

January/February 2017

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Delicious and Healthy
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In this Issue...

Experience Life to
the Fullest

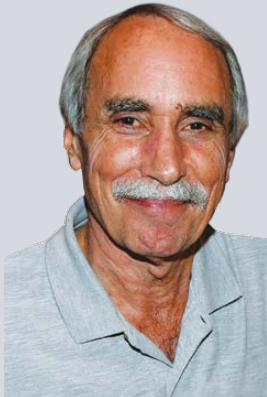
The Taste of
Nutrition

A Hug Can Make
All the Difference



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Road to Wellness

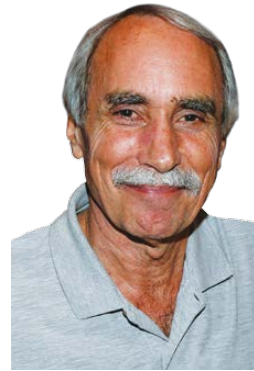
A lot of people I've met over the years describe being healthy as a static state of being. But that's not necessarily true. What it means to be healthy as a child is quite a bit different from what it means to be healthy as a senior. And every stage of life in between has a slightly different version of healthy.

These differences are among the reasons that the road to wellness is not a single, straight path. It is a long and winding road with lots of detours, forks and even the occasional U turn—and that is part of the joy. Discovering the path that is right for you is a deeply personal and enriching journey.

We learn so much about ourselves on the road to wellness. Every time we try new foods, recipes, exercises and relaxation techniques, we have a slightly better understanding of what our road looks like. This isn't necessarily a conscious understanding until we deliberately look within ourselves. We look into ourselves and examine our likes and dislikes. Then we ask ourselves why. Why do I like carrots but not peas? Why am I running every morning when I would much rather bike?

There is no road map that will work for everyone. Even though we may walk different paths, we are not alone on the road to wellness. Friends, family, doctors and coworkers are all walking with us on similar but slightly different paths. These intertwining journeys are wonderful support mechanisms.

We are each guided by our own common sense, trial and error, and positive outlook. Combining these internal feelings with scientific knowledge and cutting-edge research helps us find the best path to take on the road to wellness.



Dwight L. McKee M.D.

Dwight L. McKee
Scientific Director

Nutritional News

Fiber-rich foods

Consuming a diet full of fiber-rich foods has been linked to successful aging. Over the course of 10 years, researchers looked at the diet and health of 1,609 adults over the age of 50. They discovered those who had the highest dietary fiber intake were more likely to reach old age disease-free and fully functional. The study looked at successful aging as not just the absence of disease and cognitive impairment but also took into account physical disability, social engagement and mental health.



Resistance exercises

Pain associated with knee joint cartilage may be eased by a wet walk. A study performed at the University of Jyväskylä, Finland, has found low-impact aquatic resistance exercises helped improve knee cartilage's biochemical composition. This could be good news for anyone who has the generally accepted belief that joint cartilage can be well maintained but not improved. The study focused on 87 postmenopausal women in their 60s with mild osteoarthritis of the knee. One hour of intensive aquatic lower-limb resistance exercises three times a week for four months improved the cartilage's biochemical composition, which can help ease pain and improve mobility.

Boost your child's mental abilities

Omega 3 fatty acids may help improve children's reading skills. According to a study of 154 schoolchildren from western Sweden, after just three months of omega 3 supplementation, children's reading skills improved. A large portion of our brains is composed of these healthy fats (EPA and DHA), so it's no wonder that including more of them in our children's diets can help boost children's mental abilities.

Eat more greens

Help keep your skin looking radiant during dry winter months by eating more greens. Containing nearly 950 micrograms of beta carotene (and just eight calories) per cup, raw kale supports healthy skin color and texture.



The gift of healthy eating

Give your children the gift of healthy eating for life by gardening with them today. A new study that interviewed 1,351 college students revealed that those students who gardened with their parents as children were more likely to eat more vegetables as young adults. If the students were currently gardening, they were even more likely to consume a healthy diet. Family gardens don't have to be big in order to benefit everyone. Even a few small potted vegetable plants will help instill a healthy appetite for fresh vegetables.



Mindful Exercise

Mindfulness exercises are popular these days as people strive to find peace and serenity in the midst of hectic modern lifestyles. Yoga and meditation help people let go of daily stresses and deliberately focus on what is happening in the present moment. There is no need to stop being mindful when you leave the yoga studio.

Recently, scientists have found links between mindfulness and overall physical health. Weight control and mindfulness go hand in hand. It has been shown that people who practice mindfulness during meals are less likely to gain weight. The simple act of becoming aware of our actions when we eat helps us consume fewer calories.

It also pays to be mindful during exercise. Practicing mindfulness before, during and after exercise can help improve the results of your activity, avoid injuries and improve the chances of maintaining a regular physical fitness routine.

Whether you are running, swimming, biking or engaged in any other physical activity, remain aware of how your body feels in each moment.

Letting your mind wander or focusing on distractions means you are not paying attention to the little aches and pains that can signal injuries that keep you out of the gym for weeks.



You don't need to focus on pain; this can also cause you to stop. Instead, try to cultivate a deep awareness of your body. How do your feet feel when they touch the pavement? How fast or slowly are you breathing? Can you feel yourself getting dehydrated? Intentionally checking in with yourself will help you maximize results while minimizing the risk of injury.

There is much joy to be found in physical activity when you look for it within yourself.

A recent study found people who practiced mindful exercise reported experiencing more satisfaction, which resulted in skipping fewer days.¹

To start a mindful exercise session, before you even take your first step or dive into the water, take a few moments to be present in your body. How do you feel? What are your goals for the session? Have clear intentions of what you want to accomplish. How will achieving those goals make you feel?

Then expand your awareness to your environment. What do you see? What are your five senses telling you? How will your environment affect your awareness of yourself? Exercise should be an in-body experience, not an out-of-body one, but it can be dangerous to completely ignore your surroundings.



Do not try to multitask when performing mindful exercise. It's impossible to practice mindful activity when you are listening to an audiobook, watching television or talking on the phone.

Leave these things behind and let your senses connect your inner thoughts to the world around you.

As you become aware of your body as a whole, feel the way it takes up space in the world from the inside out.



While exercising, notice how your body changes. Feel your heart rate and breathing increase.

Notice the tightness (or looseness) of your muscles. Are your movements natural and fluid or stiff? Are you compensating for small pain or using proper form? Being mindful of all these things will help maximize your efforts.



Mindful exercising takes practice. If you find your thoughts are drifting away from your body to your chores, do not get upset with yourself. Simply realign your thoughts to focus on your body, and let them guide your progress. Practice will make it easier and easier to remain mindful. Eventually it will become second nature, and you will be amazed at how much more productive your exercises become and how great you feel during and after!

¹Tsafou KE, De Ridder DT, van Ee R, Lacroix JP. Mindfulness and satisfaction in physical activity: A cross-sectional study in the Dutch population. *J Health Psychol.* 2016 Sep;21(9): 1817-27. doi: 10.1177/1359105314567207

Why is Sleep so Important?

The rise of personal fitness trackers has provided fascinating insight into our daily routines. More recent models are now also providing information on how we sleep. With new, personalized data on how we spend that mysterious third of our life asleep, many people are for the first time really examining their sleeping habits and learning how they can improve their sleeping experience.



Despite a plethora of studies and advancements in research technology, many of the exact mechanisms of and reasons for sleep are still somewhat of a mystery. What scientists do know for sure is that sleep is a critical activity that affects our bodies in numerous ways—from our energy reserves to weight control, from mood to immune systems.

Sleep has been shown to be a factor in the repair of cell tissue, thermoregulation, metabolic regulation and adaptive immune functions.¹

There is a significant bidirectional relationship between mood and sleep, as our emotions and sleep patterns are intrinsically linked.² The highs and lows we feel during the day will affect how we sleep at night. And the quality and length of sleep will affect our emotions during the day.

Research has shown that especially emotional and stressful events during the day have an impact on sleep physiology and dream patterns, dream content, and the emotion within a dream. Researchers have also found that sleep has a restorative affect on daily functioning. Get enough high-quality sleep and you are more emotionally equipped the following day. Inversely, a night spent tossing and turning can leave one feeling more sensitive to emotional and stressful events the next day. These affects seem to be more deeply related to REM (rapid eye movement) sleep periods.³

The link between sleep and mood runs deeper than simply affecting how you feel when you wake up after a good (or restless) night. It's estimated that mood disorders are found in one-third to one-half of patients with chronic sleep problems.⁴

In addition to affecting mood, sleep can have a profound impact on memory. Studies have shown time and time again that better sleep equals better memory retention. This link has been interpreted as evidence that sleep provides a break from mental activity that increases forgetting with a kind of nonspecific interference.⁵

In other words, when we are awake, our normal and healthy mental processes distract us enough to interfere with memory formation.

Moreover, researchers have found that the amount of time that elapses between learning something new and going to sleep affects the ability to commit the new information to memory. One study found that students were more capable of retaining new vocabulary words when sleep occurred within three hours after the lesson than when sleep was delayed by more than 10 hours.⁶ Students who study during the afternoon and get a good night's sleep may be better off than students who stay up all night cramming for a test.

In addition to influencing mood and memory, sleep also affects weight control. Evidence suggests that people who do not regularly get enough sleep are more likely to be overweight or obese. Furthermore, when actively trying to lose weight, those who experience good-quality sleep are 33 percent more likely to have success.⁷ Sleep deprivation has been shown to increase production of a hormone called ghrelin, which increases appetite and fat storage.

Multiple studies have shown a significant positive relationship between sleep duration and the loss of body fat. Consequently, anyone who starts a new diet or activity plan in order to shed pounds should also consider how well he or she sleeps at night in order to maximize results and prevent disappointment.⁸



¹ Rasch B, Born J. About Sleep's Role in Memory. *Physiol Rev*. 2013 Apr; 93(2):681–766. doi: 10.1152/physrev.00032.2012

² Moturu ST, Khayal I, Aharony N, et al. Sleep, mood and sociability in a healthy population. *Conf Proc IEEE Eng Med Biol Soc*. 2011;2011:5267-70. doi: 10.1109/IEMBS.2011.6091303.

³ Vandekerckhove M, Cluydts R. The emotional brain and sleep: an intimate relationship. *Sleep Med Rev* 14: 219–226, 2010

⁴ Benca R, Okawa M, Uchiyama M, et al. Sleep and mood disorders. *Sleep Med Rev*. 1997 Nov;1(1):45-56.

⁵ Wixted JT. The psychology and neuroscience of forgetting. *Annu Rev Psychol* 55: 235–269, 2004.

⁶ Gais S, Lucas B, Born J. Sleep after learning aids memory recall. *Learn Mem* 13: 259–262, 2006

⁷ Thomson CA, Morrow KL, Flatt SW, et al. Relationship between sleep quality and quantity and weight loss in women participating in a weight-loss intervention trial. *Obesity (Silver Spring)*. 2012 Jul;20(7):1419-25. doi: 10.1038/oby.2012.62. Epub 2012 Mar 8.

⁸ Chaput JP, Tremblay A. Sleeping habits predict the magnitude of fat loss in adults exposed to moderate caloric restriction. *Obes Facts*. 2012;5(4):561-6. doi: 10.1159/000342054.



GOOD SLEEP HABITS

Scientists and researchers have studied sleep patterns for years looking for ways to help even the most time-crunched people find ways to sleep better. In general, a healthy diet, low stress and lots of physical activity will help at night. Here are a few other specific tips to foster healthy sleep habits.

Avoid napping during the day, especially in the afternoon. Naps, even short ones, can disturb normal sleep patterns.

An afternoon nap may feel refreshing after a long, hard day, but ultimately it could prevent sleep from coming easily at night, which will make it even harder to get through the following day without another nap.

Avoid stimulants such as caffeine, nicotine and alcohol too close to bedtime. You may think a drink before bedtime will help you calm down and sleep better after a stressful day. Technically, this is true; alcohol often does speed the onset of sleep. However, it will disrupt your sleep later. When the body begins to metabolize the alcohol, you may wake up and have trouble falling back asleep. Or you may not enter a deep, healthy sleep.



Exercise is great for fostering good sleep, but not when you get physical right before bed. Vigorous activity should be reserved for morning and early afternoon.

Teach your body how to relax before bed by establishing a regular, relaxing bedtime routine. Avoid stimulating music, television, books and conversation two hours before bedtime. Your bedroom and bed should be a sleep sanctuary—no television, radio, computers or cellphones allowed.⁹

A hot cup of chamomile tea in the evening can also help relax you and promote sleepiness.

Chamomile, which also has anti-inflammatory and anti-bacterial properties, is an old folk remedy for sleeplessness that has been shown in scientific studies to improve sleep.¹⁰

Despite its obvious importance, many of us treat sleep as an annoying part of life that cuts into productivity. Perhaps it's time we changed our focus and looked at sleep as an essential and healthy night activity that we look forward to.

How much should I sleep?

Age	Hours
65+	5-9
26-64	6-10
18-25	6-11
14-17	7-11
6-13	7-12
3-5	8-14
Under 2	9-19 ¹¹



⁹Thorpy, Michael, MD. "Sleep Hygiene." - National Sleep Foundation. National Sleep Foundation, n.d. Web. 09 Oct. 2016.

¹⁰Chang SM, Chen CH. Effects of an intervention with drinking

chamomile tea on sleep quality and depression in sleep disturbed postnatal women: a randomized controlled trial. J Adv Nurs. 2016 Feb;72(2):306-15. doi: 10.1111/jan.12836. Epub 2015 Oct 20.

¹¹"How Much Sleep Do We Really Need?" How Sleep Works. National Sleep Foundation, n.d. Web. 09 Oct. 2016.

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Food supplements should not be used as a substitute for a varied diet.

Experience Life to the Fullest

How often do you actively engage all five of your senses when experiencing life? Most people will answer that question with “rarely” or “never.” That’s because we tend to focus on just one or two senses at a time.

When watching the sun set over the sea, we use vision to focus on the colors of the sky and water. When eating dinner, we focus on the taste of the food. When talking with a friend, we tune into their words with our ears. But in each of these examples, all five of our senses are active and taking in information.

When we become conscious of all our senses, any experience can be heightened.

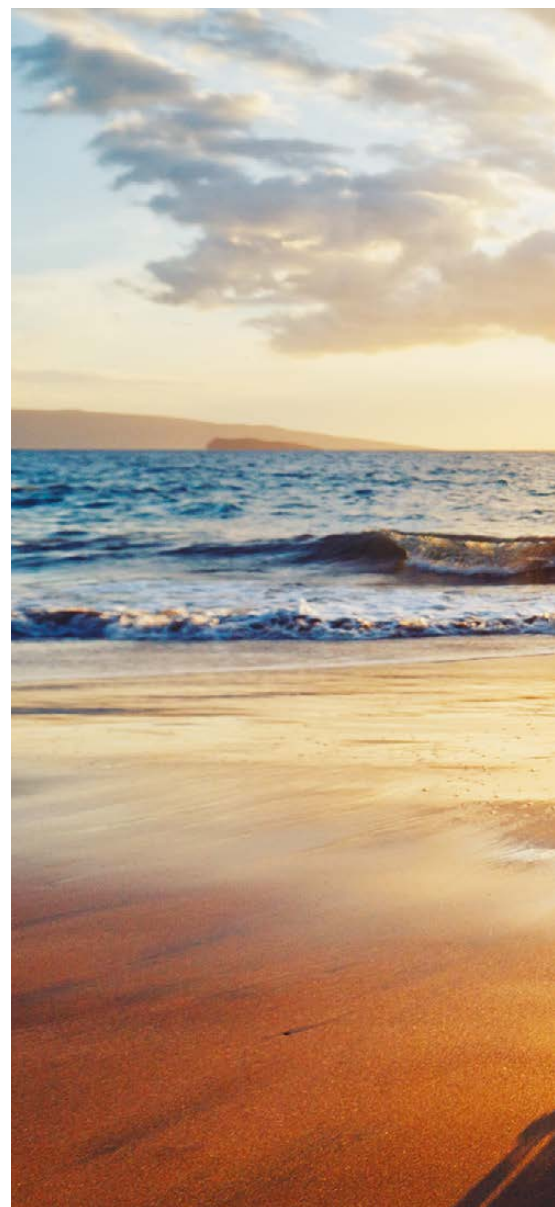
Let’s examine the sunset example. Do you feel the sand under your bare feet? Smell the salt of the ocean? Hear the waves lapping gently at the shore? Taste the salt in the air? When all our senses are engaged, the moment feels richer and will remain a much more vivid memory.

If you’re not used to engaging all your senses, it may not feel natural at first. It takes mindfulness to remember to slow down and let your other senses work. But because the beauty of the world will open to you in ways you never imagined, this new way of experiencing life will quickly become second nature.

It’s impossible to engage all your senses when they are dulled with distractions. Younger generations are especially accustomed to putting a screen between themselves and the world around them. Do you really need to post a beautiful sunset to Facebook or check in with friends to see what they are doing?

Excessive media consumption, constant multitasking and negative thought patterns are all common distractions that dull your senses. It simply isn’t possible to engage all your senses when distractions such as smartphones get in the way.

Put away your smartphone and strive to live in the moment.



When we take the time to experience the world with all our senses, we naturally let go of programmed behaviors and patterns. The more engaged with each moment we become, the more easily all the distractions we unconsciously create will disappear.

When you are simply watching a sunset, your mind will drift to other thoughts. You might unconsciously pick up your phone in order to see what your friends are doing.

But if you really experience the moment and engage all your senses, you may forget you even own a phone for a few minutes. Doesn’t that sound freeing?



Living life to the fullest by engaging all our senses often results in a happier life because it stops negative thought patterns.

When we are engaged in a beautiful experience, we don't need to own it.

We don't look for ways to make it better or try to purchase it. The sight, sound, touch, taste and smell create a whole, fulfilling moment. Living in that moment is more satisfying and positive than chasing any desire.



When we live through all of our senses, anxieties and worries subside, positive emotions rise, and we're left in a moment of sensory indulgence and connection to our surroundings.

When we're busy worrying, analyzing, capturing and sharing, we are not fully engaged and enjoying the world around us. It is only when we slow down and tune into all our senses that we can truly experience life to the fullest.



The Taste of Nutrition

In a world without advertisements, a premade food industry, man-made flavors or genetically altered food, what tastes would humans prefer? According to behavioral ecologists, recognizing flavors is the body's way of identifying nutrients and remembering what foods they come from.¹

Some of the most influential proof of this innate nutritional wisdom was found in 1939, when a researcher let a group of toddlers feed themselves without any adult influence. Remember that in 1939 the manufactured food industry hadn't yet evolved into what it is today. Most people still consumed whole foods in their natural state or simply mixed foods together and cooked with flavorful herbs and spices.

The study gave the toddlers a selection of 34 nutritionally diverse whole foods. Some of the choices were water, potatoes, beef, bone jelly (gelatin), carrots, chicken, grains, bananas and milk.

The children were given complete autonomy to choose what foods they wanted, and the results were nothing less than astonishing.

Parents today would probably expect their children to migrate to the most sugar-dense foods. But this study showed the toddlers were drawn to the foods that provided the nourishment their bodies needed for whatever stage they were currently in. Toddlers in the midst of growth spurts tended to eat more protein. During high-activity times, they consumed more carbohydrates and fats. Incredibly, one child in the study who had a vitamin D deficiency even chose to drink cod liver oil.²

The toddlers were not educated in nutrition. They didn't know the first thing about carbohydrates, fats, gluten or sugar. They simply ate what tasted good to them. How is it possible that they chose foods to fit their nutritional needs so well?

There is evidence that our taste buds are linked to nutritional content. Flavor volatiles (organic compounds) are derived from an array of nutrients, including amino acids, fatty acids and carotenoids. A tomato, for example, gets most of its important flavor-related volatiles from essential nutrients. These volatiles provide taste buds with important information about the nutritional makeup of the tomato. In other words, the same nutrients that make a tomato healthy are responsible for its delicious flavor.³

For hundreds of thousands of years, our nutrition has been guided by taste. Now this process is being hijacked by the manufactured food industry. Let's continue looking at tomatoes; our taste buds have known for centuries that they are healthy. But today, most species of tomatoes have been bred and genetically altered to withstand the rugged environments and traveling conditions needed to transport them across the globe and into supermarkets. This process doesn't take into account actual nutritional content.



Many of the premade foods we buy today are not what they seem to our taste buds. A fruit juice may taste great to a child, but without reading the label, parents may not realize that it doesn't contain anywhere near the same nutritional content as a whole piece of fruit. Additionally, many products include a lot of additional sugars, artificial flavors and MSG (monosodium glutamate, which directly activates the nerves in the tongue to send a message to the brain that it tastes good).

The five taste sensations—sweetness, sourness, saltiness, bitterness and umami—used to guide us to healthy choices. After several decades of eating faux foods, many of us can no longer trust our taste buds. We have grown too accustomed to eating foods created to make money rather than foods grown to be healthy. Although many Western diets are rampant with faux foods, this isn't a problem isolated in one area of the globe.

Long ago, people all over the world were led to healthy diets by their taste buds. Differences in available flavors, religious food laws, traditions, customs and the preferred use of ingredient-flavor networks created widely different cuisines throughout the world. However, there has always been a wide variety of fruits, vegetables, herbs and spices to keep palates and bodies happy no matter where people live.

Despite the Scandinavian diet being drastically different from a North American diet, people in both areas were able to consume all the nutrients they needed to remain healthy. The same goes for German and Japanese diets.

They did this by consuming a wide variety of foods in their natural form. Today, we can go back to this healthier eating style by seeking out local, organic foods while at the same time avoiding premade and manufactured foods with nutritional content drastically different from what our ancestors thrived on.

¹ Schatzker, Mark. "How Flavor Drives Nutrition." WSJ. Wsj.com, 09 Apr. 2015. Web. 25 Sept. 2016.
² Davis CM. Results of the self-selection of diets by young children. Can Med Assoc J 1939;41:257-61.

³ Stephen A. Goff, Harry J. Klee. Plant Volatile Compounds: Sensory Cues for Health and Nutritional Value? Science 10 Feb 2006 : 815-819

Making Sense of Nutrition and the Five Senses

Taste, touch, sight, hearing and smell—these are the five primary senses that we use to interact with the world, and our dinner plates. At the table, we see, touch, taste and smell our food; we hear foods being cooked in the frying pan; we see and hear our friends while we eat; we feel silverware with our hands and napkins on our lips.





The process of eating is an amazing sensory journey. But what happens to that journey if we lose one of our senses? How does it affect our meals and nutritional intake?

As we age, most of us will experience changes in at least one of our five senses. In a study published in the *Journal of the American Geriatrics Society*, University of Chicago researchers found 94 percent of the study's participants experienced loss in at least one of their senses! Over half the participants experienced two or more sensory losses.¹ Researchers believe this loss of senses may help explain why so many older adults report poorer quality of life and face increased challenges in interacting with the world around them—it may also help explain certain nutritional deficiencies in elderly populations.

Cataracts, glaucoma and age-related macular degeneration are three of the most common forms of vision impairment associated with aging. Nutrition and lifestyle changes can impact each of these for better or worse.

Levels of vitamin C, an eyesight-supporting antioxidant, tend to decrease in the eyes as we age. This decrease in protection can lead to an increase in vision-damaging free radicals in the eyes. Fortunately, long-term supplementation with vitamin C has been shown to help prevent this loss. Moreover, supplying eyes with the nutritional support they need has also been linked to a reduction in the risk of developing cataracts. According to one study, taking a combination of vitamins C and E for more than 10 years may cut the risk of developing cataracts by an astonishing 60 percent.²



Diets rich in fresh, cold-water fish tend to help protect the eyes as well, especially in relation to open-angle glaucoma, presumably because of the high levels of omega-3 fatty acids found in fish and other marine life.³ We can also protect our eyes from the outside in by avoiding prolonged exposure to direct sunlight as well as avoiding exposure to environmental contaminants and carcinogens.

Committing to a lifestyle that encourages these behaviors can help protect one of our most precious and relied-upon senses for a lifetime.

Studies confirm that hearing loss and poor nutrition go hand in hand. An Australian study reported on in the *Journal of Nutrition* found diets with high amounts of simple sugars and refined carbohydrates detrimentally impact hearing.⁴ Other research discovered a link between inadequate intake of folic acid and B12 and damage to the coating of the cochlear nerve—much of that damage has been attributed to high levels of free radicals.⁵

Free radicals can enter the body from cigarette smoke, smog, herbicides and other environmental sources. Other free radicals are formed by healthy, essential processes within the body, such as burning fuel for energy or fighting viruses. When the body is not supplied with enough antioxidants and too many free radicals accumulate, damage to your ears, eyes and every other part of the body can begin to occur. The damage they inflict can be compounded by poor nutrition and stress. Therefore, an antioxidant-rich diet can also help fight the damage some ototoxic drugs—like those used to battle depression, infections and cancer—can do to the inner ear.

One might not connect the loss of senses such as hearing, touch and vision to nutritional deficiencies, but these senses connect people to the world around them. Without being able to see, hear or feel their friends and family, many elderly people may begin to retreat from the world around them. This self-imposed isolation creates a risk factor for many health concerns, including suboptimal eating habits, which can lead to poor nutrition, and additional sensory loss.



¹ Correia C, Lopez KJ, Wroblewski KE, et al. Global Sensory Impairment in Older Adults in the United States. *J Am Geriatr Soc*. 2016 Feb;64(2):306-13. doi: 10.1111/jgs.13955.

² American Optometric Association. "Vitamin C." Vitamin C. AOA, n.d. Web. 02 Oct. 2016.

³ Renard JP, Rouland JF, Bron A, et al. Nutritional, lifestyle and environmental factors in ocular hypertension and primary open-angle glaucoma: an exploratory case-control study. *Acta*

Ophthalmol. 2013 Sep;91(6):505-13. doi: 10.1111/j.1755-3768.2011.02356.x. Epub 2012 Mar 6.

⁴ B Gopinath, V Flood, C McMahon, et al. Dietary Glycemic Load Is a Predictor of Age-Related Hearing Loss in Older Adults. *J Nutr*. December 1, 2010 vol. 140 no. 12 2207-2212

⁵ Houston DK, Johnson MA, Nozza RJ, et al. Age-related hearing loss, vitamin B-12, and folate in elderly women. *Am J Clin Nutr*. 1999 Mar;69(3):564-71.



While they are distinct senses, taste and smell are intrinsically linked. Enjoying the aromas of food sets off a chain reaction in the body that prepares it to eat.

Your sense of smell is more than just an appetite kick-starter; it may also be an important bellwether for your overall health.

A study from the University of Chicago found loss of smell to be a strong indicator of five-year mortality rates.⁶

Losing your sense of smell can have a dramatic effect on nutritional intake. Because smelling food is such an important part of eating, when that sense is diminished or gone, many people find they lose their appetites. When a person eats less (generally speaking, below 1,200 kilocalories a day), they are simply not consuming enough vitamins and minerals to stay as healthy as possible.

Of all the five senses, losing the sense of taste can produce the biggest negative impact on nutritional health. People at risk for losing their sense of taste include the elderly, people who have certain allergies or those who use excessive nose drops. Certain medications can also cause changes and loss in taste sensation. Smoking, poor oral hygiene and improperly fitting dentures can lessen taste sensation as well.

Regardless of the reason for the loss, the inability to taste foods often leads to nutritional problems. People who can no longer smell or taste may lose interest in eating to the point of malnutrition. Conversely, some people may overeat to the point of obesity in an attempt to achieve pleasure from food. Many people who lose the ability to taste also end up consuming excess amounts of salt, sugar and fats in an attempt to compensate for the lack of taste.

Losing the sense of taste or smell tends to have the most profound effect on appetite. But all our senses are engaged when we eat. The following tips can help bring back appetite and encourage healthy eating habits in people who no longer derive the same pleasures from food that they used to.

Long before mealtime, encourage healthy habits such as good oral hygiene and regular physical activity. Healthy teeth and gums help protect taste buds, and exercise stimulates appetite.



Remember that there is more to food than flavor alone. Create meals that stimulate all five senses by experimenting with different textures, temperatures and colors.

Set the table with colorful placemats and napkins to further stimulate your senses. In addition, invite loved ones to share the meal and provide engaging conversation.

Some people with sensory loss will find it easier to consume foods they are familiar with, while others need new foods that are not linked to memories. In either case, using a variety of seasonings and strong flavors to stimulate as many taste buds as possible can often help.

Encourage your loved ones to eat a variety of foods. People who lose joy in eating will often eschew variety in favor of simplicity. But eating the same few foods over and over again will not provide the body with the nutritional support it needs to maintain health.

⁶ Pinto JM, Wroblewski KE, Kern DW, Schumm LP, McClintock MK (2014) Olfactory Dysfunction Predicts 5-Year Mortality in Older Adults. PLoS ONE 9(10): e107541. doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0107541

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Delicious and Healthy Herb Combinations

Herbs are packed with flavor and nutrition. Experimenting with new combinations can make ordinary dishes taste more delicious than you may think possible, while at the same time giving your body the nutritional support it craves.

Herbs and spices tend to be extremely rich in nutritional content—especially antioxidants, which the body needs to protect against free radicals, also known as “oxidative stress.” Regularly cooking new recipes that call for a wide variety of antioxidant-rich herbs will help provide your body with enough antioxidants to help safeguard against oxidative stress caused by free radicals.

Protection against free radicals is far from the only health benefit offered by fresh herbs. Every herb has distinct nutritional content, so each one provides different support to your body. Basil is rich in vitamin A, which has been shown to support healthy vision. Sage tends to have high levels of folic acid, a nutrient that pregnant women are strongly encouraged to consume. Tarragon has high levels of the important minerals calcium, manganese and iron. Dill is a good source of the antioxidant vitamin C.

It's easy to see how adding a few fresh herbs to your meal can provide your body with a broad spectrum of nutritional support.

Spices have also been found to be particularly rich in anticancer compounds, which act in many different ways to keep healthy stem cells healthy so they do not develop the multiple defects that can lead to cancer.¹

Every cuisine has its own foundation of herbs and spices. Regional differences in availability and taste preferences dictate which herbs tend to be used most and how they are paired. However, in general, a few basic combinations are well received everywhere: basil/thyme/oregano, dill/chive/parsley, cilantro/sweet marjoram/thyme, lemon verbena/mint/chamomile, and parsley/thyme/laurel.

Experiment with taste and nutrition by substituting herbs called for in your recipe with similar yet distinctly different choices. Try adding marjoram instead of oregano, parsley instead of cilantro, anise in place of fennel or savory for thyme. Not only will you give your taste buds something new to try, but you will also help expand the variety of health-promoting nutrients in your body.

Cilantro is a particularly good spice to use when preparing fish-based dishes, as it enhances detoxification of mercury, which is often concentrated in fish, particularly in larger fish with a longer life span, such as tuna.



An easy way to test new combinations before throwing your fresh herbs into the stew pot is to dice a small amount and mix it into soft butter or cream cheese. Spread this on a cracker or a piece of bread. Your taste buds will let you know right away whether or not your experiment was successful.

When using fresh herbs, remember that recipes generally measure for dry herbs. One tablespoon of finely cut fresh herbs is equivalent to one teaspoon of crumbled dried herbs or about one half teaspoon of ground dried herbs. Dry herbs can be added earlier in the cooking process, but fresh ones cannot.

For longer-cooking recipes, add your fresh herbs in the last 45-60 minutes of cooking. Be sure to handle your fresh herbs gently because their oils can be fragile. Nothing can boost the flavor and nutritional content of your favorite dishes like adding a few fresh herbs.

If you are unsure of where to start, try these standard combinations:

Savory Soups: Thyme, parsley, bay leaf, dill, tarragon.

Hot and Spicy: Paprika, chili, garlic, allspice, thyme, cayenne.

Delicious Desserts: Cinnamon, cloves, coriander, ginger, nutmeg, mace.

Classic French: Chives, chervil, parsley, thyme, tarragon.

Indian Mix: Cumin, coriander, cardamom, curry.

Italian Blend: Oregano, basil, marjoram, tarragon, parsley.

Mexican Combination: Garlic, cumin, oregano, cilantro.

As you master the basic combinations of fresh herbs and spices, you will learn which flavor combinations you enjoy the most. Keep experimenting to ensure your meals are fun and your body receives a wide range of nutritional support.

¹ Aggarwhal, Bharat, Yost, Deobrah: Healing Spices: How to Use 50 Everyday and Exotic Spices to Boost Health and Beat Disease, 2011.

A Hug Can Make All the Difference

When babies are born, mothers are encouraged to hold their newborn skin to skin because of the incredible benefits that come from this very first hug.

It promotes bonding right away, reduces stress and activates beneficial hormones in both mother and baby. Research shows that continuing to hug our children closely as they grow up may be just as important as that very first skin-to-skin interaction.

Children who are raised in homes with lots of hugging and affection display vastly different hormone levels than children raised without touch—and this effect lasts long after the baby years.

A Romanian study done in the 1980s found that levels of the stress hormone cortisol were much higher in children who lived in orphanages for more than eight months than in those who were adopted before four months.¹

More recent research has shown hugging also helps reduce stress by stimulating the release of a peptide hormone called oxytocin from the posterior pituitary gland. Children who experience more skin-to-skin contact in the earliest phases of life and continue to receive lots of hugs have oxytocin released into their bodies, where it counteracts and reduces cortisol levels and also promotes a feeling of tranquility and connection to other people.

This effect has led many neonatal intensive care doctors to encourage new parents to spend as much time as possible holding their premature infants, as it is shown to help boost these babies' vital signs.

An unrelated study found that close maternal bonds with lots of hugging during the early childhood years have a powerful impact on hippocampal growth. The hippocampus is the area of the brain thought to be the center of emotion, memory and autonomic nervous system regulation. Data from this study suggests that although hugs and affection are important throughout life, early childhood is a particularly sensitive period when this support has an even more powerful effect on hippocampal growth in the young, developing brain. The hippocampal growth trajectory observed was associated with better emotion regulation in early adolescence. All these findings suggest lots of hugs and affection in early childhood may help foster healthy childhood brain development and emotional functioning.²

Hugs are important to children for much more than just healthy neurological development. Children need to feel love and affection from their parents in order to feel emotionally and physically secure.

Hugs help build trust and a feeling of safety, which help children feel open to trying new experiences.



This sense of safety also helps children develop healthy self-esteem. The love we give our children, often in the form of physical touch, builds a foundation of self-confidence that helps them feel good about themselves. Put simply, you can boost your child's confidence, trust and self-esteem greatly with multiple daily hugs.

Hugging makes children (and adults!) feel happy. Hugs can trigger the release of serotonin in the brain, which is a natural feel-good hormone. This may be the reason we desire a hug when we are feeling depressed or sad. Perhaps unaware of the chemical reasons behind it, we know that hugs literally leave us feeling better.³



The power of hugs doesn't stop there. It's been shown that hugs can boost the immune system as well.

A study has shown the gentle pressure on the sternum combined with the emotional boost from a hug stimulates the thymus gland, which is responsible for producing and regulating specialized lymphocytes called T-cells—hugs keep us healthy in mind and body!⁴



Because parents and children receive the benefits (and feel good), hugs even help educate our children on how love is a two-way street.

The science is clear—the power of hugs is incredible.

¹ Gunnar MR, Morison SJ, Chisholm K, Schuder M; Salivary cortisol levels in children adopted from Romanian orphanages; *Dev Psychopathol.* 2001 Summer;13(3):611-28.

² Joan L. Luby, Andy Belden, Michael P. Harms, et al. Mother nurture and the social definition of neurodevelopment; *Proc. Natl. Acad. Sci. USA* 2016 0 (2016) 1605859113v1-201605859

³ Richardson, Josh. "8 Ways Science Reveals That Hugging Creates a Physiological Response Equivalent To Drugs." 8 Ways Science Reveals That Hugging Creates a Physiological Response Equivalent To Drugs. *Prevent Disease*, 22 Jan. 2015. Web. 25 Sept. 2016.

⁴ Rea, Shilo. "Hugs Help Protect Against Stress and Infection, Say Carnegie Mellon Researchers-CMU News - Carnegie Mellon University." Hugs Help Protect Against Stress and Infection, Say Carnegie Mellon Researchers-CMU News - Carnegie Mellon University. Carnegie Mellon University, 17 Dec. 2014. Web. 25 Sept. 2016.

The Sensitive Side of Women

Are women really more sensitive than men? In terms of experiencing life through the five senses, women definitely experience things differently than men do. Evidence suggests that male and female brains respond in different ways when processing sensory input.

Men and women literally see the world differently. A study at City University of New York showed that women are better able to distinguish between subtle shades of primary colors (red, yellow and blue) than men are.¹ While females tend to be better at discriminating among colors, males tend to have an advantage when it comes to following fast-moving objects and discerning detail from a distance. These differences may have roots in our hunter-gatherer past, when women picked fruits and berries while men stood guard or hunted.

In addition to their ability to better distinguish colors, women are also less prone to color blindness.

The genetic condition that causes a pigment problem and makes it difficult to distinguish between colors is rarely found in women. In evolutionary terms, women probably developed eyesight better suited for distinguishing poisonous plants from healthy ones.



Women may also have a better sense of smell than most men do.

The tendency for women to outperform men on scent identification tests has been seen for a long time, but only fairly recently have scientists found a possible explanation for the phenomenon. A study in *PLoS ONE* found the olfactory centers in the brains of females had roughly 43 percent more cells and almost 50 percent more neurons than the brains of men did.

Because few cells are added to our brains after its initial development, women are most likely born with these extra cells, which may have their roots in reproductive behaviors such as finding a suitable mate, pair bonding and infant recognition.²

Whether or not women hear better than men is a topic that has been debated for generations. According to recent research, women may not necessarily hear better than men, but they definitely hear differently.

A study measuring brain activity in the temporal lobe during active listening found distinct differences in the areas that were activated in men and women. Men's brains had a tendency to show activity exclusively on the left side of the brain, which is classically associated with listening and speech. Women, on the other hand, displayed activity on both sides of the brain, although most of the activity was seen on the left. The right temporal lobe is associated with non-language auditory functions.

These findings suggest language and hearing differences in male and female brains, but it doesn't necessarily mean either sex is able to perform better or worse. The researchers theorize that human evolution created two different types of brains designed for equally intelligent and complementary behavior.

In addition to the differences in how their brains process sounds, men and women also tend to lose hearing differently. As they age, both genders are at risk for age-related hearing loss. However, women approaching retirement age have better high-frequency hearing than their male counterparts. Women in their 60s and older tend to lose low-frequency hearing at a greater rate than men do.³

All these differences may help explain why men and women tend to excel at different types of tasks—neither is better than the other, just different, and they complement each other. It also shows how getting in touch with your “sensitive” side can help any person experience life in a more fulfilling way. By knowing where your sense strengths are and paying closer attention to those attributes, any woman can experience the world more fully.

¹ Israel Abramov, James Gordon, Olga Feldman, and Alla Chavarga. Sex and vision II: color appearance of monochromatic lights. *Biol Sex Differ.* 2012; 3: 21.

² Oliveira-Pinto AV, Santos RM, Coutinho RA, Oliveira LM, et al. (2014) Sexual Dimorphism in the Human Olfactory Bulb: Females Have More Neurons and Glial Cells than Males. *PLoS ONE* 9(11): e111733. doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0111733

³ “Medscape Log In.” Medscape, Medscape General Medicine, 1997, http://www.medscape.com/viewarticle/719262_1.



Coping with Hearing Loss

For the majority of the population, some degree of hearing loss is inevitable with age. Taking appropriate action to do something about your hearing loss begins by first understanding what is happening to your body and accepting that this is nothing to be ashamed of.

According to the *Journal of the American Medical Association*, hearing loss is the third most prevalent chronic condition in older adults.¹ Approximately 25 to 40 percent of people ages 65 and older have hearing loss, with the numbers increasing to 66 percent at age 75 and more than 80 percent for those over age 85.

There are a number of different causes of hearing loss, including aging, excessive noise, ear infections, reaction to medications and physical injuries. Hearing loss is cumulative, meaning advanced hearing loss can be caused by a combination of several or all of these factors occurring throughout life.

To limit the amount of hearing loss throughout a lifetime, safeguard yourself against loud sounds. Wear hearing protection such as earplugs or ear muffs when you must be exposed to loud noises such as concerts, lawn mowers and power tools. Turn down the volume when listening to music, especially when using headphones.

If someone else can hear sound from your headphones, that's usually an indication they are loud enough to damage the sensitive nerves in the inner ear known as "hair cells."

Despite the widespread prevalence of seniors with hearing loss, fewer than 13 percent of patients report that they received a hearing screening during their annual physical exam, according to some estimates. Unfortunately, many patients subscribe to the myth that if they had a hearing problem, their doctor would have told them. This combined with a reluctance to accept what is happening has led to an estimated 80 percent of people with hearing loss going untreated.

Untreated hearing loss has been linked to a number of other physical and emotional concerns, including reduced job performance and earning potential, anxiety, stress, impaired memory, and fatigue.² Often people who have trouble hearing conversations end up withdrawing from social situations. They either don't realize what is happening or are ashamed to admit it, finding it easier to simply stop having conversations than to struggle to hear what is being said.

The negative impact of untreated hearing loss affects not only the individuals but their families as well. Adult children of seniors can become frustrated when they feel they have to yell or repeat themselves over and over again.

Family members need to realize that a parent's or grandparent's hearing loss can affect the whole family.

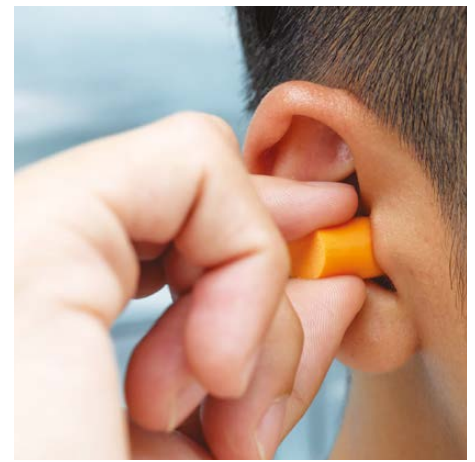
One of the best things family members can do to support the person with hearing loss is to gently and lovingly encourage them to get treated.

If a parent or a grandparent is self-conscious about bulky hearing aids, inform them that these days hearing aids are so small that they are virtually undetectable. Current-generation hearing aids are also often able to pair with electronic devices such as cell phones to boost hearing and avoid the squealing feedback older generations of hearing aid users had to deal with.



¹ Parnet S, Lynn C, Glass RM. Adult Hearing Loss. *JAMA*. 2007;298(1):130. doi:10.1001/jama.298.1.130.

² Your Guide to Better Hearing. Better Hearing Institute. 2005



If the person is not yet ready to try hearing aids, there is also a wide selection of helpful assistive technology products that can be investigated. Extra-loud, amplifying phones can help compensate for hearing loss that can otherwise make phone calls almost impossible. For those who have lost the ability to clearly hear the TV, most modern televisions allow display of closed captions. Doorbells can be attached to lamps that flash instead of audible chimes that may go unnoticed.

There are a lot of other strategies that family members can utilize to improve communication and keep those with hearing loss engaged in the conversation.

Always strive to be patient, positive and relaxed. Turn off any radios, televisions, appliances or other noisy distractions. Face the person directly in well-lit areas, and avoid using your hands as you talk.

Hearing loss is an invisible disability that, untreated, can significantly impact one's quality of life—but it does not need to. With a supportive family and a willingness to investigate assistive technology and/or hearing aids, nearly everyone can jump back into lively conversations and stay connected.



The Joys of Being a Sensitive Man

Traditionally raised men who value stoicism, strength and other masculine traits have a tendency to miss out on many of the wonderful small joys in life. Learning to protect and place an emphasis on experiencing one's senses can help any man live a happier, healthier life.

TOUCH

Macho men tend to shy away from hugs and signs of affection that involve physical touch. This may lead to feelings of depression, anxiety and loneliness. According to research conducted at the University of North Carolina, people who regularly hugged their partners showed lower heart rates and blood pressure. Another study found hugs can even protect the immune system.

Hugs also appear to stimulate production of oxytocin, dopamine and serotonin—three powerful feel-good hormones that promote feelings of contentment, happiness and relaxation.

TASTE

Men who are taught to be stoic and believe showing emotions to be a trait only females are allowed to display may be missing out at the dinner table. For many men, eating is a chore. They may have certain likes and dislikes, but mealtime is little more than another task that must be completed.



Experiencing the flavors of food and beverages can be limited when a man holds too many emotions inside; this can in turn lead to consuming a limited diet that doesn't provide the broad spectrum of nutritional support a man needs.

When a man is able to show how much he enjoys certain flavors, share them with loved ones and speak emotionally about his food, the joy of eating returns. With it comes the ability to branch out and try new food and flavor combinations that incorporate a wide range of healthy fruits and vegetables.

VISION

Masculine men often try to hide problems because they don't want to show weakness, or they feel they simply can't be bothered to take the time to get help. Vision problems can cause a man to lose out on many of life's joys. Regular eye exams, whether a person currently uses glasses or not, will help catch any small issues before they become big problems. Healthy vision allows a man to see his wife's smile, watch his favorite team, read a good book, and witness countless other people, experiences and things that bring joy into his life.



SMELL

Men may initially scoff at aromatherapy, but relishing scents can help shed stress after a hard day at the office or help them stop worrying and fall asleep after a particularly hard day. Lemon and other citrus smells are wonderful for boosting mood. Lavender-based scents are relaxing and calming.

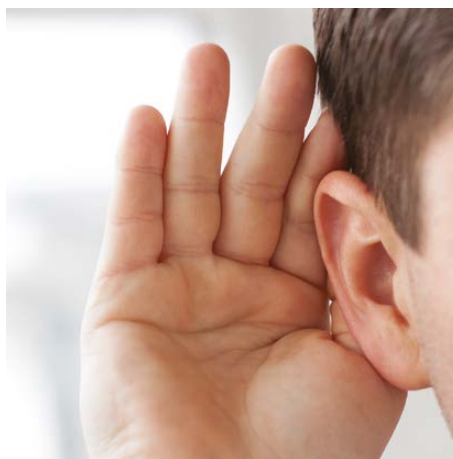
Thyme, with its sweet and spicy aroma, is a great morning scent that will energize, while the long-lasting, bittersweet aroma of sage oil is used as a calming sedative.

There is a distinct scent with a unique effect on the mind and the body that any man can benefit from.



HEARING

Much like with vision, many men try to hide problems with hearing because they feel ashamed of their “weakness.” Men may also be at increased risk of experiencing hearing loss because of the loud noises that come with traditionally manly activities such as mowing the lawn, using power tools and riding motorcycles. Men should limit the amount of time they are exposed to loud sounds and wear hearing protection (even if they don’t find it manly) when working with loud equipment.



Losing one’s hearing means not being able to engage in conversations with loved ones, hear the roaring crowd at a game or keep up with adult children on the telephone.

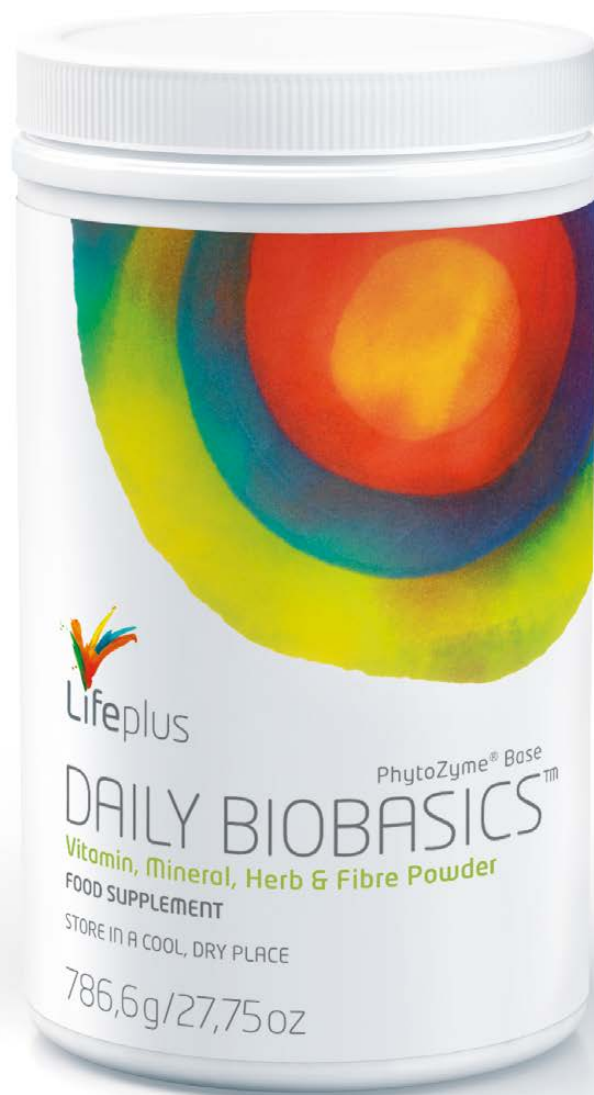
That’s not to mention the health concerns hearing loss is associated with, including depression, memory loss and dementia. When a man safeguards his hearing, he is better able to engage with the world around him.

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Food supplements should not be used as a substitute for a varied diet.

Ask the Expert

Does exercise affect mood?

Have you ever gone for a run after a particularly stressful day and ended up feeling much better afterward? That happens because there is a definite link between physical activity and mood.

Exercise causes the body to release feel-good hormones that literally improve your mood.

The more often you can exercise, the better the results will be for your mood and cognitive function, because the same endorphins that make you feel better mentally also help you concentrate and stay sharp. Getting active can also affect mood by disrupting negative thought patterns. It's easy to dwell on a bad mood when you're sitting alone indoors. It's much harder when you're physically active. Focusing on your activity, combined with those wonderful mood-boosting hormones, can break negative thought patterns and leave you feeling happier and energized in a short time.



Are low-fat snack foods a healthy option?

The snack foods you enjoy are tasty because they are high in fat, sugar and salt, and often also synthetic artificial flavorings and MSG. Replacing junk foods with diet drinks and fat-free snacks may seem like a good idea, but it often ends up working against you. When one of those three ingredients is removed to produce a “healthier” version, manufacturers increase the other two. The end result is a low-fat snack that is higher in sugar and salt. Or worse, packed with man-made faux food ingredients engineered in a laboratory. Plus, because we think these “low fat” processed foods are healthier snacks, we often tend to eat more of them, thus boosting intake of refined sugar, salt and artificial flavoring. For best results, ditch premade snack foods altogether and instead nibble on whole fruits, vegetables, whole grains and protein sources loaded with nutrients and dietary fiber that support the body while keeping you feeling full and satisfied for longer.

What does “eat the rainbow” really mean?

The term “eat the rainbow” is a simple way to remember that you need to consume a wide variety of fruits and vegetables to provide your body with the nutritional support it needs. Eating the rainbow refers to a diet full of the colors of the rainbow — red beets, orange carrots, yellow squash, green spinach, indigo blueberries, violet eggplant. The nutritional content of every fruit and vegetable is different, and no one or two of them will provide your body with everything it needs. You don't need to eat the entire rainbow at every meal, but aim for two to three colors each time you sit down to eat. Each of these colors signals the presence of a specific class of health-protecting nutrient groups such as carotenoids (red, orange and yellow), chlorophyll (green) and anthocyanins (blue, purple, violet and black).



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