I grew up in a Texas Panhandle town so small and flat you could see from one end of Main Street to the other. During the 1950s, it was safe enough to let kids have the “run of the town,” and that’s exactly what my brother Ron and I did. We’d ride our bikes to the local little slaughterhouse and watch the gory demise and transformation of chickens and cows being readied for market. When we heard a train coming, we’d rush to the railroad tracks in hopes that we could get a penny flattened by a passing train. Trying to find the penny afterward was usually the real adventure. And, one of our favorite things to do was visit the local drugstore on Main Street and buy cinnamon oil from the pharmacist. For 25 cents, he would decant and sell us a little bottle that was just tall enough that we could shove five or six toothpicks in and still get the cap back on.

After a few hours (they were even better after a day or so), we’d fish a cinnamon-soaked toothpick out and chew and suck on it until

Spicy Solution continued on page 2

— Benjamin Franklin
the cinnamon was gone and it fell apart. Those little bottles would last for weeks and make dozens of “cinnamon toothpicks,” as long as we kept the lid on tight enough that it didn’t leak out in our front jeans pocket and burn our thigh. Among my circle of friends, cinnamon toothpicks were like cigarettes in prison. They were the underlying currency of our barter system. Any kid in the know carried cinnamon toothpicks in one front pocket and his pocket knife, change, marbles, and flattened pennies in the other.

If our obsession for cinnamon would have become more widespread, maybe many of the health problems we’re seeing today wouldn’t exist.

Until recently, cinnamon was a little investigated spice. We know it has insulin-like activity and I’ve reported on that in the past. In fact, cinnamon powder is one of the things I routinely use and highly recommend you add to your daily protein shake, as I do.

But this use is just the tip of the iceberg. Recent research has shown that cinnamon extract can be a very inexpensive and pleasant way to help deal with several common health problems.

A Tasty and Effective Antimicrobial

Like many other spices, cinnamon has largely been overlooked when it comes to its antimicrobial properties, which have been shown to be quite significant. (J Agric Food Chem 07;55(14):5484–5490)

Several studies have found that cinnamon is effective at destroying most of the food-borne pathogenic bacteria that have caused the majority of the food-poisoning outbreaks we’ve been seeing lately. These include strains like Escherichia coli, Salmonella anatum, Bacillus cereus, Staphylococcus aureus, and Listeria monocytogenes.

E. coli and S. anatum probably don’t need any introduction. It seems like every few months there’s a recall somewhere in the country of a vegetable, hamburger meat, or some other food contaminated with one of these strains of bacteria.

L. monocytogenes and S. aureus are two other food-borne pathogens, each of which comes with their own set of potential horrors. Infections from L. monocytogenes (called listeriosis) aren’t that common, with only an estimated 2,500 reported a year in this country. But, even at that, around one-fifth of those infected die. This food-borne bacterium causes the typical food poisoning symptoms of fever and muscle aches, which can rapidly progress into nausea and diarrhea. If it progresses even further, it can lead to swelling of the brain (encephalitis) and its covering (meningitis), and lead to death.

The other pathogen that is quickly becoming a more widespread, serious threat to your health and will continue to do so in the future is S. aureus. It is one of the most prevalent disease-causing bacteria in humans. If something as plentiful, pleasant-tasting, and inexpensive as cinnamon can help you avoid staph infections, then it truly is a godsend. There’s a saying attributed to Ben Franklin: “Beer is proof that God loves us and wants us to be happy.” I’m not totally sure about that, but cinnamon may be proof that God has given us the tools we need to stay healthy.

Staph infections generally start out as skin infections that develop into pus-filled pimples, blisters, boils, and ulcerations. (And you thought my slaughterhouse visits were gross!) The real problem comes when the S. aureus bacterium happens to become methicillin resistant (MRSA). These antibiotic-resistant infections are what we always hear about being spread at hospitals, schools, and public events. In addition to the serious skin infections, the more virulent forms quickly evolve into bacteremia (bloodstream infections), pneumonia, bone and joint infections, and even death. MRSA infections are a relatively new event, so you are probably quite aware of the...
A Diabetes Solution

Cinnamon is not only anti-bacterial, it is also antiviral and has been shown to inactivate the avian influenza A virus. In addition, it has antifungal and larvicidal properties. If this wasn't enough, it is also a powerful antioxidant and antitumor agent, and it lowers levels of the oxidized forms of cholesterol and enhances immune function. (Crit Rev Food Sci Nutr 10;50(9):822–834)

Unfortunately, much of the work with cinnamon hasn’t been carried out in such a fashion that would give the best understanding of exactly how to use it or its extracts in real-life situations. Most experiments have been confined to the laboratory.

In one recent study out of London, however, the researchers felt so strongly about the benefits they saw when type 2 diabetics took cinnamon that they made the following comment: “Cinnamon supplementation could be considered as an additional dietary supplement option to regulate blood glucose and blood pressure levels along with conventional medications to treat type 2 diabetes.”

In their study, 58 type 2 diabetic patients (25 males and 33 females) ages 54.9 to 65, who had an HbA1c over 7% and were being treated only with hypoglycemic agents, were randomly assigned to receive either 2 g of cinnamon or a placebo daily for 12 weeks. At the end of the study, HbA1c was significantly decreased in the cinnamon group compared with the placebo group. Both the systolic and diastolic blood pressures were also reduced among those taking cinnamon. Additionally, those taking cinnamon had reductions in their fasting blood sugar, waist circumference, and body mass index compared to when they first started the cinnamon. (Diabet Med 10;27(10):1159–1167)

Finally, more and more studies are suggesting that cinnamon can be used therapeutically to help control blood sugar levels when it is taken with meals. Cinnamon mimics insulin and its effect, but it has functions that are independent of insulin, as well. By improving the uptake of glucose by cells and increasing the number of molecules that facilitate glucose uptake, it can stop hyperglycemia associated with diabetes and the resulting kidney and neurological damage. (Curr Diab Rep 10;(3):173–199) (Biosci Biotechnol Biochem 10;74(12):2418–2425)

In short, if you want to prevent diabetes, or if you already have diabetes and want better control of your blood sugar, you need to be taking cinnamon. From my viewpoint, that covers just about everyone.

A Strong Immune System Is Your Best Defense...

We never know when our immune system will come under attack or when we’ll encounter the “straw that breaks the camel’s back.” Like many other situations in life, I’d rather be years too early in preparation than a minute too late. (My dad sums it up as being “a day late and a dollar short.”) Take infections from S. aureus that I mentioned earlier, for example. Many people are already colonized with S. aureus and the time from exposure to development of disease can be anywhere from days to years. It depends on the strength of their immune system and how strong the beneficial bacteria flora is in their system.

It is well documented that individuals with compromised immune systems fall victim to these infections at a far, far greater rate than those in a healthy state. In a nutshell, the weaker your immune system is, the greater your risk of contracting an infection.

If you’re able to avoid antibiotics and other drugs that disrupt beneficial bacterial flora and, at the same time, consistently supplement your diet with probiotics, a good daily multi-vitamin/mineral, fermented foods, and natural antimicrobials like cinnamon and curcumin, you are far more likely to have the “reserve” to fight off a full blown staph infection when your immune system takes a hit. Curcumin, a component of the Indian spice turmeric, is structurally similar to certain compounds in red chili, cloves, black pepper, ginger, and cinnamon. Curcumin-induced alterations also reduce insulin resistance and many of the other symptoms associated with diabetes and obesity…much like cinnamon. (Annu Rev Nutr 10 Aug 21;30:173–99)

I believe curcumin is so important that I’ve included it in Daily Advantage. (I could put cinnamon in there as well, but it’s really easier and more economical for you just to take it separately.)

...But Antibiotics Bring Down Your Defenses

A couple of months ago, I reported on a study showing that a single round of antibiotics can disrupt the natural bacteria in the intestinal tract for as long as two years. Antibiotics can also leave the normal, remaining bacteria with antibiotic-resistant genes that can be transferred later to pathogenic bacteria. Now another study has just revealed that a single course of antibiotics can permanently alter the microflora content. When patients took ciprofloxan, there was a profound change in the diversity and composition of the types
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of bacteria in just four days. And, even when the bacteria numbers returned, the type and number of the different colonies were vastly different. (Microbiology 10;156(Pt 11):3216–23) (Natl Acad Sci USA Sep 16, 2010 Epub ahead of print)

I consider this last study to be of monumental importance, but I’m probably one of the few people who even care. Our intestinal flora is our “second immune system,” and changing the organisms and their balance will have unpredictable consequences. These kinds of changes will one day be traced to autoimmune diseases, cancers, and other horrific diseases that develop years down the road, as well as those abrupt changes in health that many people experience for no apparent reason. It would be like wiping out half the animals on earth and dramatically changing the ratios of those that were left in a closed ecosystem, and then expecting everything to function as normal. It wouldn’t happen in nature, and it can’t happen in your gut.

And don’t forget that antibiotics aren’t the only drugs that alter gut flora. Anti-inflammatories, steroids, acid blockers, and hormones can cause the same problem. It’s frightening just how little we know about the long-term side effects of drugs.

Most doctors aren’t even aware that antibiotics prevent the excretion of mercury. Researchers can mimic the exact same physiological changes to the brain along with the signs and symptoms of Alzheimer’s disease simply by adding mercury...
to the system. Increased mercury levels are also a known causative factor in cardiovascular disease. It would be interesting to see a study comparing the use of antibiotics and the increase we’ve seen in both of these diseases. The work has already been done with autism and the results are pretty sickening, to say the least.

Autism certainly appears to affect children whose biochemistry is such that they are far more sensitive to mercury than the general population. Unfortunately, even mentioning this observation brings on the full wrath and fury of organized medicine, the pharmaceutical industry, and government regulatory agencies. After decades of denying any connection (and how many deaths, disabilities, and cases of suffering?), those in the dental profession have finally admitted the dangers of mercury amalgam fillings.

Dr. Andrew Wakefield’s career has practically been destroyed because he recently published such an observation…and he never claimed that autism was actually caused by vaccines.

Not only do autistic children experience chronic intestinal inflammation at a rate three times that of non-autistic children, they also have a history of much higher antibiotic use (i.e., a disruption of the beneficial intestinal flora). Dr. Stephanie Cave, at Louisiana State University Medical School, has treated over 2,500 autistic children. She has reported that, in the US in just the last 30 years, the incidence of autism has gone from 1 child in 10,000 to 1 in 150—and 1 in 30 males. (What Your Doctor May Not Tell You About Children’s Vaccinations)

Cinnamon Improves Oral Health, Too

For the last couple of years, in addition to adding common grocery store cinnamon powder to my morning protein shake (the recipe for this is on my subscriber center at drdavidwilliams.com), I’ve been using cinnamon extract powder (generally either 4% oil powder or 4:1 extract powder). To be honest, I started using it primarily because I enjoyed the taste and I guess it brought back those childhood memories. But I’ve also experienced several noticeable health benefits, as well.

As I said earlier, I thought about adding it to my multi-vitamin/mineral formula, Daily Advantage, but I discovered a couple of very good reasons, besides the added cost, not to do so. First, when you take a couple hundred milligrams of either the extract or the common spice powder, it works as a fantastic breath freshener. I don’t know of anything that works better. And in the long term, positive effects of oral cinnamon use are far greater than just fresh breath.

After using it for a couple of months, you may find, like I have, that your gum health improves significantly. I’ve seen a tremendous difference in that area. If you have continuing periodontal issues or gingivitis, let 250 mg of the extract powder dissolve in your mouth four or more times a day. Swish it around as it dissolves and don’t rinse your mouth or drink any liquid for a while…give it time to work. When added to your regular brushing, flossing, and other dental routines, the results can be amazing. If you’re a dentist, pass this tip along to your patients and watch the results yourself.

For the best results I also use an oral probiotic, like Ear, Nose & Throat Defense (available at drdavidwilliams.com), separately from the cinnamon to help maintain the beneficial bacteria in my oral cavity and upper respiratory system.

There needs to be a greater effort made to educate the public about the health link that exists between the mouth and the rest of the body. Periodontal disease subjects the body to chronic inflammation and has been directly linked to coronary artery disease, high blood pressure, metabolic syndrome, and insulin resistance. It affects over 50% of all adults in this country. Some studies suggest that the neglect in the dental health of children has a direct correlation to a child’s overall health.

I think in the next 10 or 15 years, the health ramifications of periodontal disease will become a well-publicized issue. I won’t be surprised when doctors one day routinely tell parents, “You can prevent your child from developing cardiovascular disease later in life by having them practice proper dental hygiene early in life.” Don’t wait for that day. Start now.

How to Use Cinnamon Therapeutically

Cinnamon extract powder is noticeably stronger than just regular cinnamon powder. (But it’s nothing compared to the oil we used as kids. That stuff is classified as a strong irritant.) The first time you use cinnamon extract powder, you’ll definitely notice a little burning in your mouth. I suggest taking just a small amount until you get used to it.

Cinnamon is very safe and has been studied extensively for toxicity and other issues since it is used so widely as a food additive. It’s not mutagenic or a known allergen, and on top of all of its other benefits, it even acts as an anti-foaming agent and can help alleviate stomach distress and gas.

(Spicy Solution continued on page 8)
THREE STEPS TO GALLBLA D DER HEALTH

[Editor’s Note: Dr. Williams wrote this article on gallbladder health in the September 1996 issue of Alternatives, and his recommendations on how to keep this often underappreciated organ healthy still ring true to this day.]

Your red blood cells have a life span of about 120 days. At that time, they become so fragile they rupture. The pigmented part of the red blood cell is then broken down into several components, one of which is eventually converted to the yellow pigment, bilirubin. Bilirubin travels through your bloodstream and is absorbed by cells in your liver. Some bilirubin returns to the bloodstream and some is mixed with other components to form bile.

Bile consists of water, bile salts, bilirubin, cholesterol, fatty acids, lecithin, and minerals. It is formed in the liver and stored in the gallbladder—a small sac directly below the liver. Once inside the gallbladder, water is reabsorbed from the mixture and the bile becomes more and more concentrated.

Compared to the liver bile, gallbladder bile has roughly six times more bile salts, over seven times more bilirubin and lecithin, and as much as 10 times more fatty acids and cholesterol. The concentration of bile allows it to function more effectively in a number of different tasks.

For one, when fat enters the small intestine, a hormone is released (choleystokinin) that triggers the gallbladder to contract and release bile. Bile first acts like a detergent or an emulsifier. It reduces the surface tension of the fats and helps break them down into smaller particles. Next, the bile salts attach to the smaller fat particles and pull them out of the intestinal tract so they are properly absorbed.

The liver also uses bile to get rid of excess cholesterol in the blood. Bile is also one of the avenues used by the liver to remove toxins from the body. It takes toxins out of the bloodstream and releases them through the bile. Overloading the liver with toxins from conditions like constipation; persistent drug, alcohol, or hormone use; or contaminated or highly processed foods will have a tendency to “thicken” the bile. Thickened bile flows from the gallbladder at a much slower rate. This not only affects digestion, but also causes the bile to become extremely concentrated, which can lead to the formation of gallstones.

Inadequate amounts of bile, thickened bile, or a sluggish gallbladder can have a negative effect on your overall health. But these techniques will benefit the health of practically everyone’s gallbladder. Those who have had their gallbladder removed will also benefit.

Artichokes

Leaves from the artichoke plant contain caffeoylquinic acids, which promote bile flow and also promote a degree of regeneration within the liver itself. The simplest and least expensive way to benefit from these compounds is to eat the artichoke leaves.

Sauerkraut and Sauerkraut Juice

When used regularly, sauerkraut and its juice will promote bile output. A cup of the juice by itself taken once or twice a week before breakfast can work wonders.

Reflexes for the Normalization of Bile Flow

The following technique is adapted from the brilliant work of Dr. Bertrand Delamette. It involves the use of a combination of acupuncture meridian points, as well as foot and neurolymphatic reflexes. The procedure is simple and requires no special training or apparatus. It works. All you need is an able and willing assistant.

These are the four points you need to know. [Editor’s Note: You can find illustrations on Dr. Williams’ subscriber center at drdavidwilliams.com.]

1) Acupuncture point large intestine-4 or LI-4, located in the web of skin between the thumb and index finger on the right hand.

2) The reflex point for the small intestine on the bottom of the right foot, directly in front of the heel.

3) The edge of the rib cage overlying the gallbladder, which also happens to be the acupuncture alarm point for the gallbladder or GB-24.

4) The area where the gallbladder bile duct and the pancreatic bile duct meet before dumping into the small intestine (also called the ampulla of Vater) is located 1 ½” to the right of the bellybutton and then 3” below that.

There are five steps to the procedure.

1. Grasp the LI-4 point on the patient’s right hand between your thumb and index finger and apply a squeezing pressure with a circular-type motion until the pain in the area decreases.

2. Using your thumb, rub the bottom of the right foot in a circular motion until the pain begins to subside.

3. Cup your right hand so that the ends of your fingers are even and gently contact the bottom edge of the right rib cage. Hold just a slight pressure there for a minute or so to help relax the gallbladder. You may feel a gurgling or emptying of the gallbladder.

4. With your left thumb and index finger, again grasp the LI-4 point on the right hand. Place your other index finger over the ampulla of Vater. Apply about 2 lbs. of pressure to each site and hold it for three or four minutes.

5. Next, apply direct, steady pressure of about 4 lbs. to the reflex point on the bottom of the right foot while at the same time applying 2 lbs. of pressure with your opposite hand to the ampulla of Vater.

Don’t be surprised if the gallbladder begins to gurgle and empty throughout this procedure. Two or three sessions over the first week followed by a weekly session can make a dramatic difference in the way you feel. ■
**Joint Pain and Dehydration**

**Question:** As I’ve gotten older, I’ve noticed that I’m beginning to have more joint pain and stiffness. I’ve recently started taking the joint product you developed and I’ve seen a very noticeable improvement, but my problems haven’t totally gone away. X-rays I’ve had taken of the joints that give me the most problems don’t show any serious arthritis. Is there anything else you can suggest that might help?

—W.M., Houston, Texas

**Answer:** One of the factors you also need to consider is dehydration. For numerous reasons, dehydration is one of the most common underlying causes of countless health issues—everything from headaches and constipation to blood pressure problems. But most people don’t associate dehydration with joint pain and stiffness.

Many of the fluids we consume nowadays act as diuretics. These include things like soft drinks, tea, coffee, and alcohol. Lots of drugs also exhibit a diuretic effect. And, a diet rich in protein and fat promotes fluid loss, as well. (Urea, a byproduct of protein, is a well-known diuretic.)

Some of the primary ingredients in joint products are carbohydrate and protein complexes known as glycosaminoglycans (called GAGs for short). Along with sulfur compounds, these GAGs form a thick gel-like liquid that supplies cushioning, lubrication, shock absorption, and nutrition to the cartilage in our joints. But keep in mind, they are primarily only the matrix or framework, much like a sponge. For the sponge to be “full” and “cushiony,” it needs to be filled with water.

As we age, these matrixes begin to break down and the ability to keep our joints hydrated lessens. Taking the compounds in the joint product will help, but you also need to rehydrate your joints. You can start to do this by eliminating or cutting back on the drinks I mentioned earlier that act as diuretics. And, many drugs used these days, particularly the diuretics or “water pills” given to control blood pressure, can be contributing to the problem. And obviously, you need to be drinking plenty of water every day. Regardless of what you may hear, 1/2 gallon a day is not unreasonable for most people.

At first, increasing the amount of water you drink may not seem like it’s doing much good. In the beginning, it may just make you go to the bathroom more often, but as the matrixes begin to swell again and regain their ability to retain water, that will subside. It’s like trying to water a plant when the surrounding soil has dried up. When you first water it, it takes a few times before it rehydrates and begins to retain that much-needed water. A similar thing happens with your joints.

Consuming foods rich in complex carbohydrates will also speed up the process. Beans, legumes, and whole grains absorb and retain water. Pretty much any high-fiber food will help tremendously, like vegetables (particularly raw), whole fruits (the pectin content in apples makes them especially helpful), and sprouted seeds. As they move through the intestinal tract, they provide a “reservoir” from which the body can pull water as it is needed. By the time most foods reach the large intestine, about the only thing being absorbed at that point is water. If you avoid these kinds of foods, it will be far more difficult to remain hydrated.

Finally, if you really want to jumpstart the process, then start adding meat broth to your diet. I’ve mentioned this in the past and also have provided recipes. The gelatin from animal bones and joints provides the GAGs, sulfur compounds, and necessary minerals in a form that’s easily digested and used by the body. [Editor’s Note: You can find these recipes on Dr. Williams’ subscriber center at drdavidwilliams.com.]

**Cranberry Powder for Prostate Health**

**Question:** For several years now, every time I go in for my physical, my PSA level is elevated, but it hasn’t gotten any worse over time. I have had one biopsy but it was negative, and even without any change in the PSA, I know when I see my doctor in a few months he’ll probably want to do another biopsy. I’m not too keen on continually doing biopsies. Do you have any suggestions or thoughts?

—D.P., San Antonio, Texas

**Answer:** The elevated PSA level may be an indication of chronic nonbacterial prostatitis. This can be present with or without benign prostatic hypertrophy (BPH) and all those accompanying symptoms. It may be that this is your problem. If so, it would be well worth trying cranberry powder for several months.

One recent study that showed the benefits of cranberry powder involved 42 men (average age 63) who had lower urinary tract symptoms and an elevated PSA level, but a negative biopsy for cancer. Some had BPH and others didn’t. Half of the men were given 1,500 mg of dried cranberry powder per day and the other half were not. At the end of six months, when compared to the control group, those taking the cranberry powder had significant increases in their International Prostate Symptom Scores and quality of life scores, a significant increase in urinary...
flow, a decrease in residual urine volume after urination, and a significant decrease in their total PSA levels. (Br J Nutr 10;104:1181–1189)

Cranberry powder is known to “flush” bacteria out of the urinary tract by inhibiting its ability to adhere to the walls of the urinary tract. Exactly how it would work in nonbacterial prostatitis isn’t understood. Some strains of bacteria, however, are harder to culture and, in these cases, may be overlooked as the underlying cause. Regardless of its mode of action, based on your circumstances, I would definitely give cranberry powder a try.

There are several companies that sell encapsulated powdered cranberry powder. And any health food store will carry it. But you can save a lot of money by using the bulk powder. It’s a little sour (even so, I don’t mind the taste), but if that’s a problem for you, you can always add it to a shake or tea. Buying in bulk, it will run about $10 a month if you take 1.5 g (1,500 mg) a day, like in the study.

A company called Nutri-Fruit sells a variety of berry powders, including cranberry. A level teaspoon of their product should provide about 1.5 g, and you’d need three containers of their 3.9 oz. size for a six-month supply.

They can be reached at:

Nutri-Fruit
7510 SE Altman Road
Gresham, OR 97080
www.nutrifruit.com
(866) 343-7848

(Spicy Solution continued from page 5)

In my protein shake, I really don’t measure the cinnamon. I just give it a few huge sprinkles. It’s easily a half teaspoon or more. As for the extract powder, I take about 250 mg four times a day whenever I want to freshen my breath. I’ve encapsulated the powder myself and have also purchased it already encapsulated. The little capsules are handy to keep in the truck or carry with me.

If you can’t afford the added expense of buying a more concentrated extract, just buy the spice in the larger containers at your grocery store. It may require a little more to be effective. Just keep in mind, take it with meals if you’re using it to help keep your blood sugar levels from spiking after eating. And for gum health, take it by itself and let it dissolve and stay in your mouth.

Pure Bulk sells the 4:1 extract in 250 g, 500 g, and 100 kg bags. You can buy it online by visiting http://purebulk.com/cinnamon-bark-powder-extract or by calling 541-679-1500.

If you prefer to take cinnamon that’s already encapsulated, there are several brands you can try, including Swanson (www.swansonvitamins.com) or Nature’s Way (www.naturesway.com).

Take care,

Dr. David Williams

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Coming Soon

With summer just around the corner, you may be loading up on sunscreen, wide-brimmed hats, and other UV-resistant clothing to protect your skin from the sun. But what’s the real truth about skin cancer and the best ways to protect your skin? I’ll tell you more and give you my recommendations in an upcoming issue of Alternatives.