

THE NATURAL PATH

Your Guide to Good Health & Vitality
Cutting Edge Research Made Easy

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The Natural Dentist

You Don't Hear Much about
Natural Health for Your Teeth



Happy New Year!

Here's a helpful guide to your New Year's Resolutions!

Quit Drinking

A new review of the research suggests that alcohol can be harmful to your health at much lower amounts than previously thought. The Canadian Centre on Substance Use and Addiction reviewed more than 5,000 studies and found that 3-6 drinks per week increases the risk of cancer, and more than 7 increases the risk of heart disease and stroke. Small amounts of alcohol neither harm nor benefit the heart, but more increases the risk of coronary artery disease, heart attacks, heart failure, high blood pressure, atrial fibrillation and stroke.

Alcohol was found to have a negative impact for most of the diseases reviewed, including several kinds of cancer, heart disease and liver cirrhosis. For men, the dangers go off the cliff at 6 or more drinks; for women at 3 or more. 2 drinks a week or less may have a lower, more negligible effect.

7 Tips for Cutting Back

1. Alkalinize your body by focussing on vegetarian foods. And drink lots of water and herbal teas.

2. Stabilize your blood sugar by reducing sugar and refined carbs while increasing complex carbs. Following that menu and eliminating caffeine reduces cravings for alcohol and increases chances of success at quitting

LOOK INSIDE

- Olive Leaf Extract: A Herb for Our Time
- Berberine Beats Diabetes
- Lemon Verbena Helps You to Sleep

Cavities

Regularly drinking green tea, or even just rinsing your mouth with it, leads to fewer cavities (*Nutrition* 2002). Theaflavins are flavonoid antioxidants found in black tea. You might also want to find them in your toothpaste. When adults brushed their teeth with toothpaste with or without added theaflavins, saliva samples showed that the toothpaste with theaflavins significantly increased bacteria associated with oral health and significantly decreased harmful oral pathogens (3 *Biotech* 2021 Mar;11(3):150). Drinking black tea inhibits the growth of bacteria that causes cavities. It also prevents the bacteria from adhering to your teeth. The people in the study used the tea as a rinse (*American Society for Microbiology*, May 24, 2001).

Canadian research has also shown that there is an association between low levels of vitamin D and cavities (*J Dent Res* 2016;95:173-9).

Children benefit when their mothers take calcium while pregnant. Children whose mothers supplemented calcium during pregnancy had a 27% reduced risk of having a cavity, missing or filled tooth (*Acta Obstet Gynecol Scand* 2010;89:1396-402). And chewing gum helps: if it's xylitol chewing gum (*Acta Odontol Scand* 1994;52:116-27). Children who chew gum containing xylitol for 5 minutes 5 times a day for 2 years have large reductions in cavities compared with those not chewing the gum (*Am J Dent* 1996;9:184-90). And when 204 children with a high risk of cavities were given gum with or without xylitol for 6 months, the xylitol provided significant long-term protection against cavities (*Clin Oral Investig* 2013;17:785-91).

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Lifesaver: Black Seed & Vitamin D Versus COVID

120 people with mild to moderate COVID were given standard therapy alone or with the addition of 900mg of black seed and a low 2000IU dose of vitamin D. The black seed and D group recovered from cough, fatigue, headache, runny nose, fever and difficulty breathing faster. Most importantly, the number of people testing negative on a PCR test after 7 and 14 days was significantly higher than in the control group. Those on black seed and vitamin D were 83% less likely to be positive after 7 days and 91% less likely after 14 (*Front Pharmacol.* 2022; 13: 1011522).



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Aloe vera can be used as an antiseptic for preventing cavities (*J Oral Sci* 2012;54:15-21).

Research has also found that probiotics prevent cavities (*Curr Pharm Des* 2012;18:5522-31). A double-blind study of children found that probiotics taken for 7 months reduced cavities by 49% compared to placebo (*Caries Res* 2001;35:412-420). A second study found that supplementing probiotics during the last month of pregnancy and continuing to give them to infants for the first year results in significantly fewer kids with cavities at 9 years of age (*Caries Res* 2014;48:111-7). In a double-blind study of children aged 1-6, supplementation with probiotics for 7 months reduced the incidence of cavities by 49% (*Caries Res* 2001;35:412-420).

Gingivitis

Gingivitis refers to inflammation and bleeding of the gums. If it progresses to periodontitis, then you could experience loose teeth, pain, dental pockets, swelling and even bone destruction. Recent evidence is increasingly suggesting that periodontitis is associated with cardiovascular disease, diabetes, Alzheimer's and Parkinson's disease.

Coenzyme Q10 deficiency may be involved in gingivitis (*Int J Vitam Nutr Res* 1973;43:84-92). Carl Folkers, the world's leading CoQ10 researcher, has shown that CoQ10 significantly improves periodontal pocket depth and tooth mobility (Folkers 1981). Folkers conducted a review of 7 studies of periodontal disease that found that 70% of people responded favourably to CoQ10 (Folkers 1977). Double-blind research shows that 50mg of CoQ10 a day for 3 weeks is significantly better than a placebo at reducing symptoms of gingivitis (*Res Commun Chem Pathol Pharmacol* 1976;14:715-9).

When people with periodontal disease who consume low amounts of vitamin C are supplemented with just 70mg of vitamin C a day, periodontal disease improves in only 6 weeks (*Int J Vitam Nutr Res* 1982;52:333-41). A systematic review of 14 studies found that higher vitamin C intake and blood levels are associated with less periodontal disease and less progression of periodontal disease. It also found that taking vitamin C improves bleeding of the gums in gingivitis but not in the more advanced periodontitis (*Int J Environ Res Public Health* 2019;16(14)).

Green tea is a veritable herbal dentist. Several studies have shown green tea, or green tea flavonoids, prevent periodontal disease (*Carries Res* 1991; *Biosci Biothechnol Biochem* 1996; *J Periodontal Res* 2002). Epidemiological studies show that green tea protects

against periodontal disease and tooth loss (*Prev Med* 2010).

When people rinsed their mouths for 1 minute twice a day with either a placebo mouthwash or a mouthwash containing 2% green tea, at the end of 4 weeks, there was a significant reduction in plaque and gingivitis with the green tea but not the placebo mouthwash (*Oral Health Prev Dent* 2015;doi:10.3290/j.ohpd.a33447).

As the results with green tea show, flavonoids are valuable for natural dentistry. Pine bark extract is a rich source of proanthocyanidin flavonoids. Double-blind research shows that chewing 6 pieces of gum with 5mg of pine bark extract in each lessens gum bleeding and stops plaque formation versus placebo (*Phytomedicine* 2002;9:410-3).

Probiotics also improve periodontitis (*J Clin Periodontology* 2016;doi: 10.1111/jcpe.12545). A meta-analysis included 3 studies comparing conventional treatment to the same treatment plus probiotics. It found that adding probiotics works better than conventional treatment alone. People who took probiotics had significantly greater improvement in the support and stability of the tooth as measured by clinical attachment level and bleeding upon probing: both markers of periodontitis. They also had significantly greater improvement in pocket depth when the pockets were moderate or deep (*Journal of Clinical Periodontology* 2016;43(6):520-30).

People with the highest levels of vitamin D have 30% less incidence of gingivitis and are a significant 20% less likely to bleed when their gums are probed, suggesting reduced susceptibility to gingivitis (*AJCN* 2005;82:575-80). Vitamin D helps the more advanced periodontal disease: people with the highest levels of vitamin D experience less bone loss (*J Periodontol* 2009).

Several studies show that folic acid is beneficial (*J Clin Periodontol* 1980, 1982). One double-blind study found that 4mg of folic acid for 30 days increases resistance of the gums to local irritants, leading to a reduction in inflammation (*J Periodontol* 1976;47:667-8). Perhaps even better is rinsing with a folic acid solution. Folic acid rinses have been shown in double-blind studies to reduce gum inflammation and bleeding in people with gingivitis (*J Oral Med* 1978;33:20-2; *J Clin Periodontol* 1984;11:619-28).

Neem is a traditional herb for cleaning teeth. Modern research supports its use. Neem leaf gel is as good (*Int Dent J* 2004;54:219-23) or better than chlorhexidine at reducing plaque and bacteria (*J Ethnopharmacol* 2004;90:99-103). Chlorhexidine is a pharmaceutical oral rinse used for treating gingivitis.

When 134 people were given either a placebo or aged garlic extract for 4 months, there was a significantly greater decrease in gingivitis and bleeding gums in the garlic group (*J Clin Dent* 2018;29(2):52-56). A recent 18 month study looked at people with the more advanced periodontitis. At the beginning of the study, the people in the garlic group had an average pocket depth value

of 1.89. At the end of the study, it had significantly shrunk to a value of 1.06. The control group only saw improvement to 1.50 (*J Clin Biochem Nutr* 2020;67(3):297-301).

A study of 3,028 people over the age of 30 discovered that people who get the most magnesium are a significant 31-35% less likely to get periodontitis. Both dietary magnesium and supplemental magnesium reduce the risk. The data suggests getting a minimum of 500mg a day (*Front Nutr.* 2022;9:976518).

Aloe vera can be used as an antiseptic for preventing periodontal disease (*J Oral Sci* 2012;54:15-21). When 345 people were given 10ml of aloe vera juice for 30 days, it was as effective as chlorhexidine in decreasing plaque and gingivitis. The researchers concluded that the results favour aloe as a safe alternative to chlorhexidine (*Oral Health Dent Manag* 2014;13:14-19). When people swish chlorhexidine or 100% pure aloe vera juice 4 times a day for 4 days, both significantly reduce plaque, but the aloe is safer (*Ethiop J Health Sci* 2014;24:139-44).

And here's one you've never heard of. The herb holy basil has been shown in triple-blind research to be as effective a mouthwash as chlorhexidine at reducing plaque and gingivitis. Both significantly reduce gingival bleeding and plaque (*J Ayurveda Integr Med* 2014;5:109-16).

Wisdom Teeth

The most common reason for oral surgery is having your wisdom teeth removed. Removing impacted wisdom teeth is a painful procedure that causes pain, swelling and inflammation and even lockjaw.

A convincing body of research shows that serrapeptase is an effective natural treatment for wisdom tooth extraction. Compared to placebo, serrapeptase significantly reduces both pain and swelling (*Int J Oral Maxillofac Surg* 2008;37(3):264-8). Other double-blind studies verify that result. Though not quite as effective as the powerful, side-effect laden steroids, serrapeptase acts effectively as a pain killer. And it is superior for both swelling and lockjaw (*Indian J Dent Res* 2012;23:709-13; *J Clin Exp Dent* 2015; 7(2): e197- e202). Most recently, a systematic review and meta-analysis of 5 double-blind studies that compared serrapeptase to drugs, including corticosteroids, revealed that serrapeptase is far superior to corticosteroids for lockjaw and equally effective for swelling. The researchers concluded that serrapeptase "could be used safely and effectively to improve trismus [lockjaw] and facial swelling after surgical removal of impacted molar" (*J Maxillofac Oral Surg* 2018;17(2):122-128). These results take on even greater practical importance when you compare the safety profiles of the two treatments.

SPOTLIGHT: A Herb for Our Time

With the triple threat of COVID, RSV and influenza overwhelming public health, maybe olive leaf extract should be more in the spotlight because it fights all three.

Upper Respiratory Tract Infections

A relatively new discovery about olive leaf extract is that it may help the immune system.

Phenolic compounds in olive leaf are antibacterial, antiviral, antioxidant and anti-inflammatory.

In what may be the first study of olive leaf extract on immunity, high school athletes were given either olive leaf extract or a placebo for 9 weeks during their competitive season. The olive leaf extract made no difference for how often they got upper respiratory illnesses.

But, when they did get sick, there was a significant 28% reduction in the number of days they were sick. The placebo group took 12.3 days to get better; the olive leaf group took only 9.7 (*Nutrients* 2019 Feb; 11(2): 358).

Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV)

Cases of kids with respiratory syncytial

virus, or RSV, are surging in the US and Canada. Importantly, that same study found something else. The olive leaf also improved patients infected with RSV.

COVID

One of the most important phenolic compounds in olives is oleuropein. Molecular studies have shown that oleuropein binds to ACE-2 receptors, preventing the spike of the COVID virus from binding to your cells, preventing entry. It also inhibits the main protease of the COVID virus, preventing replication.

The laboratory studies were promising, so researchers put olive leaf extract to the test.

The triple-blind study included 141 people who were hospitalized with confirmed COVID and imaging consistent with COVID pneumonia.

The people in the study were between 18 and 72, and the average age was 48.88. All of them were on standard care. One group was given a placebo, one group was given 250mg of olive leaf extract and one group was given 500mg of olive leaf extract. They all took their pills twice a day for 5 days. The olive leaf extract was standardized for 30% oleuropein.

The two doses of olive leaf extract were equally effective, and both were significantly

better than placebo. On the fifth day of hospitalization, body temperature, pulse rate and respiratory rate and oxygen saturation were all significantly better in the olive leaf extract groups than in the placebo group. Inflammation, as measured by C-reactive protein and erythrocyte sedimentation rate, was also significantly better in the olive leaf groups.

Importantly, length of hospitalization was significantly shorter in the olive leaf extract groups.

The olive leaf extract was safe with no one having an adverse reaction (*Explore (NY)*. 2022 Oct 29;doi:10.1016/j.explore.2022.10.020).

These two new studies offer olive leaf extract as a herb for our time with promise of helping to treat the triple threat of influenza, RSV and COVID.



NATURAL PATH NEWSFLASH



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Berberine Beats Diabetes

Last year, a meta-analysis of 46 studies on diabetes and prediabetes concluded that berberine significantly lowers HbA1c, fasting blood glucose and blood glucose after eating. HbA1c is the most important marker of long term blood sugar and diabetes control (*Oxid Med Cell Longev*. 2021; 2021: 2074610).

Now a new meta-analysis of 37 controlled studies of type II diabetics has added to that evidence.

Like the first study, this one found that berberine significantly reduced HbA1c and blood sugar after eating. The berberine was safe.

Berberine is the active ingredient in important herbs like goldenseal.

Front Pharmacol. 2022;13:1015045

Lemon Verbena: Good Night!

There is a long tradition of using lemon verbena as a relaxing herb that helps you sleep. A new study validates the tradition.

40 stressed out people were given either 400mg a day of lemon verbena, standardized to 28% phenylpropanoids, or a placebo.

The lemon verbena group had significantly reduced perception of stress and improved sleep.

They had significant improvement in how often they woke up during the night and the amount of time spent in deep sleep and REM sleep. The placebo produced no improvement, and the difference in improved REM sleep was significant.

Lemon verbena worked especially well for women.

Nutrients 2022;14(1):218



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(*J Am Diet Assoc* 1991;91:463-66). Huge success has also been achieved by a similar program that also eliminated coffee, junk food and dairy (*Int J Biosoc Res* 1983;4:5-18). Chromium may help too.

3. Exercise more (*J Stud Alcohol* 1982;43:380-66).

4. Supplementing L-glutamine shows promise in decreasing the desire to drink (*Q J Stud Alcohol* 1957;18:581-87).

5. B vitamins are often deficient in alcoholics. Supplementing B vitamins, especially B1 and B3, may help alcoholics reduce their drinking.

6. Perhaps the most exciting supplement for cutting back on drinking is the herb kudzu. Heavy drinkers who supplement kudzu drink significantly less (*Alcohol Clin Exp Res* 2005;29:756-62; *Psychopharmacol* 2013;226:65-73). The kudzu is sometimes standardized for isoflavones, and it may be the isoflavone puerarin that is doing a lot of the work (*Drug Alcohol Depend* 2012;126(1-2):251-6).

7. The herb skullcap can help with alcohol withdrawal.

Quit Smoking

Nicotine is addictive: it is one of the most difficult addictions to quit. But it is also one of the most beneficial to quit, since smoking is the number one cause of death in North America. Smoking leads to heart disease and cancer, but it also contributes to depression, bone loss, hair loss, wrinkles and to losing your teeth.

Quitting is hard. But nature can help.

7 Tips to Help You Quit

1. Once again, alkalinize your diet.

2. Suck a lime. Sounds strange, but research shows that sucking a lime and chewing the skin whenever you feel a craving is as effective, but much better tolerated, than chewing nicotine gum (*J Med Assoc Thai* 2012;95:S76-82).

3. Have a cup of tea. At least 2 studies have shown that replacing cigarette filters with green tea filters containing the active ingredient theanine can reduce smoking by 56.5%. It helped 31.7% of smokers to quit and a further 13.9% to go from 14 cigarettes a day to just 1-5.

A second study that included long time smokers with strong cravings found a 91% cut back in smoking after 3 months. Daily cigarettes dropped

from an average of over 24 a day to just 3 (*Sci China Life Sci* 2010;53:533-41). So give green tea or theanine a try.

4. Supplement essential fatty acids. Double-blind research has shown that taking EPA and DHA omega-3 fatty acids can significantly reduce cravings for nicotine and reduce cigarette smoking by 11% (*J Psychopharmacol* 2014;28:804-9).

Further research has supported the ability of omega-3 EFAs to significantly reduce nicotine cravings (*Eur Addict Res* 2016;22:153-62).

5. Increase your serotonin. Adding tryptophan to a high carbohydrate diet helps people to smoke fewer cigarettes while reducing withdrawal symptoms like anxiety (*J Behav Med* 1991;14:97-110).

Since tryptophan works because it increases serotonin, and 5-HTP is more effective at increasing serotonin, 5-HTP may work even better.

Another supplement that helps with serotonin is the famous antidepressant herb St. John's wort. When 24 people who averaged 20 cigarettes a day for the past 22 years were given 900mg of St. John's wort a day, 54% had successfully quit at the 3 week mark. 37% were still cigarette free after 12 weeks (*Complement Ther Med* 2006;14(3):175-84).

6. Give up other potentially addictive substances like alcohol, caffeine and sugar. That might help since they can increase the desire to smoke.

7. The herbs lobelia and oats may also help.

Make Your Diet Healthier

First the bad news: junk food kills your brain.

A massive Brazilian study followed over 10,000 people whose average age was 51 for up to 10 years. It looked at the effect of eating ultraprocessed foods like hot dogs, sausages, burgers, French fries, sodas, cookies, cakes, candy, and doughnuts. It found that the people who ate more than 20% of their calories from ultraprocessed foods had a 28% faster rate of decline in global cognition and a 25% faster decline in cognitive functioning.

But it gets worse because our diet is worse. Brazilians get about 25%-30% of their calories from ultraprocessed foods. But Canadians get 48% and Americans get 58%.

The study was presented on December 5 at the 2022 Alzheimer's Association International Conference.

Now the good news: variations of the Mediterranean diet.

You already knew the Mediterranean diet was good for you. The Mediterranean diet is rich in fruits, vegetables, grains, nuts, seeds, legumes, olive oil. It is moderate in fish, and very low in red meat, sugar and saturated fats. It has been shown to be good for virtually everything, including cardiovascular health, cognitive health, Parkinson's disease, breast and prostate cancer, weight management and mental health.

But here's something new. There are new variations on the Mediterranean diet. The MIND diet combines the Mediterranean diet with the high blood pressure beating DASH diet. Like the Mediterranean diet, the DASH diet is rich in vegetables, fruits, nuts and whole grains and poor in saturated fat sources like meat and dairy.

The MIND diet focuses on plant based foods and lowers animal based foods, saturated fats and sweets. Researchers developed the diet by analyzing the Mediterranean and DASH diets and selecting the foods with the strongest evidence for preventing dementia. Green leafy vegetables were at the top of the list.

When the researchers followed older adults for 4.7 years, they discovered that the MIND diet significantly slows cognitive decline. Those who most closely followed the MIND diet had brains that were the equivalent of being 7.5 years younger (*Alzheimers Dement.* 2015 Sep;11(9):1015-22)!

A 4.5 year study of 923 people between 58 and 98 found that people who most closely followed the MIND diet had a 53% reduced rate of Alzheimer's (*Alzheimers Dement.* 2015 Sep;11(9):1007-14).

The green Mediterranean diet is a Mediterranean diet that has less red and processed meat and more walnuts, green tea and an aquatic green called duckweed. While a healthy diet reduced visceral fat by 4.5% and a Mediterranean diet by 7%, the green Mediterranean diet reduced it by a whopping 14% (*BMC Medicine* 2022 doi.org/10.1186/s12916-022-02525-8). That matters because visceral fat loss is the healthiest fat loss.

About Linda Woolven & Ted Snider



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This newsletter is intended for educational purposes only and is in no way intended for self-diagnosis or self-treatment. For health problems, consult a qualified health practitioner.