7 Deadly Signs of Disease

From your head to your toes, these telltale signals can reveal when something is seriously wrong.

By Lynn Allison

Sometimes it takes sophisticated medical tests to tell us when we are sick. But in many cases, our bodies send out clear signals — some obvious, some subtle — that we are ill. When this happens, we need only to look into the mirror for the telltale signs.

The key is being able to accurately interpret what your body is trying to tell you so that you can get the medical help you need.

Here are seven signs that could indicate the presence of a deadly disease, according to medical experts.

1. **HAIR:** Sudden hair loss, especially in women, can be a sign of a thyroid abnormality — either hyperthyroidism or hypothyroidism.

   It can also be caused by iron deficiency, according to Kenneth Beer, M.D., a top dermatologist who teaches at the University of Miami.

   Iron deficiency can lead to serious health problems, including anemia, severe fatigue, and immune system impairment.

   Simple blood tests can determine if you have thyroid problems or an iron deficiency.

2. **EYES:** The photos you take of your loved ones can save their lives.

   If one eye in the picture shows a red reflection but the other shows a white spot on the pupil, the person might have retinoblastoma, a rare but potentially deadly malignancy of the eye.

   It is most common in children under 6. Ophthalmologists often urge parents to check for “white dot” photos, since most pediatricians don’t check for the disease during routine checkups.

   **Bulging eyes,** called exophthalmos, are a common sign of Graves disease, a thyroid disorder, says Cary Silverman, M.D., a New Jersey ophthalmologist.

   **Sudden blurry vision,** particularly in the elderly, has been linked to early Alzheimer’s disease.

3. **EARS:** Dr. Mehmet Oz, the celebrated television talk show host and cardiologist, says that a diagonal crease on one or both ears that looks like an earring has been ripped out of the lobe, can signal future heart disease.

   Experts say this feature usually corresponds with thickened arteries that supply blood to the heart.

   The ear crease usually appears many years before a heart attack or other heart disease symptoms.
Check the mirror, and if you have that line, see your doctor or cardiologist for heart disease screening.

4. FINGERNAILS: Pale fingernails are another indication of iron deficiency.
“Nails should turn lighter when pressed and return to a pink color,” says Anthony Martinez, M.D., assistant clinical professor of medicine at the University of California, San Diego.

Discolored nails — brown, yellow, or gray instead of pink — can be the result of a fungus, but they can also signal diabetes.

Dr. Beer points out that fingernail clubbing, when the nails become shaped like a spoon, can be an indication of lung disease.

5. FINGERS: Women with ring fingers longer than their index (pointer) fingers have an increased risk of osteoarthritis and polycystic syndrome, a hormonal disorder that is one of the leading causes of infertility in women.

In men, however, longer index fingers are a good thing, indicating they have a lower risk of prostate cancer, according to British researchers. Men with index fingers longer than their ring finger were one-third less likely to develop the disease.

6. SKIN: A cut that won’t heal accompanied by fever is a sign of necrotizing fasciitis, better known as flesh-eating bacteria syndrome.

Many different types of bacteria cause this frightening disease. The condition recently made headlines when 24-year-old Aimee Copeland battled flesh-eating bacteria syndrome, which resulted from a cut she received after falling into a river. The Georgia woman survived, but had to have both hands, a foot, and a leg amputated.

It is extremely important to get treatment quickly if you have a cut, even a minor one, along with a fever. Antibiotics are started as soon as flesh-eating bacteria is suspected.

7. TOES: Hairless toes are an indication of cardiovascular...
disease. Even for women, tiny bits of hair or “peach fuzz” on the toes are a good sign, according to Dr. Oz.

When you have hair on your feet, it means you have a good blood supply to your toes, he says. In fact, people who quit smoking will often notice that they will get more hair on their feet. This is because their circulatory system is starting to work better, says Dr. Oz.

Conversely, people who start smoking, or increase the amount of smoking, will lose toe hair.

Here are other common signs of serious disease:

A twitching eye can indicate a magnesium deficiency, but it can also be a sign of multiple sclerosis.

A dry mouth can signal Sjogren’s syndrome, an autoimmune disease that attacks salivary and tear glands. The condition can cause serious joint pain and strikes primarily women. Dry mouth can also be a symptom of diabetes or Parkinson’s disease.

Creamy white patches on the tongue or gums can be a sign of oral thrush, which is a yeast infection. This condition is not serious and usually can be cleared up using an oral anti-fungal mouthwash. If the patches do not go away, they should be checked by a doctor because they can be an early sign of cancer.

Persistant bad breath that doesn’t respond to good oral hygiene can indicate Type 1 diabetes.

Ketoacidosis is a condition that occurs in some diabetics in which the body tries to rid itself of excess acetone through breathing. The acetone emitted can cause bad breath.

**Important**

As a subscriber to Health Radar, you may have opted to get this newsletter with our Convenient Automatic Renewal program. If you decide not to cancel your subscription, your credit card will be billed each year and read NMX*HEALTH RADAR on your credit card statement. Thank you.
5 Breakthroughs That Knock Our Socks Off

This week, we were totally blown away — yep, that’s ‘70s slang, but hey, that’s where our roots are! — by five medical breakthroughs we think you should know about.

1. The “new” good fat! You’ve already heard plenty about DHA, the great-for-you omega-3 fatty acid in fatty fish and algae or fish-oil capsules. Now, research from Harvard Medical School and the Cleveland Clinic (where Dr. Mike is Chief Wellness Officer) has shown that omega-7 fatty acids found in purified palmitoleic acid have amazing powers, too. They squelched heart-threatening LDL cholesterol and triglycerides, boosted ticker-friendly HDLs, decreased fatty liver and improved cells’ ability to take in blood sugar in several studies.

Our take: Four studies are more than four times better than one, but we need more human trials before recommending omega-7s unconditionally. But we’re intrigued enough so that at least Dr. Mike is taking 200 milligrams of purified omega-7 in capsule form along with the 900 milligrams of DHA we each take daily.

2. Streamlined exercise. If you’re trying to fit in cardiovascular exercise (walking, pedaling your exercise bike, etc.) and strength-training, you, like us, may have wondered if it’s OK to do them both on the same day. Now, docs from Canada’s McMaster University and Sweden’s Karolinska Institute have studied this question the correct way — in randomized, double-blind human studies that put volunteers on a variety of routines then analyzed their muscles. The result: Cardio and strength routines, when done on the same day, are good and good for you!

Our take: Two studies are good, but we’d like to see four in humans, with results lining up on the same side of the issue, before we say “Do this and stay younger.” Still, we’re doubling up. We do stamina routines for 21 or more minutes at 80 percent of our age-adjusted max heart rate followed by strength exercises for 10-20 minutes on the same day — three times a week.

3. Say “ahhhh” and save your DNA. Stress doesn’t just ding your genes, it stunts them. A Duke University study shows that family violence, watching disturbing movies, or experiencing disturbing events shortens kids’ telomeres, the protective caps on the ends of DNA. That boosts risk for health problems later in life.

Our take: Avoid these DNA changes (remember, you can control how well your genes work) with this feel-good technique. Just tense and relax muscle groups, starting with your feet. Move on to legs, stomach, back, neck, arms, face and head. To melt stress, breathe in as you tense, out as you relax.

4. Ceramides and cancer protection. This accidental discovery could lead to a cure for pancreatic cancer and glioblastoma — a very bad-behaving brain tumor. In mice experiments, fatty acids called ceramides acted like a Trojan horse. Tumor cells invited them in and then the ceramides told lysosomes (tiny recycling centers inside cells) to burst, killing the cancer cell.

Our take: Someday, ceramides could be the basis for a gentle, effective, integrative cancer treatment.

5. Bexarotene and Alzheimer’s disease. This skin-cancer drug is showing huge promise against Alzheimer’s disease. Mouse studies were a triumph. The first reports from other scientists trying to get the same results (an important research step) are due in mid-June.

Our take: When results are in, you’ll hear the news from us!
Harvard: Cocoa Has Extraordinary Health Benefits

It fights heart disease, cancer, diabetes, high blood pressure, and aging.

By Lynn Allison

It’s not a coincidence that we shower loved ones with chocolate in a heart-shaped box for Valentine’s Day. Recent research confirms what Cupid already knew — that dark chocolate does your heart good.

Harvard researchers analyzed 21 separate scientific studies on cocoa, a key component in dark chocolate, and concluded that cocoa consumption is associated with cardiovascular as well as other health benefits.

Dr. Eric Ding of the Harvard Medical School tells Health Radar that his extensive research reveals that cocoa lowers blood pressure, improves the health and elasticity of blood vessels, and improves cholesterol levels.

Centuries of Proof

“The Kuna people of coastal Panama drink cocoa water each and every day, and they never seem to have high blood pressure associated with aging as we do in most of the Western world,” he says. “They also have a much lower incidence of cancer. So we gathered data from several studies and found such credible evidence from many diverse and independent scientific sources that we feel we reached a tipping point on cocoa’s extraordinary health benefits. This is no longer a myth based on anecdotal evidence.”

Historically, cocoa has been used medicinally for more than 2,000 years, since the time of the ancient Mayan and Aztec civilizations. More than 100 therapeutic uses for chocolate and cocoa have been noted, including the treatment of fatigue, fever, angina and heart pain, kidney and bowel complaints, and shortness of breath.

Dr. Ding explains that it’s the flavonoids in cocoa that protect against disease. Cocoa contains three types of flavonoids: procyanidin, catechin, and epicatechin.

A study recently published in the “American Journal of Clinical Nutrition” found that the epicatechin in cocoa lowers blood pressure. Another study from San Diego State University showed that people who consumed dark chocolate had lower blood sugar and healthier cholesterol ratios.

“We’ve noticed that ingesting cocoa helps protect the heart in several ways. It raises the HDL or good cholesterol while lowering the LDL, or bad cholesterol,” Dr. Ding says.

Diabetes Help

His research revealed that in the study groups of people who consume cocoa, resistance to the hormone insulin dropped, which means it could ease diabetes. Participants maintained ideal weight levels even though cocoa and chocolate are often forbidden to diabetics.

Dr. Ding says that in addition to these benefits, cocoa appears to make the blood vessels more elastic and healthy. It’s important to note that the studies used low-sugar or unsweetened dark chocolate and pure cocoa, not common candy bars.

Cocoa Supplements

Cocoa supplements, usually in powder form, are widely available at health food stores and on the Internet.

Dr. Ellen Kamhi, author of “The Natural Medicine Chest,” agrees that it’s important to consume the right source of cocoa. “Standard commercial chocolate may not have the original flavonoids of the cocoa bean, which supports good health,” she tells Health Radar. “Overprocessing destroys them, so choose products such as dark chocolate, or unprocessed, unsweetened chocolate. Enjoy a small piece of cocoa-rich chocolate as part of your balanced diet.”

Dr. Ding says when you are buying cocoa supplements, make sure that they contain at least 400-500 milligrams of cocoa flavonoids. Examples include supplements from CocoaWell, CocoaVie, and Club Natural.
Heartburn or Heart Attack? Knowing the Difference Could Save Your Life

By Charlotte Libov

Most people experience minor twinges of chest pain now and then. And when it happens, we can’t help but wonder if it is something serious. Is it heartburn or a heart attack?

These two maladies have similar symptoms, but very different outcomes.

Delaying treatment of a heart attack could cost you your life. On the other hand, no one wants to take an ambulance trip and go through many hours of testing if the pain could be cleared up with an antacid.

“The reason that heartburn has ‘heart’ in its name is because it’s extremely difficult to differentiate a heart attack from heartburn,” says Harvey Kramer, M.D., director of Cardiovascular Disease Prevention at Danbury (Conn.) Hospital.

The first thing to consider is your heart attack risk, according to Chauncey Crandall, M.D.

“People with coronary heart disease, heart attack survivors, or those who have undergone coronary artery bypass surgery or had a stent implanted should not hesitate to get help,” says Dr. Crandall, chief of the Cardiac Transplant Program at the Palm Beach Cardiovascular Clinic.

If you are over 50, have a family history of heart disease, have high blood pressure, diabetes, are obese, or inactive, you are also at greater risk and should err on the side of caution.

There are also key differences in the symptoms of heartburn and a heart attack that can help you decide whether to call 911, say Dr. Crandall and Dr. Kramer.

**Where is the pain located?**

If the pain is located in the center of the chest, the shoulder, jaw, neck, or back, it may be a heart attack.

However, if the pain is a burning sensation in the throat and is accompanied by a bitter taste in the back of the throat, that’s most likely heartburn.

**When Does the Pain Strike?**

If the pain occurs shortly after you’ve eaten, it may very well be heartburn, especially if you lie down after eating.

Heart attack chest pain more commonly occurs during exertion. Cardiac pain generally does not occur at rest, while heartburn usually does.

**Telltale Symptoms**

Heart attack symptoms may include shortness of breath, sweating, fainting, nausea, and lightheadedness. These do not often happen with heartburn.

“If you get associated symptoms like sweating and shortness of breath with the discomfort, that’s more likely to be caused by cardiac chest pain, not heartburn,” notes Dr. Kramer.

“Women often present with atypical symptoms of heart attack, so they are more likely to experience these symptoms.”

If you are on antibiotics or other medications that could irritate the stomach, that’s an indication for heartburn.

For people who take nitroglycerin for angina relief, things can be tricky. Sometimes nitroglycerin relieves the pain of heartburn.

**Most Important**

Remember, there are no hard-and-fast rules. If you’re experiencing chest pain that you suspect may be heart-related, chew a 325-milligram aspirin if you have one handy, but don’t hesitate — calling 911 should be your first priority.

Also, don’t ever drive yourself to the hospital.

An ambulance is the better option because emergency treatment can be started on the way to the hospital that could save your life.

**“FIT AFTER 50” FACT**

Hot weather is a major risk factor for heart attacks. In fact, extremely high temperatures kill more people in the U.S. than hurricanes, earthquakes, lightning, and floods combined. Heart attack rates go up during heat waves and also during cold spells, making it important for those at risk to stay in a controlled environment during extreme temperatures.
New Test Finds the Right Antidepressant

GeneSightRX promises to end grueling trial-and-error process.

By Nick Tate

For the 1 in 10 Americans diagnosed with depression, choosing the right antidepressant is no easy feat. The 20-plus mental-health drugs approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration all carry side effects and can interact negatively with other treatments. And certain drugs simply work better for some people than others.

For doctors, matching patients with the right drugs is an inexact science, at best. Patients may try many drugs — sometimes in various combinations and dosages — before hitting on the best option. For some, it is a grueling trial-and-error ordeal that lasts months or longer.

But that may be about to change. A remarkable new test developed at the Mayo Clinic and Cincinnati Children’s Hospital is now available that helps turn the subjective method of selecting the right antidepressant into a more exact process.

The GeneSightRX test is the first “pharmacogenomic” laboratory test that can help guide patients to antidepressants likely to be a good or bad match, based on his or her individual genetic makeup. Created by an Ohio-based company called AssureRx Health Inc., it is being hailed as a breakthrough in therapy and one of the first practical examples of what experts have long viewed as the wave of the future in healthcare — treatment that is personalized to an individual’s biological makeup.

“Pharmacogenomics is being used to improve mental wellness so it is already one of the waves of the future in healthcare — treatment that is personalized to an individual’s biological makeup,” AssureRx’s Chief Science Officer Tony Altar told Health Radar. “Its application is already here.”

How the Test Works

Psychiatrists prescribe various kinds of antidepressants that have different effects on chemicals in the brain called neurotransmitters — including serotonin and norepinephrine — which are believed to regulate moods. The most commonly prescribed antidepressants are called SSRIs (short for selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors) and SNRIs (serotonin-norepinephrine reuptake inhibitors). They work by increasing the activity of the brain chemicals through varying mechanisms, requiring the activity of different enzymes.

But genetic differences can determine how a person will react to mental-health medications. Doctors have known this for years. In fact, they often find that when depression runs in families, the same antidepressant medication will work best on all family members who have the condition.

GeneSight identifies variations in a small number of genes that influence the metabolism and therapeutic response of drugs used to treat depression, as well as schizophrenia and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, said Altar. By tracking liver enzymes that degrade the drug once it is in the body, the test can predict how a patient will react to specific antidepressants.

“In the case of therapeutic response, the prediction is based on how the gene variation affects brain proteins that contribute to the therapeutic response of the drug,” he said. “The [test] can predict psychiatric drugs that are a good match for treating patients, based on each patient’s genetic profile.”

To use the test, patients work directly with their own doctors, who take a saliva sample and send it directly to AssureRx for analysis. Within 24 hours, the company provides results, including the most commonly prescribed drugs he or she is likely to respond well to and tolerate, and a drug interaction table indicating any potential conflicting substances.

“The test has to be ordered by a clinician who is licensed to prescribe medications, such as a physician, nurse practitioner, physician assistant, and in some states a Ph.D. psychologist can get a license to prescribe certain types of medications,” Altar noted. “The patient cannot order the test.”

For more information: Visit AssureRx’s website at www.assurerxhealth.com or call 513-234-0510. Patients can ask their doctors to contact AssureRx by calling 866-757-9204 or emailing sales@assurerxhealth.com.
Prostate Health: The Truth About the PSA, Saw Palmetto Pills, and More

Q: There's been a lot of confusion lately about PSA screening guidelines. What's your take on the new federal recommendations against the PSA test for most men?

A: I think that perplexed would be the best word to describe my take on the recent recommendations from the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force. The bottom line for me is that the death rate for prostate cancer has dropped by as much as 40 percent since PSA testing came on the scene in the mid-1980s.

Unless something has changed in the basic tumor biology of prostate cancer (doubtful), then early detection by PSA testing is really the only explanation for this decline. Earlier diagnosis allows educated decisions to be made based on the whole picture — aggressiveness, tumor stage, comorbidities, life expectancy, etc. To me, taking away PSA screening puts us back into the dark ages of prostate cancer treatment when most men weren't diagnosed until they had metastatic disease.

Q: But aren't there downsides to the PSA test?

A: Is PSA testing perfect? Obviously not, and this has been recognized since early on. It is not a black-or-white test and there are false positives and false negatives. It is, however, the most helpful tool that we have and likely will have for some time.

In the words of the American Urological Association: “In disparaging the PSA test before a newer diagnostic is more readily available does a great disservice to American men and may cause more harm than good.”

Q: Beyond the PSA, what can men do to maintain prostate health?

A: I tell my patients that a heart-healthy diet is a prostate-healthy diet — we all could benefit from less animal fat in our diet. Eating more tomatoes and tomato-based products (for lycopene) may also be helpful. Soy-based products (soy milk, tofu) may also be good for the prostate. I am not a megavitamin or supplement fan but I generally recommend a daily multivitamin and a well-rounded diet. Exercise in general helps maintain a healthy immune system and can help prevent cancer.

Q: What about saw palmetto? Studies have found it a beneficial treatment for enlarged prostate, but a new analysis says it's no better than a sugar pill.

A: There are several good studies showing saw palmetto alone is no better than placebo. But combination pills that include saw palmetto, stinging nettle, pygeum, etc., may have some activity and are widely used in Europe.

Neill Borland, M.D., is one of the nation’s leading urologists and prostate cancer specialists. He is in private practice as part of the Urology Group of Florida in West Palm Beach.
The Blood Sugar Solution Big Pharma Hates
Why a Natural Solution Is Safer and Much More Effective

Do you struggle to maintain healthy blood sugar metabolism? Often, a blood sugar issue first manifests with symptoms like fatigue, mood swings, food cravings and weight gain. But as it progresses, your doctor may tell you that your only option for avoiding serious health problems is to take a dangerous drug for the rest of your life! Well, I’m here to tell you that this is nonsense.

My name is Joshua Corn and I am the Editor-in-Chief of Live in the Now, one of the fastest growing natural health publications in the nation. My passion for natural health drives me to seek out alternative health solutions that are both safe and effective. Please keep reading because getting a handle on your blood sugar (the natural way) will improve every aspect of your health.

Warning Signs of Blood Sugar Trouble
- Unbalanced cholesterol ratios
- Blood pressure concerns
- Irritability and mood swings
- Late afternoon energy drops
- Fuzzy thinking
- Uncontrollable cravings
- Weight gain
- Poor digestion
- Vision and hearing loss
- Skin aging and wrinkles

The Dangers of Drugs for Blood Sugar Management
The current mainstream medical mentality on blood sugar management has created Big Pharma’s most lucrative class of drugs. But are they safe? Incredibly, despite evidence that the controversial drug Avandia caused over 83,000 heart attacks, it is still being prescribed! Big Pharma has an ugly track record of misrepresenting the truth about the safety of its drugs, and there’s no reason for you to jeopardize your health for their profits.

A Spice That’s Nice for Blood Sugar and Weight Loss
Recent groundbreaking research on cinnamon has led to some exciting findings. USDA scientists were the first to discover that cinnamon very effectively balances blood sugar. And a recent study published in the American Journal of Clinical Nutrition showed that cinnamon improves insulin function while preventing food cravings and overeating, making it an ally for dieters.

Cinnamon Supports Optimal Heart Health Too!
In addition to its blood sugar benefits, numerous studies have shown that cinnamon balances cholesterol levels and promotes a strong, healthy heart! It turns out that cinnamon contains powerful antioxidant substances that tame inflammation and support optimal heart function.

WARNING: Don’t Take Cinnamon by the Spoonful
Taking full advantage of the benefits of cinnamon is not as simple as sprinkling it on your food. Whole and powdered cinnamon contains volatile oils that can be toxic to the liver in large doses. Currently, most experts recommend taking 500 mg a day of a standardized cinnamon supplement made using a water-soluble method that removes toxins while leaving the active compounds intact.

The Perfect Blood Sugar Solution
In addition to my work with Live in the Now, I own a company called SAN, which has been making premium grade dietary supplements for over 15 years. Working with my Scientific Advisory Board, I created a premium grade cinnamon formula called CinnaPure™. It’s superior to anything else out there — and affordable! I encourage you to do your own research, but here’s why I am confident that CinnaPure™ is simply the best:

- The Perfect Dose: Just one small capsule per day of CinnaPure™ provides 500 mg of Cinnulin PF®, the world’s most researched and most effective type of cinnamon extract.
- Standardized: Produced from a superior source of cinnamon bark, validated to have the most active polyphenols.
- Safe and effective: Made using a patented water-soluble method that removes toxins while leaving important active compounds intact.

I Want to Do More Than Just Sell You a Bottle
I honestly want this product to be the solution you’ve been looking for, which is why CinnaPure™ ships to you for free and comes with an unbelievable 365-day return policy. Try it for up to a year and if it doesn’t work, it’s FREE! Whether you are concerned about safely balancing your blood sugar levels, increasing your energy levels, losing weight or avoiding trouble down the road, CinnaPure™ is a smart risk-free investment. I hope you will give it a try!

- Joshua Corn
Editor-In-Chief of Live in the Now and CEO of SAN

Try CinnaPure™ RISK FREE!
Order Today & Get Free Priority Shipping (a $7.95 value)

Three Easy Ways to Order:
Toll-Free: 800-627-9721 Ref. Code: CINSP3
Online: www.stopagingnow.com/cinnapure3
By Mail: Complete the below form and mail to:
Stop Aging Now Orders Department
8825 Boggy Creek Rd, Orlando, FL 32824

- YOUR VERY BEST DEAL
Please send me 6 bottles of CinnaPure™ plus 2 FREE bonus bottles for only $99.95 (that’s just $12.49 per bottle).
Price per bottle includes bonus bottles.

- GREAT SAVINGS
Please send me 3 bottles of CinnaPure™ plus 1 FREE bonus bottle for only $59.96 (that’s just $19.99 per bottle).
Price per bottle includes bonus bottle.

- GOOD SAVINGS
Please send me 1 bottle of CinnaPure™ for only $19.95.

The information contained above is for general consumer understanding and education, and should not be considered or used as a substitute for medical advice, diagnosis or treatment. This product is not an alternative to any prescription drug. If you are currently taking a prescription drug, consult your doctor before making any changes. These statements have not been evaluated by the FDA. This product is not intended to diagnose, treat, cure or prevent disease.
Breakthrough Sleeping Pill: Long-Term Help for Insomniacs

By Nick Tate

If you’re among the one in three Americans who have a hard time falling or staying asleep, here’s something to put your mind at rest: A new pill helps insomniacs get to sleep faster — and stay asleep longer — than other drugs now on the market.

What’s more, the new pill, called suvorexant (pronounced soo-voh-rex-ant), works in ways that are completely different from others on the market, without posing the sometimes dangerous side effects that have made many doctors reluctant to prescribe such drugs.

Although it has not yet been approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, Duke University Medical Center researchers who tested the pill predicted it will be available by year’s end.

Sleep specialists are calling the pill the biggest breakthrough in insomnia treatments in many years.

Dr. Michael J. Thorpy, director of the Sleep-Wake Disorders Center at the Montefiore Medical Center in New York, told Health Radar that the new drug works in a manner that is completely different from current sleeping pills, which act as depressants.

“That’s what’s very exciting to us in sleep medicine,” said Dr. Thorpy. “The standard sleeping pills of the past have been depressants and the newer ones, like suvorexant, are more selective to target sleep.

“So finding a medication that works in a totally different way adds a whole different compound to our armory in the treatment of sleep disorders.”

Safer, More Effective

Two late-stage clinical studies of suvorexant, developed by Merck & Co., found the drug greatly reduced the time it took patients taking it to fall asleep and helped them stay asleep longer, without significant side effects or addiction.

Pills on the market now, such as Ambien, keep patients asleep for about two-thirds of the night. But suvorexant appears to provide longer rest.

The findings will be used by the drug company to file for FDA approval of the drug later this year — making it the first medicine of its kind to hit the market.

Unlike sleeping pills that are usually taken as needed, suvorexant is taken nightly over long periods of time. It works by blocking chemical messengers in the brain called orexins that help to keep you awake.

Insomnia patients in the Duke studies took varying doses of suvorexant over a three-month period. In one study, patients 18-64 years of age were given 40 mg, and those 65 and older were given 30 mg. The second study tested suvorexant at 20 mg in the younger group and 15 mg in patients 65 and older.

The findings, presented at a recent meeting of the Associated Professional Sleep Societies in Boston, indicated both dosing levels were effective in helping patients get to sleep and stay asleep.

And unlike other sleeping pills, suvorexant doesn’t appear to lose effectiveness over time or require ever-greater doses. Suvorexant was still effective after a year of taking the drug, Merck found.

Dangers of Other Sleeping Pills

Suvorexant’s development comes in the wake of new concerns raised about traditional sleeping pills. Earlier this year, a new study reported that millions of Americans who regularly take medication may increase their cancer risk 35 percent and their risk of death fivefold.

Among the sleeping pills studied were Ambien (zolpidem), Lunesta (eszopiclone), Sonata (zaleplon), and Halcion (triazolam).

Despite the concerns, sleeping pills are among the most widely prescribed medicines, with an estimated 63 million prescriptions written in the U.S. last year.

Dr. Thorpy noted that medication is not the only way to treat sleep problems. Healthy sleep habits are also important — including such rituals as going to bed at the same time each night and waking at the same time each morning.
Eating Like a Caveman: Can It End Cancer and Heart Disease?

By Arnie Rosenberg

It’s trendy to go “back to basics.” But author Nora Gedgaudas says that for optimum health, we need to take our diet all the way back to the Paleolithic Era, which ended 200,000 years ago.

Gedgaudas, a certified nutritional therapist and neurofeedback specialist, says that a high-fat, moderate-protein, starch-free diet — along with nuts, seeds and seafood — helped Paleolithic man develop the physical makeup we still have today. Our hunter-gatherer ancestors didn’t have the carbohydrates and processed foods that are today’s diet staples.

“Our ancestors gave us clues about how we should eat based on how they ate,” Gedgaudas, author of the recent best-selling book “Primal Body, Primal Mind,” tells Health Radar.

“Their habits helped design their physical makeup, which now is our physical makeup. When we deviate, we get into trouble. And we’re in trouble.”

Modern Perils

Gedgaudas says our eating habits and health are influenced by our environment, which contains polluted water and air, chemical pesticides, and farm soil that has become depleted of nutrients.

Not only does heart disease and cancer claim more victims each year, but autoimmune disorders, autism, ADD/ADHD, and memory disorder all can be traced to abandonment of the diet that helped make man strong and healthy in the first place and keep him that way for millions of years, she says.

Because we’ve genetically changed little from our much-healthier ancestors, our dietary and physiological requirements haven’t substantially changed, either. That’s why so-called “caveman diets” have become so popular in recent years, Gedgaudas says.

Cancer, heart disease, and autoimmune disorders are modern health scourges that were not widespread in our long-ago ancestors. Today, they are among man’s top killers.

Back to Basics

“Paleolithic nutrition has taken off because it appeals to people in a common-sense way,” she says. “Nutrition never started coming into focus for me without this foundational outlook.”

Eating a primitive diet is simple, Gedgaudas says. Avoid processed foods, factory-farmed meat, and farm-raised seafood. Instead eat grass-fed meats and wild-caught fish.

Choose organic vegetables and greens. Stay away from conventionally produced dairy products, especially low-fat milk, which is high in carbohydrates, Gedgaudas advises. And at the top of her “cut the carbs” list is eliminating sugar from your diet.

Should you cut back on unhealthy foods gradually? Gedgaudas recommends quitting cold turkey.

Otherwise, “You’re setting yourself up for failure. People base their diet on foods that truly are addictive in most respects,” she says.

Likewise, she calls the old adage “Everything in moderation” no more than an excuse.

What You Can Do

Here are the first steps that Gedgaudas recommends for a healthier, primal diet:

• Eliminate margarine and commercial cooking oils “immediately, if not yesterday.” Olive oil is an excellent substitute.
• Replace soda, sports drinks, and juices with plain water.
• Avoid fast food, sugar, starches, and processed gluten-containing foods.
• Supplement with omega-3 oils, vitamins A and D, and a daily multivitamin, mineral complex or multimineral complex.
• Get at least seven to eight hours of sleep a night.

With so many unhealthy foods and toxins in the environment, “There’s almost no room for error anymore,” Gedgaudas says. “Each generation is increasingly vulnerable.

“Individuals need to take responsibility for their own well-being.”
You Share Your Body With Several Pounds of Bacteria

Despite the yuck factor, trillions of microbes inside us keep us healthy.

By Rick Ansorge

Between two and five pounds of you is not you, but bacteria.

It may make us uneasy to know that we share our bodies with some 10,000 different species of microbes. They are so numerous that they make up a significant portion of our body weight. In fact, the bacteria in your body likely outweigh your brain, which is only about three pounds. Despite the yuck factor, this is a good thing.

We tend to think of bacteria as disease-causing. And indeed, bacteria are among mankind’s biggest killers, causing pneumonia, tuberculosis, bubonic plague, and many others. “Some people don’t even want to know that there are living bacteria in their yogurt,” says Dr. Maria Marco, Assistant Professor of Food Science at the University of California in Davis.

As a result of a huge new research effort called the Human Microbiome Project that involves more than 200 scientists at 80 institutions, we recently have begun to understand much more about the organisms teeming inside our skin.

Researchers discovered that microbes in our body outnumber human cells by a factor of 10 to one: 100 trillion microbes versus only 10 trillion human cells. “Bacteria in our digestive tract help digest our food,” says Dr. Marco. “The good bacteria also serve as a barrier to the harmful bacteria.”

Starting at birth, the human body is colonized with microbes that prime and stimulate the immune system to function more efficiently. “We’re starting to realize that we can be colonized by trillions of bacteria and stay healthy,” Dr. Marco says. “The immune system recognizes that some of these organisms are OK and others are not.”

The results of the Microbiome Project reinforce the idea that probiotic foods and supplements containing helpful bacteria such as acidophilus and lactobacillus can help improve and maintain human health.

Eventually, Dr. Marco expects the new research to lead to better treatments, especially for gastrointestinal ailments. “We’re starting to learn that there are connections between the gut and brain,” she says.

“There’s interesting work being done in connecting the microorganism in our intestines and the signaling that occurs there that can even affect our moods. It’s a new frontier.”

Which Probiotics Should You Take?

Based on scientific studies, probiotics experts suggest trying the following probiotic products for common health concerns:

- **Preventing antibiotic-associated diarrhea.** Lactobacillus GG (Culturelle), Lactobacillus casei (DanActive), Saccharomyces boulardii (Jarrow Formulas, others).
- **Preventing infectious diarrhea and traveler’s diarrhea.** Lactobacillus GG (Culturelle), Lactobacillus casei (DanActive), Bifidobacterium animalis (Activia), Saccharomyces boulardii (Jarrow Formulas, others).
- **Preventing colds and flu.** Lactobacillus casei (DanActive), Lactobacillus reuteri (Nature’s Sunshine, others), Lactobacillus acidophilus NCFM (Evolve kefir).
- **Treating irritable bowel syndrome.** Bifidobacterium infantis (Align, Benefiotics).
- **Treating inflammatory bowel disease.** Combination products containing lactobacillus, bifidobacterium, and streptococcus (VSL#3).
- **Treating respiratory infections.** Lactobacillus GG (Culturelle), or a combination containing Lactobacillus acidophilus and Bifobacterium (HOWARU Protect).
- **Treating vaginal infections.** Researchers have found Lactobacillus acidophilus suppositories (Vivag, Pharma Vinci A/S) and vaginal tablets (Gynoflor) may be effective. Researchers also found that vaginal capsules containing Lactobacillus gasseri and Lactobacillus rhamnosus seem to help.
MAYO STUDY: BP DRUG CAUSES CELIAC SYMPTOMS

A commonly prescribed blood pressure drug, Olmesartan, can trigger severe gastrointestinal symptoms that can be confused with celiac disease, which is caused by an allergy to gluten in the diet.

Doctors at Mayo Clinic treated 22 patients who had celiac symptoms, including, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, weight loss, and electrolyte abnormalities.

The patients didn’t respond to a gluten-free diet, and blood tests failed to show antibodies typical of celiac disease. After examining their medications, doctors took several patients off Olmesartan, and their symptoms improved dramatically. After removing the remaining patients from the drug, all showed improvement.

HOTEL TV REMOTES TEEM WITH GERMS

The next time you check into a hotel, you might want to take time to sanitize the television remote. Researchers at the University of Houston found that TV remotes are among the surfaces most likely to be heavily contaminated with disease-causing bacteria.

As expected, high levels of contamination were also found on toilets and bathroom sinks, but bedside lamp switches were also especially germy.

TEA TACKLES DIABETES

If you drink tea like an Englishman — an average of four cups a day — you will lower your risk of developing Type 2 diabetes, according to German researchers. The study examined tea-drinking habits of Europeans and found that those who drank at least four cups of tea daily (the British average) lowered their diabetes risk by 20 percent. The benefit, say researchers, may come from the polyphenols in tea, which influence the effectiveness of glucose and protect beta cells from free-radical damage.

SCANS TRIPLE CANCER RISK

Children under 15 who have as few as two CT scans of the head triple their risk of brain cancer, researchers found. The British study, which included more than 175,000 children and young adults, also found that children who have five to 10 whole-body scans also triple their risk of leukemia. Head scans, say the researchers, usually involve higher doses of radiation than whole-body scans. CT scans produce about 10 times the dose of radiation used in X-rays, and the researchers say they should be used only when the immediate benefits outweigh the long-term risks.

GINSENG FIGHTS CANCER FATIGUE

Ginseng has long been touted as an energy-booster, and now a study by the Mayo Clinic has found that it may also help cancer patients fight fatigue, a complaint that occurs in up to 90 percent of cancer patients. Researchers found that high doses (2,000 mg) of American ginseng (Panax quinquefolius) each day reduced cancer fatigue over a two-month period with no side effects. “After eight weeks, we saw a 20-point improvement in fatigue in cancer patients, measured on a 100-point, standardized fatigue scale,” said Debra Barton of the Mayo Clinic Cancer Center.

COFFEE PREVENTS ALZHEIMERS

A study published in the “Journal of Alzheimer’s Disease” found that drinking at least three cups of coffee a day could prevent the onset of the mind-robbing disease. Scientists from the University of South Florida and the University of Miami studied people aged 65 to 88 who had mild cognitive impairment (MCI). They found that 100 percent of patients who had high levels of caffeine in their blood (the equivalent of drinking several cups of coffee) did not develop full-blown Alzheimer’s during the follow-up that lasted two to four years. “These intriguing results suggest that older adults with mild memory impairment who drink moderate levels of coffee — about three cups a day — will

“FIT AFTER 50” FACT

If you habitually sleep fewer than six hours a night, you’re at an increased risk for stroke. In fact, researchers at the University of Alabama at Birmingham found that the biggest risk for stroke in middle age and older adults who weren’t overweight or suffering from sleep apnea was a lack of sleep. Researchers believe that short sleep duration may be a precursor to other traditional stroke risk factors — such as apnea — and that sleep treatments may help prevent the development of stroke.
not convert to Alzheimer’s disease, or at least they will experience a substantial delay before converting to Alzheimer’s,” said the study lead author, neuroscientist Dr. Chuanhai Cao. “The results from this study, along with our earlier studies in Alzheimer’s mice, are very consistent in indicating that moderate daily caffeine/coffee intake throughout adulthood should appreciably protect against Alzheimer’s disease later in life.”

**DIABETES DRUG DOUBLES BLADDER CANCER RISK**

Canadian researchers have found that pioglitazone, a drug used to treat Type 2 diabetes, increases the risk of bladder cancer. Patients who had taken pioglitazone at some point in the past had an increased risk of 83 percent. The risk doubled for those who had taken the drug for at least two years, and climbed still higher for those who had taken larger amounts. The researchers found no increased risk for a similar drug, rosiglitazone. However, both drugs are known to increase the risk of heart failure.

**SIMPLE TEST FOR AUTISM**

A test that uses an ordinary electroencephalogram (EEG) to map electrical activity in the brain can diagnose autism in children as young as 2, according to researchers at Boston Children’s Hospital.

The findings are important because autism can often be difficult to diagnose. EEGs, which came into use in the 1930s and have been used for decades to diagnose epilepsy, can detect differences in the way the brain is wired.

Dr. Frank Duffy found large differences in the connections between regions of the brain — especially those that control language — in children with autism. Researchers hope that diagnosing autism earlier will lead to more effective treatment.

**CELERY BATTLES BREAST CANCER**

Apigenin, a chemical found in celery and parsley, may treat an aggressive form of breast cancer, according to researchers at the University of Missouri. The celery chemical was found to be extremely effective in treating mice who were induced to have a human form of breast cancer. What’s more, apigenin did not have any side effects in the animals. “Clinical trials could begin tomorrow,” says researcher Salman Hyder, but obtaining funding is a problem. “Since apigenin is easily extracted from plants, pharmaceutical companies don’t stand to profit from the treatment; hence the industry won’t put money into studying something you can grow in your garden.”

**SPINACH TONES MUSCLES**

Popeye was right: Spinach makes you stronger. Scientists at Sweden’s Karolinska Institute found that the large amount of nitrate in spinach has a powerful effect on muscles, toning them and making them stronger. Researchers divided mice into two groups, a control group and a group given nitrate in their drinking water, the human equivalent of eating 7 to 10.5 ounces of spinach a day. After seven days, the mice supplied with nitrate had significantly stronger muscles.

“The amount of nitrate that affected muscle strength in mice was relatively low,” said Dr. Andrés Hernández, researcher at the Department of Physiology and Pharmacology. “Translated to humans, it means that we can obtain the equivalent volume by eating more of a vegetarian diet, as nitrate is found naturally in several leafy vegetables.”

**VEGGIES BEAT PANCREATITIS**

A diet rich in vegetables appears to prevent acute pancreatitis, a potentially deadly inflammation of the pancreas, a large Swedish study found.

After tracking 80,000 people for 11 years, scientists found that those who ate the most vegetables — more than four servings a day — were 44 percent less likely to develop acute pancreatitis than those who ate only one serving a day. Eating vegetables was even more protective among people who were overweight.
Strategies for Staying Hydrated:
The Key to Good Health

By Dieter Hogen

Our bodies are made up largely of water, up to 75 percent, depending on our age and build. Our lungs are 90 percent water, our blood 83 percent. Those numbers show how important it is to stay hydrated, which is a basic requirement for health — not just to finish a marathon.

Dehydration can have serious consequences and even be life threatening. It puts enormous stress on every cell in your body from your brain to your prostate, resulting in poor performance and making you more prone to disease.

Symptoms of dehydration include dizziness, muscle weakness, low concentration levels, and tiredness. Being dehydrated causes blood to become more viscous, which is like having syrup in your veins, a condition that increases the risk of heart attack and stroke.

How much water the body needs to extract from food and beverages for its metabolic needs each day is not exactly known and will greatly vary from person to person. The very-often recommended 8 cups a day for an average size person doesn’t help a lot. Depending on where you live, how active you are, how much you sweat, what you eat, and what other beverages you consume, that number can be much less or twice as much. And it can vary from day to day. Make sure you adjust your fluid intake each day according to your lifestyle.

One way to tell if you are getting enough fluids: Make sure your urine is clear or light yellow, not dark.

Clean water (preferably filtered by reverse osmosis), teas, and high-water-content food like fruits and vegetables should all be part of your daily nutritional program. The more high-water food you consume, the less water you need to drink. Consider fresh vegetable juices and diluted fresh fruit juices (at least one part water for one part juice) as a highly recommended healthy addition.

The best way to avoid dehydration during exercise is to drink extra fluids 1-2 hours beforehand, and then stopping 30 minutes before you start exercising.

Here are a few things I do to stay hydrated — and I recommend them to my athletes and everybody else:

Right after getting up, drink 1 ½ cups of water with the juice of one lemon. The body dehydrates during the night and drinking something refreshing first thing in the morning is my secret little health tip. It rehydrates the body right away, is important for detox processes, helps your brain, skin, prostate — you name it.

Have a morning smoothie and prepare a tumbler of tea or coffee.

At some point during the day I make 4 cups of jasmine green tea, add 1 tablespoon or a little more of a natural sweetener like honey, agave, or maple syrup and a little fresh-squeezed orange juice. I drink one or two cups right away. The rest goes into the fridge for a delicious iced tea later.

Eat a big slice of melon right after a very sweaty workout. Besides being so refreshing and rehydrating, it gives you much-needed sugar and plenty of antioxidants.

Stay away from store-bought drinks that are too sugary or contain sweeteners and all kinds of artificial additives.

One last bit of advice: For all your homemade drinks and cooking I would not recommend using unfiltered tap water. Besides chlorine, there is always the chance for other contaminants. Instead of expensive bottled water, I recommend that you install a reverse osmosis filter underneath your sink. This way you get good-quality drinking water whenever you want it, for a fraction of the price.

A world-renowned nutrition expert and Olympic athletic coach, Dieter Hogen created a nutrition and training regimen in the 1990s that changed the elite athletes’ training paradigm forever. Schooled at Potsdam University in Germany, Dieter brings his nutritional knowledge to Health Radar with one goal in mind: “To simply make you healthier and more energetic, no matter your age or current physical condition.”
Chemical-Free Food Can Be Delivered to Your Door

By Donna Scaglione

When you read about all the antibiotics and other chemicals used in raising beef, does it take some of the joy out of sinking your teeth into a hamburger? You’re not alone.

Interest in eating more naturally raised foods is growing, with consumer groups calling for restrictions on the use of antibiotics in animal feed.

At least one major fast-food chain, Chipotle Mexican Grill, is now offering antibiotic-free meat. Smaller regional chains — Evos, Organic to Go, and Gusto Grilled Organics for example — are following suit.

And there is growing array of mail-order companies that will deliver natural, healthier foods to your door.

Healthier Alternative

Proponents of grass-fed, pasture-raised, antibiotic-free meat and wild-caught fish tout its benefits.

Chief among their arguments is that overuse of antibiotics in animal feed at factory farms leads to the creation of drug-resistant “superbugs” in humans and animals, and that grass-fed meats are naturally lower in calories and come from cows more humanely raised.

Grass-fed beef generally has less total fat than typical corn-fed beef. It also has higher levels of heart healthy substances such as omega-3 fatty acids, antioxidant vitamins, and conjugated linoleic acid.

Wild-caught — as opposed to farm-raised — fish is also often higher in heart healthy omega-3 fatty acids. Much farm-raised fish is also treated with antibiotics, which wild-caught are not.

While some natural foods may be becoming more available at stores like Trader Joe’s, Whole Foods, and others, it can still be difficult to find them at many local grocers.

That’s where the Internet comes in. A number of online businesses offer grass-fed meats and other products delivered to your home.

But beware of sticker shock, especially on the meat products. Grass-fed meat takes longer to produce because the animals eat at their own pace and are not given grains to quickly fatten them, making their meat more expensive.

Where to Buy

Here’s a list of web-based companies that will deliver grass-fed and organic meat to your door.

EatWild.com — This website, produced by “Pasture Perfect” author Jo Robinson, is a primer on all things grass fed, including a directory of more than 1,300 pasture-based farms in the United States and Canada offering grass-fed products free of antibiotics and added hormones, including beef, pork, venison, chicken, turkey, eggs, milk, cheeses, nuts, berries, and wild-caught salmon.

Greensbury Market — This Maryland-based online market gets its beef, poultry, and pork from a network of small, USDA-certified organic farms from around the country. GreensburyMarket.com

Beyond Organic Grass-fed Beef — Ranchers Fred and Donna Nick offer grass-fed beef in an array of cuts including roasts, steaks, kabob cubes, sausage, and even beef jerky.

The Santa Margarita, Calif., company promises no antibiotics, growth hormones, or steroids are used. BeyondOrganicGrassFedBeef.com

Alderspring Ranch Grass-fed Beef — The Idaho ranch promises certified organic, dry-aged beef from cattle fed grass from mountain pastures. Stew meat, rib-eye, ribs, roasts, and more are offered. Alderspring.com

Wild Idea Buffalo Company — Wild Idea buffalo feed on Great Plains grasses on a South Dakota ranch using sustainable land and animal management practices, according to the company website, WildIdeaBuffalo.com

Other Resources

EatWellGuide.org — Find sustainable, organically grown and raised food near you. Search by keyword, zip code, or city and state.

Which fish is healthy? Monterey Bay Aquarium’s Seafood Watch (montereybayaquarium.org) offers a science-based “Super Green” list of tuna and other fish that is rich in omega-3 fatty acids and low in environmental contaminants.
Little-Known Vitamin Prevents Obesity

A vitamin found in tiny quantities in milk and beer may be the key to fighting obesity and diabetes, and also to making muscles stronger. Scientists at Weill Cornell Medical College and the Polytechnic School in Lausanne, Switzerland, found that the vitamin precursor nicotinamide riboside (NR), a cousin of niacin (vitamin B3), provided “remarkable” health benefits in high doses.

In a study, mice fed a high-fat diet supplemented with NR gained 60 percent less weight, showed no signs of developing diabetes, and had better endurance performance than mice eating the same diet without the supplement. According to Cornell’s Dr. Anthony Sauve, “the use of NR offers the health benefits of a low-calorie diet and exercise — without doing either one.

“The bottom line is that NR improves the function of mitochondria, the cell’s energy factories. Mitochondrial decline is the hallmark of many diseases associated with aging, such as cancer and neurodegeneration, and NR supplementation boosts mitochondrial functioning.”

Contact Lenses Monitor Blood Sugar

Checking blood sugar may soon be as simple as looking in the mirror. Contact lenses that change color could replace the frequent painful skin pricks diabetics must undergo in order to monitor their blood sugar levels.

Glucose is present in tears, and researchers at the University of Akron have developed a contact lens that changes color when the glucose levels change. “Glucose concentrations in tears can be used to intermittently or continuously monitor diabetic patients just as effectively as blood sugar levels measured directly from blood from a pricked finger,” says Dr. Jun Hu, associate professor of chemistry. The convenience could boost patient compliance, and since the feedback is continuous, the device (which doesn’t interfere with vision) could provide more exact monitoring. Since another person would have to spot the color change, or the patient would have to look in a mirror, researchers are working on a smart phone app that takes a picture of the eye and calculates the sugar concentration. “All you need is a smart-phone with a camera,” says Dr. Hu.

Skin Patch Fights Depression

A patch called the NeuroSigma sticks to the forehead and uses miniscule electrical impulses to stimulate a nerve in the head to fight depression during sleep. According to researchers, the trigeminal nerve, which is just beneath the forehead, acts like the “USB port into the brain,” leading to areas believed to control mood. In a study, patients suffering from major depression and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) who had not responded to at least one antidepressant used the patch for eight hours each night. (The patch contains electrodes that are linked to a generator the size of a cell phone.)

After eight weeks, they reported a 50 percent reduction in symptoms of depression and a 36 percent reduction in PTSD symptoms. “These findings are very encouraging,” said UCLA professor of psychiatry, Ian Cook, M.D. “The combination of depression and an anxiety disorder, like PTSD, is usually difficult to treat effectively.”

Device ‘Smells’ Cancer

A breathalyzer-type device can “smell” cancer, providing an early warning for breast and lung cancer, according to scientists at the Georgia Institute of Technology. Patients simply blow into a tube attached to a device which looks like a small water bottle. The bottle is then sent to a lab where the breath is analyzed by a sensor that looks for specific compounds produced by cancerous cells. In one study, the breathalyzer detected breast cancer with 78 percent accuracy. In addition to being a quick way to diagnose cancer early, it would offer an alternative to mammograms and CT scans, which are expensive and expose patients to dangerous radiation.