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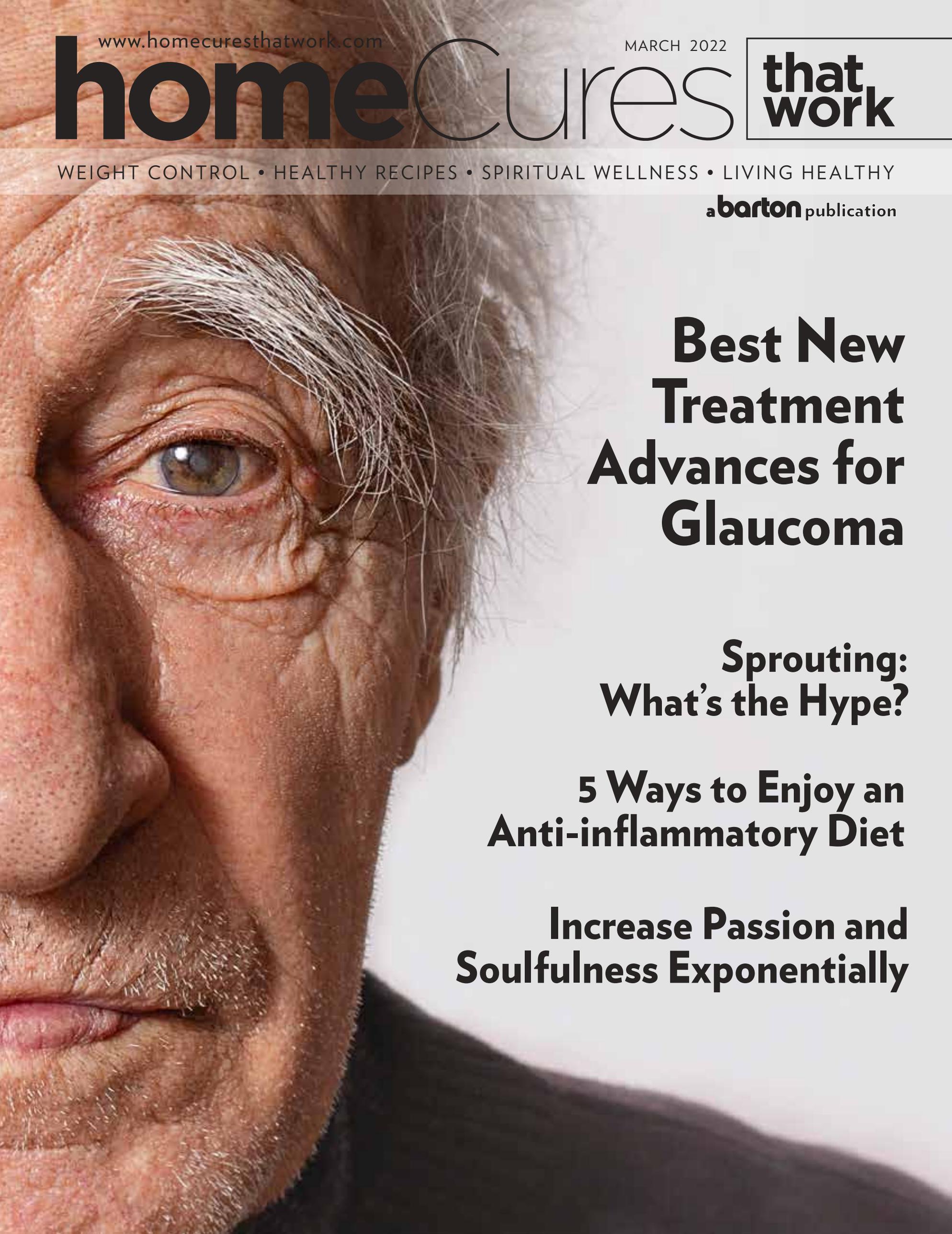
**home**Cures

MARCH 2022

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a **barton** publication



# **Best New Treatment Advances for Glaucoma**

## **Sprouting: What's the Hype?**

## **5 Ways to Enjoy an Anti-inflammatory Diet**

## **Increase Passion and Soulfulness Exponentially**

# Home Cures That Work

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If you are a living breathing human, you've likely experienced feeling stuck or unfulfilled at some point in your life. Although it may feel incredibly uncomfortable and frustrating at times; it's actually a good thing. Discomfort can be a wakeup call to get right in life. Home Cures That Work is a prescribed solution in this situation.

This is a perfect time to explore different restorative practices to help you heal and reconnect.

To improve your vision, be open to try things like a program for rebuilding mitochondria, as outlined by Dr. Saunders. Increasing energy is something you can control that does your eyes a favor: filling up with foods, supplements and exercises linked to supporting your peepers.

Everyone's journey is different. Feeling like your health is not moving forward may be a sign that there is something more you need. It is helpful to have an anti-inflammatory diet through your health journey. Foods high in antioxidants are designed specifically to help you with your mind and mood health.

You also need to make choices within the context of your own health profile. For instance, sprouting lentils make nutrients more absorbable by our bodies. To sprout, we duplicate the germination process found in nature. Isn't nature and the way God created it for our use amazing?!

Looking for more ways to get in touch with your inner self? We offer the secrets to increasing passion and soulfulness exponentially.

Take this time opportunity to learn how Home Cures That Work speak to you and actually listen to the nudges within to live your most authentic self.

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For your health,

Cheryl Ravey, Editor  
Home Cures That Work

## AUTHORS



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Dr. Scott D. Saunders, M.D. is a practicing physician, specializing in preventative health care, who utilizes eclectic health care for the whole family, including conventional, orthomolecular and natural medicine. He is also the medical director of The Integrative Medical Center of Santa Barbara in Lompoc, CA. He went to UCLA medical school and is board certified in family medicine. View natural remedies with Dr. Saunders at: <http://drsaundersmd.com>



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Glaucoma results from fluid buildup that damages the eye's optic nerve, potentially causing vision loss and even blindness. Depending on the extent of the disease, treatment has traditionally included eyedrops. Here's how to tell which therapy can help your vision problem...



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Sprouts of certain seeds and nuts are an inexpensive and simple way to add extra nutrients to the diet. Keep reading to get caught up on sprouts 101 and to learn the health benefits of sprouts and tips on how to incorporate them into your diet.



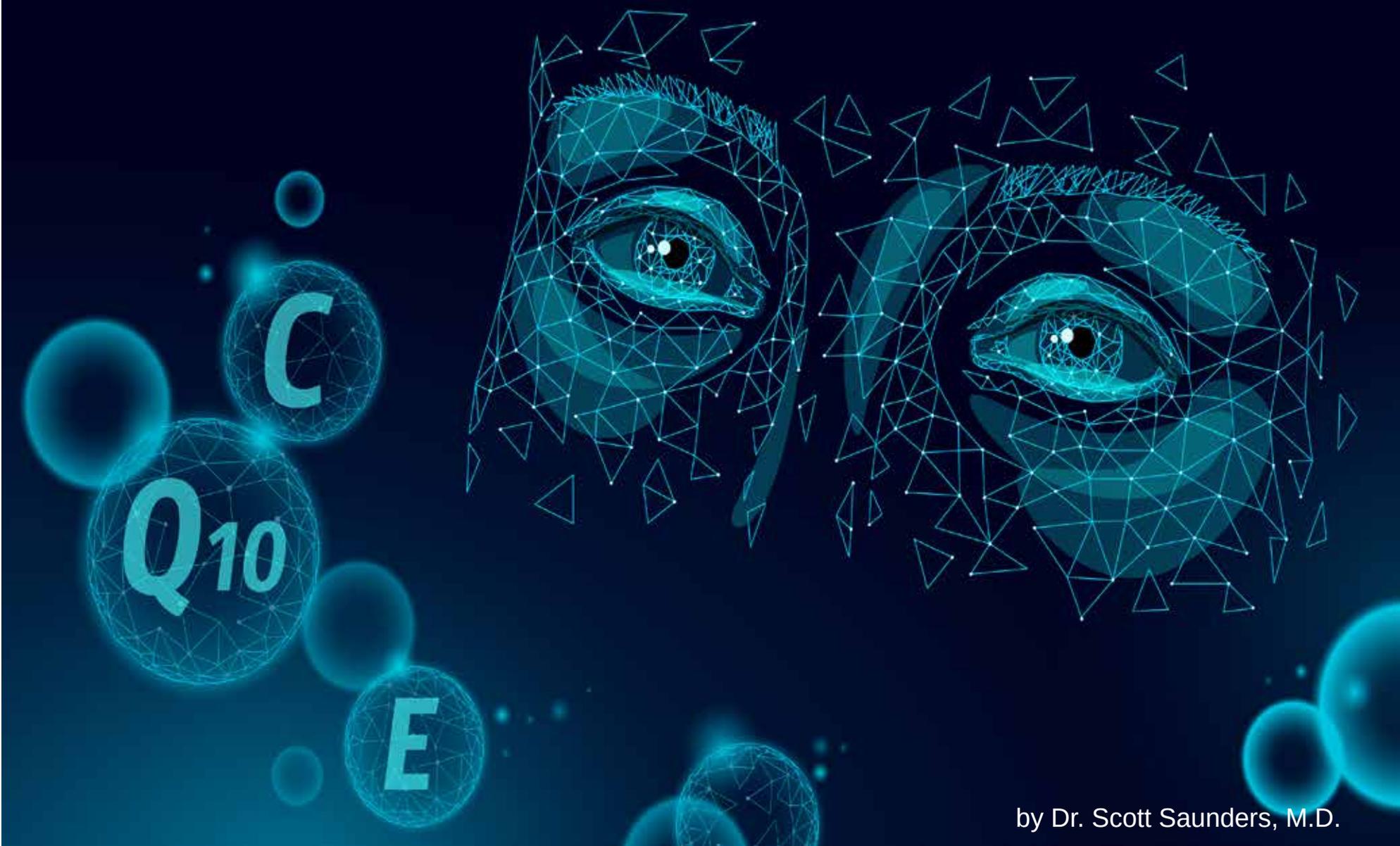
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More than a weight loss plan, an anti-inflammatory diet can help you add years to your life. But new research has shown that it's the cumulative effect of making many changes that delivers the most dramatic results. Here's how to take your efforts to the next level.

## 12 INCREASE PASSION AND SOULFULNESS EXPONENTIALLY

There are actionable things you can do to shift you into a place of alignment and onto a life path that feels authentic and exciting. Keep reading to learn how tools and practices you can implement to help you gain clarity around what you truly desire.



by Dr. Scott Saunders, M.D.

# BEST NEW TREATMENT ADVANCES FOR GLAUCOMA

**O**NE OF MY patients, Carol, came to see me, after a visit to the ophthalmologist, with great fear that she was going to go blind. She was told she had glaucoma in both eyes and needed to use drops to lower the pressure in the eyes. The doctor explained that if the pressure didn't come down with the drops, she would need surgery to prevent permanent blindness. She was not looking forward to putting drops in her eyes for the rest of her life, and for sure didn't want surgery. Of course, she came to me for help.

nerve. The nerve gradually loses neurons and gets smaller, leading to a steady loss of vision. This generally starts from the outside peripheral vision where there are fewer nerves. Then it progressively goes into the center of the eye. The loss of nerves is happening all over, but since there are fewer nerves in the peripheral vision, it is first noticed there. Most people who have mild glaucoma don't even notice that they have a loss of vision. At some point they may have difficulty reading, or driving at night, and go to the eye doctor only to find that glasses won't fix their sight. It's too late – the nerve isn't working.

pressure in the eyes. It used to be thought that excessive pressure caused a lack of blood flow in the retina and optic nerve causing damage. Some doctors still believe this because is what was taught in medical school and it seems to make sense. However, there are a few problems with this hypothesis.

## High Pressure without Glaucoma

Glaucoma is a degeneration of the optic

Glaucoma is often thought of as high

A 20-year study of sixteen hundred people

with high eye pressure showed 75% never develop glaucoma.[1] High eye pressure is common. By 40 years of age about 5% of people have high pressure in the eyes, but without glaucoma, or damage to the optic nerve. Around 75 years of age that increases to 8%.[2] Their eye pressure measures high, but they don't have any vision changes or signs of optic nerve damage. (Interestingly, high eye pressure is associated with low systemic blood pressure.)

## Normal Pressure Glaucoma

The other confounding factor in the theory of high eye pressure causing glaucoma is that there are many people with glaucoma, who lose their vision, but have normal pressure. In the United States up to 48% of those with glaucoma have normal eye pressure. In Japan it is up to 66%![3] This is called "Low-Tension Glaucoma." In other words, these people are showing damage to the optic nerve, and losing their vision, but they don't have high pressure in the eyes.

## Pressure is NOT the Cause

If half of people with glaucoma have normal pressure, and only a fourth of those with high pressure in the eyes get glaucoma, why are we still saying high eye pressure causes glaucoma? It takes a LONG time for knowledge gained by research to reach the doctors providing care in the "trenches." (This is a good reason to have a functional doctor on your side. ☐ ) Glaucoma, or damage to the optic nerve, is NOT caused by high

pressure in the eyes. The pressure in the eyes is just a symptom of inflammation, which is sometimes associated with glaucoma, but not a cause.

Focusing on eye pressure to prevent loss of vision is like trying to prevent damage to your car's engine with a blown gasket and the oil light on by filling it with more oil. That may turn the oil light off for a time, but the engine with an oil leak will still be more likely to get overheated and seize up. Stopping every few miles to add more oil may help a little, but you must fix the problem to prevent destruction of your engine.

In the same way, the current treatments for glaucoma that all revolve around lowering pressure in the eyeballs is misguided at best. Most people are having surgeries, injections, and putting drops in their eyes to lower the pressure unnecessarily because, despite high pressure, they will not get glaucoma. Moreover, treating high pressure only drops the risk of blindness by about half.[4] When you consider that 75% of those treated would never have developed glaucoma, it becomes obvious the current treatments are not adequate! We need something that really works so nobody goes blind.

## Low Energy is the Cause

The first step in finding a good treatment is to know the cause. Since there are so many with glaucoma who don't have high pressure, we may be able to determine a cause by looking at these people. The most consistent risk factors for low-tension glaucoma are:

- People with a family history of normal-tension glaucoma, such as people of Japanese ancestry
- People with a history of systemic

heart disease such as irregular heart rhythm.[5]

There seems to be one or more genetic defects, in some people that makes them more susceptible to glaucoma, probably due to a loss of mitochondria, which make energy for cells. The optic nerve requires a huge amount of energy compared to other cells, so it is especially susceptible to a lack of mitochondria. The other risk factor, heart disease with irregular rhythm, is also caused by a lack of energy, but in the heart. This gives us some important information about what the real cause of glaucoma may be.

Inflammation doesn't seem to be the cause; it is often associated with glaucoma because those who have low energy are often deficient in antioxidants. However, those who have low pressure glaucoma may have good levels of antioxidants so, they don't get high pressure in the eyes, but they still lose mitochondria.

Thus, the problem is energy. Since human beings are visual, the optic nerve is in constant use, making it more susceptible to a loss of power. In mice used as a model for glaucoma, it was found that mitochondrial deficits account for the loss of nerve cells.[6] This is also the relationship of glaucoma and heart disease. People with arrhythmias lack mitochondria in the heart so they don't have enough energy.

## How to Increase Energy and Decrease Pressure

Thus, a program for rebuilding mitochondria should help most people with glaucoma. We already know how to improve mitochondrial function – it's simple:

Exercise sufficient to get winded, or short

of breath, produces an enzyme called AMPK which causes more mitochondria to grow. It seems the best way to do this is with HIIT – interval training exercises. This is where you put out your maximum effort for ten seconds, then a light effort for 30 seconds. Only 10 minutes per day, or 30 minutes per week, is sufficient.

Fasting periodically helps the body to cleanse, detox, and grow more mitochondria.

- Any time you have an empty stomach you are fasting.
- The more time with an empty stomach, the better.

There are many ways to fast that will produce results. For example, not eating or drinking for one day each week, or three days in a row once a month. Many people do “intermittent fasting” where they fast every day, having a 5-hour window of eating two meals at 7am and noon. Any of these works well.

Nutrient supplements can allow more energy to be produced, as well as reduce oxygen free-radicals:

**Niacinamide** – vitamin B3, otherwise known as niacin or nicotinamide. The mitochondria need large amounts of this B-vitamin. If we don’t eat enough, it can be made from tryptophan, an amino acid found in meat, milk, and other protein sources. Tryptophan is often not absorbed well because it competes with other amino acids. This leads to low levels of niacinamide, and poor mitochondrial function. One study showed that mice that are genetically pre-disposed to glaucoma did not get it if they were given niacinamide in high doses (500mg per kilogram, or 35 grams per day for an average person). It is interesting to note that the pressure in the eyes of the mice did not change; they still had high pressure, but

did not get glaucoma.[7]

A human study using 1.5 grams of niacinamide per day showed a significant decrease in progression of glaucoma.[8]

**Coenzyme Q-10** – CoQ10 is not a vitamin because we make it out of cholesterol. Those taking medications for high cholesterol often have less coQ10, which may contribute to both inflammation and lack of energy. In the same mice as above, researchers gave large doses of coQ10 to the young mice before they had any signs of glaucoma and found it prevented glaucoma.[9]

**Magnesium** – Magnesium may help glaucoma in two ways. First, it is necessary for energy production, and is a common deficiency, and second, it dilates blood vessels. In one study, participants with glaucoma and visual field deficits were given 122mg of magnesium twice a day. In only four weeks, significant improvement was noted in their vision.[10]

**Anthocyanins** – (the color in Bilberry, Blueberry) within 2 weeks one placebo-controlled study showed a significant decline in eye pressure.[11]

**Carotenoids** – (Carotene, Lutein, Astaxanthin, Zeaxanthin) a review article of multiple studies showed significant synergistic effect of various carotenoids in protecting the optic nerve from damage.[12]

**Crocine/Crocetin** – (Saffron) protects the retinal cells and nerves from damage by decreasing inflammation in the eyes.[13]

So, where does the list end? It doesn’t! There are hundreds of known anti-inflammatory chemicals. These all work synergistically to help your eyes. If you eat processed foods, you get none of these. You don’t get niacinamide, CoQ10, magnesium or any of the antioxidants that

are found in real food. Artificial colors have no benefit, but natural ones do. Each time you eat carrots, spinach, or kale you get tiny amounts of these. We cannot afford to eat anything that is not supplying nutrients. Sure, you can take a blueberry extract, but that doesn’t have all the benefits of eating a variety of antioxidants. There is so much more to prevention than just focusing on one illness (like glaucoma).

Avoid all processed or prepared foods. Don’t eat anything that does not nourish your body. Enjoy real foods. If you don’t like vegetables, eat them anyway. My mom used to hide kale in fried rice, broccoli in macaroni and cheese, and wheat germ in cookies. Everything she made would have one or more nutritious ingredients. One of her friends told her that it was a waste to put wheat germ in her cookies because it was such a tiny amount of nutrition, but she was not swayed. She told her friend, “I use up about three bottles of wheat germ every year, and that adds significantly to my children’s nutrition!”

Another way to get good nutrition is to make smoothies with fruit and vegetables. Add kale, spinach, and chard to your berry smoothie once or twice per week. Also, tomato sauce has lots of lutein; use it in your meals. It’s the small and simple choices we make daily that determine our nutrition. Eat fish every Friday. Eat liver and onions periodically. Eat fruit, vegetables, nuts, seeds for snacks. Don’t buy bags of chips – get blueberries, carrots, raspberries, oranges, and kiwi instead. This is the way to prevent glaucoma – as well as heart disease, cancer, arthritis, and a host of other illnesses.

# Supplement Recommendations

Having said that, some who have glaucoma, or even elevated pressure in the eyes without glaucoma, may need a supplement. Those with genetic predisposition, such as those of Japanese descent, may want to take extra doses of the nutrients above to prevent glaucoma. There is a tendency to decrease our CoQ10 production as we age. Also, if we don't have good protein digestion and absorption, we may not get enough vitamin B3 from food. Those who have low pressure glaucoma or arrhythmias of the heart might be low in energy. In such cases it is wise to take supplements.

- Niacinamide 1,000mg twice per day
- CoQ10 100mg twice per day
- Magnesium about 200mg twice per day

Also, there are many supplements with carotenoids, look for a good quality brand. You can now buy "Eye Vitamins" which contain these and other ingredients. They have been studied, and they do make a difference to those with eye disease.

Back to Carol: after a discussion, Carol changed her ways. She started having antioxidant-rich fruit and vegetable smoothies and added more fruit and vegetables to her diet. She also took magnesium, niacinamide, and CoQ10. She got off her medication for acid reflux because it prevents the absorption of magnesium. She stopped eating at night, so she no

longer has acid reflux. Her eye pressure came down. She stopped the eye drops, and – this is important – she goes to see an ophthalmologist once a year to check on her optic nerve.

If you are concerned about it, and especially if you have relatives with the disorder, the measures above will prevent glaucoma. But even if you already have it, glaucoma is treatable, but be careful of the old treatments that only consider eye pressure. Medications and surgery that only reduce eye pressure may reduce your risk of blindness, slightly, but do not address the problem. The real issue is energy produced by mitochondria. Instead, give them the nutrients they need, and they will keep you young, energetic – and sighted.



Sources: [1] <https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2021/04/210415142827.htm> [2] <https://www.brightfocus.org/glaucoma/article/ocular-hypertension-and-glaucoma> [3] <https://www.sciencedirect.com/topics/medicine-and-dentistry/normal-tension-glaucoma> [4] <https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2021/04/210415142827.htm> [5] <https://www.glaucoma.org/glaucoma/normal-tension-glaucoma.php> [6] *Science* 2017; 355, 756-760. Vitamin B3 modulates mitochondrial vulnerability and prevents glaucoma in aged mice. Williams, P. A. et al. [7] *Science* 2017; 355, 756-760. Vitamin B3 modulates mitochondrial vulnerability and prevents glaucoma in aged mice. Williams, P. A. et al. [8] *Invest ophthalmol vis sci.* 2019, 60:2509-2514; Nicotinamide Deficiency in Primary Open-angle Glaucoma; Kauassi Nzoughet J. et al. [9] *Neural Regen Res.* 2019; 14:197-200; Evidence on Neuroprotective properties of Coenzyme Q10 in the treatment of Glaucoma; Martucci, A.; Nucci, C. [10] *Ophthalmologica* 1995; 209:11-13; The Influence of Magnesium on Visual Field and Peripheral Vasospasm in Glaucoma; Gaspar, Az, et al. [11] *Randomized Controlled Trial J Ocul Pharmacol Ther.* 2013 Feb;29(1):61-7. doi: 10.1089/jop.2012.0071. Epub 2012 Oct 9. Effects of black currant anthocyanins on intraocular pressure in healthy volunteers and patients with glaucoma; Hiroshi Ohguro 1, Ikuyo Ohguro, Saeko Yagi [12] *Nutrients.* 2021 Jun 6;13(6):1949. doi: 10.3390/nu13061949. Carotenoids in the Management of Glaucoma: A Systematic Review of the Evidence; Drake W Lem 1, Dennis L Gierhart 2, Pinakin Gunvant Davey [13] *Int J Mol Med.* 2016 Jan;37(1):225-32. doi: 10.3892/ijmm.2015.2418. Epub 2015 Nov 23. Crocin protects retinal ganglion cells against H2O2-induced damage through the mitochondrial pathway and activation of NF-κB; Bochang Lv 1, Tao Chen 2, Zhiguo Xu 1, Fuquan Huo 3, Yanyan Wei 2, Xinguang Yang



# Sprouting: What's the Hype?

**Y**OU SEE LOAVES of sprouted bread in the aisles, and maybe you even buy it because of its associated health benefits – but is it worth the extra cash? What are those benefits exactly?

Sprouting, the process of germinating seeds to be eaten raw or cooked, was also popular in the 1970's. And still, to this day, many health professionals believe that sprouted benefits run the gamut from better blood sugar control to increased absorption of minerals. Read on to learn more about how sprouting can improve your health.

## Why Go Sprouted?

Experts agree that sprouts are in fact more nutritious than the un-sprouted. A variety of popular brands, such as Ezekial, are based on the premise that sprouted grains are better for you. But, why?

When the seed is germinated before eating or cooking, your body is able to better absorb a number of nutrients including zinc, vitamin C, and iron. But, that's not all. Other health benefits include:

- Better digestion: When bread is made with raw grains, the bread is starchy and hard to digest. However, sprouting allows the seed to break most of its starch down into simple sugars. This process makes these grains easier for your body to digest.
- Controlling blood sugar: According to a 2012 study published in the

“International Journal of Food Sciences and Nutrition,” sulphoraphanes in broccoli sprouts were found to reduce insulin resistance, and can be beneficial in controlling blood sugar in type-2 diabetics.

- Lowers cardiovascular risk: In a recent Korean study, mice fed sprouted brown rice had higher plasma HDL-cholesterol (good cholesterol) than those who ate the non-sprouted rice.
- Increase total dietary fiber: A German study found that sprouting wheat decreases gluten proteins while increasing folate; in general, bread from sprouted wheat is higher in dietary fiber, which is essential in a healthy diet.

# DIY Sprouting

The sprouting process can be used with grains, vegetables, beans and lentils. And, though you can buy a variety of sprouted products off the shelf of most grocery stores, sprouting at home allows you to experiment, while saving money on expensive sprouted products. With a simple process, you can turn your kitchen into a sprouting heaven.

1. Wash your seeds and pick out any stones. You can use a colander to make this process easier.
2. Move your seeds into a sealable container - this can be a jar or bowl, doesn't matter - and cover them with water. Let this soak for 8-12 hours.
3. Pour out the water, rinse with cold water and pour it out again, making sure you don't leave the seeds sitting in any water.
4. You can then leave your dry seeds in the jar or on a paper towel, and leave them where air circulation is good – near a window or an airy room.
5. Wash them twice a day to keep them clean and moist. Do so until the seeds have been fully sprouted – sprouting time will vary with everything seed.

# Dangers of Sprouting

While eating sprouted bread or vegetables has a slew of health benefits, there are a number of dangers, as well. Some dangers include salmonella, E. coli, and listeria. When eating and growing sprouts, the FDA suggests:

- If you buy sprouted vegetables, always refrigerate them, and try to cook them before eating.
- When making your own, use clean water and containers; sanitize your container before using it.
- All sprouts, bought or made at home, should have a clean smell. If something smells funky, throw them out.

Sprouted bread remains one of the most popular sprouted items in the grocery store, and for good reason. Sprouting your grains, (as well as veggies, lentils and rice) has huge nutritional benefits including lower cardiovascular risk, higher dietary fiber intake, better digestion and blood sugar control. Consider sprouting your own or purchasing sprouted products to reap many of these benefits.



# 5 Ways to Enjoy an Anti-inflammatory Diet



Have you read the headlines lately?

- Inflammation Is the #1 Cause of All Disease!
- Inflammation: The Secret Killer!
- Beat Inflammation and Save Your Life!

It's enough to make you rush to the drugstore and stock up on anti-inflammatory drugs like Advil and Motrin. Not so fast! Those NSAIDs (nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs) usher in a whole host of health problems and aren't even the best weapons with which to launch an attack against inflammation. To keep systemic inflammation at bay, it's best to eat anti-inflammatory foods and stay away from over-the-counter and prescription drugs that lead to kidney and heart problems if taken regularly.

# Inflammation Investigated

Inflammation is both friend and foe. Your body depends on the inflammation response to help protect it from injury and infection.

Let's say you sprain your ankle. The swelling and pain that accompany a sprain are your body's inflammation response at work. Inflammation triggers the release of white blood cells to your ankle. These white blood cells help clear away the infection while the associated discomfort tells your body to take it easy and rest so healing can do its magic. While the initial pain might be annoying, it's imperative to the healing process!

Chronic inflammation, however, wreaks havoc on the body and causes all sorts of health conditions, including obesity, ADD/ADHD, peripheral neuropathy, diabetes, heart disease, stroke, migraines, thyroid issues, dental issues, and cancer.

## Eat Away Inflammation

You can curb chronic inflammation by eating foods with anti-inflammatory properties. Here are five tips to help nurture a healthy immune response in your body:

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### TIP #1: REBALANCE YOUR OMEGAS

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Omega-3 is an essential anti-inflammatory fatty acid that your body needs to protect against heart disease, age-related dementia...the list is endless.

Omega-6 is another essential fatty acid that is imperative to health; however, omega-6 is pro-inflammatory, and when it outweighs omega-3, inflammation in the body rages.

Bring your omega-3:omega-6 ratio back into ideal 1:1 balance by cutting back on omega-6-rich foods like polyunsaturated vegetable oils and upping your intake of omega-3-rich foods like oily cold water fish, chia and flax seeds.

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### TIP #2: CUT BACK ON SUGAR AND TRANS FATS

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Sugar stokes inflammation by telling the body to release chemical messengers called cytokines. Overproduction of cytokines causes tissue degradation and diseases such as rheumatoid

arthritis. Trans fat (think processed and packaged foods) damages the cells that line your blood vessels, activating systemic inflammation big time!

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### TIP #3: TRADE IN THE REFINED FOR THE WHOLE

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We're talking grains here. Whole grains are much healthier than refined white breads, rice, and cereal. Rich in fiber, whole grains have less sugar and help decrease levels of C-reactive protein, a marker of inflammation in the blood.

As long as you aren't intolerant of gluten, whole grains are a safe and healthy anti-inflammatory food.

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### TIP #4: EAT YOUR E

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Research shows that vitamin E helps monitor cytokine production (those pesky inflammatory molecules that can get out of control with their inflammation duties!).

Load up on vitamin E by eating dark, leafy greens such as kale, spinach, and broccoli. You can also get vitamin E and omega-3 together in a handful of nuts. So go ahead and crunch on some almonds and walnuts!

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### TIP #5: EAT COLORFULLY: ADD SOME OTHER COLORS BESIDES GREEN TO YOUR PLATE. PEPPERS, TOMATOES, AND BEETS HAVE ALL BEEN LINKED TO REDUCED INFLAMMATION.

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- Tomatoes contain lycopene, which has been associated with decreased inflammation in the lungs specifically
- Beets give you a hearty dose of fiber and vitamin C!

Everyone's body is different. What works to reduce inflammation in some, may trigger the inflammation response in others. Start listening to your body and noticing the subtleties. Some common symptoms of inflammation to look out for are joint and muscle pain, asthma or allergies, constant fatigue, and skin problems.

Loading up on junk foods, high-fat meats, sugar, and highly processed foods will increase these inflammation symptoms in your body.





By Nathaniel Branden, Ph.D.

# INCREASE PASSION AND SOULFULNESS EXPONENTIALLY

**W**HEN I THINK of nourishing the soul, I think of nurturing the ability to respond positively to life—that is, the ability to sustain passion for our interests, values, and projects. I believe that the worst of all spiritual defeats is to lose enthusiasm for life’s possibilities.

Every life has its share of setbacks and disappointments—of tragedy and loss. So, the question we all confront, in the face of negatives that may assail us, is: How do we keep our inner fire alive?

Two things, at minimum, are needed: an ability to appreciate the positives in our life—and a commitment to action.

*Every day, it’s important to ask and answer these questions:*

*“What’s good in my life?” and “What needs to be done?”*

The first question keeps us focused on positives; the second keeps us proactive and reminds us that we are responsible for our own happiness and well-being.

Another aspect of focusing on the positive, and thereby nourishing the soul, is to stay focused on the inquiry “What in my life do I most enjoy? What most stimulates me?” Someone once said that you can know who a man is if you know what wakes him up.

The pleasures that nurture me personally may be as simple as enjoying the view of the city and the ocean from the window of my living room, or spending time in the garden, or appreciating good health. Of course, one of the greatest joys that nurtures me is having a loving relationship with my wife. In addition,

when I think of nurturing the soul, I think of listening to music and rereading books that have meant a lot to me. I also think of the act of writing. When I spend time at my computer, writing, I almost invariably experience a tremendous sense of appreciation of how wonderful it is to be alive. If I am away from writing too long, I feel discouraged, or at least dispirited. Writing takes energy, and it also creates energy.

## Be Engaged in What You Do To Feel Alive

For all of us, the key is to pay close attention to which activities make us feel most alive, passion and in love with life—and then try to spend as much time as possible engaged in those activities.

Even when our life is most difficult, it is important to remember that something within us is keeping us alive—the life force—that lifts us, energizes us, pulls us back sometimes from the abyss of despair. True spirituality does not exist without love of life.

If we feel unhappy or unfulfilled, the most urgent question is, “What needs to be done?” Or one might say, “What’s missing in my life—and what can I do about it?” The sin is to suffer passively. We must never forget that we have the capacity to act. So, we must always be concerned to know “What avenues of action are possible to me? What can I do to make my life better?”

If we stay oriented to the two basic questions—“What’s good in my life?” and “What needs to be done?”—and strive to respond to those questions appropriately, the predictable result is that we will be happier human beings and get far more

of whatever it is that we want in life.

## Nourishing the Soul Positions Us For Enjoyment

Some writers—Erich Fromm, for one—contrast a so-called “being” orientation with a “doing” orientation. The implication is that being and doing are in some sense antithetical. Of course, they are not. Doing and being, action and stillness, are dependent on one another. Without action, we would cease to exist, and without stillness, we would neither be able to appreciate our existence nor have a foundation from which to act. We need stillness, we need the pure experience of being, in order to fully realize ourselves. Out of that stillness can come the motivation to act and also the awareness we need to act wisely, not to lose perspective.

When being and doing are in harmony, when stillness and action are friends to each other, we create an integrated, satisfied soul. We are then in the best position to truly enjoy and appreciate life and not be destroyed by adversity.

## The Process, Not Just The End Result, Brings Happiness

Another aspect of nourishing the soul is the ability to stay focused on the present, to live in the present. Many years ago in the 1960s, I was writing a book called *The Psychology of Self-Esteem*. I was

a young man at the time, in my thirties, and one day I was sitting at my typewriter, impatient for the book to be finished, thinking that my life would really begin to unfold only when this book was finished. Yet I intuitively knew that something was wrong with this line of thought. So, I asked myself what I thought I would be doing when the book was finished, and I immediately answered, “Planning the next book.” And when the next book was finished? “Planning the book after that.” I saw that my life, first and foremost, was about writing: that was and is my passion. So, in the middle of writing *The Psychology of Self-Esteem*, I finally realized “This is it. This is my life. If I can’t enjoy it now, every day, there is no reason to believe I’ll be better able to enjoy it in the future, after the seventh, eighth, or ninth book.”

That realization was a turning point for me. The impulse to focus on the future can be quite strong. It’s natural to look ahead. Yet I realized that the key to happiness lay in enjoying the process, not just the final result—because the greater part of my life was going to be spent at the level of process and not at the stage of contemplating the finished product. So, now I bless each day I can get up and go to my computer and sit down to write and know and love the fact that this is what my life is about.

I believe that earning your living doing something you enjoy is one of the very best ways to nourish your soul. But even if you are employed at something that is not your ideal work, it is important to find ways to take as much pleasure in it as possible. Living in the present moment can make ordinary activities more interesting and joyful; you may be surprised, if you only look, at what you will find. If you try to stay connected with why you are doing what you are doing, for example, then even the parts of your life that aren’t especially exciting can become more

meaningful.

Sometimes, I have to go to an event that doesn't especially interest me. I've learned to tell myself, Make this experience as happy for yourself as you possibly can. Once that becomes a conscious purpose, it's amazing how imaginative one can become. Life becomes infinitely more interesting.

## Be An Active Participant In The Drama Of Life

Nothing I am saying about the importance of living in the present denies the value of being concerned with the future. We want to keep in mind our goals, what we're moving toward, and to see the progression and direction that underlie our activities. We need to be able to plan for

the future without sacrificing the present, and enjoy the present without making ourselves oblivious to the future. Obviously, we cannot control every single aspect of our life. We are not omnipotent. But, we do have an enormous degree of responsibility for the shape our life takes. We have many options about how we will respond to events. We are not passive spectators, but active contestants in the drama of our existence. We need to take responsibility for the kind of life we create for ourselves.

How do we nurture the soul? By revering our own life. By treating it as supremely important. By reaching for the best within ourselves. By learning to love it all, not only the joys and the victories, but also the pain and struggles.





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