BEYOND HEALTH® News

November — December 2001

"Over 20,000 research articles have consistently shown that enrichment of the diet with the essential nutrients reverses degenerative disease."

—Kirk Hamilton
Clincal Pearls

Live Longer Now

Cut calories…

Cutting calories is the only method that has consistently been proven to extend longevity. If you cut the caloric intake of laboratory animals by roughly 40 percent you double their life span; likewise, imagine doubling average American life span—to 154 years! Such longevity may sound outlandish to some, but traditionally healthy populations (like the Hunzas) were approaching that—and they ate low-calorie diets. Coincidence? Probably not.

Until recently, no one knew exactly *why* cutting calories extended life span, but a new study published in the September *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* sheds some light. Animals that were fed calorie-restricted diets from birth live long, healthy lives because they do not "turn on" the *genes* that cause aging and disease. *A high calorie diet turns on genes that are responsible for aging and disease and at the same time turns off genes that keep us young and healthy.* Since Americans are on high calorie diets (and become more overweight every year), our early deaths and high rates of disease are not surprising. The number of calories you eat will have direct bearing on the rate at which you age.

The fact that eating a low calorie diet from birth leads to long, healthy lives is certainly good news, but here is some even better news for those of us who are older. Even if you are already older, *you can reverse the aging process and become biologically younger.* All you have to do is go on a calorie-restricted diet. As it turns out, when older animals were put on such a diet, they reversed half of their age-related genetic changes, thereby becoming biologically younger. So even in old age, restricting calories is beneficial.

However, when calories are restricted, each calorie must be richer in nutrition. While fewer calories are beneficial, fewer *nutrients* are a disaster. This means consuming absolutely no empty calories such as sugar, white flour, or white rice. By cutting these empty calories (and perhaps even fasting a day or two each week), you may well be on your way to a longer, healthier life. Choose a diet of fresh, organic, unprocessed foods plus high quality supplements such as *Perque.* Remember, a diet can be very nutritious and still low-calorie. Cutting calories is the goal, and the reward is a longer, healthier life.

Exercise Reverses Aging

Reverses age-related decline…

Just six months of exercising can reverse age-associated decline in physical condition according to a new study in September's *Circulation.* The study showed that even older people who have not stayed fit could benefit from exercise and improve their cardiovascular function. However, the study also concluded that the health benefits of exercise are lost relatively quickly so that *"exercise must be a lifelong habit—like brushing your teeth or taking a shower."*

As an example of how quickly physical condition deteriorates, twenty-year-olds were given 20 days of bed rest. The negative effect on their cardiovascular health was equivalent to 30 years of aging. However, an exercise program of moderate intensity was able to reverse the loss of cardiovascular capacity, returning the group to normal.

Cut The Juice

Fruit juice is a make-believe food…

Real foods come in forms that nature provides; nature does not provide fruit juices. Humans were never intended to drink large amounts of calories in liquid form. *Fruit juices are low in nutrients and high in sugar.* Bad enough for adults, fruit juices are a disaster for infants and children. In fact, the American Academy of Pediatricians is

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advising parents that infants who drink a lot of fruit juice may become malnourished as well as being at increased risk for tooth decay and other diseases.

Children are the largest consumers of fruit juice, and that means they are consuming massive amounts of sugar. This, in turn, is contributing to increasing levels of pediatric obesity and diabetes. In other words, fruit juice is putting our children at risk for serious health problems. Here is what happens. The sugar in fruit juice is quickly absorbed into the body. This creates major disturbances in the balance of insulin, as well as other hormones, minerals, and neurotransmitters. In short, drinking fruit juice throws the body into biochemical chaos. These imbalances then lead to depressed immunity and higher risk of infections, ADHD, allergies, and other problems. In addition, many commercial fruit juice drinks are not 100 percent fruit juice. Many products contain lots of extra sugar, plus artificial flavors and colors, making them even worse choices.

What *should* children be drinking? For infants, it should be mother's milk. After weaning, pure water and freshly prepared, organic vegetable juices are the best choices. Substances like cow milk and processed fruit juice were never intended for human consumption—most especially not by children. If you're craving fruit, choose fresh, organically grown, *whole* fruits, not fruit juices.

BEYOND HEALTH *News*

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Beyond Health News is not engaged in rendering medical advice; this material is for information only. For specific personal health needs, readers should seek advice from competent medical professionals.

Preventing Macular Degeneration

Take supplements…

Macular degeneration is the leading cause of blindness in people over age 55. A new study in the October *Archives of Ophthalmology* has demonstrated that high levels of certain vitamins and minerals not only help to prevent macular degeneration, they can also help to prevent the loss of vision associated with this condition. A six-year study sponsored by the National Eye Institute (a division of the National Institutes of Health) found that high levels of vitamins A, C, and E, beta-carotene, zinc, and copper reduced the risk of getting this disease by 25 percent and also the risk of vision loss of those already afflicted with the disease. Paul Sieving, M.D., Ph.D., director of the National Eye Institute said, "This is an exciting discovery because…these nutrients are the first effective treatment to slow the progression of this disease."

Exciting as this new information may be, numerous previous studies have shown that people who eat diets rich in green, leafy vegetables have a lower risk of developing macular degeneration as well as just about any other disease. For some reason, our medical researchers always seem to be surprised to find that a good diet and proper supplement program are important components in maintaining health.

The actual dosage of supplements used in this study was not very high. For example, only 500 mg of vitamin C and 100 IU of vitamin E were used per day. In addition, the low bioactivity of the inorganic forms of zinc and copper oxides and of the beta-carotene used would also have impaired their effectiveness. If relatively low doses of mostly ineffective nutrients can reduce risk by 25 percent, just imagine what might be achieved with higher doses in more biologically useful forms. This is why BHN always recommends Perque, because of its superior bioactivity.

Prayer Works Again

It always has…

Another study proving the effectiveness of prayer has just been reported in the October issue of the *Journal of Reproductive Health.* Researchers at Columbia University, expressing great surprise at their own findings, have announced that women at a fertility clinic who were prayed for had twice the pregnancy rate of those who were not prayed for. Completely unknown to the patients, total strangers in different Christian denominations in the United States, Canada, and Australia were given photographs of the patients and were asked to pray for them.

Dr. Rogerio Lobo, chairman of obstetrics and gynecology at Columbia University, said that, "It was not even something that was borderline significant, it was *highly significant*." The authors were even reluctant to publish their findings because they seemed so "improbable." Not surprisingly, previous studies have shown prayer to be effective in treating heart patients.

High Protein Diets

AHA says no…

The American Heart Association (AHA) has taken a stand against high protein diets. Such diets are better known by their popular names such as the Atkins, Zone, Protein Power, and Sugar Busters diet. Each of these promotes weight loss through reducing carbohydrates and eating a diet high in protein. In its October journal *Circulation*, the AHA has warned that these diets fail to provide adequate amounts of essential nutrients such as vitamins, minerals, and fiber, while

supplying excess fat. Eating high fat diets has been shown to increase the risk of diabetes, cancer, stroke, and coronary artery disease.

While there is still controversy over the health effects of these high protein diets, BHN agrees with the AHA and continues to recommend that they be avoided. Those wishing to lose weight can do so simply by cutting out sugar, white flour, white rice, and dairy, doing regular exercise, and fasting one day per week. Taking high quality supplements is also important. For example, adequate amounts of magnesium have been found to facilitate weight loss.

Calcium Supplements Not Equal

Calcium carbonate not bioavailable…

BHN has long maintained that inorganic forms of minerals, such as calcium carbonate, are not very biologically active and should be avoided. A recent study in *The Journal of Clinical Pharmacology* has concluded that, "The selection of the calcium source is even more critical than previously thought." The truth is all calcium supplements are not created equally. They vary widely in their effectiveness, and this is especially important to most Americans because about 80 percent of us are calcium deficient.

A comparison was made between calcium carbonate (inorganic) and calcium citrate (organic). This study found that people on organic calcium absorbed two-and-a-half times as much calcium as those on inorganic calcium carbonate. This may sound bad enough, but the real bioavailability problems are far worse than this study indicates. This study measured the amount of calcium getting into the blood stream. Getting into the blood stream is only part of the story. Once in the blood, the calcium must be transported to a target cell, transported across the cell membrane, and then metabolized in the cell. Calcium must be attached to a specific amino acid transporter to accomplish this feat. This is why the more expensive organic forms of calcium are superior; the inorganic forms are not capable of getting into the cell. For these reasons and others, the inorganic calcium carbonate has a true bioavailability at the cellular level of about only 10 percent, which is terrible. Yet this is the form of calcium most often recommended by doctors. BHN continues to recommend Perque Bone Guard as the most highly bioavailable calcium product we have ever found.

Salmon Is Good

Not if its farmed…

Even conventional medical doctors are becoming aware of the body's need for omega 3 fatty acids, and fish is a good dietary source of these fats. Fatty fish, such as salmon, are particularly good sources, so everyone should eat salmon, right? Well, yes and no. The problem is, most of the salmon available today has been *farmed*, and farmed fish are not healthy. In fact, about 60 percent of the salmon on the market is farm produced, and the global farmed-salmon production increased by 18 percent in the last year. Farmed fish are produced at lower cost than conventionally harvested fish, and they have swamped the market. Prices have collapsed to the point where the Governor of Alaska has declared an economic disaster in Alaskan salmon fisheries. Ordinarily, lower prices for the consumer would be a good thing, but not in this case.

Farmed fish are grown in floating pens and are produced like livestock. Growing in close quarters makes the fish more susceptible to disease, and as a result they are vaccinated. In addition, antibiotics are used to ward off infection, though less is used today than previously. Some of the farmed fish have been found to be contaminated with PCBs and dioxins. *In addition, these farmed fish are fed pigments in order to make their flesh a pleasing pink.*

By eating farmed fish, one misses the nutrition that the fish is supposed to provide. Instead of being a good source of omega 3 fatty acids, the ratios of these oils in farmed fish are all wrong and are unhealthy. The fats are wrong because the fish are fed an unnatural diet of corn-gluten meal, soy meal, and canola oil. By eating an unnatural diet, instead of having a natural, healthy ratio of omega 6 to omega 3 of 3 to 1, the ratio is closer to 20 to 1. This ratio is associated with cancer and heart disease and similar to that found in commercial beef, which is also unhealthy.

If you are shopping for salmon or if you are ordering salmon off the menu, be sure to ask where the salmon was harvested. Salmon caught off Alaska or in the North Atlantic are OK, but if the salmon is farmed, order something else instead. Make your displeasure about the farmed fish known to the management. Unfortunately, fish farms have started to produce other types of fish as well. There is now small production of halibut, tuna, and sea bass, which is sure to grow if people are foolish enough to buy this unhealthy food. One producer is even experimenting with farming cod.

Dangerous Behavior

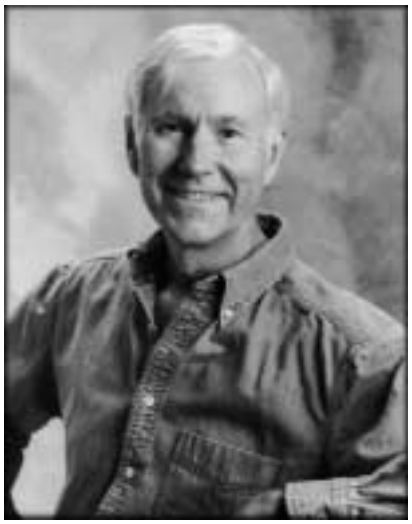
Cut out TV…

The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) is urging parents to "Get the TV out of your child's room." An article in *Pediatrics* has warned that television can promote *dangerous behavior* in children. The average child or teen watches almost three hours of TV every day. About one third of 2 to 7 year-olds and two thirds of 8 to 18 year-olds have a TV in their bedroom.

The AAP warns that children and teens are very susceptible to the messages they hear on TV and that reducing TV exposure can reduce violence and substance abuse among young people. They recommended that all TVs be removed from hospital rooms where children are patients as well as from the waiting rooms of pediatricians as an example to parents.

Food Combining

by Raymond Francis



Digestive aids are one of the biggest selling over-the-counter drugs in America, and sales of prescription drugs for heartburn are in the many billions of dollars. A vast number of people have trouble properly digesting their food and this is a *major* contributor to our epidemic of chronic and degenerative diseases. Where is all this poor digestion coming from? Modern medicine may be the single largest cause of poor digestion through its irresponsible use of antibiotics, birth control pills, and anti-inflammatory drugs. However, another major contributor is *the foods we select to eat at a given meal.* This last problem can be completely solved by learning which foods digest well together and which do not.

Having evolved as hunter-gatherers, our digestive systems are not designed to digest different types of food *all* at the same time. Yet, due to today's technology, we can eat a variety of foods, at the same time, at every meal. This makes it difficult to digest that food properly and it leads to disease by causing both deficiency and toxicity. When food is not digested properly, nutrients are not made available to the body so we become deficient. At the same time, the undigested food rots in our digestive system producing a variety of dangerous toxins. The answer to this problem is to learn how to do proper food combining.

The rules of food combining are rather simple, and if you apply them at every meal your body will digest its food better and you will be healthier (not to mention not needing that Maalox or Alka Seltzer). Certain kinds of foods digest well together and others do not. While eating many different foods in your diet is a great idea, *we are not designed to digest them all at the same time.* Learning which foods go well with each other is what food combining is all about.

Our digestive systems have adapted and evolved over many thousands of years. Until very recently, humankind did not eat the combinations of foods that are now "normal" to us. Remember, our ancestors evolved by hunting and gathering. Foods were often eaten directly from their source, usually one at a time, because there was no way to preserve or store them. When food was found, people would eat whatever they could and then move on, bringing along only what they could carry. Our ancestors certainly did not cook up three or four course meals that combined all sorts of different proteins, starches, sugars, fruits, and vegetables. This is why our digestive systems are ill equipped to digest particular combinations of food.

While we are young and our digestive systems are working at peak performance, it is possible to appear to get away with a lot of digestive indiscretions. However, as we age and digestive capacity diminishes, forcing the body to digest incompatible foods puts a tremendous strain on us, and it results in incompletely digested food. Incompletely digested food not only rots, ferments, and putrefies in the intestines, producing dangerous toxins, but it deprives us of essential nutrients, which we should be getting from properly digested food.

The key is to learn the food combinations that work well together and those that do not—planning your meals accordingly. In order to do this, think of a few simple food categories that you may already know: **proteins**, **starches**, **vegetables**, and three kinds of **fruits** (***sweet***, ***acid***, and ***melons***)

- It is good to combine **vegetables** with either **proteins** or **starches**, but
- Do not combine **proteins** and **starches** (meat and potatoes, fish and rice, etc.).
- Generally, eat **fruit** alone. *Acid* fruits may be consumed with *sweet* fruits, in which case, the acid fruits should be eaten *first*. *Acid* fruits can also be combined with *nuts* and *seeds.*
- Do not combine **melons** with anything (even other fruits, except other melons).

With these guidelines in mind, take a moment to identify your favorite foods; become aware of which categories they fall into and what they combine well with:

Protein	Eggs, meat, fish, fowl, nuts, seeds, avocado, coconut, sprouts, milk products.
Starch	Corn, wheat, barley, rice, buckwheat, millet, oats, dried peas & beans, potatoes, yams, squash, flour (pasta/bread/pastries), sugar (candy/soft drinks/etc.)
Vegetables	Asparagus, tomatoes, okra, green beans, green peas, broccoli, bell peppers, Brussels sprouts, cabbage, lettuce, celery, cucumber, eggplant, spinach, mushrooms, zucchini, radish, artichoke, beets, carrots, cauliflower, chives, ginger, garlic, leeks onion, shallots, scallions

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Sweet Fruits	Bananas, currants, figs, dates, raisins, prunes, dried fruits, grapes
Acid Fruits	Lemons, oranges, grapefruits ,other citrus fruits, kiwi, plum, pineapple, mango, papaya, all berries, nectarines, apples, cherries, pears, apricots, and peaches.
Melons	Cantaloupe, casaba, crenshaw, honeydew, banana melon, watermelon.

Food combining principles exist because each food category has different digestive requirements. For example, the requirements for proper digestion of proteins are radically different from that of starches; if you eat them both at the same time, you cannot digest either one well. (This is because proteins digest in an acid environment, while starches digest in an alkaline environment. Your digestive system has the ability to create either environment, but it cannot create them both at the same time.) Instead, combine proteins or starches with *vegetables,* which are highly nutritious and combine well with either one.

Fruit, however, is a different matter. Fruit has special digestive requirements and should generally be eaten alone. This is because fruit is very easy to digest and is meant to pass through the digestive system quickly. If fruit does not pass through the digestive system quickly, such as when combined with protein or starch, the fruit sugar can ferment in your stomach, often manifesting as bloating and gas. Fruit should be eaten alone, or combined with other fruits (ideal is to eat acid fruits first, if you are combining sweet and acid fruits together). Melons should only be eaten alone or combined with other melons in order to prevent sugar fermentation. Melons take even less time to digest than other fruits and must pass very quickly through your digestive system.

As you probably realize, many of our traditional meals are made up of the wrong combinations of food. What we think of as a "good meal" is most typically a harmful combination of starch and protein—the meat and potatoes diet (or a burger and fries, or a cheese pizza). We make the problem worse by accompanying meals with sugary drinks and desserts. These combinations will cause the food to ferment and putrefy in the digestive system. Learning how to apply proper food combining can do great things for your health.

Raymond Francis is an M.I.T.-trained scientist and an internationally recognized leader in the emerging field of optimal health maintenance.

Readers are invited to ask questions.
Answers will be provided by Raymond Francis on a space available basis.

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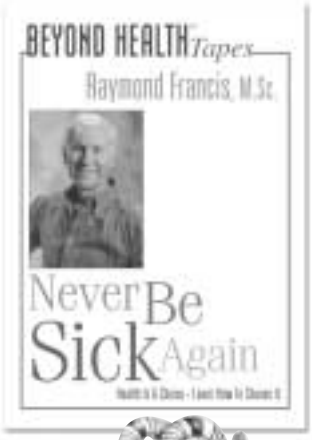

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N E W S I N R E V I E W

Avoid Flesh Eating Disease

No ibuprofen…

A report in the *New Zealand National News* warns against giving ibuprofen (Motrin, Nuprin, Advil) to chickenpox patients. As it turns out, children treated for chickenpox with ibuprofen have a higher incidence of a deadly flesh-eating disease called necrotising fasciitis. It appears that the ibuprofen impairs the immune response, thus allowing infection, and also masks the symptoms of secondary infection, thus delaying treatment.

It is well known that aspirin can cause Reye's syndrome in children with chickenpox and it now appears that ibuprofen may be even more dangerous. Since these drugs are usually given for fever and since fever is natural and beneficial there is no reason to use these drugs for this purpose.

Question: I am pregnant and a friend recommended I take choline. I wondered what you would think about that?
S.A. —Orlando, FL

Answer: Animal studies have found supplemental choline during pregnancy results in animals with better memories and that the effects last for a lifetime. It sounds to me like taking choline would be a good idea. Choline-rich foods include real eggs, lean meat, nuts and soybeans. Perque's Choline Citrate would be the supplement of choice.

In addition to pregnancy, supplemental choline is also very good for anyone with liver disease. In a study published in *Liver,* choline was given to patients with chronic active hepatitis, and in just three days it produced a significant reduction in disease activity.

Question: A friend is a multilevel distributor for a company called *4Life*. She is recommending a product called Transfer Factor to strengthen my immune system. I was wondering if you knew anything about this product.
A.C. —San Francisco, CA

Answer: As it turns out, I do. I review dozens of products every year. On those rare occasions when I find something that is truly outstanding, we make it available at Beyond Health—the whole idea being to have one place where people can be assured of getting only the best. I actually looked at two products made by this company, the Transfer Factor you are referring to and a skin cream. Neither of these products met my exacting standards for safety and effectiveness. For example, the skin cream contained chemical compounds called parabens (used as preservatives). Parabens can actually damage sub-layers of skin worse than the damage caused by severe sunburn. This is not something I would put on my skin, and it is indicative of the level of technical sophistication (in this case, the lack thereof) of the company selling the product. Transfer Factor is a complex product and it affects the immune system in complex ways that are not fully understood. This is why, for a company that lacks the technical sophistication not to put toxins in its skin cream, one has to wonder about their Transfer Factor. One person I know who experimented with this Transfer Factor suffered a serious allergic reaction.

If you want to strengthen your immune system, I would suggest avoiding known allergens as well as sugar and dairy products, avoiding toxins, eating lots of fresh fruits and vegetables, going on Beyond Health's comprehensive nutritional supplement program, and getting plenty of fresh air, sunlight, and exercise. This is a sure-fire way to improve anyone's immunity.

As a general rule of thumb, I think that caution is always advised when purchasing health products from a multilevel marketing company. Not to say that on occasion these companies do not have good products, but for the most part they do not. The cost of marketing through a multilevel is so very high, that the products are virtually always overpriced, often ineffective, and certainly not worth what you pay for them. Their primary goal is making money, not improving health, and the value is usually in the marketing hype and the packaging, not in the product.

Question: I was wondering if it is normal for hair to fall out daily. I often find hair on the floor and in the shower. Is this related to nutrient deficiency or toxicity?
M.S. —San Francisco, CA

Answer: Yes, it is normal for hair to fall out daily. However, it is not normal if the loss is excessive and leads to a thinning or complete loss of hair. Hair loss can be genetic. So-called male-pattern or female-pattern baldness is related to genes. However, hair loss can also result from deficiency and toxicity. Chemotherapy is just one example of hair loss caused by toxicity. Nutritional causes can be related to deficiency of biotin or iron. Low thyroid function and other hormonal problems along with poor digestion and parasitic infections are also known causes. If large amounts of hair are lost, it may be a good idea to see a doctor to rule out an undiagnosed disease.

Question: I am concerned about anthrax. If faced with having to take Cipro, what should I do?
L. F. —Pompano Beach, FL

Answer: Not being a physician, it is not appropriate for me to advise you on such a matter. I will, however, share with you my own thoughts on the subject. There are not a lot of studies on this particular question, so it is not possible to speak with the kind of authority that would come from many well-done studies. Nonetheless, if I were exposed to anthrax, my inclination would be to avoid antibiotics because of the enormous damage done to the body by these dangerous drugs. In fact, as I am writing this, there are people all over the country taking Cipro, even though they have had *no* exposure to anthrax. This is downright nutty. In my opinion, there are many natural immune boosters as well as natural antibiotics that are preferable to hazardous prescription drugs.

If I were exposed to anthrax, I would start by increasing my daily vitamin C to at least 12 grams per day and preferably as high as my body would tolerate (bowel tolerance). The vitamin C should be taken in conjunction with quercitin, as they are synergistic. In addition, I would use garlic, fresh garlic as well as liquid Kyolic garlic. Since anthrax kills by producing a toxin, garlic is important because it helps to block the production of toxins by germs. Garlic is also a powerful broad-spectrum antibiotic. A study done in England, and published in the *Journal of Nutrition* last March (long before our current crisis), found that *garlic was more effective in the treatment of anthrax than the antibiotics commonly used.* Other natural antibiotics that I would include in my program are olive leaf extract and oregano oil.

In addition to natural antibiotics, it is also essential to help the body detoxify any anthrax toxin that is produced. This could be accomplished by supplementing with sulfur-containing antioxidants. These include alpha lipoic acid, N-acetyl cysteine, and glutathione. Thiodox (see Beyond Health catalog) contains all three of these. Naturally, avoiding sugar, eating a good diet, taking the Beyond Health Comprehensive Supplement Program, getting plenty of rest, reducing stress levels and getting plenty of exercise and natural sunlight are also helpful in enhancing immunity.

Question: Are there health risks associated with using aluminum foils and pots? I remember one incident where I used aluminum foil to cover a salad dish. I discovered that the foil had developed tiny holes and I suspected corrosion of some kind. Also how about the aluminum in antiperspirants?

M. S. —San Francisco, CA

Answer: You are right to be concerned about aluminum. Aluminum is not a nutrient and it is toxic to humans. Humans have no known biochemical requirements for aluminum. Meanwhile aluminum appears to be preferentially absorbed by the brain, it is well known to be associated with Alzheimer's Disease, and it has been demonstrated to interfere with enzymes that produce critical neurotransmitters.

Putting food in contact with aluminum foil or aluminum cookware is not a good idea. Many foods are capable of reacting with aluminum, thus making the aluminum bioavailable to you. The fact that you found little holes in your aluminum foil means that the aluminum reacted with the food. Perhaps the foil was in contact with a tomato or with vinegar in the salad. Cooking an acid-type fruit or vegetable, such as tomato sauce, in aluminum cookware will invariably result in some quantity of aluminum being leached into the food. Even worse, if the water being used in the cooking has been fluoridated, the amount of aluminum leaching into the food can be 1000 times greater than if the water is not fluoridated.

Likewise using antiperspirants containing aluminum is not a good idea (use IndiuMagic instead). Many people take antacids on a regular basis, seemingly unaware that most antacids contain aluminum. Avoiding aluminum beverage cans is also a good idea; drink from glass bottles instead. In general, try to eliminate your biological exposure to aluminum.

Question: Are plastics linked to cancer? How much plastic is released from the containers we use? Some of my plastic containers are designated safe for microwave ovens, but I am guessing that everything becomes more volatile as temperature goes up. What is vinyl chloride? Is it OK to use plastic water bottles?

M. S. —San Francisco, CA

Answer: You sure ask a lot of questions, but that's good. We all need to learn how to make better choices in our highly complex world if we care about out health. I'll answer your questions in order:

Yes, plastics are linked to cancer. In particular, certain chemicals that are added to plastics such as *plasticizers* to make them softer and more pliable or as *antioxidants* to make them more stable and less breakable are known to have estrogenic effects in the body. Another chemical, bisphenol-A, leaches out of polycarbonate plastics (large water bottles) and from the plastic linings of canned goods in biologically active amounts. These chemicals upset the natural hormonal balance in the body and can contribute to hormone-driven cancers such as breast and prostate cancer.

As for how much is released, the answer is too much. Even though only a little contaminant is leached, not much is needed. Hormones work at very small dose levels. While the amount of chemicals leaching from these plastics can be too small to detect by some analytical methods, it may still be sufficient to cause a damaging biological effect. This has in fact been demonstrated in the laboratory.

As for your microwave-safe containers, microwave safe means that the container will not melt in the microwave. Yes, as the temperature goes up, more contaminants will come out of the plastic. However, no one should be using a microwave in the first place. The microwaving process itself produces unique food toxins that no one should be eating.

Vinyl chloride is a type of plastic that is used for many thousands of different uses. Vinyl chloride is a brittle plastic, but by adding plasticizers to it, it can be made very soft and used as an upholstery fabric among countless other uses. Unfortunately, the chemical additives do leach out and are toxic.

As for plastic water bottles, it is not easy to obtain water that is not in plastic bottles. All plastic bottles leach chemicals into the water. The longer the water remains in contact and the higher the temperature, the more chemicals will leach out. The amount of water consumed from such containers should definitely be limited.

We live in a world of plastics and, unfortunately, they are having an adverse effect on our health. At least try to minimize the amount that you consume that has been in contact with plastic wrap or containers.

Question: Is it safe to swim in chlorinated pools and hot tubs.

M. S. —San Francisco, CA

Answer: Chlorine is a powerful oxidizing agent. This is why it is used as a disinfectant—it kills living things. Unfortunately, it has the same effect on you. In fact, there is a school of thought that chlorine in our bath water, pools, and hot tubs is a substantial contributor to our epidemic of skin cancer. Our physicians blame the sun, but it may be the chlorine.

I have a filter on my shower that takes out the chlorine, and I recommend this to everyone. If you have a pool or hot tub, it would be a lot safer to use ozone to disinfect your water. In general it is a good idea to minimize your exposure to chlorinated water, and if you are exposed to take lots of antioxidants to help protect you.

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