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DR. SAUNDERS'

TOP 3 ALTERNATIVES TO POPULAR HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE DRUGS

**6 WAYS TO KNOCK OUT
BACK PAIN WITHOUT A PILL**

Surprising Real Pain Relief

**Best and Worst
Protein Powders ...pg. 8**

**FOOD AND MIGRAINE
CONNECTION**

Because...OUCH!

**The "Healthiest"
Alcoholic Beverages**



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**LETTER
FROM
THE
EDITOR**

According to Johns Hopkins Health Alerts, blood pressure medications — including angiotensin receptor blockers—have numerous side effects. But these side effects pale in comparison with the high-risk category of blood pressure drugs. These place you in danger of life-threatening conditions such as cancer, heart attack and liver damage. One study in Lancet Oncology showed that those taking an angiotensin-receptor blocker (ARB) were far more likely to get cancer. For instance, the use of an ARB increased lung cancer risk by 25% or higher!

You can treat your high blood pressure safely and side-effect-free with blood -pressure -lowering alternatives right now from Dr. Saunders. There are many ...some of them twice as effective as any dangerous blood pressure drug.

Some unfortunate hypertension patients experience episodes of migraines. In general, a surprising 10% of the world-wide population suffers from migraine headaches. There is a strong belief in the natural health community of one disease, one cause. In other words, the body, if cleansed of toxins and given proper nutrition, will heal itself. There is also a consensus that health starts in the gut. To fully address the actions you can take to eliminate migraines from your life, follow all of the steps in the Food and Migraine Connection article.

If we hyperextend or twist a joint, we know exactly what caused the pain. But there are times when back pain sneaks up on us and we have no idea what started it, much less how to stop it. Before you pop a pill or two, or regularly fill a prescription for the rest of your life, why not discover the cause, rather than just treat the symptoms? If you heal the body, you end the back pain. Home Cures That Work gives you 6 Ways to Knock Out Back Pain Without A Pill.

Starting a conversation about protein powders between a vegan and a meat eater is a lot like discussing politics or religion with a stranger. More often than not, it's not going to end peacefully. However, there are many myths and inaccurate claims made on both sides of the fence with regards the best sources, and it's time to clear them up in our article about the best and worst protein powders.

Let's face it. It's hard seeing the benefits of a healthy diet and exercise when we're always going out for some drinks with friends. Beer is filling and full of carbs, mixed drinks are too sugary. How can we drink our alcohol and have flat stomachs too? First off, a warning. The healthiest ways to drink alcohol still aren't really healthy. After all, too much of a good thing, even "healthier" alcohol, can land you in the hospital with alcohol poisoning, and that would be the least of your worries. Now, onto a review of the healthiest alcoholic drinks.

Find your way forward in this month's Home Cures That Work for some major "aha" moments and answers to your blood pressure, migraine, back pain, protein and alcohol questions!

For your health,

Cheryl Ravey
Editor
Home Cures That Work



3 Alternatives to Popular High Blood Pressure Drugs

Lowering Stress to Avoid Angiotensin Receptor Blockers (ARB)

BY DR. SCOTT SAUNDERS, M.D.

Research on mice and men has indicated some amazing characteristics of the relatively new angiotensin receptor blockers (ARB). Angiotensin receptor blockers (also called ARBs or angiotensin II inhibitors) are medicines that dilate (widen) blood vessels, and are used in the treatment of conditions such as high blood pressure. Examples of ARBs include[1]:

- Atacand
- Avalide
- Avapro
- Benicar
- Cozaar
- Diovan
- Exforge
- Hyzaar
- Micardis
- Teveten

Angiotensin is a chemical in your body that affects your cardiovascular system in various ways, including narrowing your blood vessels.

This narrowing can increase your blood pressure and force your heart to work harder. Angiotensin also triggers a hormone that makes your body retain water. Having more fluid in your body in a restricted space will cause your blood pressure to rise. Angiotensin receptor blockers block the action of angiotensin, allowing blood vessels to dilate. They also reduce the amount of water your body retains, which lowers your blood pressure.

But ARBs have many other positive effects on the body. It seems that every system is affected, including the brain, heart, lungs, kidneys, and more. As more research is done, more benefits are found.

ARB Potential Benefits

- Protects the kidneys in diabetes[2]
- Prevents dementia, improves brain function[3]
- Decreases stress, lowers anxiety[4]
- Delays the manifestations of hypertension
- Delays diabetes
- Decreases cardiovascular disease
- Lowers risk of cancer[5]
- Prolongs life[6]
- Lowers protein, lipid, and DNA oxidation[7]
- Limits mitochondrial peroxide production (protecting energy)
- Increases uncoupling protein-2 and sirtuin expression (to prevent aging).[8]
- Prevents migraine headaches[9]

Taken together, it seems like ARBs can improve and prolong the life of almost everyone! It sounds too good to be true! How can a medication that blocks only one receptor have so many benefits? Is this snake-oil? Or is it real?!

It turns out that there is some truth to all of it. ARB drugs block one of the receptors (AT1) stimulated by Angiotensin II, a hormone from

the kidney that increases blood pressure. Angiotensin II is a stress hormone so ARB drugs will have the effect of lowering stress.

Stress is the biggest factor in our health, causing more damage than anything else. If we could put all we do to affect our physical health on a scale, it might look something like this:



Stress has much more effect on our health and longevity than anything else. The most important cause of aging is stress. Yet, we spend most of our time and money on the other things: food, exercise, supplements and medications; and ignore the most important part – stress.

It turns out that angiotensin II is a major stress hormone. It's released by stress, causing many of the effects that we experience. Stress is ultimately responsible for:

- Decreased circulation in the body, including the brain
- Raised blood pressure
- Inflammation
- Oxidation that damages our mitochondria that make energy

Almost every tissue in the body has an angiotensin receptor. Thus, all these effects

Exercise regularly. This increases hormones called “endorphins” that lower stress hormones.

Forgive everyone of everything. Hold no anger, grudge, or resentment, no matter how much you’ve been hurt.

Avoid stimulants like caffeine, sugar, and amphetamines. Use herbal teas, or broth.

2. Curcumin

Found in turmeric, curcumin is an amazing herb that lowers the Angiotensin II hormone,[16] giving all the benefits of these medications, but without any of the risks.

Turmeric should be used

with black pepper to better absorb curcumin, the active ingredient. Find a supplement that includes piperine or black pepper. The dose depends on the preparation, so follow the instructions on the label.

3. Fasting

Besides mental stress, there is a growing body of evidence that many of the problems that can be treated with ARB medications are caused by eating too many calories, causing chemical stress. As the population increases in weight, we see the same effects of hypertension, heart disease, cancer, and Alzheimer’s disease. Periodic fasting can reverse and eliminate the risks without any side-effects (except

hunger). The list above that includes the potential benefits of the ARB medications is also a list of proven benefits of calorie restriction or periodic fasting. [17] Fasting not only improves health in these, but also in so many other ways.

As new drugs come out, all the “research” is positive to improve marketing. But as patents expire, we begin to see the other side. Since some of these still have original patents, there are lots of positive articles written about them. Thus, we may have to wait some time to fully comprehend the downside of the ARB drugs. In the meantime, with the program outlined, you can have all the good benefits without ever taking the drug!

Sources: [1] <http://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/high-blood-pressure/in-depth/angiotensin-ii-receptor-blockers/art-20045009> [2] Compound 21 and Telmisartan combination mitigates type 2 diabetic nephropathy through amelioration of caspase mediated apoptosis. Pandey A, Gaikwad AB. *Biochem Biophys Res Commun*. 2017 Apr 27; pii: S0006-291X(17)30816-1. doi: 10.1016/j.bbrc.2017.04.134. PMID: 28456626 [3] Protective effects of Telmisartan and tempol on lipopolysaccharide-induced cognitive impairment, neuro-inflammation and amyloidogenesis: possible role of brain derived neurotrophic factor. Khalilaf WA, Messiha B, Abo-Youssef A, El Sayed NS. *Can J Physiol Pharmacol*. 2017 Apr 7. doi: 10.1139/cjpp-2017-0042. PMID: 28388365 [4] *Ann N Y Acad Sci*. 2008 Dec;1148:360-6. Peripherally administered angiotensin II AT1 receptor antagonists are anti-stress compounds in vivo. Pavel J, Benicky J, Murakami Y, Sanchez-Lemus E, Saaavedra JM. [5] The angiotensin II type 1 receptor antagonist telmisartan inhibits cell proliferation and tumor growth of esophageal adenocarcinoma via the AMPKα/mTOR pathway in vitro and in vivo. Fujihara S, Morishita A, Ogawa K, Tadokoro T, Chiyo T, Kato K, Kobara H, Mori H, Iwama H, Masaki T. *Oncotarget*. 2017 Jan 31;8(5):8536-8549. doi: 10.18632/oncotarget.14345. PMID: 28052030 [6] Disruption of the Ang II type 1 receptor promotes longevity in mice. Benigni A, Corna D, Zoja C, Sonzogno A, Latini R, Salio M, Conti S, Rottoli D, Longaretti L, Cassis P, Morigi M, Coffman TM, Remuzzi G. [7] Angiotensin II Receptor Blockers Inhibit the Generation of Epoxyeicosatrienoic Acid from Arachidonic Acid in Recombinant CYP2C9, CYP2J2 and Human Liver Microsomes. Senda A, Mukai Y, Hayakawa T, Kato Y, Eliasson E, Rane A, Toda T, Inotsume N. *Basic Clin Pharmacol Toxicol*. 2017 Apr 4. doi: 10.1111/bcpt.12789. PMID: 28374982 [8] *Cardiovasc Res*. 2011 Jan 1;89(1):31-40. doi: 10.1093/cvr/cvq285. Epub 2010 Sep 6. Angiotensin II blockade: a strategy to slow ageing by protecting mitochondria? de Cavanagh EM1, Inseerra F, Ferder L. [9] Treatment with telmisartan, a long-acting angiotensin II receptor blocker, prevents migraine attacks in Japanese non-responders to lomerizine. Ikeda K, Hanashiro S, Ishikawa Y, Sawada M, Kyuzen M, Morioka H, Ebina J, Nagasawa J, Yanagihashi M, Miura K, Hirayama T, Takazawa T, Kano O, Kawabe K, Iwasaki Y. *Neurosci*. 2017 Feb 21. doi: 10.1007/s10072-017-2854-4. PMID: 28224326 [10] <https://doi.org/10.1161/CIRCULATIONAHA.105.594986> *Circulation*. 2006;114:838-854 Originally published August 21, 2006 [11] *Panminerva Med*. 2016 Sep 15. Angiotensin receptor blockers and breast cancer risk: a meta-analysis. Qian YF1, Xu WG, Wu J. [12] *J Renin Angiotensin Aldosterone Syst*. 2015 Dec;16(4):768-73. doi: 10.1177/1470320315607391. Epub 2015 Oct 5. Angiotensin receptor blockers use and the risk of lung cancer: A meta-analysis. Zhang W1, Liang Z1, Li J1, Cai S2. [13] <https://www.wsj.com/news/articles/SB10001424127887324682204578515172395384146> [14] *Hypertension*. 2016 Jun;67(6):1181-8. doi: 10.1161/HYPERTENSIONAHA.116.07363. Epub 2016 Apr 11. Antihypertensive Medications and the Prevalence of Hyperkalemia in a Large Health System. Chang AR1, Sang Y2, Leddy J2, Yahya T2, Kirchner HL2, Inker LA2, Matsushita K2, Ballew SH2, Coresh J2, Grams ME2. [15] *Cutis*. 2017 Jan;99(1):E16-E19. Telmisartan-induced lichen planus eruption manifested on vitiliginous skin. Chan WP1, Mackey VT1, Sun DK2. [16] Curcumin inhibits angiotensin II-induced inflammation and proliferation of rat vascular smooth muscle cells by elevating PPAR-γ activity and reducing oxidative stress. Li HY, Yang M, Li Z, Meng Z. *Int J Mol Med*. 2017 May;39(5):1307-1316. doi: 10.3892/ijmm.2017.2924. Epub 2017 Mar 20. PMID: 28339005 [17] *Mol Cell Endocrinol*. 2017 Apr 12. pii: S0303-7207(17)30224-1. doi: 10.1016/j.mce.2017.04.011. Nutrition modulation of human aging: The calorie restriction paradigm. Das SK1, Balasubramanian P2, Weerasekara YK3.



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Best and Worst Protein Powders

The 6 Healthiest Protein Powders

BY **SUSAN PATTERSON**

You can buy protein powders just about everywhere today, from your local supermarket or co-op to the health food store and all over the internet. They come in a myriad of forms, including soy, whey, pea, hemp and casein protein, and with a wide range of price tags. Protein powders are an especially convenient source of

high quality, complete protein. They aren't just for serious athletes and body-builders either!

Using a protein shake as an occasional meal replacement can aid your efforts to lose weight and fat. In fact, they're often more effective than simply following a lower-calorie diet. Protein is more satiating than fats or carbohydrates and can also help raise the metabolism. One 2008 study, published in the journal *Nutrition & Metabolism*, demonstrated that obese women and men lost more fat when they drank two

protein shake meal replacements per day and followed a low-calorie diet. Subjects who stuck to the diet without the shakes lost less total body fat and more lean muscle mass.

So if you're trying to lose weight and fat or become more lean and fit, adding protein powder to your diet makes sense. But there are a number of other things to consider before you begin.

Potential Protein Powder Cautions

If you're already getting enough protein in your diet each day, consuming protein powder, no matter what type, could be dangerous. Excess protein, whether it's from food or protein powder, can raise your risk of developing kidney stones or kidney disease. This is because eating too much protein boosts the level of uric acid that leads to kidney stones. A high-protein diet also reduces levels of citrate, the chemical in urine that helps prevent stones from forming.

High amounts of protein can also lead to osteoporosis. Taking in more animal protein than you need causes your body to convert extra protein building blocks called amino acids into organic acids that acidify the bloodstream. The kidneys neutralize the acidity by pushing large amounts of calcium into the urine, taking it from the bones. Particularly in women, if this occurs over a long period of time, it increases the risk of osteoporosis.

Dehydration is another concern when taking in large amounts of protein. If you aren't getting enough carbs, then the body goes into ketosis. Ketosis is a state in which there is a buildup of toxic ketones in the body. To dispose of excess ketone bodies, the body uses the

kidneys to excrete them in urine. This increases dehydration risk, even more so if you're working out intensely and losing a lot of fluid through sweat. Dehydration has a number of side effects, including everything from lethargy, dizziness and bad breath to serious issues like stress on the kidneys and even a dysfunction in the heart.

Some people experience bloating and/or gas when consuming protein powders. Thankfully, this is something that's easily corrected. Skipping any protein powders that contain sugar alcohols may eliminate the problem. This includes:

- Sorbitol
- Xylitol
- Lactitol
- Erythritol
- Mannitol
- Isomalt
- Hydrogenated starch

If you're blending your protein powder into a shake, keep in mind the longer you blend, the more air is whipped into it. A whipped shake means you'll swallow more air. Be careful not to slurp it down - sip slowly or it could leave you feeling uncomfortably bloated and gassy.



4 Reasons to Use Protein Powder

But if you use common sense and caution, there are a number of reasons to consider supplementing with protein powder:

1. You're starting a new workout program. If you're new to exercise, or starting again after a long period of inactivity and are trying to build muscle, you'll need more protein than usual.
2. You're working out more intensely. If you're going to be amping up those workouts, your body needs more protein. For example, if you begin to train for a half-marathon, you will need extra protein.
3. You're recovering from an injury. If you've suffered from a sports injury, you probably need more protein to help that injury heal.
4. You're going vegetarian or vegan. Certain protein powders can be a vegan or vegetarian protein source. If you are eliminating chicken, fish, meat and possibly dairy, then you will need alternative protein options.

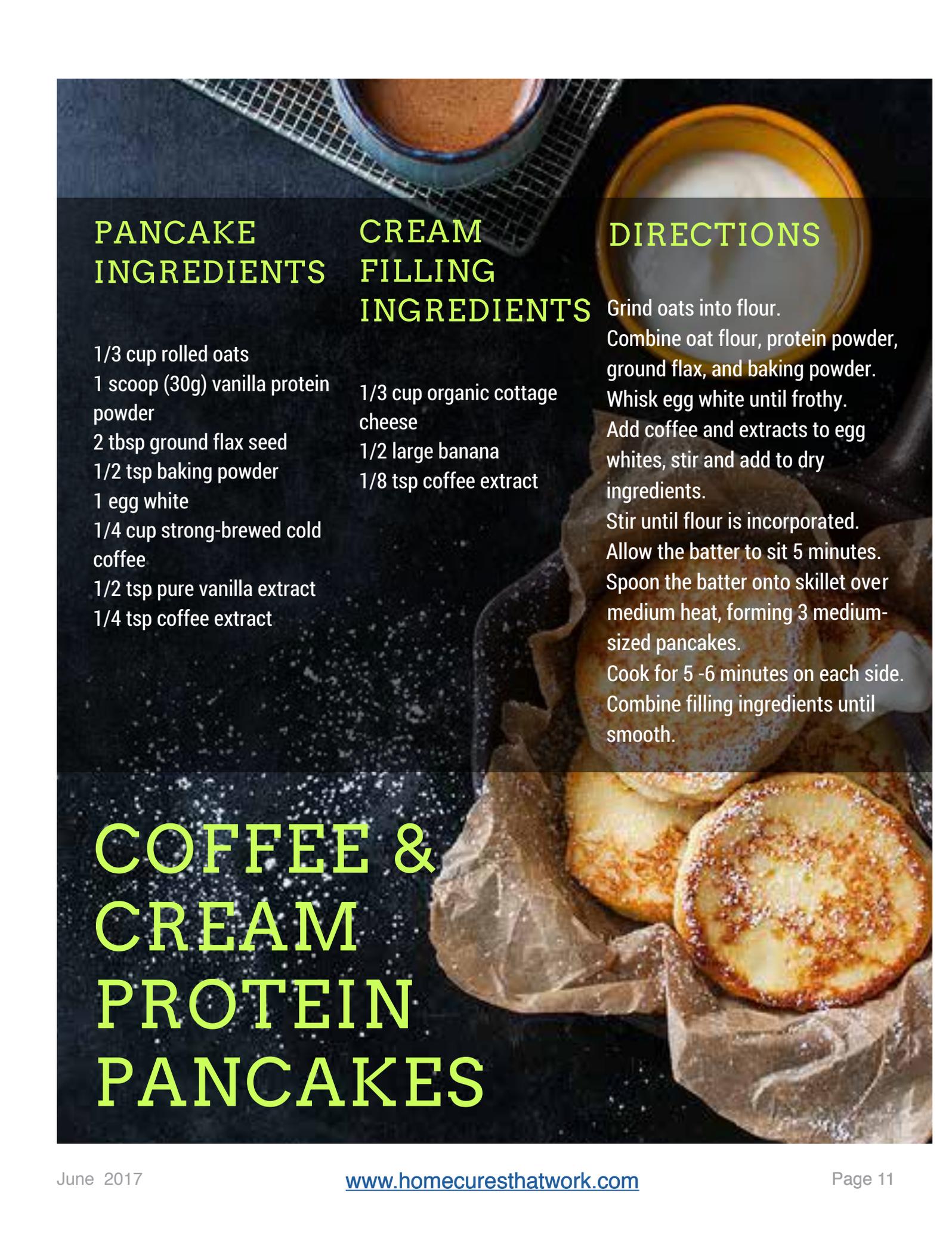
3 Benefits of Protein Powder

As mentioned previously, protein powder can help you lose weight and fat, but what else can consuming protein powder do?

1. Improve blood sugar levels. Blood sugar metabolism requires the proper release of insulin after a meal. A higher intake of protein at one time can significantly improve insulin production and glucose metabolism. One study on overweight adults who consumed 54 grams of whey protein per day proves my point. Participants managed to lower fasting insulin by 11 percent while improving markers of insulin sensitivity by 10 percent.
2. Build muscles. One of the primary ways protein helps improve weight and fat loss is by aiding in muscle building. That's because protein is used in the production of muscles. Without enough protein your body is unable to put the structures together that make up every cell, tissue, and organ. Nor can the body produce the biochemical compounds necessary for cardiovascular functioning. In addition, protein is necessary for muscle growth and contraction.
3. Prevent injury. A lack of protein in the diet means the muscles won't heal as quickly. This only leads to overtraining and ultimately, injury.

The Best Types of Protein Powders

Now that you know more about protein powder and the pros and cons of taking it, your next decision is which type to take.



PANCAKE INGREDIENTS

1/3 cup rolled oats
1 scoop (30g) vanilla protein powder
2 tbsp ground flax seed
1/2 tsp baking powder
1 egg white
1/4 cup strong-brewed cold coffee
1/2 tsp pure vanilla extract
1/4 tsp coffee extract

CREAM FILLING INGREDIENTS

1/3 cup organic cottage cheese
1/2 large banana
1/8 tsp coffee extract

DIRECTIONS

Grind oats into flour.
Combine oat flour, protein powder, ground flax, and baking powder.
Whisk egg white until frothy.
Add coffee and extracts to egg whites, stir and add to dry ingredients.
Stir until flour is incorporated.
Allow the batter to sit 5 minutes.
Spoon the batter onto skillet over medium heat, forming 3 medium-sized pancakes.
Cook for 5 -6 minutes on each side.
Combine filling ingredients until smooth.

COFFEE & CREAM PROTEIN PANCAKES

Whey

Whey is one of the most popular protein powder forms. It's made from milk, which is easily digestible, although if you have an allergy to dairy or lactose, avoid it. Whey is also a complete protein, containing all the essential and nonessential amino acids. It even boasts the highest branched-chain amino acid content found in nature. Be sure to look for whey protein isolate rather than concentrate. Whey protein isolate contains the highest protein concentration, 90-95%, with very little fat.

Hemp

Hemp is ideal for vegans and vegetarian because it is a near-complete plant-based protein. It also offers the ability to lower inflammation with its omega-6 essential fatty acids. Some research has suggested hemp protein may be more helpful with weight loss than other protein powders due to its high fiber content.

Casein

Casein is another milk protein. But it differs from whey because the body absorbs it at a slower pace. That makes it a good choice for meal replacements to help you stay fuller longer. If you take it right before bedtime, then it will supply the body with protein through the night to avoid muscle loss. The downside with casein is that it's less water-soluble than whey and doesn't mix as well with liquids. If you purchase casein, then be sure to look for "calcium caseinate" on the label so you're getting the purest form.

Soy

Soy is also a complete plant-based protein that makes another option for vegans, vegetarians and those who are lactose intolerant. However,

soy protein is highly processed, so it's really not the best choice for your health. Some studies have also linked consumption of soy in general to higher risk of breast cancer. Not only does soy fall short on protein "quality," but soy is also a known inhibitor of thyroid function. When your thyroid is suppressed, weight loss is severely compromised.

We don't recommend soy products, so if you choose to use soy it should be consumed only in moderation. Also, choose soy protein isolate. It is higher in protein and isoflavones, and lower in cholesterol and fat compared to soy protein concentrate.

Brown rice

Brown rice protein powders are generally considered inferior to whey protein when it comes to building muscle. While brown rice protein contains all the essential amino acids, it's too low in lysine to be considered a complete protein.

Pea

Pea protein is plant-based and highly digestible. It is also high in glutamic acid, which helps to convert carbs into energy so that they won't be stored as fat. The downside is that pea protein is not a complete protein. Therefore, it's important to pair it with other vegan sources of protein like hemp.

Protein powders can provide extra protein for a variety of health applications. In addition to drinking your protein powder, try this tasty dish below.

Coffee & Cream Protein Pancakes

If you're looking for a fun Saturday morning breakfast or Sunday brunch recipe with extra protein, consider throwing your protein powder into this recipe.

Pancake ingredients:

- 1/3 cup rolled oats
- 1 scoop (30g) vanilla protein powder
- 2 tbsp ground flax seed
- 1/2 tsp baking powder
- 1 egg white
- 1/4 cup strong-brewed cold coffee
- 1/2 tsp pure vanilla extract
- 1/4 tsp coffee extract (the McCormick brand offers this along with their spices and other extracts)

Cream filling ingredients:

- 1/3 cup organic cottage cheese (like Nancy's)
- 1/2 large banana
- 1/8 tsp coffee extract

Directions:

4. Heat a nonstick skillet or pancake griddle over medium heat.
5. In a food processor or blender, grind oats into flour.
6. Combine oat flour, protein powder, ground flax, and baking powder in a bowl.
7. In a separate bowl, whisk egg white until frothy.
8. Add coffee and extracts to egg whites, stir and add to dry ingredients.
9. Stir until flour is incorporated.
10. Allow the batter to sit at least 5 minutes before continuing.
11. Spoon the batter onto skillet surface, forming 3 medium-sized pancakes.
12. Cook for 5 to 6 minutes on each side, or until golden brown with crisp edges.
13. Make the filling by combining the cottage cheese, banana and extract in a food processor or blender; blend until smooth.



6 Ways to Knock Out Back Pain Without A Pill

Lower Back Pain? Drugs vs. Real Pain Relief

BY **ROB FISCHER**

When you have lower back pain, you don't want to do anything but lay in bed. But the best thing you can do for a bad back is to stretch. The nice thing about stretching your back is that you can do it while in pain and experience almost

immediate relief. By stretching, you can keep your body happy and pain free.

There are many conditions associated with lower back pain. Understanding back pain's root cause is crucial to getting you on the road to recovery. Not sure of why you're in agony? Here are some of the common causes for lower back injuries:[1]

- Improper lifting – Either lifting something too heavy, lifting with the back instead of the legs, or holding an object away from your body instead of “hugging” it.
- Overuse – Perhaps you’ve experienced lower back pain from working in the garden, scrubbing the floor, or other physical work that you’re unaccustomed to.
- Degenerative disc disease – This can occur with aging.
- Disc tear – Sometimes happens due to an injury.
- Fractures in the vertebra – This is often caused by osteoporosis.
- Spinal stenosis – This puts pressure on the spinal cord due to a narrowing of the spinal column.
- Scoliosis – This is abnormal curvature of the spine.
- Smoking – Smoking damages virtually every function in the body including the lower back.

There are many other causes of lower back pain and due to the general nature of the pain, doctors find that the cause is often difficult to diagnose.[2]

The Purpose of Pain

While no one likes to experience pain, without pain we wouldn’t live for very long. Pain alerts us that there’s something wrong. Pain either warns of possible injury if we continue what we’re doing, or it tells us we’ve already injured ourselves and we need to take measures to repair the injury. Without the warning system of pain, we would continue to injure ourselves to the death! This is precisely what happens with neuropathy—a deadening of the nerves to the feeling of pain.

6 Tips to Prevent Lower Back Pain

You can cut your risk of lower back pain by following these general prevention tips below.

1. Practice good posture when sitting and standing.
2. If you sit at a desk all day, request an ergonomic evaluation to ensure that your work area is arranged for optimal posture. Also, get up frequently to stretch your back and walk around. Consider working at a standing workstation.
3. Follow proper lifting techniques whenever you lift anything. Don’t lift more than you are able. Ask for help. Lift with your legs and hold the object close to your body.
4. Lose weight if you are overweight. A large belly and extra pounds place undue pressure on the spine and muscles.
5. Exercise regularly and stay active. Keeping your core muscles fit helps support your lower back and can help prevent other common injuries. Walking is one of the best exercises for back health.
6. Quit smoking if you smoke. Those who smoke are nearly a third more likely to develop lower back pain than those who don’t smoke.[3]

Pain Management vs. Pain Relief

Lower back pain can range anywhere from searing, excruciating pain to a dull ache. When we’re in pain, our first thought is to eliminate the pain. But there’s a difference between managing pain and relieving it.

Managing our back pain has more to do with coping with it and alleviating the symptoms.

This is where most people reach for medication. By contrast, pain relief seeks to discover the cause of the pain and repair the injury so that pain management is no longer necessary. Our goal is relief from pain, not merely managing it.

There are inherent dangers in trying to manage lower back pain with drugs. The site drugs.com compares a whopping 113 drugs commonly prescribed for back pain. Yikes—113![4] The fundamental problem with reaching for a drug is that it only treats the symptoms, not the cause of the injury.

We may need some temporary reprieve from the pain through medication so we can determine the cause and take steps to heal. But too many people see drugs as the remedy for lower back pain. Drugs do not provide a remedy, but instead may lead to other even more serious issues.

One drug that doctors are prescribing often today for lower back pain is Lyrica. Lyrica is commonly used to treat nerve pain for people suffering with fibromyalgia. But a study conducted in Great Britain showed that Lyrica was no more effective in managing back pain than a placebo (sugar pill)! [5]

The fact that Lyrica is ineffective is only the beginning of the problem. Lyrica and many other drugs like it are costly, produce serious side effects and are often addictive. Lyrica's own official warnings state that it "May cause serious allergic reactions or suicidal thoughts or actions...swelling, trouble breathing, rash, hives, blisters, changes in eye sight including blurry vision, muscle pain with fever, tired feeling or skin sores. Common side effects are dizziness, sleepiness, weight gain and swelling of hands, legs and feet." [6]

What their warnings don't reveal is that Lyrica is addictive and withdrawal

can be a hellish experience that may include many of its side effects.

A much healthier way to manage lower back pain includes:

- Maintaining proper posture when sitting or standing
- Getting up and walking around frequently
- Stretching your back often throughout the day

Find More Permanent Lower Back Pain Relief

Once again, many are prone to take the "easy road" to relief from back pain and opt for surgery. While surgery may be necessary for some, failed back surgeries occur at an "alarming rate." Failed back surgeries often require additional surgeries to repair. People who opt for back surgery are less likely to return to work than those who don't go under the knife. Also, pain reduction from back surgery is minimal. Those who choose surgery often require more pain medication after the surgery than before. [7]

How do we find more lasting relief from lower back pain? Through stretching and exercise. Weak muscles and lack of flexibility set us up for injury, strain and lower back pain. By contrast, exercise and stretching:

- Increase muscle strength
- Improve flexibility
- Help reduce weight
- Improve posture
- Increase blood-flow
- Move nutrients and fluids throughout the body to support good health

6 Simple Stretches to Relieve Lower Back Pain

Stretching is vital for flexibility and strength. Never bounce while stretching. Stretches should be gradual and deliberate. You should feel your muscles and ligaments stretching, but stretching should not be painful. The following 6 stretching exercises for the lower back pain are great even if you already suffer from back pain.[8] Use a mat or a carpeted floor.

1. Knee to chest.

Lie on your back on the floor and point your toes straight upward. Slowly bend your right knee, bringing it up to your chest. Grasp your right thigh, knee or shin with both hands clasped together and pull your knee towards your chest gently. Hold this position for 20 seconds then slowly lower your leg back to the starting position. Repeat this three times with each leg.

2. Lying Knee Twist

Lie on your back with your legs straight out. Bend your right leg at the knee and bring it over the left side of your body. Find a position in which you feel a gentle stretch in your back and buttocks muscles and hold it for 20 seconds. Then rotate your leg back to the starting position. Repeat three times with each leg.

3. Cat Stretch

You've probably seen a cat arch its back up to stretch. Begin by getting down on the floor on all fours with your hands directly below your shoulders and your knees below your hips. Exhale and gently arch your back downward and hold for 5-10 seconds. Then, inhale and arch your back upward like a cat. Hold this position for 5-10 seconds as well. Repeat 10 times.

4. Piriformis Seated Stretch

Sciatica or radiating leg pain is often linked to the piriformis muscle. Sit on the floor with your back straight. Cross your left leg over your right leg, placing your left foot on the floor and tucking your right foot up to your buttocks. With your right hand, pull your left knee toward your body slowly. Keep your back straight and chest up. Hold this position for 20 seconds and repeat three times with both legs.

5. Cobra Stretch

Lie flat on your stomach with your legs fully extended and the fronts of your feet flat on the floor. Slowly bend at the waist and push your torso upward resting on your forearms with your palms flat on the floor. Keep your head straight up and your hips on the ground. Find a comfortable position that gently stretches your lower back and abdominal muscles and hold for 10 seconds. Slowly return to the starting position and repeat five times. If you feel flexible enough, try pushing all the way up on your hands for an additional stretch.

6. Restful Pose

Position yourself on your hands and knees on the floor. Spread your knees slightly wider than your hips. Turn your toes inward so both feet touch. Lower your buttocks as far back toward your feet as possible. When you find a comfortable position, extend your arms fully forward, resting them on the floor. This will bring your forehead to the floor. Relax and hold for 20 seconds and slowly return to the starting position and repeat three times. If you are unable to extend your arms above you due to shoulder pain, let your arms fall to either side of your body toward your feet.

Any time you feel lower

back pain, let that signal you that it's time to stretch. You can strengthen your lower back and remedy pain by doing these gentle exercises.

Also, remember to maintain good body posture always. When you catch yourself slouching, or leaning into your computer or desk, correct your posture. If you sit a lot at work, get up and stretch your back, and walk around frequently. Sitting puts 40% more pressure on your spine than standing does.[9] So the more time you can spend on your feet, the less back pain you'll have to endure.

Finally, a regular, brisk walk in which you're taking nice long strides works wonders for preventing and relieving lower back pain. Walking is great for your cardio health as well. Consider walking over your lunch break, or some other time that you can work it into your daily routine.

Remember, you want pain relief rather than merely managing your back pain. Lower back pain can be prevented. If you stick to these tips and stretches, you can say goodbye to lower back pain for good.

Sources: [1] Stephanie Watson, "Living with Low Back Pain," WebMD, nd, <http://www.webmd.com/back-pain/living-with-low-back-pain-11/causes?page=1>. [2] Stephanie Watson. [3] Stephanie Watson. [4] Drugs.com, "Medications for Back Pain," <https://www.drugs.com/condition/backache.html>. [5] Madlen Davies, "Drug Commonly Prescribed for Back Pain DOESN'T Work—and Is "No Better than a Sugar Pill," Daily Mail, 11 December 2014, <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/health/article-2869901/Drug-commonly-prescribed-pain-DOESN-T-work-no-better-sugar-pill.html>. [6] Joe Graedon, "Lyrica Side Effects & Withdrawal Are Worrisome," People's Pharmacy, August 1, 2013, <https://www.peoplespharmacy.com/2013/08/01/post-11/>. [7] Spinal & Sports Care Clinic, "Is Back Surgery Right for Me?" nd, http://www.spokanedecompression.com/?gclid=CjwKEAjw3KDIBRCz0KvZIJ7k4TgSJABDqOK7b-GxSsUDoTaqU0BnoX7VRipQ6cXJS3TEr41kOr1CVxoCyETw_wcB. [8] Advanced Pain Management, "6 Stretches to Help Back Pain," nd, <http://www.apmhealth.com/education/healthy-living/stretching---strengthening-tips/6-stretches-to-help-back-pain>. [9] <http://www.prevention.com/health/health-concerns/habits-cause-back-pain>



Rob Fischer has been writing professionally for over 35 years. His experience includes writing curricula, study guides, articles, blogs, sales copy, newsletters, manuals, workbooks, training courses, and workshops. Rob has written for numerous companies, non-profits, and individuals. He has published 20 books and serves as an editor and ghostwriter for other authors.



Food and Migraine Connection

Separating the Good the Bad and the Ugly Migraine Trigger Foods

The light is blinding... you're in agonizing pain...and it's so bad, you feel sick to your stomach.

When a migraine strikes, all you can think about is making it stop... RIGHT NOW.

You might have some pretty heavy-duty painkillers ready to go for when one hits, but those quick fixes might only make you feel better briefly.

While it's tough to think long-term when a migraine has you in its vise grip, a new study shows that reliable migraine pain relief may be just a few weeks away.

Although there is no solid end-all cure for migraines, they can be controlled and managed by the foods you eat. I'm referring to the Good, the Bad and the Ugly Foods (no relation to the movie of the same name starring the famous Clint Eastwood).

The Migraine Elimination Diet

In 1983, researchers at the Hospital for Sick Children in London reported their results for 88 children with severe, frequent migraines who began an elimination diet.

[1] Of this group, 78 recovered completely, and 4 more improved greatly.

In addition, some children who also had seizures found that their seizures stopped. The researchers then reintroduced various foods and found that they sparked migraine recurrences in all but eight children.

In subsequent tests using disguised foods, the vast majority of children again became migraine symptom-free when trigger foods were avoided. Migraines returned when trigger foods were added to the diet.[1]

In adults, anywhere between 20 and 50 percent have a reduction or elimination of their headaches when they avoid common trigger foods.

Instead of waiting until a migraine starts and then treating it, identify common dietary triggers in order to avoid migraines altogether.

Most migraine specialists agree that the best way to avoid a migraine is to avoid the triggers. But since each person is so unique, those triggers vary widely from one person to the next. We suggest keeping a food diary to monitor what sets you off.

The foods and migraine connection will be a starting point for the Migraine Elimination Diet.

The easiest way to follow this diet is to keep meals very simple. You'll trade a

few months of dietary boredom for lots of information about your own migraine trigger foods. Two important things to note:

Your list should include both foods to eat (the Good) and foods to avoid (the Bad and the Ugly).

Your list is not intended as a permanent dietary change, but to help you figure out what your triggers may be. You discover your triggers by stripping down your diet first; then adding foods back in to test them.

The Good Migraine-Free Foods

The good foods are those that DO NOT cause migraine pain and have never contributed to migraines or any other pains.

The good migraine-free foods:

- Rice, such as brown rice
- Cooked vegetables, such as broccoli, spinach, Swiss chard or collards, carrots or sweet potatoes, summer squash
- Cooked or dried non-citrus fruits: cherries, cranberries, pears, prunes (but not citrus fruits, apples, bananas, peaches, or tomatoes)
- Water: tap, bottled or sparkling

The Bad Migraine Trigger Foods

The bad foods are common triggers for causing migraines in most people.

The bad migraine trigger foods:

Dairy products, especially cheese:

This includes all kinds of hard cheeses and foods prepared with cheese. The more aged the cheese, the worse the trigger. White cheeses, including cottage cheese, ricotta and cream cheese, have not been implicated, but yogurt has.

Chocolate:

Anything with cocoa. Chocolate contains phenylethylamine, which may cause blood vessels to expand and contract.

Eggs:

Eggs, especially egg whites, contain high levels of glutamic acid. Glutamic acid is a top migraine trigger. Eggs also contain exorbitant amounts of aspartic acid and phenylalanine. Aspartic acid is considered an excitotoxin that may raise inflammation in the brain—similar to MSG. Store-bought eggs and processed eggs (powdered, boxed, and egg additives) contain the highest amounts of glutamic acid, aspartic acid, phenylalanine, and inflammatory omega-6 fats.

Deli meats and fish:

If it has been aged, canned, cured, fermented, marinated, smoked or tenderized, it may trigger headaches. Preservation with nitrites or nitrates is a no-no. Avoid beef livers and chicken livers, as well.

Freshly baked breads raised with yeast:

Especially problematic is sourdough. Also look out for bagels, doughnuts, pizza dough and soft pretzels less than 24 hours out of the oven.

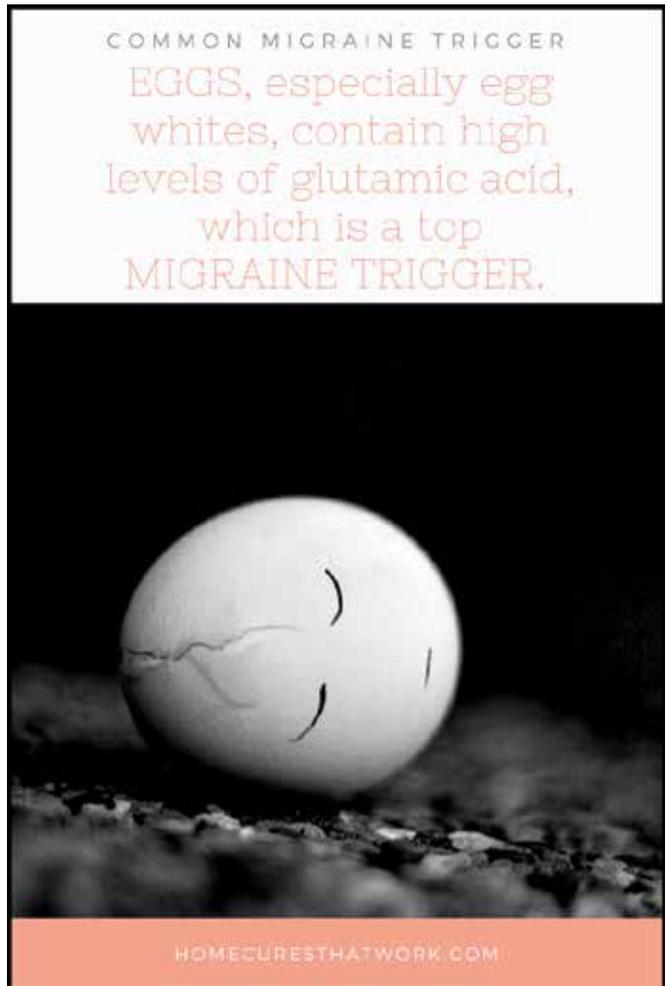
Nuts:

From almonds to pistachios, they can all be culprits, as can nut butters.

Red wine:

Too much red wine or any dark alcohol

can stack the decks against you. Of all drinking alcohols, vodka is tolerated best. Also avoid vinegar; balsamic is the most problematic, but white should be OK.



Caffeinated drinks:

Found in coffee, tea, colas and certain other sodas. Going off caffeine suddenly can also trigger migraines.

MSG (monosodium glutamine):

Notoriously found in Chinese food, but also in seasoned salt, salty snacks, prepared soups, many low-fat and low-cal foods, and even veggie burgers. Steer clear of hydrolyzed vegetable, soy or plant proteins, which can contain similar compounds.

Aspartame:

Found in many diet soft drinks and artificial sweeteners, aspartame contains excitotoxins known to affect nerve cells.

Certain fruits and vegetables:

- Among the problematic fruits: citrus fruits and fruit juices, bananas, raisins and other dried fruits preserved with sulfites, raspberries, red plums, papayas, passion fruit, figs, dates, and avocados.
- Vegetable culprits include sauerkraut, pea pods and beans (from fava to navy to lentils).
- The worst vegetable offender may be onions, though baby onions are OK.

The major culprits reported as headache triggers are alcoholic drinks, chocolate and cheese. But how many of you reading this article are fed up with being told to avoid these foods, or have already eliminated them from your diet with absolutely no effect on the frequency or severity of your attacks?

In general, avoid cold or frozen foods, foods that are high in tyramine (aged cheeses and cultured dairy products), preservatives or processed foods and anything that contains caffeine.

The Ugly Migraine Foods

The Ugly foods are those that specifically cause you migraine pain. You will need to personally identify these during a trial-and-error Migraine Elimination Diet. This trial-and-error diet will help you weed out the specific “ugly” trigger foods that precipitate migraines and determine the safe foods to include in your daily diet.

The Elimination Diet: Finding Your Migraine Triggers

The Migraine Elimination Diet is designed to separate the Good from the Bad and the Ugly. Start off the diet by getting a notebook to keep track of your migraine trigger foods and your safe foods; then plan your menu around the Good foods only. This will mean completely avoiding the Bad foods during this trial-and-error time frame. If you are a coffee or tea drinker, you will need to wean yourself off slowly before you begin. See Recipe Ideas below for some helpful starting points.

CHART EVERYTHING. Note all the conditions leading up to the headache—including weather patterns, menstrual cycle, and stress load—and see what patterns emerge.

- Once your migraine symptoms have diminished, usually within a week or two, start introducing one food at a time to your daily menu, but make sure to take a day off in between introducing each new food item.
- Also, eat a generous amount of the specific food item so you can see whether it causes any pain or migraine symptoms.
- If the trigger food releases the onset of a migraine, make note of it in your notebook.
- If the food causes no adverse migraine pain it is now considered a Good food item and you can include it in your diet.
- It is important to stay away from adding the bad foods to your menu until the end of the trial-and-error Migraine Elimination Diet.
- After a few more weeks, you should have a good idea which are your trigger foods and hopefully a nice long list of Good foods you can safely choose from.

Migraine Friendly Recipes

Breakfast: Migraine-Free Oatmeal

Ingredients:

- 3/4 cup whole grain old-fashioned oats or steel-cut oatmeal
- 1 tsp cinnamon
- Add a dash of vanilla or maple syrup (optional)

Directions:

1. Follow the instructions for cooking oatmeal.
2. Add the cinnamon and vanilla or maple syrup to the oatmeal
3. Stir and eat.

Lunch: Simple Sweet Potato Ginger Soup

Ingredients:

- 1 Tbsp olive oil
- 2 medium yellow onions, chopped
- 3 large sweet potatoes (pink, orange, or yellow variety), peeled and chopped
- 1 inch piece fresh ginger, peeled and finely chopped
- 6 cups low-sodium vegetable broth
- Salt and pepper, to taste

Directions:

1. Heat oil in a medium saucepan over medium heat. Add onions and sauté until golden.
2. Pour in the broth and bring to boil over medium-high heat. Add sweet potatoes

and ginger and reduce heat to medium-low. Simmer until sweet potatoes are easily pierced with a fork (about 20 to 25 minutes).

3. Working in batches, purée soup in a blender or use an immersible hand blender to blend soup until smooth. Season with salt and pepper to taste. Serve hot.[2]

Dinner: Garlic Shrimp and Broccoli Pasta (Migraine-Free, Gluten-free)

Ingredients:

- 1 pound raw shrimp, peeled & de-veined
- 1/2 package of gluten-free spaghetti
- 1 large crown of broccoli
- 4 Tbsp butter
- 1 Tbsp finely chopped fresh parsley
- 1/2 tsp red pepper flakes
- 1/2 tsp dried basil and/or oregano
- Salt
- Pepper

Directions:

1. Start a pot of water to boil for pasta
2. While the water is starting to heat up, peel and de-vein shrimp, then salt and pepper to taste
3. Cut broccoli into small, bite-sized florets and steam for 3-4 minutes
4. Melt 2 Tbsp of butter in a large saucepan
5. Add chopped garlic, red pepper flakes, and oregano/basil to butter and simmer
6. Cook butter mixture for about 2 minutes
7. Add shrimp to butter mixture
8. Cook for 2-3 minutes until both sides are pink
9. Add 2 more Tbsp of butter to shrimp pan, then mix in cooked pasta and steamed broccoli
10. Sprinkle freshly chopped parsley on top just before serving.

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The “Healthiest” Alcoholic Beverages

Bottoms Up: Choosing Healthier Drinks

BY **DAVID KEKICH**

To drink or not to drink? What’s the purpose of living longer if you can’t enjoy yourself?

We’re not encouraging drinking. Just limit yourself to two drinks a day if you do drink. And that doesn’t mean not drinking at all six days a week and having fourteen on the seventh. Drink sensibly. Besides social issues, drinking more than one or two a day for the average sized person can wreak havoc on your body and lead to all kinds of long-term physical and mental problems.

If you decide to imbibe, remember, alcohol is a toxin. Drinking too much on a regular basis has been linked to weight gain, high blood pressure, stroke, heart disease, dementia, osteoporosis, certain cancers and dry wrinkled skin.

If you drink, we suggest eating before or during drinking, and drinking water with your alcoholic beverages. We recommend only beverages made without grains such as the following:

1. Red wine

Dry wines have less sugar. In general, most red wines have little or no sugar. Most sweet wines are white. A four ounce glass of dry red wine usually contains about 83 calories, no sugar, .5 grams of carbohydrates and no fat. Many people claim health benefits for moderate red wine consumption.

2. Tequila

One shot contains around 97 calories, no fat and no carbs as well as no sugar. There is even a bit of potassium.

3. Brandy

Unflavored brandy has about 72 calories per shot, no sugar and zero fat and carbs. The sugar has been removed in the distillation process.

4. Rum

The unflavored versions have about 64 calories per shot. They also contain no sugar, fat or carbs.

Bottoms up if you must, but not too often.

If you want to avoid the waistline bulge but you also want to drink what you like, it works like this:

Once you have more than two drinks, you're already in "unhealthy" territory. If it's a simple social gathering and not a wild night out, the healthiest thing will be to cut yourself off after a couple.

Try switching between alcoholic and non-alcoholic drinks throughout the night.

Sparkling water with a squeeze of citrus can be refreshing, and it has the added benefit of not looking like a buzz kill.

Editor's favorite drink is a homemade mojito:

Ingredients:

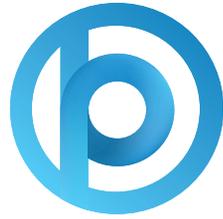
- 3 shots seltzer
- 1 shot light rum
- 1 tsp. sugar
- Pinch of stevia
- 1/2 lime, cut into 4 wedges
- 1 handful fresh mint

Directions:

Place mint leaves and 1 lime wedge into a sturdy glass. Use a muddler to crush the mint and lime to release the mint oils and lime juice. Add 2 more lime wedges and the sugar, and muddle again to release the lime juice. Do not strain the mixture. Fill the glass almost to the top with ice. Pour the rum over the ice, and fill the glass with seltzer water. Stir, taste, and add stevia if desired. Garnish with the remaining lime wedge.



David Kekich (Living Healthy to 120: Anti-Aging Breakthroughs) is President/CEO of Maximum Life Foundation that focuses on aging research, a 501(c)(3) corporation dedicated to curing aging-related diseases. For more information, visit: www.MaxLife.org. David contributes to our column Living Healthy to 120: Anti-Aging Breakthroughs. MaxLife is helping to make the anti-aging dream a reality with cutting edge Bio-Engineering research and products.



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