, your clocks (plural), since they are located in almost every tissue and organ of your body! There is also a master clock, which synchronizes all the clocks. This master clock is housed in the hypothalamus of the brain, and it has the tongue-twisting name of "suprachiasmatic nucleus" or SCN for short. The SCN is the major controller of our circadian rhythms, which are so important to good health.

All our organ and tissue clocks, known as the "peripheral clocks," have important jobs that keep us running efficiently. Although the SCN is primarily controlled by light, not all the peripheral clocks are, and they may instead respond to cues such as eating, moving, and temperature. The peripheral clocks use these cues to regulate the secretion of appropriate amounts of hormones and other bodily fluids; they also adjust our body temperature and influence our genes.

For most of us, our SCN is controlled by light—or lack thereof—hitting the retina of our eyes (and this applies even when our eyes are closed, since light can be sensed through our eyelids). In blind people, other mechanisms regulate the circadian rhythms. The two main hormones regulated by the SCN are cortisol and melatonin.

"Long-term consequences of poor circadian rhythms can lead to cancer, heart disease, diabetes, and psychiatric disorders."

Cortisol is a hormone produced by the adrenal glands. It is probably best known as the "fight-or-flight" hormone that increases in response to stress, but it is also of vital importance to regulating our metabolism. We need cortisol in order to wake up and get going with our day.

As the light hitting the retina decreases towards the evening, the level of cortisol drops and melatonin—which is produced by the pineal gland in the brain—increases. Melatonin is necessary for the establishment of good circadian rhythms and, of course, promotes a sound sleep.

A reversed output of cortisol, where it starts low in the morning, and then becomes high into the evening, delays the surge of melatonin necessary for sleep. This can lead to insomnia, and it makes it more difficult to lose weight, by increasing our blood sugar and our appetite. Elevated cortisol levels also impact our mood, heightening feelings of anxiety and depression. Long-term consequences of poor circadian rhythms can lead to cancer, heart disease, diabetes, and psychiatric disorders.



"Melatonin can help you establish healthy circadian rhythms without the side effects or groggy feeling on waking up that many people experience after taking a sleeping pill."

How do our circadian rhythms get out of balance? The biggest influence is the use of artificial light during times that are naturally dark. Shift workers are particularly susceptible to the effects of this unnatural light, and this has come to be known as "shift-work disorder." People who frequently cross time zones and late-night gamers are also prone to disrupting their circadian rhythms.

Blue lights, which are found on device screens, can be especially problematic, since blue is of the same wavelength as produced by full daylight, and it tricks the brain into thinking it is still daytime. Exposing the brain to this wavelength late in the day will push the production of melatonin later and means less hours are spent in sleep.

We often think the answer to insomnia is to take a sleeping pill, or perhaps try nonprescription substances to relax. We might even fall asleep while watching TV, and then wake up the next morning feeling unrefreshed. What if there was a way that actually worked to restore the circadian rhythms and restore sleep? By normalizing these rhythms, you can lose weight and reduce your risk of chronic disease. It is worth a few, easy lifestyle changes!

Take Stock of Your Habits, Adjust Accordingly

First of all, change your habits. Spend as much time outside each day as possible. If natural daylight is impossible due to the time of year, try using a light lamp in the morning for a similar effect. Many people use caffeine to start their day. Drinking a cup or two of coffee or tea before noon may be helpful. More cups than that or drinking caffeinated beverages in the afternoon can interfere with your sleep. If you are tired during the day, a short nap of 20 minutes can help you feel refreshed. At night, dim your devices, and turn them off a few hours before bed. Consider wearing a sleep mask at night and keeping your bedroom cool.



Wendy Presant, RHNC, CFMP

With a background in nursing, naturopathic, and functional medicine, Wendy Presant is currently registered as a health-and-nutrition counsellor. She provides virtual coaching services to individuals looking to optimize their health.

naturalcoachathome.care

Vitamin D and B₁₂ Levels

Ask your doctor to check your vitamin D and B₁₂ levels, since these nutrients are correlated with healthy circadian rhythms.

Your Day's Rhythm

Establish regular rhythms to entrain your clocks by keeping waking, sleeping, eating, and moving at the same times each day.

Start Taking Melatonin

If you have implemented all the lifestyle advice and you are still having trouble getting to sleep on time, ask your doctor if it is alright to use melatonin. Start with a small dose, taken in the hour before bed. Melatonin can help you establish healthy circadian rhythms without the side effects or groggy feeling on waking up that many people experience after taking a sleeping pill.

Every day as you recalibrate your body clocks and prepare them for a restful night, you will experience improved sleep, reset your rhythms, and promote long-term health!



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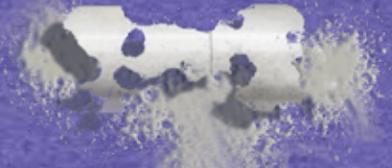
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Eating with the Seasons

by Jill Northrup, ND

Summer is here! Along with longer days and warmer temperatures, Canadians can also enjoy a plethora of local fresh fruits and vegetables this season. In addition to being more flavourful, local in-season produce is more environmentally friendly and nutritious in comparison to its international counterparts. Reduced transit time produces a smaller ecological footprint and faster farm-to-table minimizes the loss of vitamins and minerals. Eating locally is a sustainable practice that is not only good for us, but often, for our wallets too. Read on to learn about some of the produce currently in season in Canada and the health benefits of these plants.

Berries

Field berries are harvested across much of southern Canada beginning in June/July until September/October, depending on weather conditions. Strawberries are the first to arrive, followed by blackberries, raspberries, and blueberries ripening towards the

end of the season. Nutritionally, berries are a rich source of antioxidants, including anthocyanins. This compound not only produces the blue, red, and purple hues of berries, but also possesses potent inflammation- and cell-damage-fighting activity, in addition to anticancer and antiplatelet effects. Berries are a key component of the MIND diet designed for neurological health, as anthocyanins can cross the blood-brain barrier and can help preserve cognitive health among the elderly. Berries also have a low glycemic load, meaning they do not spike blood sugar. This makes berries a great fruit option to help manage blood sugar.

Garlic

Garlic is typically planted in the fall and harvested the following summer. The medicinal effects of garlic have long been recognized by various cultures. Garlic's health benefits largely come from allicin, a compound known for its cardiovascular and immune-related effects. Research shows that garlic consumption prevents atherosclerosis, reduces cholesterol and blood pressure, and inhibits platelet aggregation. Garlic also exhibits antitumour, hypoglycemic, and antimicrobial effects. To enjoy the health benefits of allicin, garlic should be crushed or minced and added to food when it is nearly done being prepared.



Tomatoes

Greenhouse tomatoes are available year-round, but vine-ripened tomatoes are significantly more nutritious and have much more flavour. Tomatoes are incredibly rich in vitamin C. This is especially true for vine-ripened tomatoes, which have twice as much vitamin C in comparison to hothouse tomatoes. Tomatoes, when cooked in oil, are also a rich source of lycopene. Lycopene has anticancer effects, which both reduces the risk and progression of prostate cancer.



Broccoli

Broccoli is a cruciferous vegetable harvested beginning in June or July, depending on the province. Belonging to the same vegetable family as cabbage and Brussels sprouts, broccoli is a rich source of vitamins A, C, and K, as well as of the minerals calcium, potassium, and iron. Broccoli is also high in soluble fibre, meaning it absorbs water and forms a gel within the digestive tract, which helps to regulate bowel movements. As a cruciferous vegetable family member, broccoli contains the bioactive compounds sulforaphane and indole-3-carbinol. These compounds exert anticancer, anti-inflammatory, and antioxidant effects. Indole-3-carbinol also plays a role in estrogen metabolism and can be used therapeutically for some hormonal disorders.

Beets

This earthy tasting root vegetable is harvested in the late summer across Canada. Beetroot contains various vitamins and minerals, including B vitamins, vitamin C, magnesium, phosphorus, calcium, potassium, and zinc.

Beets also have potential therapeutic value in the management of various chronic diseases, including liver and cardiovascular conditions. As a source of betaine in addition to many antioxidants, beets have a

hepatoprotective, or liver-protective, effect. Research suggests beetroot juice, in addition to a Mediterranean diet, may have promising effects in reducing fibrosis seen in fatty liver disease. Beets are also a source of nitrates, not to be confused with nitrites. Unlike nitrites, which are harmful to heart and blood-vessel health, nitrates are beneficial. As a precursor to nitric oxide, nitrates play a role in preventing hypertension and atherosclerosis.



Summary

These are only a small selection of some of the delicious local produce that become available over the summer in Canada. Although nutrient-dense, not all foods are suitable for everyone—talk to your naturopathic doctor to determine what foods are best for you and your health. Whenever possible, support the local economy, the environment, and your health by choosing local in-season produce this summer.



Dr. Jill Northrup, ND

A Toronto-based naturopathic doctor with a passion for health and natural medicines, she values an evidence-based treatment approach and emphasizes patient education and preventative medicine in her practice.

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Creative Ways to Drink More Water

by Patricia Wu, ND



Water intake is essential to human life; it is a simple solution that improves health and wellness. Some dislike the taste, others find it boring, but most of the time, water intake can be improved and encouraged when it's a habit that is made obvious, attractive, easy, and satisfying.

Choose Your Vessel



1. A clear drinking vessel. The visual cue reminds you to finish your drink. There are plenty of reusable water bottles with BPA-free labels, but the truth is that most plastics contain some sort of BPA-related substitute that may be just as harmful. Glass can be heavy, so an insulated stainless-steel, double-walled water bottle with a straw is the better option for drinking on the go. At home, mason jars with measurement markings make it easy to calculate how much you are drinking.

2. A pretty water carafe is more than just a decorative piece. It keeps the water within reach. Have one dedicated for your home office, dining table, or coffee table. There are sets that come with a glass cup and a lid that can be kept on your nightstand so you can start hydrating before getting out of bed.



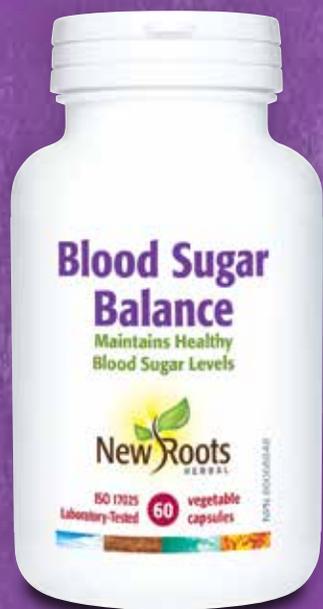
3. A straw. Sometimes, the action of lifting the water bottle can be an obstacle. A water bottle with a straw encourages more passive drinking so you can hydrate easily on the go.

What Kind of Water?

Tap water in Canada is safe and contains less microplastics than bottled water. However, a high-quality water filter is still recommended. Filters can be faucet-mounted, in pitchers, or a whole water system for the home. Water filters remove bacteria, leached metals, and environmental pollutants. A deeper dive into water-filtration systems would be needed to really explain what filtered water is best. Just know that using a water filter can help improve the quality of the water you are consuming.



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But Water Is Just so Boring...

Water consumption in Canadian children between 9 and 13 years old has increased from 75% in 2004 to 90% in 2015 on any given day, due to the updated Health Canada Food Guide. This coincides with one glass of milk being replaced with a glass of water. Even so, 50% of adults report not drinking enough water throughout the day.

For those who dislike the taste of plain water, fruit infusions provide natural flavours without the added sugars and toxins from artificial drinks and sweeteners. Just toss in a handful of fruits and fresh garden herbs for a cooling summer infusion and a hydrating “spa” experience. No straining necessary, and it looks good in the glass or carafe!

A few classic combinations are cucumber and lemon balm, triple citrus (orange, lemon, and lime), strawberry and mint, and peach or plum and mint.



For those needing an extra boost, herbal adaptogens exist to support stress and detoxification. A summer favourite is a chilled schisandra berry tea. *Schisandra chinensis* contains compounds that activate liver enzymes, promote memory and cognition, and regulate the stress response. Known as the five-flavour berry—sour, sweet, salty, bitter, and pungent (spicy)—the flavour you taste correlates to a traditional Chinese medicine organ system that is needing more support.

If preparing a fruit or adaptogen infusion is too labour-intensive, electrolyte powders, vitamin C powders, and amino-acid powders are readily available to add flavour, minimize added sugars, and give you a boost since you are already drinking water.

Lastly, for those that are still hesitant, some fruits have an astonishingly high amount of water content. Presenting as a “triple threat” with fibre, flavour, and hydration powers, fruits like blueberries, raspberries, peaches, apricots, plums, cucumbers, pineapples, cantaloupes, and watermelons contain over 80% water! Use these to make granitas, dole whips (pureed frozen fruit), smoothies, and even fruit kebabs to keep the water intake going.



In a nutshell, getting your daily water intake does not always need to be from plain water. The key is to consume many more hydrating solutions and foods compared to dehydrating beverages. Keep your beverage vessel filled and add a little extra boost to switch up the flavour and health punch.

See next page for two delicious drinks to enjoy this summer.



Schisandra Berry Tea

Ingredients

- 1 tbsp. schisandra berries
- 1 litre of hot water
- Honey to taste, if desired

Directions

Steep in hot water for 15 min, then chill in fridge overnight. Consume throughout the day.

Watermelon Granita

Ingredients

- ½ watermelon (around 3 kg)—seedless, or seeds removed
- 1–2 limes, juice only
- Fresh mint for garnish



Directions

Cut watermelon into chunks and add to food processor or blender. Add lime juice and blend thoroughly.

Pour watermelon into a shallow freezer-proof dish. Freeze for 2 hours. Remove from freezer and scrape the surface with a fork until grainy, slushy texture. Return dish to freezer for 1 more hour.

Repeat fork scraping on the surface every hour until no more liquid remains and the entire mixture is scraped.

Serve in dessert bowls with a sprig of mint for garnish



Dr. Patricia Wu, ND

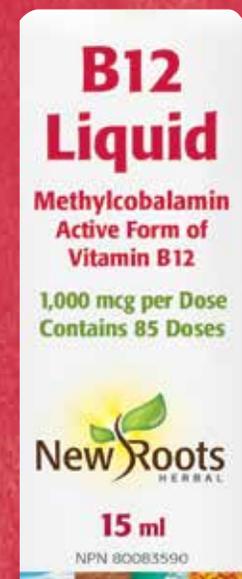
Dr. Wu is a naturopathic physician with a geriatric-focused practice in Tsawwassen (South Delta), BC. She has a special interest in heart disease, metabolic disease, and brain health (dementia/Alzheimer's prevention).

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Tecate Fish Tacos

Here's a simple recipe to get more fish into your weekly meal plan. This crispy taco recipe features panko-crusted fish, foolproof chipotle crema, and your favourite toppings... as long as avocado is among them!

Chipotle Crema Ingredients

- 1 chipotle chili in adobo sauce
- ½ cup plain Greek yogurt (or mayo)
- 1 tbsp. lime juice
- ¼ tsp. fine sea salt

Crispy Fish Ingredients

- 1½ pounds firm white fish, such as cod or halibut, cut into 1-inch cubes
- 1 egg, whisked
- 1 cup panko breadcrumbs
- 4 tsp. taco seasoning
- 1 tsp. New Roots Herbal's Fermented Beet Powder
- A pinch of sea salt and freshly cracked black pepper to taste

Taco Ingredients

- 6 corn or flour tortillas, warmed
- 2 fresh avocados, peeled, pitted, and sliced
- Toppings of choice (lettuce, tomatoes, cilantro, red onions, cheese, etc.)

Chipotle Crema Instructions

Combine ingredients and blend until smooth. Set aside.

Crispy Fish Instructions

Preheat oven to 375 °F (190 °C). Spread the panko out in an even layer on a medium baking sheet. Bake for 5–7 minutes, giving the pan a gentle shake halfway through, until the panko is toasted and golden brown (keep a close eye on the panko so that it does not burn). Transfer the panko to a medium bowl, and dust off the baking sheet for future use.

Add seasoning to the panko. Whisk until uniform.

Arrange your “mise en place”: 1) fish, 2) whisked egg, 3) panko mixture, and 4) parchment-covered baking sheet. Dip fish cube in egg. Transfer to panko blend and gently press until coated on all sides. Place fish cubes on baking sheet.

Place in the oven and bake for 10 minutes until cooked through and flakes easily (internal temperature should be 145 °F [65 °C]). Fish should easily flake for preparation.

Taco Instructions

Lay a bed of shredded lettuce followed by the fish and get creative. Drizzle with the chipotle crema and serve immediately.

Makes 6 tacos.

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Flourish Original Recipe



Chick-a-licious Balls

Simple oven-baked chicken meatballs that are tender and juicy! Only 15 minutes of prep time and 20 minutes of cooking time.

Ingredients

- 1 lb ground chicken
- 1 medium onion, finely diced then sautéed—about ¼ cup after being sautéed
- 1 large egg, beaten
- 2 cloves garlic, crushed with garlic press (or finely chopped)
- 1 cup Italian breadcrumbs—divided
- ⅔ cup Parmesan cheese
- ⅔ cup milk
- 1 tbsp. each fresh parsley and basil (or 1 tsp. each dried)

Instructions

Preheat oven to 375 °F (190 °C) and line a baking sheet with parchment paper or a baking mat.

Sauté onions on medium heat until golden—about 5 minutes. Drain excess oil and set aside.

In a large bowl, combine half the Italian breadcrumbs and milk; mix well and set aside.

Combine ground chicken, onion, garlic, egg, salt, black pepper, Parmesan cheese, and parsley to the breadcrumb mixture, and mix with your hands until just combined. Do not overmix.

Some ground chicken, especially packaged, may contain more fat. Slowly add remaining breadcrumbs as needed until the mixture is just thick enough to work with.

Portion onto the prepared baking sheet (use ice cream scoop or weigh to approximately 50 g if you have a scale). Wet your hands with oil and roll meatballs into 2"-diameter balls (5 cm).

Bake for about 18–20 minutes or until the meatballs have reached an internal temperature of 175 °F (80 °C). Remove from oven and drain off any excess fat.

To store, cover in airtight container while still warm. May be separated and frozen for an easy weeknight meal.

Serves 4 (16 meatballs)

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Flourish Original Recipe



Pizza Dip and Vegetables

Imagine all of the tasty flavours of a pizza baked into a deliciously warmed dip. If you don't have a sensitivity to the nightshade family of plants and can tolerate tomatoes, these nutritional superstars will benefit you with their impressive antioxidant profile. Although raw tomatoes are delicious, it is best to consume them after they have been cooked, to maximize the availability of the carotenoids *beta*-carotene, lutein, zeaxanthin, and lycopene. My family likes to pair this dip with baguette or corn-free tortilla chips.

Pizza Dip Ingredients

- 1 can (28 oz.) tomatoes, crushed (see Tip)
- 1 cup red or yellow onion, finely chopped
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 2 tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil
- 2 tbsp. tomato paste (see Tip)
- 1 tbsp. Italian seasoning
- 2 tsp. dried basil
- 3 drops pure monk fruit extract (if you like a sweet sauce; optional)
- ½ tsp. unrefined pink salt

Optional Ingredients

- ½ cup crumbled vegan cheese
- ½ cup sliced marinated artichoke hearts
- ¼ cup sliced pitted black or green olives or capers
- 12 fresh basil leaves, for garnish

Vegetables

- 3 green zucchinis, cut into sticks
- 3 yellow zucchinis, cut into sticks
- 1 bunch asparagus, trimmed and cut into sticks
- 1 sweet red pepper, seeded and sliced into sticks
- 2 cups snap peas

Instructions

In a 12-inch cast-iron skillet or oven-safe saucepan, heat the olive oil over medium heat. Add the onion and garlic, and cook while stirring occasionally, until softened (about 5 minutes). Add the tomatoes and their juice, tomato paste, Italian seasoning, basil, monk fruit (if using), and salt. Stir to combine, then simmer for 30 minutes until the sauce thickens.

Meanwhile, preheat the oven to 350 °F (150 °C). Remove the pan from the heat and top the sauce with the vegan cheese, olives, and artichoke hearts (if using). Bake for 10 minutes, until the cheese is melted and the toppings are warmed through. Garnish with the fresh basil (if using), and serve with the vegetables for dipping.

Tip: To save time, you can use sugar-free organic tomato sauce as a substitute for the crushed tomatoes and tomato paste, but you may have to simmer it for longer before adding the toppings and baking (up to 45 minutes, depending on how watery your sauce choice is).

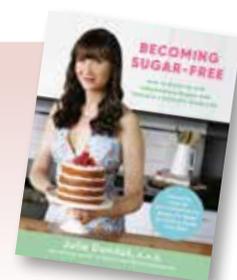


Julie Daniluk, RHN

Julie Daniluk is a highly sought-after anti-inflammatory expert, speaker, and award-winning author of four bestselling books. Her passion is to speak in venues where she blends her skills and experience in fun and positive ways to provide breakthrough results with her audiences.

JulieDaniluk.com

More delicious recipes are available in Julie's recipe book: *Becoming Sugar Free*



AskGord



My blood lipid profile is about 10% higher than average. Any ideas how to lower my numbers before my next check-up?

Focus on factors you can control; regular physical activity improves your ratio of HDL (good cholesterol), LDL (harmful cholesterol), and limit consumption of foods high in saturated fat, such as red and processed meats and high-fat dairy products.

Pivot to foods high in soluble fibre such as oats, barley, whole grains, and fruits which help block intestinal absorption of cholesterol. Foods rich in plant sterols—such as nuts, cereals, and legumes—also hinder cholesterol absorption within the intestines. Plant sterol-enriched foods can help; however, plant sterols in supplement form such as powders or softgels deliver a more therapeutic amount.

Our hectic summer social calendar leads to occasional nasty disruptions of my digestive tract, any suggestions for relief?

Constipation, bloating and even diarrhoea can be traced to an overworked liver. Family get-togethers and summer barbecues usually feature food and beverages which increase the metabolic burden on your liver. Red meat, processed meat with saturated fat, salt, spices, and preservatives are big offenders for hepatic health. The occasional extra adult beverage is well-known for its detrimental effects, with sugar-laden soft drinks and even diet sodas adding to the liver's workload.

In addition to moderation, several natural botanical extracts can support your liver this summer. Milk thistle extract (be sure it mentions potency-validated silymarin) is among my favourites. It exerts anti-inflammatory effects on the liver and can even help with liver-cell regeneration. Red beet, black radish, dandelion, and artichoke extracts, as well as *alpha*-lipoic acid, are also well-known for their liver-protectant properties.

You get an oil change before a summer road trip; perhaps your liver could benefit from a tune-up this summer?

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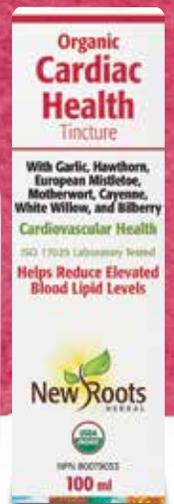
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