

GOOD NEWS



Mended Hearts—Houston Chapter 38, CHI Baylor St. Luke's Medical Center

Cinnamon and blood sugar



**Mended Hearts
Houston:
832.355.4160**

Researchers are studying the spice cinnamon to see if it helps control blood sugar, as folk treatments suggest.

A review of 11 trials of cinnamon supplements in people with type 2 diabetes found that people using the supplements -- while taking prescribed diabetes medications -- showed some small improvement in blood sugar levels.

However, researchers stress the findings

are not conclusive since other factors, such as exercise, cinnamon quality, and adherence to medications were often not accounted for.

The researchers concluded that the spice deserved more research but stressed that there is no evidence that cinnamon alone can control type 2 diabetes. Diabetes medications are essential.

The review was published in the Journal of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics.

Ever been told you should write a book? Now's the time

The lights come up. Music from the orchestra swells and, as the curtain rises, an actor begins speaking as the epic Autobiography of You begins.

Why not?

Unlike journaling which is typically focused on the present, a memoir or an autobiography takes a sweeping look at one's life. A life with joy, undoubtedly struggle, surely pain, but maybe an end in triumph?

Will you be, as writer Charles Dickens once wrote, the hero of your own life?

You don't have to write your life's story for anyone but yourself but it could be written for family, friends, or even the world.

Writing for just yourself could help you clarify the events of your life, maybe admit wrongs, perhaps tell your side of a story. According to the Wall Street Journal, it could even be a catalyst for the rest of your life; a chronicle of how the past brought you to the present. It could be used to change the direction for the future.

Research has shown that the act of writing about past trauma or other



stressful events can lessen depression, lower stress, improve mental function, and even help build the immune system. To recount an event, we have to break it down into smaller chunks and look at how one occasion led to another to produce the problems. This helps provide structure and organization to an

otherwise frazzled memory. As many memories are just visuals, using words to describe what we are seeing can make our memories less abstract or confusing. Ultimately, the goal is to reveal those memories in a more positive light and let them be processed and laid to rest.

You do not need writing experience to create a narrative of your life. According to Psychology Today, the challenge is getting the story to reveal itself. Even if a person's life doesn't seem to be particularly exciting or thought-provoking, everyone remembers things differently and telling the story will let them know which part of the memory was most important to them. Finding meaning in the past is a great way to help believe in one's personal value, confess mistakes, and pass on lessons to children and future generations.

More precious than diamonds: The rarest blood in the world

Suppose in one room we gathered Duffy, Kidd, Diego, Lutheran, Langereis, Vel, and Junior.

This would constitute a most extraordinary meeting because these are the names of the rarest blood types ever identified. Only 550 people in the world have Lutheran blood, for example.

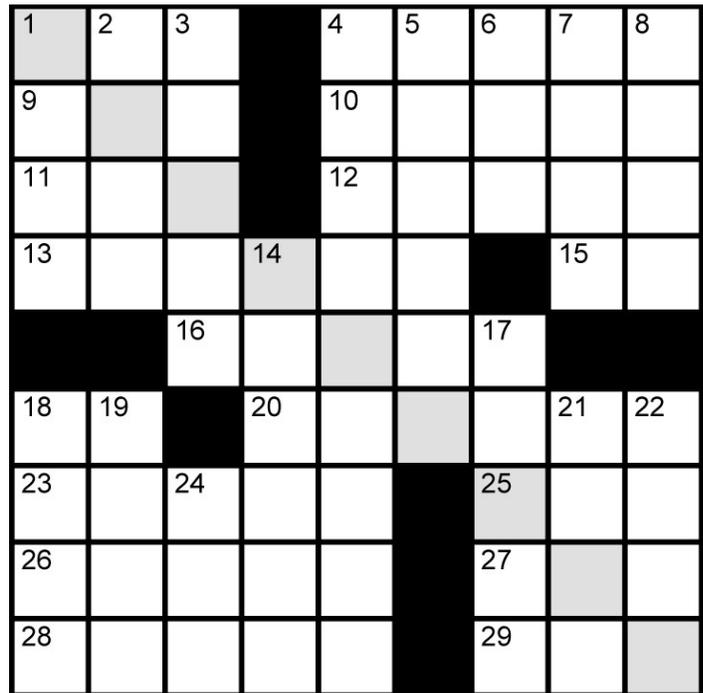
But if in that meeting we included a man named Thomas from Switzerland, you would have the rarest meeting in the history of the earth.

There's no engaging name for Thomas' blood, except insofar as some have called it 'golden.' His blood is RH-null and it is so extraordinary that, of the 7.5 billion people in the world, only 43 have ever been identified as having it and only nine are active blood donors today.

Most people know there are eight blood types: A, B, AB, and O, positive or negative. But each of these blood types can be divided into distinct varieties depending on which antigens the blood contains or doesn't contain. AB blood has A and B antigens. O blood doesn't have either. Positive blood contains the Rh D antigen; negative blood lacks it. But there are hundreds of antigens coating the blood, making perhaps

Small orange-like fruit

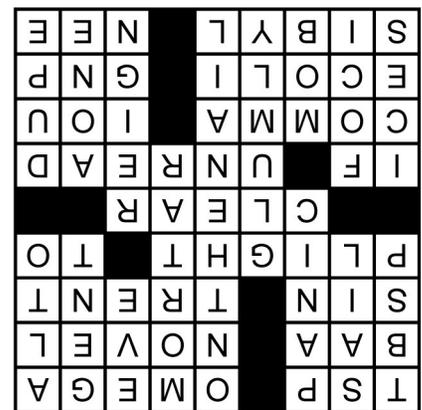
- Across
1. Recipe amt.
 4. Finale
 9. Call to Bo-peep
 10. Unusual
 11. Break a commandment
 12. 1545 council site
 13. Pickle
 15. Gift tag word
 16. Cloudless
 18. Kipling poem
 20. Still on the shelf, maybe
 23. Punctuation mark
 25. Chit
 26. Dangerous bacteria
 27. Econ. indicator
 28. Fortune teller
 29. Born as



- Down
1. Recipe abbr.
 2. Breeze (through)
 3. Pre-exam feeling, maybe
 4. Exact or very accurate
 5. Pestle's partner
 6. "The Three Faces of ___"
 7. Lady's escort
 8. Kind of sax
 14. In a melancholy manner
 17. Despot's duration
 18. Clinches

19. Central points
21. Excellent
22. Fool
24. Unruly crowd

The headline is a clue to the answer in the diagonal.



millions of combinations, according to Smithsonian.

It's important to know the antigen profile of blood because, if the wrong antigen combination is transfused, a patient can die. Even so, doctors do millions of transfusions every day with few complications.

But golden blood is unique, and that is an understatement. Rh-null has no antigens. It can be accepted by anyone with a rare blood type in the RH system and that makes it infinitely precious. It is so precious that it is never used except under the most extreme circumstances. The flip side is that a person with RH-null blood can only accept RH-null blood. That means Thomas of Switzerland should never find himself in the position of needing a blood transfusion. If he does, he should certainly not find himself in a remote part of the world. This rare blood can be provided if the tiny number of donors are available, but it requires an international mobilization of blood providers to do it. Much would depend on timing and Thomas' location.

In 2014, Thomas told Mosaic Science that he drives carefully, never speeds, and doesn't take vacations to exotic locales. But he does ski.

Resolutions: Try something new!

Everyone resolves to lose weight and stop procrastinating. Why stick with the obvious? Here are some resolutions that will make 2018 a little more interesting.

1 Master some jokes.

Try to find a selection of one-liners that will work in a variety of situations. Find a longish joke that will be suitable to tell at lunch with a friend.

2 Learn a useful phrase in three languages.

If you want laughs, learn something silly. With one resolution, you tick off 'learn something new.' Done.

3 Learn to juggle.

Instead of vowing to improve balance and get exercise, learn to juggle. You'll get both. And a party trick.

4 Give yourself a big win.

Only 8 percent of resolvers keep their resolutions. For the big win, resolve something that you have a good chance of accomplishing:

- Always drink beer during a football game. If you break this resolution, you've probably quit drinking. Win.
- Spend more money on fun. If you break this resolution, you are saving more money.
- Never buy another organizational basket. So, if you do break down, you are getting organized.
- Never become a circus acrobat. Unless you are one now, this is a resolution you can keep.



T MacKenzie, US Fish and Wildlife

Where are the parrots?

The beautiful and endangered Puerto Rican parrot should begin nesting this month in tree cavities throughout the El Yunque National Forest.

Except the forest is bare.

After two devastating hurricanes, the El Yunque forest of Puerto Rico is denuded of its canopy and, most ominously, it is silent.

No bird calls echo through the forest and none of the characteristic shrieks of the native Puerto Rican parrot.

The parrot, called iguaca, is found only in Puerto Rico. Once a million strong, by 1973 only a dozen parrots remained. Captive breeding programs have brought the numbers up to 500, more than half in the wild. An elaborate hurricane protection program saved 230 captive birds. But the double punch of two hurricanes in 2017, have left researchers wondering about the fate of the wild population.

Did they go elsewhere? Were they killed? And if they lived, where will they nest?

Since the storm, researchers have identified about 80 parrots, foraging for royal palm fruits, the last remaining of the scarce vegetation.

Some evidence hints that wild birds may have traveled away from the storm. One parrot was spotted miles away from the forest.

A few individuals were found dead.

What survivors there are will have to make a living in a forest without cover, at risk of attack by hawks. Artificial tree cavities are largely gone and trees are knocked down all over the forest.

Researchers fear an entire generation of parrots may be lost to the storms.

Gentle Yoga Sit and Stretch

Neck Roll

If you spend time sitting at a desk or just lounging, this warmup pose feels so good. (But don't do it if you have a neck or cervical spine injury.)

Sit straight in your chair. Look up to the ceiling and hold. Roll your head down to the ground and hold. Bring your left ear down to your left shoulder and hold. Then roll your head right and hold.



Celebrating Survivors

Having the chance to celebrate a second chance at life is often a sentiment we hear from members after a heart event, procedure or surgery. If you have experienced a heart attack, you now have the opportunity to share your story in a newly-launched essay contest that focuses on survivorship after a heart attack.

To find out more about the essay contest you can visit the Mended Hearts homepage, or go to <http://www.survivorshaveheart.com/direct/astrazeneca>



Bob Harper, celebrity personal trainer, author and heart attack survivor, has teamed up with one of our corporate partners, AstraZeneca, to help people like him who have experienced a heart attack share their stories through an essay contest, to educate and inspire others. Those who have had a heart attack in the past three years may submit an essay of 500 words or less about their experience and recovery.

Please consider the questions provided in the contest criteria (found on the contest website) to guide you in writing your story. Five stories from heart attack survivors will be chosen; those selected, along with a caregiver of his/her choice, will travel to New York City in February to be inducted into a heart attack survivor's network. Essays must be submitted by January 15th and must not mention any specific medication or company name.

This essay contest is the kick-off of Mended Hearts' year-long heart attack awareness and educational program, including an educational session at the national conference in San Antonio. Celebrate survivorship throughout the year in your regular meetings and social gatherings.

Mended Little Hearts 2018 #RockYourScar Photo Contest

CHD warriors of ALL ages, show us how you embrace your CHD!

The Rock Your Scar 2018 photo contest and national CHD Awareness campaign starts on January 2, 2018 and ends on January 30, 2018. A scar is not required, but being a person who has congenital heart disease is.



Please only submit one photo, do not write on your photo and/or use a filter, and make sure any professional photos credit the photographer appropriately. Photos are judged for creativity, quality, and demonstration of the theme of embracing your CHD. While EVERYONE is a real winner, we will be selecting winners for each age category who will be announced during CHD Awareness Week, February 7-14. Adult age categories include 18-25; 26-39; 40+. All winners will receive a gift card and other fun prizes.

Visit www.Mendedhearts.org on January 2 to find a link to the contest.

Medication News

Important news regarding certain heart disease medications: Earlier this month letters were sent to some heart disease patients and providers from Aetna indicating that XARELTO® would not be a Preferred Brand in 2018. (A preferred brand-name drug is one that is listed on an insurance plan's formulary or preferred list of prescription drugs. Such drugs may cost plan participants less than non-preferred brands.)

This decision has been reversed, thus both XARELTO® and Eliquis® will be in a Preferred Brand position across all of Aetna's Part D formularies. Mended Hearts has confirmed that Aetna will list both XARELTO® and Eliquis® as Preferred Brands on the Aetna & Coventry First Health Medicare 2018 Formularies. We are aware that there has been some confusion about this, thus we are clarifying this issue via today's communication.

The Aetna Medicare online formulary will be updated shortly to reflect the 2018 formulary changes. (Note that Mended Hearts does not endorse any specific product, but rather provides this information to dispel any confusion that patients or providers may have.) Please talk with your health care provider if you have any additional questions or need clarification for your prescription.

Mended Hearts, Inc. – Chapter #38 – Houston, TX

Membership Application



It's great to be alive,
and to help others.

Contact Information

Name (Mr./Mrs./Ms.)	
Street Address	
City ST ZIP Code	
Home Phone	
Email Address	
Birthdate	

Confidential Medical Information for the Mended Hearts National Database

Check all procedures or treatments that are applicable.

<input type="checkbox"/> Pacemaker	<input type="checkbox"/> Aneurysm	<input type="checkbox"/> MI	<input type="checkbox"/> Congestive Heart Failure
<input type="checkbox"/> Defibrillator	<input type="checkbox"/> Bypass	<input type="checkbox"/> PTCA	<input type="checkbox"/> Transplant
<input type="checkbox"/> Artrial Septal Defect	<input type="checkbox"/> Valve	<input type="checkbox"/> Stent	<input type="checkbox"/> Other _____

Date(s) of Procedures(s): _____ Surgeon: _____ Hospital: _____

Do you agree to allow Mended Hearts to publish your name and procedure anniversary in the Chapter Newsletter? Yes ___ No ___

Signature _____ Are you retired? Yes ___ No ___

Name of Spouse (if family membership) _____ Spouse Birthdate: _____

Are you interested in: Committee work ___; Hospital Visiting ___; Other (specify): _____

Membership Dues (National and Chapter)

Term:	Individual:	Family:
First year only	<input type="checkbox"/> \$25 (\$20 National + \$5 Chapter)	<input type="checkbox"/> \$38 (\$30 National + \$8 Chapter)
Renewal (billed by National)	<input type="checkbox"/> \$25 (\$20 National + \$5 Chapter)	<input type="checkbox"/> \$38 (\$30 National + \$8 Chapter)
Lifetime Membership	<input type="checkbox"/> \$200 (\$150 National + \$50 Chapter)	<input type="checkbox"/> \$285 (\$210 National + \$75 Chapter)

Please make checks payable to: Mended Hearts, Inc. and mail to:

Membership Chair
Mended Hearts, Inc., Chapter #38
6720 Bertner Ave., 1-132
Houston, TX 77030

Satellite Sites

- speakers of interest to heart patients, families and caregivers
- members, guests, and spouses are welcome
- free and open to the public

BAYSHORE

Bayshore Medical Center
4000 Spencer Highway
Pasadena, Texas

*Cardiac Rehab Classroom,
Lower Level
10 a.m., second Wednesday
Cecil Ghormley, 713.253.8263*

HEIGHTS

Memorial Hermann
Greater Heights Hospital
1635 North Loop West
Houston, Texas

*South Tower, classrooms B & E
6 p.m., second Tuesday
Jeanne Miller, 713.686.8926*

MEMORIAL CITY

Memorial Hermann
Memorial City Hospital
921 Gessner Road
Houston, Texas

*Main Conference Room
6 p.m., fourth Tuesday
Earl Vanzant, 713.782.8006*

CLEAR LAKE

Clear Lake Regional Medical
Center 495 Medical Center Blvd.
Webster, Texas

*Towers Auditorium,
Clear Lake Heart
6:30 p.m., second Monday
Barbara Vermillion, 281.538.4648*

WILLOWBROOK

Methodist Willowbrook Hospital
18220 State Highway 249
Houston, Texas

*Aspen Room,
Women & Children's Pavilion, first floor
6 p.m., third Tuesday
Jerry Koudelka, 281.858.4060*

Houston
832.355.4160

national

mendedhearts.org, 1.888.432.7899