

Late Winter 2026

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Heart Healthy
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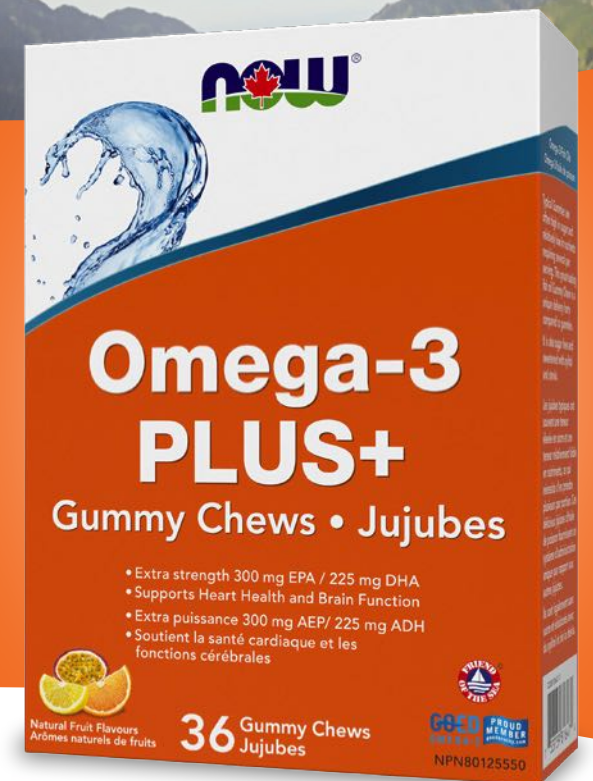


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CONSTIPATION

PAGE 8



DR. ANNA GARBER
ND

Practice: Juniper Naturopathic Clinic
junipernaturopathic.com

Focus: Children's health, digestion

Fan of: Travel, photography, unique experiences, and deep conversations

Tip: Eat a varied, whole-foods diet with produce daily!

On my shelf: Omega-3 and vitamin D

GRACEFUL AGEING

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DR. DAINA PATEL
BSc, DC

Practice: Dr. Daina Patel, DC, Toronto
drdainapatel.com

Focus: Chronic pain, wellness, and prevention

Fan of: Yoga and meditation

Tip: Movement is medicine!

On my shelf: Magnesium, lavender oil

HERBAL SAGE

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MARY CHARTERIS
BScN, RN, RH

Practice: Registered nurse, registered herbalist

Focus: Digestion, immune health, and mental wellness

Fan of: Fresh fish cooked over a fire

Tip: Bare feet on the earth!

On my shelf: Lemon, ginger, sea salt, reishi

THE KINDNESS CHEMICAL

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DR. ALISA MURLU
ND & Birth Doula

Practice: GTA, Downtown Toronto, Durham Region | dralisamurli.com

Focus: Hormones, prenatal, postpartum, and pediatrics

Fan of: Dogs, crafting, and food

Tip: Balance is key to healthy living!

On my shelf: Magnesium

THE KINDNESS CHEMICAL

PAGE 12



JENSEN PLETCH
Naturopathic Student

Practice: CCNM medical student
Instagram: @jensenndmed

Focus: Women's health and evidence-based primary care medicine

Fan of: Skiing, hockey & board games

Tip: Engage in strength-based exercise every day!

On my shelf: Vitamin D & Omega-3

THE KINDNESS CHEMICAL

PAGE 12



KYLA LAMB
Naturopathic Student

Practice: Naturopathic medical student

Focus: Optimising well-being, functional medicine & women's health

Fan of: Pilates, travel & cooking

Tip: Be kind to yourself and others!

On my shelf: *Atomic Habits* & fresh local food

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ACUPUNCTURE & INFLAMMATION

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MARY BASKWELL
R.TCMP, R.Ac, RPN

Practice: The Root Natural Health Clinic | 905-990-8100 | theroot.ca

Focus: General practice, mental health, gynecology, and fertility

Fan of: Hiking, yoga, crafting my own teas, creams, and tinctures

Tip: Simply breathe with awareness!

On my shelf: Herbs, crystals, books

INFLAMMATION IN WOMEN

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DR. EFFY GERMANIS
ND, R.Ac

Practice: Hygeia Naturopathic Clinic

Focus: Root-cause healing and whole-body wellness

Fan of: Warm meals & mindful moments

Tip: Support digestion before everything else!

On my shelf: Herbs, crystals, and my go-to supplements

BIRTH SUPPORT WORKERS

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DR. AILYA PATEL
ND, IBCLC

Practice: Footprints Therapy
footprints.ca

Focus: Pregnancy, postpartum care, lactation, and pediatrics

Fan of: Woodworking and repurposing furniture

Tip: Get outside every day!

On my shelf: Vitamin D3 with K2

BEAUTIFY YOUR FEET

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DR. ADRIENNE DELUCA
ND & Doula

Practice: wellness-with-adrienne.com
Focus: Pediatrics, fertility, birth planning, pregnancy & postpartum
Fan of: Walking with my dog Ripley
Tip: Drink more water!
On my shelf: Herbal tea, coffee, Sour Patch Kids

HEART FOOD / RECIPES

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ANGELA MOSCARELLI
CPA, CA, RHN

Practice: Guided Wellness
guidedwellness.ca
Focus: Helping busy professionals optimise their health
Fan of: Gardening, fitness, and nature
Tip: A healthy lifestyle is about balance!
On my shelf: Spirulina, lemons, fermented coconut milk

THE SWAP-ZUCCHINI NOODLES

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MARIA D'ALESSANDRO
RHN

Practice: Miala | www.miala.ca
Focus: Women's health, menstrual cycle, and endometriosis
Fan of: Walking my dog Apollo & reformer Pilates
Tip: Everything in moderation!
On my shelf: Magnesium & L-Glutamine

THE FAMILY TABLE

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DR. SARAH WHITE
ND

Practice: Replete Wellness (virtual)
repletewellness.com
Focus: Fertility, anti-aging, and skin health
Fan of: Raising chickens and gardening
Tip: Morning healthy fats and protein!
On my shelf: Liposomal glutathione, curcumin

DID YOU KNOW?

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MELODY MAIER
CNP

Practice: Holistic Whisk
holisticwhisk.com
Focus: Acne-focused nutrition and women's health
Fan of: Homemade nut milk, and a good book
Tip: Always be kind to yourself!
On my shelf: Matcha, magnesium

“CHRONIC INFLAMMATION IS IN THE BACKGROUND OF EVERY SINGLE MAJOR ILLNESS.

- Julie Daniluk

Elevate

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Ask a Naturopath

CONSTIPATION STARTS AT THE TABLE

How Mealtime Can Shape Bowel Health

Dr. Anna Garber, MSc, ND



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Constipation is one of the most common digestive complaints in children, but it's not always just about fibre, fluids, or finding the right laxative. While these are important in the management of constipation, other lifestyle factors have a significant impact on our children's ability to have regular, easy-to-pass bowel movements. One of these factors is mealtime itself. The pace, atmosphere, and dynamics at the table can directly influence a child's digestion. When meals are rushed, emotionally charged, or lacking in routine, it can interfere with the body's natural digestive rhythms and contribute to stool withholding, irregularity, and/or chronic constipation.

MIND-GUT-MEALTIME CONNECTION

The digestive tract doesn't function in isolation—it's connected to the nervous system through what's known as the

gut-brain axis. One key player in this relationship is the vagus nerve, which helps regulate peristalsis (the wave-like muscle contractions that move stool through the colon). For the vagus nerve to do its job effectively, the body must be in a calm, parasympathetic "rest and digest" state.¹

“CONSTIPATION ISN'T ALWAYS A DIGESTIVE ISSUE; IT'S OFTEN A REFLECTION OF BROADER PATTERNS IN A CHILD'S EATING EXPERIENCE. . .

Unfortunately, many children eat meals in the opposite state: rushed, distracted, anxious, or overwhelmed. This might look

like trying to finish dinner quickly between activities, managing tantrums at the table, or navigating the intensity of a sibling dynamic. Even when things seem quiet on the surface, subtle stressors can be enough to disrupt a child's sense of safety and ease during meals.

In these moments, the body shifts into a low-grade stress response, redirecting blood flow away from the digestive tract and toward the muscles, essentially putting digestion on pause. Over time, this can slow motility, reduce digestive enzyme output, and contribute to constipation.² Helping children feel regulated and emotionally safe at the table supports not just connection, but better bowel health.

Rushed, Distracted, or Irregular Meals

We live in a fast-paced world, and children are no exception. Many families eat on the go, snack frequently throughout the day, or allow meals in front of screens just to get anything into their child. But from a digestive standpoint, these habits are less than ideal.

Grazing throughout the day, for instance, can prevent the activation of the migrating motor complex (MMC). The MMC is a cyclic, wave-like movement that pushes food and waste through the intestines between meals. If children never go more than an hour or two without food, this natural cleansing cycle can't do its job efficiently, leading to stagnation and, in some cases, constipation.³

Screen time during meals adds another layer of disruption. Children are less aware of fullness cues and more likely to eat quickly or inattentively. This disconnect can dampen awareness of the body's urge to poop or make children more likely to withhold if it interrupts play or screen engagement.⁴

Similarly, inconsistent mealtime routines, such as skipping breakfast or eating lunch at varying times, can interfere with the body's natural digestive rhythms. The colon tends to be most active in the morning and after meals.⁵ If a child's meals are unpredictable, their bowel habits often become unpredictable too.

Regular, screen-free meals in a calm setting can help restore digestive consistency, foster body awareness, and support the gut's natural motility cycles.



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Feeding Dynamics

In many households, mealtimes have become a battleground. Parents feel responsible for ensuring adequate nutrition, while children seek autonomy and predictability. This can quickly spiral into a pattern of pressure, bribery, or negotiation—all of which can fuel choosy eating and constipation.

Ironically, pressuring children to eat often makes them more selective. This is especially true for strong-willed or sensitive children who may resist perceived control by asserting even more restrictions over their intake. Unfortunately, selective eating can result in low intake of fibre-rich foods, magnesium, and fluids, which are all essential for bowel regularity.⁶

This cycle can also lead to stool withholding, especially if a child has previously experienced pain during bowel movements. A child who feels pressured to eat may feel similarly anxious about pooping, especially if doing so means interrupting meals or engaging in another adult-directed activity.⁷

Instead, responsive feeding—where the parent decides what and when food is offered, and the child decides what and how much to eat—can ease this tension. This approach helps children stay attuned to their internal cues, reduces mealtime stress, and allows more natural exploration of new foods. Over time, this can improve both nutrient intake and bowel patterns, without coercion or power struggles.⁸

WHAT PARENTS CAN DO: A PRACTICAL APPROACH

Supporting your child's digestive health doesn't require perfection or elaborate meal prep. Small, consistent shifts in how meals are structured and experienced can have a significant impact over time.

Here are some gentle, evidence-informed strategies to help:

Create A Calming Pre-Meal Ritual

Try a few deep breaths, washing hands together, or sharing something you're grateful for before sitting down to eat. These small moments help transition the nervous system into "rest and digest" mode.

Prioritize Consistent, Screen-Free Meals

Whenever possible, offer meals at regular times in a calm, screen-free space. This supports digestive rhythm and helps children tune into their natural cues.

Offer Gut-Friendly Foods Without Pressure

Examples are chia in smoothies, flax in muffins, or magnesium-rich greens in sauces and soups. Offer these foods consistently, without demanding a clean plate or a certain number of bites.

Practice Responsive Feeding

Serve the meal, but let your child decide what and how much to eat from what's offered. This builds trust, reduces resistance, and helps children stay connected to hunger and fullness cues.

Know When to Seek Support

If your child has very hard stools, goes multiple days without pooping, experiences fear or pain with bowel movements, or shows ongoing food refusal or anxiety around eating or toileting, it may be time to consult a health professional. These signs may signal a need for individualized support.

Constipation isn't always a digestive issue; it's often a reflection of broader patterns in a child's eating experience, daily rhythm, and emotional environment. While nutrition matters, how meals unfold can be just as important as what's on the plate. By supporting calm, connected, and responsive mealtimes, parents can foster not only better bowel movements but also stronger relationships with food and with their children. 🌱

For references visit ecoparent.ca/ELV/LWIN26



Sergio Leon / Depositphotos.com

THE KINDNESS CHEMICAL

How Acts of Love Boost Kids' Immunity

Jensen Pletch, Kyla Lamb, and Dr. Alisa Murli, ND



Getty Images / Unsplash+

On Valentine's Day, we often think of chocolates and cards, but perhaps the sweetest gift you can give your child does not come in a box—maybe it comes through kindness and connection. Whether it's a warm hug, a simple 'thank you,' or your child helping a friend on the playground, these small gestures do more than make kids smile; they can strengthen their health from the inside out.

“WHEN KIDS FEEL LOVED AND SUPPORTED, THEIR BODIES CAN RELAX AND FOCUS ON HEALING INSTEAD OF STAYING ON ALERT”

Science is showing what parents have always known: feeling loved helps children thrive. When kids feel safe, cared for,

and supported, their bodies respond in remarkable ways. One of the main players behind this connection is a hormone called oxytocin, also known as the “kindness chemical.” Oxytocin is released through physical touch, laughter, and positive social interactions. It helps calm the body, lowers stress hormones, and strengthens the immune system's ability to fight off infection.¹

THE LINK BETWEEN STRESS AND IMMUNITY

When stress lingers for too long, it can make kids more vulnerable to getting sick. The body releases a hormone called cortisol when we are under stress. In short bursts, cortisol is helpful because it helps us react quickly when something feels threatening. But when it stays high for long periods, it can weaken the immune system and slow recovery from illness.²



malcevang@gmail.com / Depositphotos.com

Kids today face plenty of hidden stressors, including busy schedules, social pressures, and excess screen time. That is why emotional connection is so important. Many studies support that children who received hugs and comforting physical touch after a stressful event had higher oxytocin levels and lower cortisol levels than children who didn't receive the same comforts.^{3,4} A parent's warmth literally helps a child's body shift out of stress and back into balance.

Why Connection Helps Kids Stay Healthy

The immune system does not work separately from the rest of the body. It is deeply connected to our emotions.^{5,6} When kids feel loved and supported, their bodies can relax and focus on healing instead of staying on alert. You can think of it as switching from fight or flight mode to rest and repair.

This sense of calm also benefits gut health, which is home to much of the immune system. When children feel safe and content, their digestion works better, their gut bacteria stay balanced, and their immune defences stay strong.⁷

How Love Builds Resilience

Kindness and affection are powerful tools for long-term health. When children receive consistent love and attention, their bodies learn to handle challenges better. Oxytocin helps balance mood, support sleep, and regulate inflammation, all of which keep the immune system in good shape.¹


Even small moments of connection matter. A shared laugh, gentle play, or sitting together at bedtime can raise oxytocin and lower stress hormones. Over time, those little moments create a strong foundation for physical and emotional resilience.⁸

For references visit ecoparent.ca/ELV/LWIN26

Everyday Ways to Strengthen the Kindness Chemical

You don't need grand gestures to nurture connection. These simple habits help keep love and oxytocin flowing in daily life.

- 1. Hug often:** A good hug, *held for about twenty seconds*, helps calm the nervous system and gives the body time to release oxytocin. Morning hugs, bedtime snuggles, or a squeeze before school all count.⁸
- 2. Practice gratitude together:** Sharing what you are thankful for strengthens family bonds. Try making gratitude part of your dinner routine or bedtime reflection.⁴
- 3. Encourage kindness:** When kids help others, comfort a friend, or share a small act of caring, they naturally boost oxytocin and empathy.⁴
- 4. Make time for play:** Play is not only fun, it is healing. Shared laughter, games, or outdoor adventures help everyone relax and feel connected.⁴
- 5. Limit digital distractions:** Eye contact and presence matter. Setting aside time away from screens each day helps kids and parents reconnect and recharge together.⁴



Ask a Herbalist

Sage Wisdom

FOR COLD & FLU, DIGESTION,
AND COGNITIVE HEALTH

Mary Charteris, BScN, RN, RH

Moving effortlessly from our kitchen garden to our home remedy cupboard, sage's highly aromatic silvery-green leaves season our meals, ease a scratchy throat, and have long been understood as a supportive ally for cognition and memory.¹

HISTORY

Although *Salvia officinalis* is better known as culinary or common sage, this herb is anything but ordinary! Sage's name originates from the Latin word 'salvere,' meaning 'to save' or 'to heal,' referring to its historically rich and diverse healing applications. Hailing from the northern Mediterranean coastal region, sage was first mentioned in the writings of 1st-century Greek physician Dioscorides, where it was praised for its positive effect on memory, treatment of wounds and snake bites, as well as an aid for sleep and digestion. Sage later established itself in European herbal medicine largely through cultivation in medieval monastery gardens, which at the time were important centres for botanical knowledge.^{2,3}

Indigenous peoples across the Americas have traditionally worked with sage as a respiratory remedy, preparing the leaves in a tea to break up secretions that contribute to chest congestion and ease coughs. The Cherokee prepared a warm infusion of sage to aid diarrhea conditions, mild fevers and hormonal symptoms during menopause, such as hot flashes.⁴

Common sage contains vitamins A and C, both of which contribute to the maintenance of a healthy immune system.

It's also a good source of fat-soluble vitamin K, an essential nutrient for normal blood clotting and bone health.^{5,6}

Herbalist Rosemary Gladstar describes sage tea as one of her favourite remedies for the nervous system, stating, "When we get grounded, we have so much more energy, this is one of the teas I use for grounding and energizing myself . . . I can actually be very effective in what I'm doing."⁷

A steady, robust presence in my own garden, I regularly trim sage leaves, adding their earthy peppery flavour to winter bone broth brews, meat pies, and infused butters. The bitter notes in sage help stimulate digestive secretions and break down fatty foods, making them an excellent addition to meat roasts.⁸ In my apothecary, sage tincture is used in a herbal mouth rinse formula. Highly astringent and antimicrobial, it's terrific for supporting oral hygiene and gum health. I incorporate dried sage leaves into tea formulas for patients with painful or precipitous menstrual periods. I also find the dried herb invaluable in formulas for perimenopausal symptoms such as hot flashes, irritability, and hormone-related joint stiffness.

PLANT DESCRIPTION

A mint family (*Lamiaceae*) plant, sage is a perennial subshrub with square woody stems that grow 1½-2½ feet tall and sprout fuzzy, ovate gray-green leaves that can grow up to four inches long. The entire plant is adorned with fine down. Topped by whorls of two-lipped tubular flowers in

Herbal Profile

Salvia officinalis

Common Names: Sage, Culinary or Kitchen Sage, Garden Sage, Common Sage

Family: *Lamiaceae* (mint family)

Parts Used: Leaf (fresh and dried)

Taste: Pungent, oily, astringent

Tissue states: Relaxation, atrophy, depression⁶

Energetics: Warming, moistening, toning

Active Constituents: Volatile oils (A and B thujone, cineole, borneol, camphor) Diterpene bitters (picrosalvin, carnosolic acid); Flavonoids (salvigenin, hispidulin, luteolin A); Phenolic acids (rosmarinic, caffeic, labiatic); Tannins⁵

Herbal Actions: Carminative, antispasmodic, anti-inflammatory, astringent, antimicrobial⁵

colours of blue, lavender, and pink that bloom on upright spikes in mid-summer. Sage flowers emit an earthy, musky, camphorous scent with a subtle hint of mint. Popular with bees, butterflies, and hummingbirds.⁸

Character

According to the English botanist and herbalist Nicholas Culpeper, sage is linked to the influence of the planet Jupiter, expressing warming and expansive qualities.⁹ From a medical astrology lens, Jupiter governs the liver and pancreas, aspects of digestion, and metabolism.¹⁰

MEDICINAL PROPERTIES & INDICATIONS

COLD & FLU SUPPORT

Sage combines expectorant and astringent properties with pleasantly aromatic and antioxidant compounds, making it an excellent remedy for common cold conditions with excess mucus buildup when taken as a tea, gargle (in throat conditions), or as a steam.

Indications

- » Sore throat
- » Cough
- » Chest congestion
- » Simple fever
- » Restless fever
- » Muscle tension associated with lung conditions⁶

DIGESTIVE HEALTH

Bitter and tannic qualities make sage a powerhouse herb to stimulate digestive function and optimize healthy secretion of bile.⁶

Indications

- » Indigestion, specifically difficulty digesting fats
- » Bloating
- » Decreased appetite
- » Chronic diarrhea

FEMALE REPRODUCTIVE SYSTEM

Sage contains high levels of phytoestrogens: estrogen-like compounds that can support hormonal balance through transitions such as perimenopause.^{1,6}

Indications

- » Excessive sweating associated with menopause
- » Hot flashes
- » Imbalances in libido (excess and diminished)
- » Heavy and/or painful periods

COGNITIVE HEALTH

Studies are linking herbal extracts of common sage with improved memory, brain function, and mood. Sage contains rosmarinic acid, a powerful antioxidant with neuroprotective qualities.^{1,11}

Indications

- » Low mood
- » Poor concentration
- » Heavy spirit⁶

CONTRAINDICATIONS & SAFETY

Those with sensitivity to the mint family should avoid therapeutic use of this plant; Thujone toxicity is possible. Not to be consumed in large quantities (greater than 4 g per day) or used over sustained periods of time. Not to be used during pregnancy or breastfeeding.

PREPARATIONS & APPLICATIONS

Dosage: 4 grams of dried herb maximum daily

Tincture: 2-4 ml three times daily (1:5 in 40%)

Tea

Hot infusion: Pour 1 cup of low-boiled water over 1-2 teaspoons of dried herb. Steep the infusion covered for 10 minutes. Drink hot up to three times per day to stimulate digestion, bring on a sweat, or help with chest congestion.

Cool infusion: Prepare 2-3 teaspoons of sage leaves by adding 1 litre of cool water. Allow infusion to steep for several hours, or overnight, either on the countertop or in the refrigerator. Strain and serve ½ to 1 cup of tea. Drink chilled to reduce excessive sweating. It can be gargled to ease a sore throat as well.

Dried: Gather leaves and dry on a drying rack for storage.

RECIPE:

Sage-Honey Cough Syrup

Ingredients

- » Dried sage
- » Raw honey

Instructions

1. Brew a sage tea, adding two teaspoons of dried leaves per cup of boiled water.
2. Steep covered for 15-20 minutes and strain. Allow tea to cool.
3. To prepare syrup, mix ½ cup cooled tea with ½ cup raw honey, stir until well blended.
4. Enjoy 1 teaspoon as needed every 2-3 hours (not to be given to children under age two).

Store in the refrigerator for up to one week. 🌿

For references visit ecoparent.ca/ELV/LWIN26





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SPORTS & NUTRITION

TRAINING FOR Graceful Aging

A CHIROPRACTOR'S PERSPECTIVE

Dr. Daina Patel, BSc, DC



Getty Images / Unsplash+

Aging gracefully isn't about chasing youth. It's about preserving vitality, independence, and the ability to move through life with ease and confidence. As a chiropractor, I see firsthand how the body responds to time, stress, and neglect. But I also see how it thrives with care, intention, and training.

MUSCLE MASS

One of the most overlooked aspects of aging well is muscle mass. We lose it faster than we think, and with it goes strength, balance, and metabolic health. Muscle isn't just for athletes. It's protective. It cushions joints, stabilizes posture, and helps prevent falls. It also plays a key role in blood sugar regulation and inflammation control. Without enough muscle, even daily tasks become harder, such as getting up from a chair, carrying groceries, or walking up stairs.

BONE HEALTH

Osteoporosis doesn't announce itself until there's a fracture. By then, the damage is done. Weight-bearing exercise,

resistance training, and proper nutrition are our best defence as bones respond to stress. They remodel and strengthen when challenged. That's why walking, lifting, and even climbing stairs matter more than we give them credit for. I've seen women in their 60s and 70s improve bone density through consistent strength work. It's not magic; it's biology.

Training for longevity doesn't mean punishing workouts or chasing performance. It means consistency. It means choosing movement that builds resilience. For some, that's Pilates or yoga. For others, it's kettlebells or bodyweight circuits. The key is progressive overload: gradually increasing the challenge so the body adapts. If you're lifting the same weight for years, your body has no reason to change. But if you increase the load, even slightly, you stimulate growth and repair.

POSTURE & ALIGNMENT

Years of sitting, tech use, and poor movement patterns take their toll. Training should include mobility work, core activation, and exercises that restore natural movement, such as hip hinges, scapular retraction, and spinal extension. These



aren't flashy, but they're foundational. I often prescribe simple drills that look boring but create real change. Graceful aging isn't about looking good in leggings. It's about moving well and staying upright.

HORMONES

Hormonal shifts also play a role. As estrogen declines, women become more vulnerable to bone loss and muscle wasting. That's why resistance training becomes non-negotiable. Cardio alone won't cut it. We need load-bearing movement to stimulate the tissues that keep us strong. And we need enough protein to support that process. Most women don't eat nearly enough. I'm not talking about shakes and powders. I mean real food like eggs, fish, legumes, nuts, quality meats, and tofu.

RECOVERY

Sleep, hydration, and stress management are part of the training equation. So is nutrition. Calcium, magnesium, and vitamin D are essential, but they're not enough on their own. We need whole foods that support muscle and bone health. We also need to stop fearing carbs and fat. The body needs fuel to repair and rebuild. Under-eating is just as damaging as over-indulging.

MINDSET

This is the final piece of the puzzle. I've worked with women who felt defeated before they even started. They believed aging meant decline, but the body is adaptable and responds to care. It's never too late to start. I've seen clients in their 70s build strength, improve posture, and regain confidence. The key is to train with purpose, not punishment. Movement should feel empowering, not exhausting.

Graceful aging is a mindset. It's about investing in your future self and about moving with intention, eating with purpose, and refusing to settle for decline. The body is resilient and wants to heal, it wants to move, and it's waiting for you to give it the chance.

RECIPE

Collagen-Rich Coconut Turmeric Stew

This warming stew supports joint health, skin elasticity, and gut integrity. It's built around slow-cooked chicken thighs (rich in natural collagen), coconut milk for healthy fats, and turmeric for inflammation support. It's cozy, nourishing, and subtly therapeutic.

INGREDIENTS

- » 1 Tbsp olive oil or ghee
- » 1 small onion, finely chopped
- » 2 garlic cloves, minced
- » 1 tsp fresh grated ginger
- » ½ tsp ground turmeric
- » ¼ tsp ground cinnamon
- » ½ tsp sea salt
- » 4 boneless, skin-on chicken thighs
- » 1 c chopped carrots
- » 1 c chopped zucchini or squash
- » 1 c (400 ml) full-fat coconut milk
- » 1 c chicken bone broth (homemade or store-bought)
- » Juice of ½ lemon
- » Fresh cilantro or parsley to garnish

SERVES
2

INSTRUCTIONS

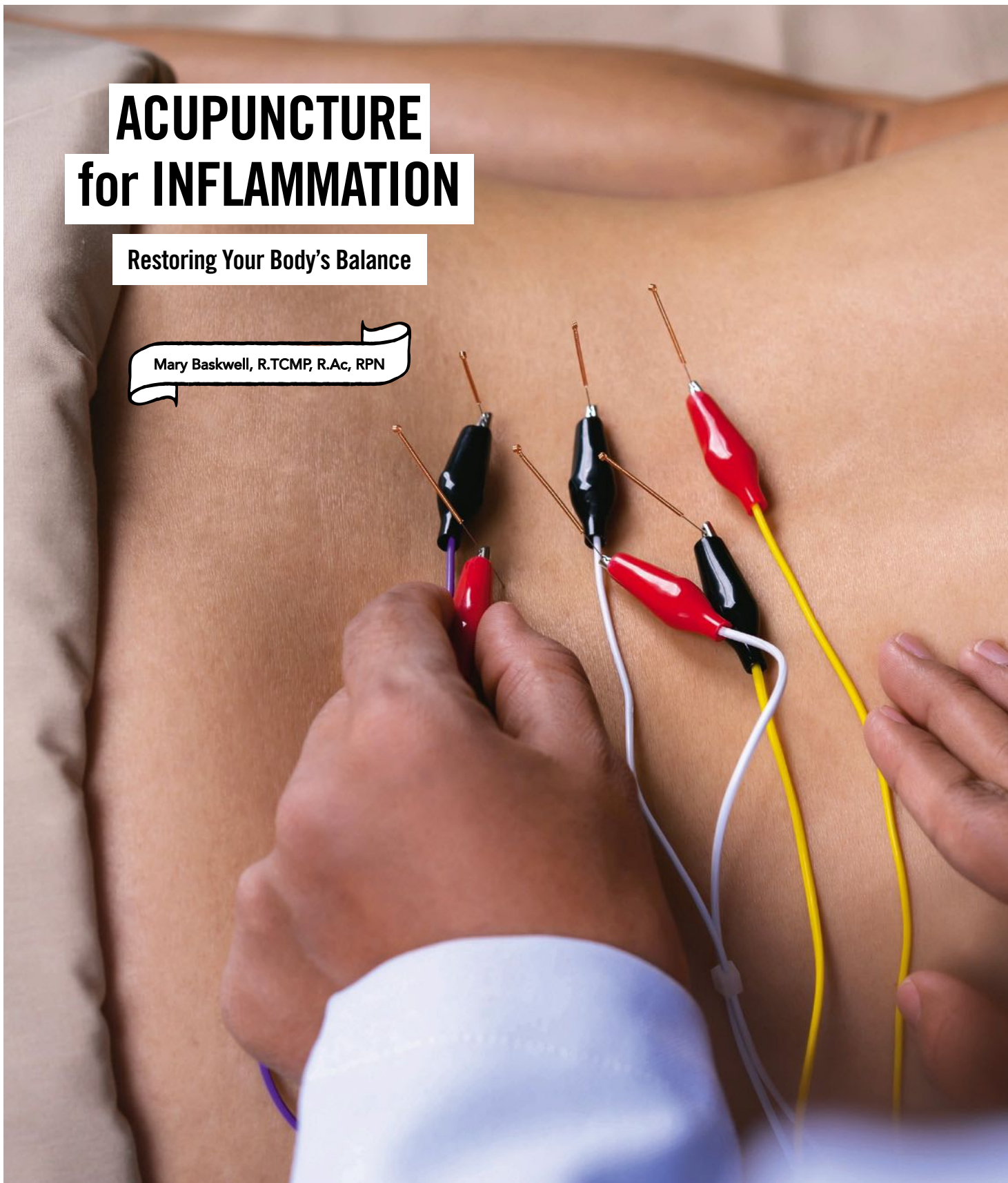
1. In a large pot, heat oil over medium heat. Sauté onion until soft.
2. Add garlic, ginger, turmeric, cinnamon, and salt. Stir until fragrant.
3. Add chicken thighs and sear lightly on both sides.
4. Add carrots, zucchini, coconut milk, and bone broth. Bring to a gentle simmer.
5. Cover and cook on low for 30-40 minutes until chicken is tender and vegetables are soft.
6. Stir in lemon juice. Adjust seasoning if needed.
7. Serve warm, garnished with fresh herbs.
8. *Optional:* Pair with cooked quinoa or cauliflower rice. 🍴

Illustration: DenisPoyasiev / Depositphotos.com

ACUPUNCTURE for INFLAMMATION

Restoring Your Body's Balance

Mary Baskwell, R.TCMP, R.Ac, RPN



geargodz / Depositphotos.com

We've all experienced inflammation before, feeling that hot, swollen, sore feeling that happens when the body is reacting to an injury, illness, or stress. In small doses, inflammation is a good thing. It's how your body repairs and protects itself. But when that response stays "switched on" for too long, it can begin to cause more harm than help, showing up as pain, fatigue, tension, or chronic conditions that never quite settle.

In Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM), inflammation is described a little differently. Instead of using the word "inflammation," TCM talks about heat, dampness, and stagnation in the body, which are energies that can build up, block flow, and cause the same kind of discomfort we recognize in modern terms. Acupuncture helps bring those elements back into balance, cooling what's too hot, moving what's stuck, and gently supporting the body's natural ability to heal.

TCM'S WAY OF SEEING INFLAMMATION

If you've ever had a red, swollen joint or felt overheated and irritable, you've experienced what TCM calls excess heat. It's one of the body's ways of showing that things are too active, too stimulated, or that energy (qi) isn't flowing as it should. When that heat mixes with moisture in the body, it becomes damp-heat, a kind of thick, heavy feeling that can make you feel sluggish or swollen.

Other times, inflammation comes from stagnation, which is when qi or blood isn't moving smoothly. In TCM, smooth flow equals health. When our qi or blood gets stuck, tension builds, pain increases, and warmth gathers in the area—much like a river that can't move past a blockage. Sometimes I'll also explain it as picturing a car revving against a brick wall and not moving; it's stuck, and the revving creates heat.

A TCM practitioner looks for clues that tell the story of where this imbalance lies. They might notice if the tongue is red or has a thick coating, if the pulse feels wiry (often stagnation) or slippery (dampness), or if certain symptoms feel worse with heat, stress, or certain foods. From there, a treatment plan is created that's unique to you. The treatment goal isn't just to quiet the pain or swelling, it's to restore overall balance. When balance returns, the body's own healing systems can do their work naturally.

Points That Restore Harmony

In TCM, acupuncture points are chosen to do more than relieve pain; they also help restore harmony in the body's systems.

» **Clearing Heat:** Points are chosen to release excess warmth and calm irritation, cooling the body from within.

» **Transforming Dampness:** When the body holds on to fluids or feels heavy, certain points help move that dampness, reducing swelling and stiffness.

» **Moving Qi and Blood:** For pain or tension that feels tight, sharp, or stuck, acupuncture helps get things flowing again, easing pressure and restoring movement.

» **Supporting the Organs:** Each organ system in TCM has a relationship to certain types of inflammation. The Lungs may relate to respiratory symptoms; the Liver to tension and stress; the Spleen to digestive sluggishness; and the Kidneys to urinary or hormonal imbalances. Supporting those organs helps bring the whole system back to equilibrium.

» **Strengthening Wei Qi (Defensive Energy):** This is the body's natural protection, similar to what we'd call the immune system. Acupuncture helps fortify this layer so that the body can respond to challenges in a balanced way, which is not overreacting, but not under-responding either.

Each treatment is a conversation between your body and the needles; it's a way of helping your system remember how to regulate itself.

HOW ACUPUNCTURE HEALS THE BODY

When an acupuncture needle is placed, it sets off a gentle ripple through the nervous system, letting the body know

it's time to shift gears from "fight and defend" to "rest and repair." That shift encourages your immune and hormonal systems to calm down and communicate more efficiently.

In Western terms, researchers have observed that acupuncture can lower inflammatory markers and regulate immune activity. Studies have shown it helps reduce the release of pro-inflammatory chemicals in the body, while increasing the ones that promote healing.^{1,2} Other studies have found that acupuncture can stimulate the vagus nerve, a major nerve that helps the body relax and quiet inflammation naturally.³ In everyday terms, this means acupuncture helps the body "turn down the volume" on inflammation, without shutting off the natural healing process that's meant to protect you.

ELECTROACUPUNCTURE

Sometimes, practitioners use electroacupuncture, where a gentle current is attached to the needles to enhance the stimulation. It feels like a soft tapping or buzzing sensation. From a TCM perspective, electroacupuncture moves qi and blood more strongly, helping to clear stubborn blockages or deep-seated inflammation. This gentle electrical pulse can help reduce pain signals and modulate immune activity, making it especially useful for chronic joint pain, tendon injuries, or lingering inflammation.

HERBS & MOXIBUSTION

While acupuncture works through the body's energy pathways, herbs and moxa work through the elements of nature: plants and warmth. They're often used together to support recovery and long-term balance.

Herbal Support

TCM herbal medicine uses combinations of roots, flowers, and barks to guide the body back to balance.

- » Herbs that clear heat help cool inflammation and soothe irritation. Think of them as nature's internal "cooling cloth."
- » Herbs that transform dampness help the body release excess moisture and reduce swelling or puffiness.
- » Herbs that move blood and qi are often used for pain, gently improving circulation and easing tension.
- » And for people who run more depleted or tired, tonic herbs are added to strengthen the body's core energy, helping it handle stress and recover faster.

Your herbal prescription would always be customised because there's no one-size-fits-all formula in TCM. What matters most is finding the right balance of cooling, moving, and nourishing elements for your particular pattern.

The Warmth of Moxibustion

Moxibustion, or "moxa," is the practice of gently burning dried mugwort near the skin to warm acupuncture points. The heat feels comforting and helps energy move smoothly through the channels. Moxa is often used when inflammation is mixed with coldness or poor circulation, for example, stiff joints that ache more in damp weather, or pain that is worse in cold winters. It strengthens the body's energy, supports immunity, and enhances healing. Modern studies have also observed that moxibustion can influence inflammatory markers in the body, helping to reduce pain and stiffness in chronic conditions such as arthritis.³

A GENTLE APPROACH FOR MODERN LIFE

Our modern lives tend to feed inflammation. People have long hours, poor sleep, emotional stress, constant stimulation, and eat processed foods. Over time, this keeps our inner fire burning too high. Acupuncture and other TCM therapies invite the body to pause, cool down, and return to its natural rhythm. Instead of forcing the body to suppress symptoms, TCM works by re-educating your body by showing it how to restore harmony on its own. Whether you're managing joint pain, allergies, digestive discomfort, or fatigue, reducing inflammation from a TCM perspective is about more than putting out a fire; it's about rekindling balance in the entire system. Inflammation takes time to unwind, especially if it's been present for months or years, so several treatments may be recommended and should be reassessed as needed. But many people notice subtle shifts right away. People may feel a sense of ease, clearer thinking, or better sleep; these are signs that the body is rebalancing from the inside out.

Acupuncture isn't meant to replace medical treatment for serious conditions, but it can be a deeply supportive therapy to help your body heal more comfortably and naturally. Many people find that combining acupuncture with mindful nutrition, movement, and rest helps them feel more resilient in the face of life's ongoing stresses. If you're curious about how TCM can support your health, start with a consultation. You may discover that the path to cooling inflammation isn't just about treating symptoms, it's about nurturing balance, flow, and peace within your whole being. 🌿

For references visit ecoparent.ca/ELV/LWIN26

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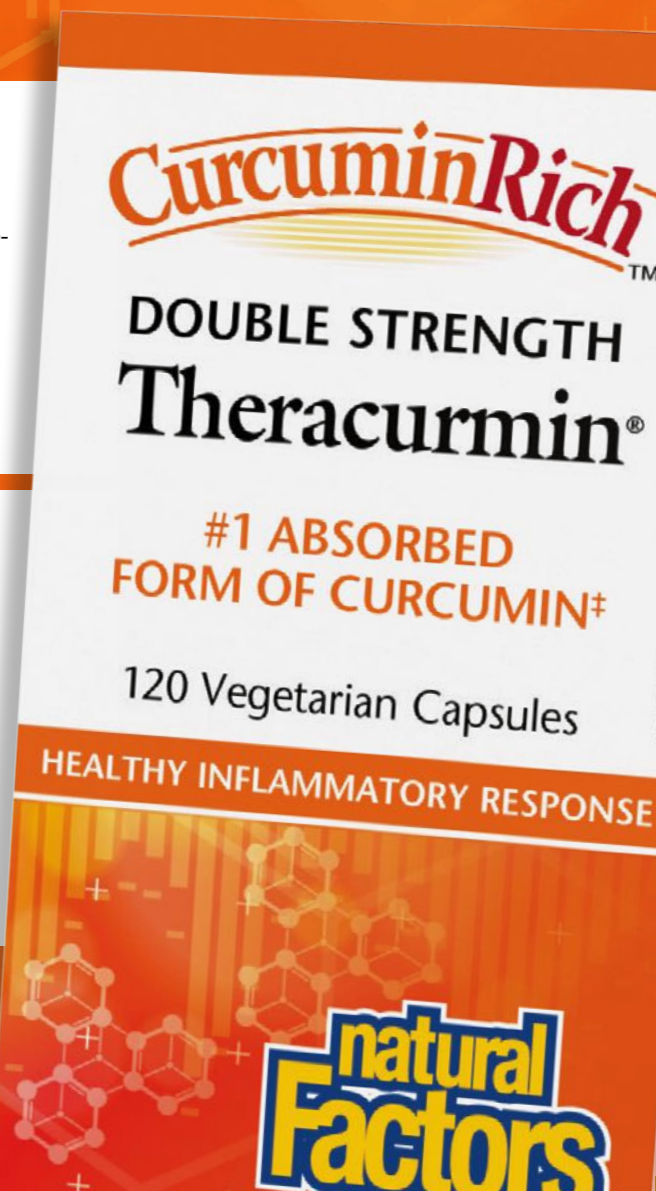


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Understand Inflammation

WHY SO MANY WOMEN FEEL OFF BALANCE

Dr. Effy Germanis, ND, R.Ac



Annie Spratt / Unsplash.com

“I just don’t feel like myself” is a phrase I hear almost every day from women in my practice. They aren’t necessarily sick, but they’re not well either. They describe waking up tired, feeling foggy or unmotivated, snapping at people they care about, struggling to sleep, and noticing their digestion or cycle feels “off.” Blood work often looks normal, yet they know something isn’t right.

For years, medicine has treated complaints of fatigue as anemia, mood as anxiety, bloating as IBS, and weight gain as lifestyle: all isolated issues. But growing evidence shows these symptoms may share a common thread—a subtle, chronic, internal flame known as inflammation. And for many women, that flame is quietly reshaping how they feel, function, and see themselves.

Across every life stage, women describe the same experience: a loss of connection to their body and sense of ease. Researchers studying women in perimenopause have identified “not feeling like myself” as one of the most commonly reported, yet least understood, phrases in medicine.

This cluster of symptoms typically includes:

- » **Persistent fatigue** even after rest
- » **Brain fog** or slowed concentration
- » **Mood changes** such as anxiety or irritability
- » **Sleep disturbances** (trouble falling or staying asleep)
- » **Digestive bloating** or irregularity
- » **Weight fluctuation** despite little change in habits

It’s not simply hormonal, though hormones play a role. It’s systemic. These symptoms often stem from inflammation simmering beneath the surface, affecting everything from the brain and the gut, to the immune system.

WHAT IS INFLAMMATION?

Inflammation is the body’s natural defence, often a response to injury, infection, or imbalance. In its acute form, it’s healing, like redness around a cut, or swelling after a sprain. The problem arises when this response doesn’t turn off.

Chronic low-grade inflammation acts like an invisible fire that keeps the immune system slightly activated all the time. It’s subtle, not enough to cause fever or swelling, but enough to interfere with cellular energy, hormone signalling, and mood regulation.

Over time, this ongoing “silent fire” contributes to fatigue, cognitive fog, pain, and hormonal disruption. It also increases long-term risk for conditions like cardiovascular disease, insulin resistance, thyroid dysfunction, and autoimmune illness, all of which disproportionately affect women.

How Inflammation Shapes Women’s Symptoms

The Brain Fog Connection

When inflammatory molecules, called cytokines, circulate, they can cross into the brain and interfere with neurotransmitters like serotonin, dopamine, and acetylcholine. The result? Difficulty focusing, forgetfulness, and that “cotton-headed” feeling. Neuroscientists call it *neuroinflammation*, but most women simply call it brain fog.

Fatigue and Energy Slumps

Inflammation triggers the immune system to conserve energy for defence, redirecting it away from metabolism. This lowers mitochondrial efficiency—the tiny energy factories in

our cells—leading to chronic tiredness that no amount of coffee can fix.

Mood and Anxiety

In a *Neuropsychopharmacology* article, “The authors interpret their findings as supporting the idea that concurrent inflammation and negative mood amplify altered perception and interpretation of internal bodily signals, a mechanism that might contribute to chronic visceral pain and mood-sensitized bodily symptoms.”¹

Those same cytokines that drive inflammation can alter the brain’s stress circuits and serotonin pathways. Women often report feeling “on edge,” more emotional, or easily overwhelmed. This isn’t weakness, it’s biochemistry.

Hormone Imbalances

Inflammation disrupts how the body metabolizes estrogen, progesterone, and thyroid hormones. It can worsen PMS, amplify perimenopausal symptoms, and slow metabolism. Elevated inflammatory markers have even been linked to irregular cycles and fertility challenges.

In an already changing landscape, an article on *Systemic Inflammation and Menopausal Transition* found that midlife women experience distinct patterns of change in the inflammatory markers, which supports a contribution of menopause in creating the terrain for systemic inflammation.²

Gut Health and Digestion

The gut houses 70 percent of the immune system. When inflammation disrupts the intestinal barrier, women experience bloating, constipation, or IBS-like symptoms. This gut-immune crosstalk fuels a vicious cycle: gut irritation heightens inflammation, and inflammation worsens digestion.³

Why Women Are More Vulnerable

Biologically and socially, women face unique inflammation triggers:

- » **Hormonal fluctuations:** Estrogen and progesterone naturally modulate inflammation. When levels dip, around menstruation, postpartum, or perimenopause, inflammation can spike.
- » **Autoimmune susceptibility:** A high percentage of autoimmune disorders occur in women, often linked to chronic inflammatory signalling.



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- » **Stress and emotional labour:** Women frequently juggle caregiving, work, and social responsibilities, keeping the nervous system in “fight-or-flight.” Chronic cortisol surges fan inflammatory flames.
- » **Sleep deprivation:** Hormonal transitions and stress often disrupt sleep, a crucial time for inflammation to reset.
- » **Environmental and lifestyle:** Processed foods, alcohol, toxins, and sedentary habits compound the issue, often subtly, over years.⁴

These overlapping layers explain why women can feel unwell long before lab results reveal disease.

CALMING THE SILENT FIRE: A HOLISTIC APPROACH

Rebalance Through Nutrition

Food is the most immediate way to influence inflammation.

- » Choose colourful, whole foods rich in antioxidants, such as leafy greens, berries, turmeric, ginger, and omega-3-rich fish
- » Minimize refined sugars and processed oils, which drive inflammatory pathways
- » Support gut health with fibre (beans, flax, chia, vegetables) and fermented foods like sauerkraut or kefir
- » Stay hydrated—even mild dehydration raises stress hormones

Support the Gut-Immune Axis

The gut is both the seat of digestion and immunity. When balanced, it helps regulate inflammation.

- » Identify and remove food triggers (common ones include gluten, dairy, and ultra-processed snacks)
- » Eating meals in timed intervals, avoiding grazing, overeating, or skipping meals entirely
- » Consider probiotics and prebiotics to restore microbial diversity

Manage Stress & Restore the Nervous System

- » Chronic stress is inflammatory. Regulating the body's stress circuitry lowers cortisol and promotes parasympathetic calm
- » Complement it with mindfulness, deep breathing, yoga, journaling, or time outdoors

Move Daily, Rest Deeply

- » Movement increases anti-inflammatory cytokines and improves lymphatic circulation. Aim for 30 minutes of moderate movement daily, walking, dancing, or resistance training
- » Equally vital is sleep. During deep sleep, the brain clears inflammatory debris through the glymphatic system. Protect this time as being non-negotiable

Brain Optimizing and Mood Balance

- » Building on the activities that bring joy and a sense of calm can positively affect a person's mood and brain activity
- » Balancing rest and activity can allow for time to reboot, while also providing the body the ability to clear the excess inflammation and toxic waste material that naturally occurs

THE ROLE OF NATUROPATHIC MEDICINE AND ACUPUNCTURE

Modern studies confirm acupuncture's ability to reduce inflammatory markers, improve circulation, and modulate the nervous and immune systems.

Clinically, women notice:

- » Calmer mood and sharper focus
- » Reduced bloating or pain
- » Improved sleep quality
- » More regular cycles

It's both a physical and energetic reset—a way to cool the fire without extinguishing vitality.

For more on acupuncture and inflammation see page 22 of this issue!

HERBAL AND NUTRIENT ALLIES

Certain natural compounds can lower inflammation safely and effectively:

- » **Curcumin (from turmeric):** reduces systemic inflammation
- » **Omega-3 fatty acids:** modulate immune response and have anti-inflammatory properties
- » **Magnesium:** supports stress resilience and sleep
- » **Adaptogens (ashwagandha, rhodiola):** balance cortisol
- » **Green tea extract:** antioxidant and metabolic support

RECONNECTING WITH YOURSELF

If you've been saying, "I don't feel like myself," you're not alone, and you're not imagining it. Your body may be sending early signals that inflammation, hormones, and stress are out of sync. The beauty is that inflammation is modifiable. When you address it through nourishment, rest, and holistic therapies, the fog begins to lift. You start to feel clearer, calmer, and more at home in your own skin again.

The silent fire of inflammation doesn't just burn in the body; it dims our sense of self. By paying attention to those whispers of imbalance and treating the body as an interconnected system, we can transform "not feeling like myself" into "finally feeling like me again." 🌿

For references visit ecoparent.ca/ELV/LWIN26

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REDUCING INFLAMMATION

Chronic inflammation can overtax the immune system, potentially contributing to diseases such as diabetes, heart disease, and arthritis. To support long-term health, attention should be given to maintaining good lifestyle habits, managing stress, and using high-quality, inflammation-reducing supplements. Take care of your health now so you can have a healthy, longer life.

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THE ROLE OF DOULAS & LACTATION CONSULTANTS

And Why You
Might Want One

Dr. Ailya Patel, ND

Welcoming a baby into your family is exhilarating, overwhelming, and transformative all at once. From the first flutter of movement to those first sleepless nights, parenthood is full of questions. Some practical, some emotional, and many that leave you wondering where to turn for help.

Two kinds of professionals have become essential to family-centred care in recent decades—doulas and lactation consultants. Their training and focus differ, but both share the same goal: empowering families with knowledge, confidence, and support at one of life’s most vulnerable moments.

WHAT IS A DOULA?

The word doula comes from the ancient Greek for “woman’s servant.” Today, doulas are trained, non-medical professionals who provide continuous physical comfort, emotional support, and guidance during pregnancy, birth, and often during the postpartum period. Unlike doctors or midwives, they don’t do clinical tasks like monitoring heart rates or performing exams. Instead, they act as steady companions and advocates.

A doula may provide:

- » **Emotional support:** Reassurance, encouragement, and a calming presence to ease fear and anxiety
- » **Physical comfort:** Massage, counter-pressure, breathing strategies, and positioning to make labour more manageable
- » **Information:** Helping families understand medical interventions, build birth plans, and translate complex medical language
- » **Advocacy:** Ensuring your preferences are heard and respected within the medical system

Evidence shows doula support leads to shorter labours, fewer medical interventions such as inductions or caesareans, and higher satisfaction with the birth experience.

The Naturopathic Doula

In some parts of Canada, families may also come across the option of a naturopathic doula, which is a naturopathic doctor who offers doula services alongside their medical training. This unique role combines the hands-on comfort measures and advocacy of a traditional doula with the additional expertise of a naturopathic doctor. A naturopathic doula may:

- » Support with labour comfort measures (breathing, massage, positioning)
- » Offer safe options such as homeopathics, herbal teas, supplements, acupuncture or nutritional strategies during pregnancy, labour, or postpartum
- » Provide continuity of care—from prenatal visits, to birth support, and follow-up postpartum check-ins
- » Screen for mental health or physical concerns and know when to refer to other health professionals

For many families, the naturopathic doula bridges the gap between clinical care and holistic support. This integrated approach can be particularly helpful when parents value natural health strategies but still want the reassurance of working with a regulated healthcare provider.

WHAT IS A LACTATION CONSULTANT?

A lactation consultant, often certified as an International Board Certified Lactation Consultant (IBCLC), is a healthcare professional trained in the clinical management of human lactation and infant feeding.

They help with:

- » **Anatomy and physiology:** Understanding milk production and infant oral structures
- » **Troubleshooting:** Engorgement, plugged ducts, nipple pain, or low supply
- » **Education:** Teaching latch techniques, hand-expression, pump selection, and milk storage
- » **Emotional reassurance:** Normalizing the ups and downs of feeding and building parents’ confidence.

Skilled lactation support is linked to higher rates of exclusive breastfeeding at one, three, and six months, reduced risk of mastitis, and fewer cases of early weaning.¹

HOW THEY WORK TOGETHER

While doulas and lactation consultants each bring unique expertise, their work often overlaps. Before birth, doulas introduce families to the basics of feeding, while many refer to IBCLCs for deeper planning. Immediately after birth, doulas may help with first latches and skin-to-skin contact, then call in an IBCLC if persistent issues arise. Both offer care and continuity during a time that can feel chaotic, and

they often coordinate with midwives, doctors, and nurses to create a seamless web of support. Together, they form a continuum of care from pregnancy through the first few months of your baby's life.

WHEN MIGHT YOU WANT A DOULA?

You might consider a doula if:

- » You're anxious, a first-time parent, or have a history of difficult births
- » You hope to avoid medical interventions and want natural comfort techniques
- » You're managing a complex pregnancy (twins, health conditions) and want extra support
- » You're planning a home or birth-centre delivery without routine pain relief
- » Your partner wants guidance so they can focus on emotional connection rather than logistics

WHEN MIGHT YOU WANT A LACTATION CONSULTANT?

An IBCLC can help if:

- » Your baby struggles to latch, or feeding is painful
- » You worry about low milk supply
- » You're preparing to return to work and want to maintain supply with pumping
- » You have multiples or a preterm baby with higher feeding demands
- » You're balancing both breast/chest and bottle feeding and want to protect supply

WHAT THE EVIDENCE SHOWS

Birth Outcomes

Doulas help lower the chances of C-sections, shorten labour, and make vaginal births more likely. They also reduce the need for medical interventions and improve overall satisfaction with the birth experience.^{1,4}

Feeding Success

Seeing a lactation consultant soon after birth makes exclusive breastfeeding much more likely, and building a mother's confidence plays a key role in breastfeeding success.²

Emotional Health

Both doulas and lactation consultants support parents' confidence and sense of control, which helps lower the risk of postpartum anxiety and depression.³

PRACTICAL CONSIDERATIONS

- » **Cost and coverage:** Fees vary, but more insurers are recognizing their value. Check your benefits for IBCLC coverage
- » **Credentials:** Look for DONA, CAPPA, or Childbirth International certification for doulas and IBCLC for lactation consultants. Many naturopathic doctors also train as doulas or IBCLCs, offering integrated care
- » **Timing:** Aim to connect with a doula by the end of the second trimester. For lactation, consider a prenatal consult around 36-38 weeks, with a follow-up in the first week postpartum
- » **Virtual care:** While hands-on support is best for latch correction, remote consults are a growing trend and can be very helpful, especially in rural areas or during illness

BEYOND THE CLINICAL

Hiring a doula or lactation consultant isn't only about avoiding complications; it's about shaping your family's early story. They can bring empowerment by turning medical information into clear, actionable choices, and they can offer continuity through familiar faces in a healthcare system that can feel rushed and fragmented. Programs offering doula and IBCLC care have been shown to help close racial and socioeconomic gaps in maternal and infant health. Many doulas and IBCLCs also connect families to local parent groups, peer support, or mental health resources.

Whether it's your first baby or your third, pregnancy and postpartum are big transitions. Having someone in your corner who understands both the science and the emotional landscape can make all the difference.

Doulas and lactation consultants don't replace your medical team; they complement them. They help you feel seen, heard, and capable. And that empowerment carries forward into parenthood, shaping confidence, resilience, and joy in the years to come.

Investing in support isn't just about labour or feeding. It's about building a foundation for your family's well-being, from bump to baby and beyond. 📧

For references visit ecoparent.ca/ELV/LWIN26



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NATURALLY BEAUTIFUL FEET

Taking Care of Your Body's Foundation

Dr. Adrienne DeLuca, ND



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In a world obsessed with skincare routines and facial serums, our poor feet are often left forgotten—hidden in shoes, ignored until sandal season, or only acknowledged when they ache. As a naturopathic doctor, I believe that true beauty is holistic. Our feet, the literal foundation of our bodies, deserve the same level of care and intention as the rest of us. Whether you're preparing for a winter getaway or simply want your feet to feel more comfortable and look naturally radiant, supporting their health from the inside *and* out is key.

Here's my holistic approach to naturally beautiful feet—no toxic polishes, harsh scrubs, or pricey spa visits required.

STEP 1: NOURISH FROM THE INSIDE OUT

When patients ask how to improve the appearance of their skin, nails, or hair, I always start with nutrition. Your feet are no exception. Brittle nails, dry skin, and cracked heels are often signs of internal imbalances or nutrient deficiencies.

- » **Healthy Fats for Supple Skin:** Omega-3 fatty acids (from flax, chia, walnuts, and wild-caught fish) support skin elasticity and hydration. If your heels are dry or cracking, it may be time to check your omega intake.
- » **Biotin & B-Complex:** These support strong, resilient nails. I often recommend a B-complex supplement to patients with weak or peeling toenails, along with a biotin-rich diet (e.g., eggs, almonds, sweet potatoes).

- » **Hydration:** Drinking enough water is essential for cellular repair and skin moisture.
- » **Zinc & Vitamin A:** Both support wound healing and skin regeneration—key if you're prone to cracked heels or fungal infections. Pumpkin seeds, sweet potatoes, and leafy greens are great sources.

STEP 2: GENTLE, NON-TOXIC FOOT CARE RITUALS

Caring for your feet doesn't need to mean toxic nail polishes and acetone removers. Here's how to create a natural, spa-like experience at home.

DIY Herbal Foot Soak

A good soak softens skin, reduces inflammation, and supports circulation.

Try this at-home recipe:

- » ½ c Epsom salts
- » 1 Tbsp baking soda
- » A few sprigs of fresh rosemary or lavender
- » 3 drops of essential oils like tea tree (antifungal), peppermint (cooling), or lavender (soothing)
- » Warm (not hot) water in a basin

Soak your feet for 15–20 minutes two to three times per week. This is particularly helpful for sore, tired feet or those prone to fungal imbalances.

Exfoliate Naturally

Instead of harsh scrubs, use a natural pumice stone after soaking. You can also mix:

- » 1 Tbsp finely ground oats
- » 1 Tbsp honey (antibacterial and humectant)
- » 1 tsp olive oil

Massage this paste into heels and soles to gently remove dead skin and restore softness.

STEP 3: HYDRATE, SEAL, AND PROTECT

Your feet have fewer oil glands than other parts of your body, which is why they tend to get dry and cracked.

Try this natural foot balm recipe after your soak or before bed:

- » 2 Tbsp shea butter
- » 1 Tbsp coconut oil
- » 5 drops lavender essential oil
- » 3 drops tea tree oil

Warm and mix the ingredients, store in a small glass jar, and apply nightly with socks for an intensive overnight treatment. The antimicrobial oils also help prevent foot odour and infection.

STEP 4: SUPPORT HEALTHY NAILS

Nail polish may make toenails look pretty in the short term, but many commercial brands contain formaldehyde, toluene, and DBP—all harsh ingredients.

Instead, nourish your nails with natural oils like vitamin E, castor oil, or jojoba oil. Massage a drop into each nail bed to keep them moisturised, flexible, and strong.

If you still enjoy polish, opt for non-toxic brands, which omit the most harmful ingredients.

See our guide to natural nails:
ecoparent.ca/manipedi

STEP 5: ADDRESS ROOT CAUSES HOLISTICALLY

If you struggle with chronic foot issues like athlete's foot, toenail fungus, plantar warts, or cracked heels, I always dig deeper. Often, there are internal imbalances at play.

- » **Fungal Infections:** These usually indicate an imbalance in the skin or gut microbiome. I often support patients with probiotics, antifungal herbs (like oregano or caprylic acid), and a lower-sugar, anti-inflammatory diet.
- » **Cracked Heels:** Beyond dryness, this can signal thyroid imbalance, poor circulation, or zinc deficiency. Gentle exfoliation and internal support are key.
- » **Swelling or Soreness:** Poor lymphatic flow or circulation may be the culprit. Consider dry brushing, contrast hydrotherapy (alternating hot/cold water), or gentle movement like walking or yoga to improve flow.

STEP 6: EMBRACE BAREFOOT BALANCE

Your feet were designed to move freely and connect with the earth. Modern shoes—especially those with narrow toe boxes, raised heels, and rigid soles—can interfere with natural gait and posture.

When safe, spend time barefoot on natural surfaces such as grass, sand, and wood. This "earthing" practice not only strengthens foot muscles and improves balance, but may also help reduce inflammation through direct contact with the Earth's electrons.

Consider minimalist shoes or barefoot-style footwear that allow your toes to splay and your arches to engage naturally.

BEAUTY IS FUNCTION

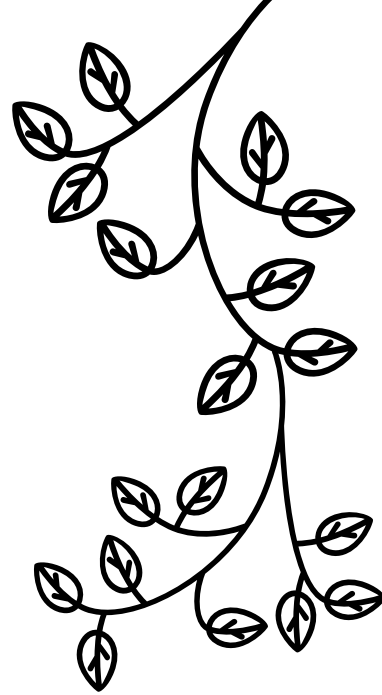
True foot beauty isn't just about appearance; it's about function. Feet that feel good, support your body with strength, and connect you to nature is beauty worth striving for. When we nurture our feet with whole-body wellness, natural care, and loving attention, they reward us with grace, grounding, and resilience.

So, the next time you think about a self-care ritual, don't stop at your face or your hair. Give your feet the care they deserve. They carry you every day of your life. 🌿

NATURAL FOOT CARE

SIMPLE HABITS FOR HEALTHIER LOOKING FEET

No harmful chemicals are required to keep your feet looking and feeling healthy. Natural foot care is a combination of simple habits that include exfoliation, hydration, foot soaks, and soothing creams.



PAUME
–Overnight Hand and Foot Hydration Mask

Indulge your skin in deep, restorative hydration while you sleep. This rich treatment combines shea butter, glycerin, panthenol, and squalane to lock in moisture, soften rough areas, and soothe irritation. Perfect for even the most sensitive skin, the gentle, unscented and essential oil-free formula leaves hands and feet feeling smooth, supple, and nourished by morning.



ARIUL
–Smooth & Pure Exfoliating and Softening Foot Peeling Masks

Foot exfoliating sock-like packs that easily peel away hardened, dead skin. These peeling masks ultimately renew and reveal a smooth skin texture. Each box contains 2 masks.



KALAYA
–Foot Cream (Peppermint)

Infused with natural peppermint oil and formulated with eucalyptus, spearmint, and salicylic acid, it's designed to naturally exfoliate and repair dry, cracked heels, leaving your feet softer. Kalaya foot cream is suitable for sensitive skin, too!

GEHWOL HEALTH
–Health Vitality Bath and Repair Salve

A one-two step approach to healing your feet. First, use the Health Vitality Bath to soften your calluses and invigorate your feet, then apply the restorative and protective salve one to two times per day to help soothe cracked skin. Uses skin-friendly lipids and a medicinal soap base.



URBAN SPA
–Bamboo Foot Paddle and Bedtime Booties

The ultimate foot care combo. Use the high-quality foot buffer built for thorough exfoliation and serious smoothing. It lifts away dry skin, calluses, and rough areas to reveal softer, healthier-looking feet. When it's time for bed, slip on Urban Spa's Bedtime Booties. Made from bleach-free, 100 percent cotton, these moisturizing socks help maintain soft, smooth feet between pedicures. Massage in your favourite foot cream at bedtime, then put on the booties to lock in hydration. As you sleep, they work to soften your skin, smooth your cuticles, and support stronger nails.



MANUCURIST
–Nail Polish (Active Plump)

Blending the qualities of nail polish and makeup, this collagen-infused formula gives a plumped, luminous effect in a soft, pearly baby-pink shade. With a 74.5 percent plant-based formula, it offers deep hydration and nourishment through plant-derived collagen and peach extracts. Apply directly to nails, no need for a polish base or top coat. Manucurist has many colours to choose from for both adults and kids! 🌿

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HEART HEALTHY Foods TO REDUCE CARDIOVASCULAR DISEASE

Angela Moscarelli, RHN



Cardiovascular diseases are the number one cause of death worldwide, but did you know they are mostly preventable? The foods you eat can have a powerful impact on heart disease risk factors like high blood pressure and high cholesterol. The Canadian Heart & Stroke Foundation says that up to 80 percent of premature heart disease can be prevented through lifestyle habits, like eating a healthy diet.

Incorporating heart-healthy foods like fresh fruits and vegetables, beans, fatty fish, and green tea can improve your overall well-being while having protective effects on your cardiovascular health. Of course, lifestyle factors like exercise, stress management, and avoiding processed foods can also play an important role in supporting the health of your heart. Consider these heart-healthy foods on your next trip to the grocery store:

Leafy Green Vegetables

Leafy green vegetable intake has been linked to a lower risk of heart disease and more significant cardiovascular health benefits than other fruits and vegetables. Leafy green vegetables such as arugula, kale, chard, and dandelion greens are dense in dietary nitrates, which may reduce blood pressure and improve the function of cells that line our blood vessels. People who ate the most nitrate-rich vegetables lowered their risk of cardiovascular disease by 12 to 26 percent.¹ Leafy greens are also rich in minerals,

antioxidants, and vitamins, including vitamin K, which may improve arterial function.

Fatty Fish

Extensive studies have been performed on the effects of omega-3 fatty acids as they relate to heart health benefits. Fatty fish is loaded with omega-3 fatty acids, which have beneficial and protective effects on cardiovascular health. The American Heart Association recommends eating two to three servings of fish each week to support heart health. Choose wild salmon, sardines, mackerel, herring, or anchovies.

Beans & Lentils

Beans and lentils are packed with minerals, including magnesium and potassium, which are essential to cardiovascular health. Studies have found that eating beans can reduce certain risk factors for heart disease, including reduced levels of LDL cholesterol.² The soluble fibre in beans and lentils binds to cholesterol and prevents it from being absorbed into the bloodstream. Incorporating beans like kidney, navy, black beans, and lentils in your diet may help to lower blood pressure, improve blood sugar management, and reduce the risk of diabetes. Add them to salads, soups, and stews or as a base for a meatless meal.

Green Tea

The polyphenols and catechins in green tea can act as antioxidants to help prevent cell damage caused by free radicals, reduce inflammation, and protect the health of your heart.³ Green tea increases leptin, which regulates our appetite and reduces LDL cholesterol. Studies found that consuming green tea (or green tea extract) for three months reduced blood pressure compared to a placebo, likely due to the flavonoids in green tea, which help to keep blood vessels flexible and improve blood flow.⁴ Switch out sugary and caffeinated drinks for a cup of green tea or add matcha powder to your yogurt bowl or smoothie.

Antioxidant Fruits & Vegetables

An underlying process of atherosclerosis (the build-up of plaque in the arteries) is inflammation. A range of colourful fruits and vegetables are loaded with antioxidants that help neutralize harmful free radicals, preventing oxidative damage and inflammation. Berries are rich in anthocyanins, which may reduce the risk of coronary artery disease. Tomatoes are rich in lycopene, which has been associated with a lower risk of heart disease and stroke.⁵ Citrus fruits, apples, and pears are also great heart-healthy choices, as are beets, onions, carrots, and cruciferous vegetables.

Garlic

Garlic contains a compound called allicin; it is released when garlic is chopped or crushed. Allicin is believed to relax blood vessels and improve blood flow, which may be effective in protecting against the buildup of plaque in the arteries, potentially preventing heart attacks and strokes. The medicinal properties of garlic have been shown to reduce blood pressure and improve cholesterol levels.⁶

Make a conscious effort to eat more whole, nutrient-dense foods and practice lifestyle factors like regular exercise and stress reduction to support the health of your heart and lower your risk of heart disease.

For references visit ecoparent.ca/ELV/LWIN26

LIFESTYLE HABITS FOR A HEALTHY HEART

Sunshine: Low levels of vitamin D have been associated with an increased risk of heart disease as well as high blood pressure.⁷ Optimize your vitamin D levels with a daily dose of sunshine.

Reduce Stress: Prolonged exposure to stress hormones like cortisol and adrenaline can lead to high blood pressure and inflammation, increasing the risk of cardiovascular diseases. Change your response to stress and lean on stress-relieving tools like meditation, journaling, or breathwork to help you break out of the “fight or flight” mode.

Exercise: The most common way to increase nitric oxide is through exercise. When nitric oxide is released into the blood, it relaxes and widens the vessels, allowing more blood to pass through. Aim for at least 30 minutes of exercise per day. Look for ways to add steps into your daily routine and include core strengthening exercises.

Maintain a Healthy Weight: Individuals with abdominal fat (visceral adipose tissue) are at a higher risk of developing insulin resistance, high blood sugar, high blood pressure, as well as systemic inflammation.

AVOID FOR BETTER HEART HEALTH

Refined Table Salt: Choose unrefined sea or Himalayan salt instead, which has increased mineral content.

Trans Fats and Refined Vegetable Oils: Like margarine, ultra-processed or fried foods. Choose heart-healthy oils like walnut, flax, avocado, or olive oil. Compared to other oils, olive oil is loaded with antioxidants and is rich in monounsaturated fatty acids, which are considered heart-healthy.

Processed Foods, Refined Sugar, and Packaged Snack Foods: Diets high in these foods can increase heart disease risk. Choose whole natural foods like fruits, veggies, beans, whole grains, nuts, and seeds whenever possible. Get in the habit of eating more meals at home and making more things from scratch.

Alcohol: Even one drink a day can increase your risk of hypertension. Higher alcohol consumption further increases your risk.

Try This Recipe!

HOT HONEY SALMON RICE BOWL

SERVES
4

INGREDIENTS

- » 1 c brown rice
- » ½ tsp turmeric powder
- » ⅛ tsp black pepper
- » 1 lb skinless salmon fillet, cut into 1½ inch pieces
- » 1 Tbsp sesame oil
- » 2 Tbsp hot honey
- » 1 tsp garlic powder
- » 1 398 mL can lentils
- » 1 c diced cucumber
- » 1 medium avocado, sliced
- » 2 tsp sesame seeds
- » 3 spring onions, sliced
- » 4 Tbsp chopped cilantro

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Preheat to 450°F. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper.
2. Prepare the rice according to package instructions. Add turmeric powder and black pepper.
3. Meanwhile, toss the salmon pieces and sesame oil together on the prepared baking sheet. Roast until opaque on the outside, about 6 minutes. Remove from the oven and turn the broiler to High. Drizzle the salmon with hot honey, sprinkle with garlic powder and toss to coat. Broil until browned slightly cooked through, approximately 3 minutes.
4. In a medium bowl, add cooked rice and mix in lentils.
5. Divide rice mixture, cucumber and avocado among the bowls.
6. Top with the salmon. Drizzle with the remaining glaze from the baking sheet.
7. Sprinkle with sesame seeds, spring onion and cilantro. 🍴



WESTSIDE SAUCE

Hot Honey

Habanero Hot

LUNDBERG

Organic Long
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BENEFITS BY NATURE

Organic Lentils

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SIMPLY ORGANIC

Garlic Powder

Non-Irradiated



ORGANIC TRADITIONS

Turmeric Powder

Great in Smoothies

drink more plants. do more stuff.

100% delicious plant-packed nutrition inside.



THE HEALTHY KITCHEN

HEALTHY NEVER TASTED SO COZY

Angela Moscarelli, RHN



SERVES
2



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Beet-Lemon Green Juice

The foods you eat (and drink) can have a powerful impact on heart disease risk factors. Colourful fruits and vegetables like lemons, beets, and turmeric are loaded with antioxidants, which help neutralize harmful free radicals and prevent inflammation. Citrus fruits can also lower the risk of heart disease and provide more significant cardiovascular health benefits. Leafy green vegetables and herbs are rich in dietary nitrates, which may reduce blood pressure.

INGREDIENTS

- » 2 medium beets
- » 2 lemons (peeled)
- » ½ bunch cilantro
- » 3 kale leaves
- » 2-inch turmeric root (or 1 tsp turmeric powder)
- » 2 celery ribs
- » 1 cucumber

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Cut the vegetables and fruit as needed into pieces that will fit into the chute of your juicer. Then follow the manufacturer's instructions and juice all the ingredients in the order given.
2. Add water as instructed or as needed to reach 1 litre.

Store in an air-tight glass container in the fridge for a maximum of 72 hours. Fill your juice to the top to keep air out and to avoid oxidation. You can also freeze juices for up to six months. If frozen, thaw in the fridge and consume as soon as possible.

Warm Lentil Salad WITH ROASTED BRUSSELS SPROUTS

This warm lentil salad is the perfect way to enjoy salad in the colder months. It's loaded with vitamins, minerals, and fibre to support heart health. Lentils are rich in minerals, including magnesium and potassium, which are crucial for maintaining cardiovascular health. Cruciferous vegetables are nutrient-dense and offer a wide range of health benefits. Serve this as a side dish or meatless main course.

INGREDIENTS

- » 2 c Brussels sprouts, halved
- » 4 tsp olive oil, divided
- » 2 Tbsp balsamic vinegar, divided
- » ½ tsp sea salt, divided
- » ½ c red onion, chopped
- » 3 garlic cloves, minced
- » 2 c baby kale (or spinach)
- » 2 c cooked lentils
- » 1 Tbsp pure maple syrup
- » ¼ c chopped parsley
- » 2 Tbsp pumpkin seeds

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Preheat the oven to 400°F.
2. Add halved Brussels sprouts to a parchment-lined baking sheet. Drizzle with 2 tsp olive oil, 1 Tbsp balsamic vinegar and ¼ tsp sea salt and toss to evenly coat the Brussels sprouts. Roast for 15 minutes.
3. Meanwhile, add the remaining olive oil to a sauté pan with onions and garlic and cook over medium heat until onions have softened. Add the baby kale, remaining sea salt and cook 3-5 minutes until softened. Add the lentils, remaining balsamic vinegar, maple syrup and a splash of water. Continue to cook over medium heat for about 3-5 minutes.
4. Remove from the heat and stir in roasted Brussels sprouts and top with a sprinkle of parsley and pumpkin seeds.

SERVES
2



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SERVES 6-8

fahrwasser / Depositphotos.com

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Slow Cooker Veggie Chili

Beans are packed with essential minerals and fibre and are extremely satiating. You and your family won't miss the meat in this hearty veggie chili. It's the perfect meal to have on hand for a simple reheat during a hectic weeknight or a cozy night in. This recipe makes a large pot perfect for meal prep and a great opportunity to tuck away a few portions in the freezer.

INGREDIENTS

- » 1 Tbsp olive oil
- » 1½ c carrots, finely chopped
- » 1½ c celery, finely chopped
- » 1½ c peppers, finely chopped
- » 2 c onions, finely chopped
- » 6 cloves garlic, minced
- » 4 tsp sea salt, divided
- » 2 756 mL cans plum tomatoes, puréed
- » 1 756 mL can diced plum tomatoes (or diced fresh tomatoes)
- » 1 Tbsp cane sugar
- » 1 Tbsp ground cumin
- » 2 Tbsp chili powder
- » 2 tsp ground coriander
- » 2 tsp dried oregano
- » 3 bay leaves
- » 2 c kidney beans
- » 2 c black beans
- » 2 c white beans
- » ¼ c organic ketchup
- » 1 Tbsp Worcestershire sauce
- » 2 limes, juiced
- » ½ bunch fresh cilantro, chopped

INSTRUCTIONS

1. In a large saucepot, add 1 Tbsp olive oil and sauté the carrots, celery, peppers, onions and garlic over medium-high heat. Season with 2 tsp sea salt. Once cooked, add to the slow cooker.
2. To the same pot, add puréed tomatoes and diced tomatoes. Bring to a boil and add 1 Tbsp cane sugar, 2 tsp sea salt, ground cumin, chili powder, ground coriander, dried oregano, and bay leaves. Reduce the heat to a simmer and add in kidney beans, black beans and white beans.
3. Add in organic ketchup and Worcestershire sauce. Mix well to thoroughly combine, then add to the slow cooker.
4. Set the slow cooker to HIGH and cook for 6 hours.
5. Before serving, add the lime juice and chopped fresh cilantro. Taste and adjust seasoning as required.



Roasted Spaghetti Squash Rings

This is the only way you will ever roast spaghetti squash again! Slicing the spaghetti squash crosswise into rings helps to keep the strands long and spaghetti-like. It also cuts down the cooking time, which is perfect for busy weeknight meals. Once cooked, gently peel the skin away and separate the "spaghetti" into strands or serve as rings. Enjoy as a nutrient-dense side dish or serve as the base for meat sauce, stewed beans, or chili.

INGREDIENTS

- » 1 large spaghetti squash
- » 1 Tbsp olive oil
- » Sea salt and black pepper to taste

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Preheat the oven to 400°F.
2. Carefully slice the ends of the squash, then cut the squash into 1½ inch rings and remove the seeds. Arrange the rings onto parchment-lined baking sheets.
3. Brush both sides with olive oil and season generously with sea salt and pepper.
4. Roast until caramelised and tender, approximately 30-40 minutes.
5. Allow to cool, then peel the skin away and separate the "spaghetti" like strands using a fork, or serve as rings.
6. Store in an air-tight container in the fridge for up to 3 days.



bhofack2 / Depositphotos.com



SERVES 3-5

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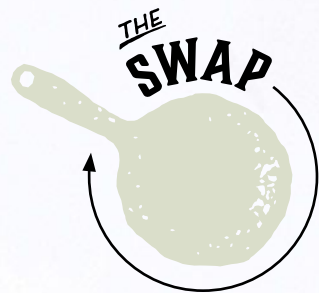
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PASTA VS. ZUCCHINI NOODLES

FOR LASTING ENERGY WITHOUT A HEAVY CRASH

Maria D'Alessandro, RHN

Pasta may be a quick and comforting meal, but it's often made from refined flour that can spike blood sugar and leave you feeling sluggish. While it's filling in the moment, it lacks the fibre and nutrients your body truly needs for lasting energy. A lighter, nutrient-rich option like zucchini noodles offers the same satisfying base for your favourite sauces, without the heavy crash afterward

TRADITIONAL CHOICE:

Traditional pasta is usually made from refined white flour, which means most of the fibre and nutrients have been stripped away during processing. Without that fibre to slow down digestion, the carbohydrates in pasta are quickly broken down into sugar, causing blood sugar levels to rise sharply. This rapid spike is often followed by a crash, leaving you tired, hungry, and craving more carbs, making it a less balanced choice for steady energy and digestive health.

THE SWAP:

Zucchini noodles are a lighter, low-carb alternative that provides hydration, fibre, and vitamins while keeping your blood sugar balanced. Pairing them with nutrient-dense toppings like salmon, pumpkin seeds, and olive oil makes the meal even more powerful. *Salmon* delivers high-quality protein and omega-3 fatty acids to support heart and hormone health, *pumpkin seeds* are rich in magnesium and zinc for energy and immunity, and *olive oil* adds healthy fats that promote satiety and reduce inflammation. Together, these ingredients create a nourishing, satisfying dish that fuels your body without the crash.



A healthier you is just a simple swap away.

etorres69 / Depositphotos.com

HEALTHY ZUCCHINI PASTA

SERVES 2

Ingredients

- » 1 Tbsp extra virgin olive oil
- » 1 red onion (thinly sliced)
- » 1 zucchini (large, spiralized)
- » ½ lemon (juiced, plus extra for garnish)
- » ¼ c pumpkin seeds
- » 1 tsp Italian seasoning
- » 1 Tbsp Maison Orphee dressing
- » 4 oz canned wild salmon (drained and broken into large chunks)

Instructions

1. Heat a pan over medium heat. Add the oil, and once the oil is hot, add the onion and zucchini. Sauté for 2-3 minutes until softened, tossing as it cooks.
2. Before serving, add lemon juice, pumpkin seeds, seasoning, and dressing and toss to combine. Transfer to a serving dish. Add the salmon on top. Garnish with the remaining lemon.

Prep time: 10 minutes
Cook time: 10 minutes

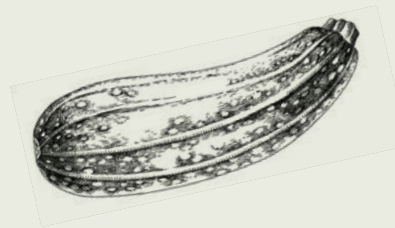
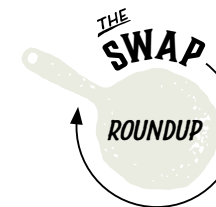


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MAISON ORPHEE Vinaigrette Marinade Olive and Balsamic Dressing

Cold-Pressed

THE FAMILY TABLE

SWEATER WEATHER RECIPES

Dr. Sarah White, ND



SERVES
4



Smoked Sardine Pâté

This smoked sardine pâté is not only delicious but also packed with omega-3 fatty acids, which are essential for heart health and to help reduce inflammation. They are also rich in protein and provide essential vitamins and minerals, including vitamin B12, calcium, and selenium. This pâté makes for a convenient and nutritious snack, especially when paired with toasted sourdough and crudites.

INGREDIENTS

- » 1 can (4 oz) smoked sardines (drained)
- » 2 Tbsp Greek yogurt
- » 1 Tbsp lemon juice
- » 1 Tbsp Dijon mustard
- » ½ tsp chili flakes
- » Small handful of fresh dill
- » 1 Tbsp capers (rinsed and drained)
- » 1 small garlic clove, grated
- » Salt and pepper to taste
- » Toasted sourdough or vegetable sticks for serving

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Drain the sardines and add to a mixing bowl.
2. Add the Greek yogurt, lemon juice, Dijon mustard, chili flakes, dill, capers, and grated garlic. Using a food processor, mix the ingredients together until well combined.
3. Season with salt and pepper to taste, and transfer the mixture to a serving dish. Cover and refrigerate for at least 30 minutes to allow the flavours to combine.
4. Serve with toasted sourdough and or vegetable sticks for serving.



Chicken Lentil Soup WITH CRISPY GARLIC AND SHALLOTS

Chicken lentil soup is a nourishing dish that packs more than 30 g of protein per serving thanks to lentils, chicken, and bone broth. Lentils are also an excellent source of fibre, helping to keep your family full and satisfied. The addition of bone broth not only enhances the soup's flavour but also offers immune-boosting properties, thanks to its rich minerals and collagen content. This comforting and wholesome soup is perfect for chilly days or when you just need a little extra warmth.

SOUP INGREDIENTS

- » 1 Tbsp olive oil
- » 1 medium onion, finely chopped
- » 4 cloves garlic, minced
- » 2 carrots, diced
- » 2 celery stalks, diced
- » 1 c dried green lentils, rinsed
- » 4 c chicken bone broth
- » 1 tsp smoked paprika
- » 1 tsp hot paprika
- » 2 c cooked shredded rotisserie chicken
- » Sea salt and pepper to taste
- » Lemon wedges

CRISPY SHALLOTS & GARLIC INGREDIENTS

- » 2 shallots, thinly sliced
- » 4 garlic cloves, thinly sliced
- » ½ c olive or avocado oil

INSTRUCTIONS

1. To make the chicken lentil soup, heat olive oil in a large pot over medium heat.
 2. Add the chopped onion and cook until translucent, about 5 minutes.
 3. Stir in the minced garlic, diced carrots, and diced celery, cooking for another 3-4 minutes until the vegetables soften.
 4. Add the rinsed lentils, chicken broth, and both paprikas. Bring the soup to a boil, then reduce the heat and simmer for about 25-30 minutes, or until the lentils are tender.
 5. Add the chicken for the last 5 minutes of cooking to heat through.
- While the soup is simmering, prepare the crispy garlic and shallots:
1. In a small pan, heat the oil and add the sliced shallots and garlic, frying until golden and crispy.
 2. Remove from oil, strain, and save for salad dressings. Once the soup is ready, season it with salt and pepper to taste.
- Serve the soup hot, garnished with crispy garlic, shallots, alongside lemon wedges.



SERVES
6



olhaalanasteva / Depositphotos.com

Vegan Beet Truffles Recipe



Beets are not only delicious but also packed with nutrients that promote heart health. Rich in nitrates, they can help lower blood pressure and improve blood flow. When combined with dark chocolate—another source of heart-healthy antioxidants—these sweet beet truffles can help support cardiovascular health. Enjoy these truffles as a nutritious snack or healthy dessert.

INGREDIENTS

- » 1 c cooked beets, cooled
- » 1 c almond flour
- » ½ c cocoa powder
- » ¼ c maple syrup
- » 1 tsp vanilla extract
- » Pinch of salt
- » Cocoa powder or shredded coconut for rolling

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Purée the beets in a food processor.
2. Add the almond flour, cocoa powder, maple syrup, vanilla extract, and a pinch of salt to the food processor with the beets and mix until a smooth and cohesive dough forms.
3. Once the dough is ready, use your hands to form small balls, then roll them in cocoa powder or shredded coconut for a finishing touch.
4. Place the truffles on a parchment-lined tray and refrigerate for at least 30 minutes until firm.

MAKES
12
TRUFFLES



Svetlana_Chermy / Depositphotos.com Illustration (right): vaneevais@gmail.com / Depositphotos.com



Illustration:vaneevais@gmail.com / Depositphotos.com



Umami Beans

Beans are a powerhouse of nutrition, making them a fantastic addition to any meal. Not only are they rich in protein and fibre, but they also support heart health and aid in digestion. This umami beans recipe is incredibly easy to prepare, perfect for a quick weeknight dinner or a hearty side dish. With the savoury combination of shallots, garlic, and anchovies, it elevates the humble bean to a new level of flavour.

INGREDIENTS

- » 2 Tbsp olive oil
- » 2 shallots, finely chopped
- » 2 small anchovy fillets
- » 3 cloves garlic, minced
- » 2 Tbsp tomato paste
- » 2 15-oz cans good-quality mixed beans, drained and rinsed
- » 1 c bone broth
- » Salt and pepper to taste
- » 1 c panko or gluten-free breadcrumbs
- » 1 Tbsp garlic powder
- » ½ c grated Parmesan cheese or nutritional yeast

INSTRUCTIONS

1. To prepare the mixed beans, heat olive oil in a large skillet over medium heat.
2. Add the chopped shallots and anchovy fillets, cooking for another 6-8 minutes until the anchovy cooks down.
3. Stir in the minced garlic and tomato paste, and cook for another 2 minutes, stirring well.
4. Add the drained beans and bone broth, stirring to combine. Season with salt and pepper, and let the mixture simmer for about 10-15 minutes until heated through and slightly thickened.
5. Meanwhile, in a separate pan, toast the breadcrumbs in a bit of olive oil with garlic powder until golden brown, then mix in the grated Parmesan or nutritional yeast.
6. Once the beans are ready, transfer them to a serving dish, top with the garlicky breadcrumbs, and garnish with additional Parmesan or nutritional yeast.

Enjoy this savoury dish as a hearty side or a main course.



zkruger / Depositphotos.com

SERVES
6
AS A
SIDE



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DID YOU KNOW?

Flaxseed

From Founder Crop to Functional Food

Melody Maier, CNP



Kruchenkova / Depositphotos.com

Flax seeds are tiny, flat seeds in shades of golden brown. Their mild, nutty flavour resembles walnuts, and a subtle earthiness suits both sweet and savoury foods. The flax plant is one of eight founder crops, which are the first plants domesticated by humans for agriculture. These early crops supported the shift from hunter-gatherers to farmers. Throughout history, this crop has provided fibre for linen and rope, oil for cooking and lamps, and seed for animal feed and human consumption. Flaxseed is still prominent today for both its versatility and health benefits.

HEALTH BENEFITS

Gentle Hormone Support

Significant research tells us that flaxseed has the potential to support hormone health, particularly in conditions like PCOS, hot flashes, and even estrogen-dominant cancers.¹ In a study of more than 6,000 women, those who consumed flaxseed were 18 percent less likely to develop breast cancer.² This hormone-balancing effect comes from fibre and lignans—plant compounds that have a gentle estrogenic effect.

Lignans bind to estrogen receptors and reduce the effect of stronger or harmful estrogens, including *xenoestrogens* from plastics, pesticides and certain personal care products.³ Flaxseed is the best-known source of lignans, though smaller amounts are also found in other seeds, grains, and legumes.⁴

Heart Healthy

Flaxseed is one of the best plant sources of alpha-linolenic acid (ALA). ALA converts to omega-3 in the body and has potent anti-inflammatory effects that help lower cholesterol and support heart health, reducing the risk of stroke, blood clots, and cardiac arrest.⁵

Flaxseed can be eaten whole, but its nutrients are best absorbed when ground. For freshness, grind small batches in a coffee grinder and store them in the fridge. If they begin to taste bitter instead of nutty, the delicate fats have gone rancid, and it's time for a new batch.

For references visit ecoparent.ca/ELV/LWIN26

Banana Flax Muffins

These wholesome banana flax muffins are naturally sweet, soft, and satiating. Ground flaxseed adds fibre for digestion, heart-healthy fats, and hormone-supporting lignans. It's a classic healthy snack to keep on hand.

SERVES 12

INGREDIENTS

- » ¼ c ground flaxseed
- » ¾ c water
- » 2 c all-purpose flour
- » 1 tsp baking soda
- » ½ tsp salt
- » 3 ripe bananas
- » ⅓ c brown sugar
- » ⅓ c olive oil
- » ¼ c milk of choice
- » 1 tsp vanilla extract
- » *Optional:* ⅓ c mini chocolate chips

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Preheat your oven to 350°F. Grease a muffin tin with olive oil.
2. In a small bowl, mix flax meal with water and allow it to sit for 10 minutes until a gel-like consistency has formed.
3. In a large mixing bowl, combine flour, baking soda, and salt.
4. In a separate bowl, mash the bananas with a fork until smooth. Add the sugar, olive oil, milk of choice, vanilla extract and flax gel. Mix well.
5. Add the wet ingredients to the bowl with the dry ingredients and mix until combined.
6. Distribute the mixture evenly into the muffin tins. Bake for 25 minutes, or until a toothpick can be inserted and removed clean.
7. Let the muffins cool for 30 minutes before removing and serving. 🍌

DID YOU KNOW? Roundup

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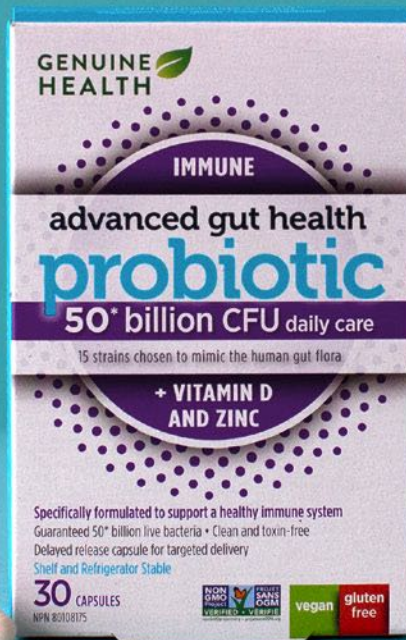
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