

GOOD + WELL



25

WORLD EXPERTS
Share Their Secrets to

Wellbeing
Gillian Fish

Foreword by Prof Ralph Martins AO



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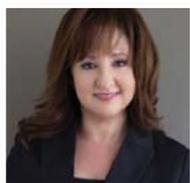


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Preface

By Gillian Fish



Thank you for spending precious time reading my book *Good + Well: 25 World Experts Share their Secrets to Wellbeing*, a two year long project inspired by the enormous privilege I have had during the building of my communications agency, The 6am Agency (formerly Brand New Solutions), a Sydney-based integrated creative communications agency, I launched in 2002.

With an instinct for trends, it was early 2002 that I felt the winds of Wellbeing starting to gain momentum; a health revolution was in the making. A revolution that would develop into one of the world's biggest game changers; that would teach the new millennial generation that good health is in our reach through Prevention rather than Cure; a philosophy that would provide hope to baby boomers drowning in disease, that with lifestyle change, one could regain good health.

And so my path to learning began – a magazine editor and now communications agency owner, joining a throng of 5000+ doctors in learning at the annual Integrative Medicine conferences in Las Vegas to start to unravel my understanding of the traditional model of 'Sickness' based healthcare and reframe that to the powerful evidence-based model of 'Wellness' in healthcare that was soon to revolutionise the way we think about our bodies, the temple of our souls. I realised that with a proactive preventative approach to our health, each of us could attain optimal health for decades to come.

And so, I began to forge relationships with some of the world's leaders in evidence-based Integrative & Preventative Medicine, through my clients, themselves all thought leaders in the Wellbeing industry, both locally and internationally. It was clear to me that the key pillars to optimal health which so desperately need attention – diet, lifestyle, exercise, nutrition and supplementation – are within reach of each and every one of us.

Through this learning I was able to understand that a sentence of chronic degenerative conditions such as cancer, heart disease, Alzheimer's, diabetes, osteoporosis is not a foregone conclusion in life. That in fact we can lead healthy, fulfilled lives for decades, if we are to follow a true model of 'Wellbeing'. That ageing does not mean a sentence of low energy, depleted memory; aching bodies or diminished sex drive.

Today's world throws a multitude of challenges at us physically and mentally each day – from endogenous toxicity caused by poor gut health; from the myriad of exogenous influences such as pollution, mega-stress, chemical invasion in our bodies and then those toxins which we choose to have in our lives each day through poor eating habits – refined sugar, too much alcohol and gluten – all leading to inflammation, oxidative stress and immune dysfunction – a surefire recipe for disease.



The evidence is undeniable – smart researchers and world experts have shown time and time again that with constructive change and an evolution to a Preventative model of health we can save ourselves, our families and our communities.

Even during the time of compiling this book, we have seen rapid developments in areas of Preventative Medicine that were only just becoming public knowledge at the start of my journey.

Importantly, we are now understanding the critical role that the microbiome - the 100 trillion bacteria living within each of us – plays in our overall health, from gut to brain, immunity and beyond, providing much hope for health issues previously thought of as unstoppable and irreversible - memory loss, brain fog, diabetes and more.

I welcome you to my learning, from the very best in the world who have been gracious enough to share with me their *Secrets to Wellbeing*; the secrets and philosophies which they share with their patients, with their loved ones and which I am honoured to share with you.

And so, it is time to thank those who have generously given of their time and knowledge with me and who gladly joined my project – to all the contributors, I am honoured to work with you all; to my late mother, Zelda, who inspired me all the way through vision, courage and tenacity; to my other mother, Selina, who showed me that it is not material goods which maketh a person, but love, dignity and courage, against all odds; to my husband, Barnet, who has supported me through the building of my business – late nights and long weekends and with the proofing of this book; to Clare, my talented designer, who has brought to life my vision of this project; to Sue who painstakingly transcribed each interview; to Chris, my business mentor and Sherpa, whose shining light has helped me traverse the mountainous business terrain with courage; to my team at The 6am Agency who through the years has shown me that life is a journey that twists and turns like nature's most beautiful rivers – learning and growing as the flow moves along; to stocksy.com for acknowledging the role this project plays in raising awareness around Alzheimer's; last but not least to my clients who have welcomed me into their businesses for years on end; to join their growth journey along the way. I am deeply honoured and humbled.

May you all take from this book what will help you take the next step forward to good health and to a life of energy, happiness and most importantly love.

Yours in good health.

Gillian

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Dedication

In loving memory of Zelda D Gosschalk



This book is a dedication in honour of my beloved mother, Zelda D Gosschalk, award-winning financial journalist, Finance Editor of Cosmopolitan magazine/South Africa, fearless investigative journalist, accomplished business woman, wife and my beautiful, exceptionally intelligent, energetic, youthful, and inspiring mother who inspired me to follow my dreams – as she did, to achieve her goals, against all odds.

Zelda passed away on October 16, 2013 after a 14 year battle with Alzheimer's – a disease which plagues 46.8 million¹ people worldwide. Zelda bore the battle with this disease with the utmost courage and dignity, right until her dying moments.

Throughout the journey of my career, Zelda inspired me to reach for my dreams; to find purpose in what I was doing and to have the courage to go where others had not considered going. Her courage, her influence has been with me each step of the way. To always report with integrity; to tell the story as it is; to have respect for fellow mankind and to educate and inspire others wherever possible.

Living through the tragedy of seeing my brilliant mother's light fade – a brilliant mind slowly, painstakingly robbed each and every day of the basic human functions that we all take for granted, I found my purpose in utilising my passion for communications to educate as many as possible about the right to Health Prevention; to change the way we traditionally understand health; to focus on 'Wellness' rather than 'Sickness' and to give hope that an inevitable death through disease is not the only option.

Thank you Mum for your inspiration and for showing me that courage is never ending.

Yours in admiration and love forever.

Gillian

*I also dedicate this book to my husband's cousin, Terry, the most beautiful, kind and giving person, who too has at the age of 55 tragically been struck with Early Onset Alzheimer's. Terry, the light of your kindness will shine always in our lives. Even though you are still with us in body, I 'miss' you.

¹ "World Alzheimer's Report 2015," Alzheimer's Disease International; <http://www.alz.co.uk/research/WorldAlzheimerReport2015-sheet.pdf>

Foreword

Foreword by Prof Ralph Martins AO



This book allows us to leverage the knowledge and experiences of a lifetime of 24 eminent health professionals, concerning the most important aspects of lifestyle that can influence our health, wellbeing and longevity. It is a summary of a series of personal interviews carried out by Gillian Fish, with each interview providing the personal thoughts and professional opinion of a particular health professional. The group of professionals includes cardiologists, neurosurgeons, integrative specialists, nutritionists, naturopaths, university professors of medicine, paediatricians and physiotherapists amongst others, and thus one would expect this book to provide a wide range of viewpoints.

Interestingly, there are certain commonalities in aspects of lifestyle among these interviews, that reiterate the importance of healthy diet, physical activity, methods of relaxation, and keeping mentally active. These factors keep cropping up despite the fact that all these professionals work in different areas of health and medicine.

As a result of my own 35+ years of research into Alzheimer's disease, I have much research-based evidence that heartily agrees with the interviewees concerning which lifestyle factors are the most important. This is evidence that has come from research carried out in Australia as part of our own Australian Imaging Biomarkers and Lifestyle study into healthy ageing through Edith Cowan University and the McCusker Alzheimer's Research Foundation in partnership with prominent medical researchers from the Austin hospital, Florey Institute, Melbourne University and the CSIRO.

We live in a world that has never before had access to such a variety of foods, medicines and choices for physical activity and mental challenges, yet we have an alarming rate of chronic health problems such as obesity, cardiovascular disease, type 2 diabetes, and neurodegenerative diseases of which Alzheimer's disease is a major contributor, particularly in the Western world with its impact in coming decades being even greater in countries like China and India.

Prevention rather than cure is clearly the best mode of action, and following the advice of the carefully chosen experts in this book can only lead to a healthier, longer and happier life.

HELP RAISE FUNDS FOR ALZHEIMER'S RESEARCH

Through the *Good + Well* project we welcome you to donate funds towards the Macquarie University research into the Prevention of Alzheimer's study, under my (Ralph Martins') directorship, which will continue to pave the way to revolutionary breakthroughs in finding ways to stop the scourge of this disease which affects over 46 million people worldwide each year. Please accept my sincere thanks for recognizing the value of this life-saving research.

Donate here: www.mq.edu.au/donate - area of choice: Professor Ralph Martins' Alzheimer's Research

Prof Ralph Martins AO



Professor Charlie Teo AM
Neurosurgeon AUS

Prof Teo is an internationally acclaimed neurosurgeon and a pioneer of minimally invasive keyhole techniques. He has been invited as Visiting Professor to more than 50 countries by distinguished universities such as Johns Hopkins, Vanderbilt and Stanford in the USA, Marburg University in Germany and the Karolinska Institute in Sweden. Dr Teo dedicates three months every year to pro bono work in developing countries, for which he has been recognised with awards from Rotary International, including the Paul Harris Fellowship, and as a finalist in the NSW Australian of the Year awards in 2003 and 2009. In the 2011 Australia Day awards he was named a Member of the Order of Australia. In 2003, Dr Teo founded the Cure Brain Cancer Foundation, now the largest funder of brain cancer research in Australia and which supports the neuro-oncology wing of the Lowy Cancer Centre.

Dr Teo is father to four beautiful girls. When he is not performing intricate brain surgery, he is proud to support his two favourite charities: the Cambodian Children's Trust, which supports orphans in Battambang, and Voiceless, which campaigns against animal cruelty and for laws to protect factory-farmed animals and kangaroos in Australia. ●

neuroendoscopy.info | curebraincancer.org.au

"If there is one thing about which I would like the world to be aware and which we should try to rectify, it's the way we are poisoning ourselves with what we eat."

– PROF CHARLIE TEO AM





What is your health mantra in one or two lines?

I have two health mantras:

- 🧠 A healthy body is a healthy mind.
- 🧠 Everything in moderation.

What are your patients' biggest concerns and how do you try and solve them?

My patients' biggest concerns are that they have done something wrong to cause their brain cancer and what do they need to do to get rid of the cancer. They often say: "If I have done something wrong or even if I haven't done something wrong, what can I do to right it?"

So the bottom line is that most patients with cancer think that they have done something wrong and invariably they haven't. They are trying desperately to search for something to make it all better because they know that traditional medicine fails in many circumstances.

What are your personal health goals?

At the risk of sounding vain, I want to live as long as possible and to maintain a good quality of life for as long as possible.

What is your ultimate survival kit for your family? What are the things that you make sure your family do in order to maintain optimal health?

When you deal with death and dying every day, you realise how fragile and precious life is. You also unfortunately see many cases of people who have done the right thing all their lives and they still get brain cancer resulting in a rapid, cruel and tragic death at a young age; many of these people have maintained healthy and organic diets, they have taken selenium as an anti-cancer measure, they have kept out of the sun etc. Essentially they did all the right things that were supposed to ward off cancer and yet they still got it!

My exposure to people dying every day is a grim reminder that "we are not here for a long time, we are here for a good time". So when I look at my family, if one of them eats something bad and I think "oh my god that is terrible"

but at the same time it brings them happiness and enjoyment then I weigh up one against the other, because the benefit that you get from having joy and happiness in your life probably outweighs the negative side of the occasional meal of saturated fats.

I guess what I am trying to say is to live life in moderation. Try and bring joy and happiness in your life but then again try and keep your life going for as long as possible by looking after your health.

How do you de-stress?

🧠 There is a mantra that says some people eat to live and other people live to eat. I am one of those who live to eat. I love my food so much that going out for dinner with friends and family is to me the ultimate de-stress. Probably almost twice a week I take all my medical and theatre staff out for dinner after a long and stressful day in the operating room. We have good food, good conversation, good.....some would say bad....karaoke and by the end we are all de-stressed.

🧠 Another way I de-stress is to exercise. Exercise releases many endorphins that are good for you. It is a part of my life that I believe is essential to being a good neurosurgeon. Brain tumour operations are often long and tedious and it is absolutely necessary to be physically as well as mentally fit to give your patients the best chance of a good outcome.

🧠 The third thing, which goes a bit against the grain of your book, is that I love riding my motor bike. Mostly, because to stay alive on a motor bike you have to be totally focussed on the road and what's going on around you which means you can't be thinking about all that went down at work that day.

Is it true that you operate to Abba?

I play different music for different stages of the operation. When I am in the initial and final stages of an operation, in other words the opening and closing of the skull, it is not so stressful and I will listen to more upbeat music such as Cold Chisel or Mental as Anything.

When I am focussed on the tumour, and it's at a complicated and challenging part of the operation, I listen to music that is more melodious and chilled, such as Abba, Leo Sayer or Elvis Presley's Love Songs.

If you were stuck on a desert island – what five things would you NOT want to be without from a health point of view?

Well firstly, let me say that being stuck on a desert island would be idyllic for me. There are very few things that I would need, but if I have to name five things "from a health point of view"

- 1. Good organic food**.... but if it really was a deserted island then I guess the food is going to be organic.
- 2. Fresh water**.... I don't drink alcohol and although I used to like soft drinks, I am no longer allowed to drink them because of pre-diabetes.
- 3. Ability to exercise**.... if the island was too small for long walks I would need my sea kayak.
- 4. Sex**.... I do love sex and I think the more regular sex you have the better it is for your health. I would take my wife and if she refused to go with me then I would take a nymphomaniac.
- 5. Good music**.... although, I mostly listen to music to relax and I guess I would be pretty relaxed on the island so maybe I could do without this fifth item.

What are your top five super compounds?

- 1. Berries.** I strongly believe that brain health can be improved with antioxidants and the food richest in antioxidants are berries: blackberries, gooseberries, strawberries, raspberries.
- 2. Fish.** Another powerful antioxidant is Omega-3 which is found in the fish groups. I love tuna and white flaky fishes. Indeed I love all types of fish.
- 3. Fresh fruit.** I cannot live without fruit.
- 4. Fibre.** Muesli in the morning is essential to keeping 'regular'.
- 5. Water.** Cold and NOT from a plastic container.

Do you take any supplements?

I believe in moderation. I figure that a diet that is well balanced means you shouldn't need to take supplements.

Having said that, there are certain situations where you might benefit from taking supplements. Once you have cancer for example you probably need all the help you can get. After brain cancer patients have had surgery, radiotherapy and chemotherapy it is vital to mop up those destructive free radicals that may accumulate and cause more damage. Anti-oxidants may improve the brain rehabilitation process.

What is on your grocery list?

We mostly order our groceries through Aussie Farmer Direct which we believe offers access to the freshest produce. We used to get fresh mince but now we are mostly pescatarian in the home. When I go shopping, which is very rarely, I go straight to the nuts section. I love nuts and as I am no longer allowed to eat lollies because of my pre-diabetic condition, I snack on nuts all the time now. I particularly love cashews and macadamias.

What are your favourite vegies?

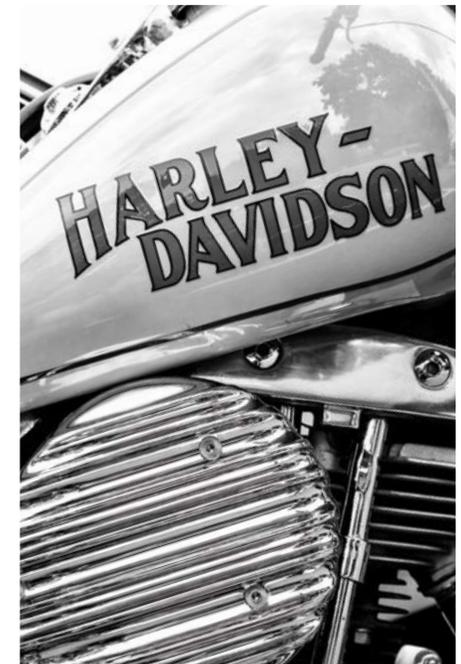
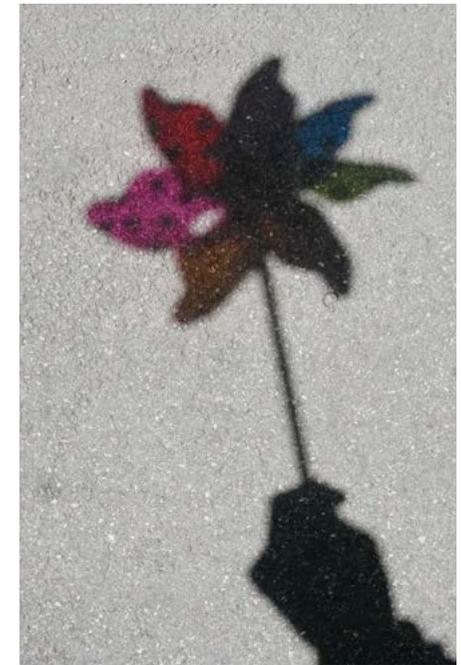
Corn on the cob, bok choy, broccoli and brussels sprouts are my favourite vegies although I love them all. I love a fresh organic tomato that tastes sweet but unfortunately many tomatoes do not taste sweet these days. I love onions and garlic as well as a leafy green salad.

The longevity menu: what is on your menu for breakfast, lunch, dinner and snacks?

In winter I have porridge. I have oats and banana and sometimes I get weak and I put brown sugar on it. I try and limit the amount of brown sugar. In summer I have muesli with milk. I have whole milk, not skim milk.

At lunchtime I am at work and I used to have salad with a chicken breast. But now since I am trying to go vegetarian, I have salad with no meat at all.

At night I almost always have fish with vegetables of some sort - mostly steamed but sometimes



raw – or a salad with Paul Newman’s Vinaigrette dressing. We have tried other dressings but we always go back to Paul Newman’s.

My weakness after dinner is always to have something sweet to top it off. It is usually chocolate chip ice cream or a Tim Tam.

Snacks during the day are always nuts or Chinese lollies in the form of preserved plums.

Insights into healthy ageing

My patients always ask me that question actually. The first thing that they often say to me is “I am going to give up work”. I don’t think people quite realise that work is good for you because it has actually been shown that there are two kinds of stress: good stress and bad stress.

Good stress releases endorphins. It pumps the adrenalin. It keeps you young and stimulated and good stress is the sort of stress that you mostly get at work. You have been well trained in what you do and sure it might be stressful if it is a hard project and you have to meet deadlines, but you are good at doing it.

Bad stress is the stress where you are doing things that you are not trained to do. You are completely out of your depth and it includes things like dealing with bankruptcy, the death of a spouse, divorce, money issues or acrimony with a partner at work.

So when my patients ask for my advice I encourage them to return to work and to try and limit the amount of bad stress in their lives. If there is a partner in business or outside of work creating unhappiness, then remove them or remove yourself out of that situation. Spousal issues need to be resolved because they create bad stress.

Going to work is good for you both from a physical and psychological viewpoint. It’s good to challenge yourself. It’s good for self-respect and it’s good to be active and not sedentary.

There is one study, however, that cautions this general philosophy. This study out of the UK was examining burn-out in surgeons of all disciplines, not just neurosurgeons. It looked at the retirement age of surgeons and how it affected longevity. The study showed that if you are a surgeon who retires at 60 you live an average of 19 years after retirement. If you are a surgeon who retires at 65,

“I strongly believe that brain health can be improved with antioxidants and the food richest in antioxidants are berries.”



you live an average of four years after retirement. The researchers postulated that as one gets older one deals with stress less efficiently. Your arteries become harder, your blood pressure becomes higher, your heart copes less well and without knowing it, your health is suffering from the same stress that, when younger, was not damaging. Interestingly, the study did not address those surgeons who continued to work until their death or into their 80’s. Therefore, in terms of ideal ageing, I would suggest that you either, continue to work for as long as you like but find less stressful work after the age of 60 or retire at 60!

Something else which may or may not affect longevity, but is certainly unhealthy, is the habit of our younger generation of spending so much time indoors in front of computers or screens of any description. Studies have shown that children who do this – be it with an iPad, TV, computer or any other sort of screen – may stimulate that part of the brain that controls visual processing but those

parts of the brain that control imagination and creative thinking are languishing.

The conclusion is that if we want to destroy creativity in the next generation, the best way to do it is to put them in front of a screen. It boils down to my original statement....monitors are an essential part of life today, but so too is physical activity and communing with nature.....everything in moderation!

What is the number one health mistake that we are making and how is it ruining our lives?

It all boils down to this one little dictum: “We are what we eat”. I don’t think people quite understand that we are poisoning our bodies with all the preservatives, insecticides, pesticides and colourings in our foods.

Even some foods that are labelled “organic” may be poisonous to some degree. I always cite this example to my patients: you think that salmon is really good for you and it is. The trouble is that a lot of the salmon these days is farmed and doesn’t have the same nutritional compounds as natural salmon, including plankton and phytoplankton, that give the salmon the natural pink colouring. So to offset the lack of colouring in the farmed salmon, farmers actually feed schooled salmon food colouring to make the flesh go pink.

If there is one thing about which I would like the world to be aware and which we should try to rectify, it’s the way we are poisoning ourselves with what we eat.

The top health myths debunked that could save your life - what are your thoughts on the most misunderstood health myths?

Firstly, let’s talk about alcohol. Alcohol has become such an accepted part of society that many people under-appreciate just how damaging it is to our health, not to mention the financial and emotional cost to our society.

I do appreciate that there are studies in the literature that show a beneficial effect of alcohol by reducing low density lipoproteins and by increasing high-density lipoproteins. But it’s not the

alcohol in alcoholic beverages that is beneficial. It’s a substance called resveratrol. Alcohol itself is nothing but damaging. Alcohol is NEVER good for you. It destroys brain cells at a rate of approximately 10,000 cells per 10 grams. It is bad for your liver. It is bad for your mental state. It is addictive. It is destroying our society. Alcohol is terrible, terrible, terrible!!

Secondly, cigarette smoking is arguably worse. This is implicated in so many cancers and diseases that I wouldn’t be able to list them here. Some of the figures on smoking and the percentage of people in hospital who smoke are just staggering. Smokers account for a huge percentage of our health dollar. And then of course smoking is not only bad for one’s health it is also bad for those unfortunate enough to be hanging around smokers. Smoking is never ever OK. It is just terrible, terrible, terrible!!

What are your secrets for maintaining optimal health?

My secret is basically work hard, play hard. I work very long hours but I make sure that I take off Fridays for a long weekend and I balance my hard work with a lot of hard play, a lot of exercise, walking the dogs and activities with the kids. It’s exercise, exercise, exercise when I am not working and I think that’s why I am healthy and I think I am pretty healthy for 57.

Use it or lose it: focussing on the brain, what are your secrets for 360° wellness?

You have to challenge yourself and there is absolutely no doubt in my mind that when you don’t challenge yourself your brain will atrophy, just like a muscle atrophies. I am sure you are aware of the studies that if you want to stave off dementia, then learning a language or a musical instrument when you are over the age of 40 will certainly reduce or slow down the onset of dementia.

If you are not going to learn a new language or an instrument, then at least challenge your mind. I do that with my academic neurosurgery practice. Reading lots of journals and reviewing manuscripts, teaching young surgeons and medical students, attending conferences overseas and surrounding



yourself with inquisitive colleagues all goes towards challenging the status quo and keeping the mind well-oiled.

What do you think the top three threats are to our health and what's the solution?

1. Firstly, we are poisoning ourselves: "We are what we eat".
2. Secondly, our sedentary lifestyle, encouraged of course by the fantastic electronics that are available to us like iPads, television sets and DVDs.
3. Last but not least, electro-magnetic radiation. We are surrounding ourselves with low frequency electro-magnetic radiation, and although we are not sure if it is damaging, there is enough evidence in the literature for the World Health Organisation (WHO) to classify it as potentially cancer causing.

What is the top health trend that is destined to succeed?

Vegetarianism. I don't know if vegetarianism has been trendy for a long time, but it is certainly gaining popularity. Furthermore, with increasing awareness of the inhumane treatment of our industry animals such as pigs, cattle and chickens, I think more people are concluding that the current situation is unsustainable. We are a civilised society yet we treat our animals in an uncivilised manner. Vegetarianism or at the least, free range farming, is the next important health and social revolution.

Are there any other trends that should be mentioned?

The organic trend is a good trend too, but the trouble is that it's difficult to regulate. Many people are calling their products organic and they really aren't. If we can police the labelling of organic products and make sure that they are truly organic, in other words free of any man-made substances, then of course that would be a great trend.

The gene factor: will we age like our mothers?

Until recently, I would have said unequivocally, yes. Our DNA, passed down to us from our parents, undoubtedly determines our cellular make-up and therefore, our appearance, behaviour, physiology, traits etc. However, the phenomenon of epigenetics introduces the concept of gene modification based on intermediaries such as mRNA, miRNA and other cellular modifiers. Studies have now shown that our behaviour, for example what we eat and how much we exercise, can alter epigenetics that may in turn be passed on to our offspring. Beware what you eat as it may have an adverse effect on your children!

Is there any message that you would like to get out there?

I would like to highlight my own charity, the Cure Brain Cancer Foundation. CBCF is searching for better treatments and eventually a cure for brain cancer. My other favourite charity is VOICELESS. Voiceless aims to reduce cruelty to the animals we eat through legislation. We don't think it's a big ask to treat animals that we know feel pain and other emotions similar to humans ie. sentient beings, with kindness and in an humane fashion.....especially if the consumption of that "depressed" animal may have serious health implications to the consumer. ●

curebraincancer.org.au





Dr Ross Walker MD

Integrative Cardiologist & Celebrity Doctor AUS

Dr Walker is a leading integrative cardiologist based on the upper north shore of Sydney. He provides a service in all aspects of echocardiography, focusing on stress echocardiography, which is a well-accepted, accurate method for assessing heart disease that does not involve irradiation or injections. Dr Walker commenced stress echocardiography in 1992 and has since performed over 50,000 studies, over 80,000 trans-thoracic echoes and 2,000 trans-oesophageal echoes. Stress echocardiography provides much more information to the practitioner than stress testing, He, along with Dr David Grout & the Sydney Adventist Hospital, pioneered Coronary Calcium scoring in Australia, the most accurate preventative scene for early heart disease.

Dr Walker also specialises in the field of preventative cardiology and he has also commenced a related service in arterial screening, which is an indirect measure of endothelial function and arterial stiffness, that also does not involve irradiation or injections. He is the author of seven books, including, 'The Life Factor' and '5 Stages of Health', and appears regularly as a media commentator including hosting a regular health show on 2UE, a leading Australian radio station. Dr Walker lectures both nationally and internationally on this subject. ●

drrosswalker.com

“Physical health
is just as important
to mental health
as mental health is
to physical health.
It is vital to have
both in sync.”

– DR ROSS WALKER



What is your health mantra?

As a cardiologist, I often say the most important coronary arteries in this world are your own. If you are not prepared to look after them, why should anyone else bother?

What is the number one question you get asked by your patients?

"Do I have to take these medications for the rest of my life?"

The answer to this is: sometimes life-long medications are necessary and a vital part of long-term management. However, lifestyle interventions are always twice as powerful as anything a doctor can do for you.

What is your ultimate health survival kit for you and your family?

These are my "five keys to being healthy":

-  **Have no addictions.** You are not healthy if you smoke, consume too much alcohol or use any illegal drugs.
-  **Develop and cultivate a good-quality sleep habits.** The body of evidence regarding sleep shows clearly that we need somewhere between six to eight hours' sleep every night, so it is vital to develop good sleep hygiene.
-  **Eat less and eat more naturally.** We hear so much about the variety of diets on the market, but it is really quite straightforward. Forget about the GI factor and think more about the HI factor – the human interference factor. The more people fiddle with the food by the time it gets into your mouth, the worse it is for you.
-  **Get three to five hours of testing exercise every week.** That means exercise that makes you feel hot and short of breath.
-  **Happiness, peace and contentment** are the most powerful health strategies available to us all.

How do you de-stress?

I have a few simple methods for dealing with stress. First, I try to go into every situation with the attitude, "I choose peace over this. I am not going to give anyone else the power to cause my heart attack." In my life, I try to cultivate the attitude "How may I serve?" rather than "What's in it for me?" Another important stress-buster is to have half an hour off the merry-go-round of life every day. I have been meditating on a daily basis for at least half an hour for the last 20 years.

If you were stuck on a desert island, name five health essentials you would not want to be without.

The most important drug on the planet is happiness, so I would need to be on that desert island with my wife and family along with my close friends. I believe life and health benefits all revolve around finding balance in your physical side, your mental side, your emotional side, your work life balance and your spiritual side. It doesn't really matter whether you are on a desert island or in the middle of busiest city in the world, health strategies are all based around your internal thought processes and involve all the strategies I have already mentioned.

What are your top five super-compounds?

- 1. BergaMet Mega.** I believe it's the most exciting natural supplement of the last 30 years. It comes from a bergamot orange grown on the southern ionic strip of Calabria in Italy. I have been taking it and prescribing it to my patients for close to four years. I now have over 3000 patients taking BergaMet Mega, with extraordinary results on cardiovascular health, metabolism and affecting the correct parameters of the cholesterol profile.
- 2. Some form of omega-3,** such as fish or krill oil. Omega-3 compounds are very powerful anti-inflammatory agents, and inflammation is a key factor in many common chronic diseases.

"The most important drug on the planet is happiness."





3. **A daily multivitamin** that has at least 400mcg of folic acid and good doses of the other B-group vitamins has been shown in a number of studies, particularly from Harvard, to reduce many chronic illnesses when taken for more than 10 to 15 years.
4. **CoQ10 in Ubiquinol form – 150-300mg per day**, based on underlying medical conditions and body size.
5. **Magnesium orotate.** The orotate version, at 400 to 800mg daily, has been shown to improve energy and protect against some of the damaging side effects of statin drugs.

Which foods do you make sure are a part of your daily diet?

Having two to three pieces of fruit and three to five servings of vegetables per day has been shown to be very protective against cancer and heart disease. Only 10 per cent of the community takes in this amount of fruit and vegetables on a daily basis, and those who do have the lowest rates of heart disease and cancer.

I am particularly keen on fruits such as blueberries, strawberries and prunes. As for vegetables, many clinical studies show that probably the most powerful of all vegetables is broccoli, for its powerful anti-cancer properties, along with all forms of tomato, because of the high concentration of lycopene. Regardless, I believe it is important to take a variety of

different-coloured vegetables, whether they are leafy green or the carotenoid-containing vegetables, such as carrot and pumpkin.

Also consuming 10 to 15 natural nuts per day, especially walnuts, almonds and macadamias, has been shown in over five major clinical studies to reduce cardiovascular risk by up to 50 per cent.

Many people talk about the health benefits of the Mediterranean diet but it is in fact the Mediterranean lifestyle that is much more powerful. Having a good, healthy breakfast involving natural grains and fruits, which is how I start the day, and then a good-sized lunch with a sleep after lunch, burning the carbs in the fields in the afternoon followed by a small evening meal – this is the way the Mediterraneans live. They have a very simple lifestyle that does not involve a lot of stress. Those who live a true Mediterranean lifestyle are among the longest-living people on the planet.

What are the top three causes of ageing that most of us don't know about?

The reality is, our bodies are only designed to work well for 30 to 40 years, wandering around a jungle with a spear and looking for food, which was not always freely available. Our metabolism is geared for feast or famine and constant movement, with the only stress being the stress of the kill or the stress of avoiding being someone's kill.

We do not live in such a harsh environment, where we die in our 30 to 40s having our head ripped off by a sabre-toothed tiger or dying of some infection. But now, because our environment is less harsh, we are now living at least double our use-by date, and in many cases, we are not living well. Over the age of 40, the organs, tissues and arteries stiffen up and the metabolism slows. That makes it very easy for our DNA, which has to constantly replenish itself, to break down, bend, twist and distort out of shape, leading to a variety of mutations that can set us up for cancer. And because we are living in a calorie-rich, exercise- and movement-poor environment, the excessive fats and sugars are laid down in our arterial wall, setting us up for chronic cardiovascular disease.

All of the above factors are setting us up for varying degrees of damage and disease in any or all of our organs, and although we are living much longer than our hunter-gatherer counterparts, in many cases people spend the last 10 to 20 years of their life in some form of medical misery.

My five keys to better ageing are:

1. Follow the five keys to being healthy I have already mentioned.
2. Have appropriate and regular preventative checks for all the common causes of diseases experienced in our modern world.
3. The appropriate and targeted use of supplementation should be under the supervision of a qualified health or medical practitioner.
4. Don't walk away from orthodox medicine, which is the most powerful way to treat modern disease.
5. Have regular follow-ups with your trusted medical practitioner.

What is the number one health mistake we all make?

Modern medicine is practised with having the ambulance parked at the bottom of the cliff, waiting for people to fall off, instead of fixing the rails at the top of the cliff – ie, focusing on preventative health. All modern medicine does is build faster ambulances. Our number one health mistake is clearly lack of focus not only by the medical profession but also the general public.

Which health myths would you like to see debunked?

Cancer is purely back luck. There is a very simple cancer prevention technique: use the organ for what it was designed for. For example, you have a couple of things in your chest called your lungs – they were designed for a thing called 'breathing', not to put a white stick in your mouth and suck the smoke in. The female breast was designed to feed babies; it was not

"There is a very simple cancer prevention technique: use the organ for what it was designed for. For example, you have a couple of things in your chest called your lungs – they were designed for a thing called 'breathing', not to put a white stick in your mouth and suck the smoke in."

designed to be flogged with a whole variety of synthetic oestrogens in the form of the endocrine-disrupting chemicals found in plastic bottles, aluminium cans and food packaging, the oral contraceptive pill or hormone replacement therapy.

There is a clear link between the time from the onset of puberty to the time of breastfeeding your first child. The shorter the period of time, the less the risk for breast cancer.

I could use other examples for every common cancer we have in our society.



Cholesterol causes heart disease and statins are the answer. Apart from a condition known as 'familial hypercholesterolemia', there is no real link between total cholesterol levels and heart disease. Every year in Australia, there are around 16 million prescriptions written for statins and I would suggest probably only 500,000 of those are necessary. Cardiovascular disease – typically in the form of atherosclerotic heart disease, which is the progressive build-up of fat, inflammation and other junk in the wall of your arteries – is much more complex than having high cholesterol and treating it with statin drugs.



Once people realise this important fact, the proper management of heart disease can occur.

 **Diets are the answer to weight loss.**

So many people go on a 12-week program thinking it will change their life. You go on a diet like you go on a holiday: you come back to your normal situation. With each diet, people tend to get flabbier and put on more weight. The real answer is to have a lifelong program that involves reducing your calorie intake and increasing your activity. Weight loss is related to calories in versus calories burnt. Calories in is every piece of food and fluid you put in your mouth apart from water, and calories burnt is a combination of exercise, movement and metabolism. Remember, one of the big phrases of modern preventative medicine is that sitting is the new smoking. And, as I have already mentioned, when you reach the age of 40, your metabolism starts to slow. We need important strategies that will affect all of these parameters.

 **Stress is all in the mind.** The only stresses of the hunter-gatherer were the acute stress of the kill, and of avoiding being killed. In our modern world, we have a whole new set of stresses that are more chronic and our bodies were not designed to deal with chronic stresses. When you are under chronic stress, you release a totally different set of chemicals apart from the acute stress chemicals that are released during an acute danger situation. These chronic chemicals have a deleterious effect on many of your organs and also on the immune system. Stress also stops you from following important lifestyle principles. When you are under stress you tend to abuse legal and illegal substances, you tend to eat more poor-quality food and you tend to hold off your exercise.

Our modern world is full of excessive choices, which leads to stress. Also there is the need for instant answers. These days we have emails, text messaging and mobile phones; we are on call 24 hours a day. Multi-tasking also makes life very stressful.

You often need to have skills in many areas to perform well in any particular job. We also have the constant need for change: you always need to be upgrading your skills and many people can expect to have three to four different occupations during their working life. The threat of litigation in all aspects of life – that if you don't do it well, someone will try and sue you – has also created life stresses. This can be litigation between companies, between workers, between neighbours and between partners.

 **Electromagnetic radiation and synthetic chemicals are harmless.**

Our modern world is full of both of these factors and there are not too many people who are not exposed to a computer screen, a mobile phone or some form of smart wiring that leads to a chronic exposure to electromagnetic fields. Many people are now calling this "dirty electricity" and a number of health professionals believe there is a strong link between electromagnetic radiation exposure and disease. There are also many people within the health professional ranks who are very concerned about our chronic exposure to synthetic, endocrine-disrupting chemicals such as Bisphenol A and flame retardants used in many clothes, not to mention all the foods additives and preservatives that are so ubiquitous in our modern world.

What are your secrets to 360° wellness, including brain health?

There has been a recent study of people who maintain their mental sharpness beyond the age of 70. There are five important factors involved here.

 First and most important, be open to change. People who become very rigid in their thinking and behaviour as they age often lose their thinking prowess. The great thinker of last century, Edward De Bono, often spoke about thinking being like water running down a hill. After a while, the water will create an ingrained track and never deviate from that course. He uses this analogy when talking about thinking, saying that we should be thinking outside the square and thinking differently.

 In addition to the above, extend your brain by learning new skills as you age. Learning a musical instrument or a new language over the age of 50 has been shown to create extra neurons in the brain. Interestingly, when Einstein died and they examined his brain, it was no larger than anyone else's but it had more rich connections due to the fact that he continually tried to extend his thinking processes. It's the basic 'use it or lose it principle'.

 Maintain your profession, or at least your professional interest, beyond the age of 70. Many people retire early and stop using their brain and see a serious decline in their mental function.

 Surround yourself with bright and optimistic people.

 Be bright and optimistic yourself.

What are the top three threats to our health and what's the solution?

1. "Diabetes" – the combination of diabetes and obesity. The underlying factors involved with a generation of obesity are the insulin-resistance gene, which is a survival advantage if you are a hunter-gatherer but a survival disadvantage if you live in this society. When you expose a person with the insulin-resistance gene to modern living, they develop metabolic syndrome – a tendency to diabetes, high blood pressure, cholesterol abnormalities, fat around the belly and cardiovascular disease. This is indeed the scourge of modern society.

2. Cancer. In the 1920s the rates of death from cancer were 3 per cent. Cancers are now to the point where they are almost overtaking cardiovascular disease worldwide. I believe the reason for this is the increasing exposure to synthetic chemicals and electromagnetic radiation. For example, air pollution is now the fourth most common cause of death in China and the more densely populated any community becomes, the more waste products are released into the environment.

"In the 1920s the rates of death from cancer were 3 per cent. Cancers are now to the point where they are almost overtaking cardiovascular disease worldwide."

3. The evolution of the viruses that are circulating around the world.

We are well aware of the HIV epidemic but another concerning feature is the rise of a variety of influenza viruses, such as swine flu and bird flu, and the potential for these to combine with human influenza and to be not only very lethal but also extremely contagious. We are well aware of the Spanish flu epidemic that occurred soon after World War I, killing 50 million people. There is the potential for an influenza virus at some stage in the next couple of decades to have a similar effect. The major difference is there are now over 7 billion people on the planet and many of them may be killed by this epidemic.

Which health trends are destined to succeed?

1. Genetic screening. Once the screening of the human genome becomes inexpensive and very targeted, it would be my vision that around age 30 that everyone has their genome screened. There has been some talk about screening children at birth, but do you really want to know that your bouncing newborn baby has an 80 per cent chance of prostate cancer or a 90 per cent chance of cardiovascular disease or breast cancer?

2. Regenerative medicine. Although stem cell therapy is in its infancy, we will be able to regrow damaged organs and following on from this will be gene manipulation. Again, as yet, there have only been a handful of diseases where gene therapy has been successful, but as we become more sophisticated in these areas, this should be standard therapy.

3. Nanotechnology – the manipulation of matter at the atomic and molecular level – both for diagnostics and treatment.

4. Bioprosthesis. Recently a hand was developed that also had a degree of sensation. As technology becomes more sophisticated, the ability to create a very functional mechanical limb or organ such as a heart or a pancreas beyond our current level should be the standard therapy.

5. Whole life prevention. We will have sophisticated, simple monitoring techniques to determine our health status from day to day, which will link into smart technology and even be sent back through to our medical practitioners for monitoring of our conditions. Also, a better education program for our children (which is really happening in many ways now) to teach them about the benefits of healthy lifestyles so that they move into adulthood with a much healthier attitude than currently exists with many younger people.

What tests do we need to take right now?

1. A basic screen with your GP around age 30: simple tests such as blood pressure, cholesterol and blood sugar with an assessment of your weight, waist circumference and, for females, a gynaecologic check on a regular basis. By age 40, these tests should be repeated. But the major time for the full assessment as far as I am concerned is age 50, unless you have a very strong family history of premature heart disease or cancer.

2. All men aged 50 and women aged 60 should have a coronary calcium score (CAC), which involves a snapshot of your arteries

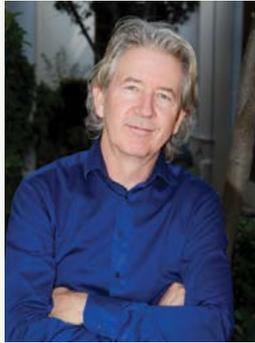
in the heart using a CT scanner; an arterial stiffness measurement; and possibly a stress echocardiogram. An important part of this assessment should be appropriate blood tests looking at the full lipid (blood fat) profile, blood sugar level and an hs-CRP, (High Sensitivity C-Reactive Protein) which is a general test for inflammation, a rather under-diagnosed condition known as elevated lipoprotein and homocysteine levels.

3. At age 50, it is important to consider cancer screening. All females require mammography and a gynaecologic check; males should have a digital rectal examination looking for prostate cancer; and anyone without a family history of bowel cancer should have a colonoscopy at age 50.

4. For women at 50 and men at 60, a DEXA, or bone density, screening for osteoporosis is important as well.

Will we age like our parents?

I believe that genes contribute around 30 per cent to disease. There is a wonderful saying that your genes load the gun but your environment pulls the trigger. But there's a new wave of thinking around the concept of epigenetics. Genes are not fixed structures that will always cause disease unless you have a very serious single-gene disease such as Down syndrome or Huntington's disease. On the whole, genes interact significantly with the environment. To give a very obvious example, you may have the gene for lung cancer, which is only modestly prominent in your genetic makeup, but if you smoke, this will bring the gene out and make it very active. Thus the importance of early screening for any manifestations of a disease. When human genome analysis becomes cheaper and more sophisticated in the relatively new future, we can use this information as well. ●



Patrick Holford *NUT*
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Patrick Holford is a pioneer in new approaches to health and nutrition, specialising in the field of mental health. He is widely regarded as Britain's best-selling author and leading spokesman on nutrition and mental health issues, being frequently quoted in national newspapers around the world. Holford is also popular on radio shows and national television as a presenter, interviewer and guest. ●

patrickholford.com

“Everything in your
body and brain,
without exception, is
made from what you
eat and drink.”

– PATRICK HOLFORD 

Fresh vegetables (preferably organic):

lettuce, rocket, watercress and spinach; cherry tomatoes; cucumber; spring onions; alfalfa sprouts or cress; courgettes; red onions; shallots; mushrooms; broccoli; cabbage; aubergine; peppers.

-  Garlic, ginger.
-  Oat milk, oat cakes and oat flakes.
-  Kamut pasta (this is an ancient form of wheat).
-  Almonds, pecans and chia seeds.
-  Dark chocolate.
-  Fresh fish.
-  Cinnamon.
-  Rooibos chai tea.
-  Organic wine.
-  Limes and lemons.

What is on your daily menu?

Breakfast: Salmon and asparagus omelette or a blueberry yoghurt sundae.

Lunch: Olive, pine nut and feta salad or butternut squash and broccolini salad.

Dinner: Garlic chilli prawns with pak choi or a Thai salmon noodle bowl.

Snacks: Fruit and a handful of raw nuts or seeds, a small pot of live, natural yoghurt with berries, or crudité with hummus.

(Recipes are available in 10 Secrets of 100% Health Cookbook by Patrick Holford and Fiona McDonald Joyce.)

What are the top causes of ageing that most of us don't know about?

The single biggest driver of health problems and premature ageing in the older population is multiple drug use.

Here in Britain we have a five-a-day policy – most people, by 65, are on five different drugs: one for cholesterol, one for blood pressure, one for blood sugar, one for indigestion, one for the bones and so on. The irony is that most of these drugs knock out the very nutrients needed to stay young.

Statins, for example, knock out antioxidants, while the diabetes drug metformin and antacid drugs called PPIs knock out B12. Research from Oxford University shows that two out of five people over 65 have insufficient B12 to stop accelerated brain shrinkage. Lack of B12 is also a major promoter of bone mass loss. You'll need more as you age. You also need more magnesium, which keeps your blood pressure down and helps sleep. Ironically, diuretic drugs given for high blood pressure knock out magnesium.

It's a myth that you don't need supplements as you get older. As digestion and cellular function become less efficient, you need more. Taking high doses of vitamin B has been found to slow the rate your brain shrinks when you are starting to lose your memory. And without a good level of B vitamins, the tiny power plants in every one of your cells gradually starts running down. When that happens, you feel you are getting older.

As the energy factories in cells, called mitochondria, become less efficient with age, you also need more antioxidants – especially vitamin C. I recommend 2 grams a day for anyone over 60. Other hero nutrients include vitamin D, which is made in the skin in the presence of sunlight, so get outdoors and expose yourself – and omega-3 fats, which, in turn, reduce your risk of heart disease, meaning less need for drugs. That means more fish, less meat. It is a much better bet to learn what to eat, and what's worth supplementing, to keep you healthy and drug-free as you get older.



Your health is
in your hands.

What is the number one health mistake we all make?

Too many people have got hooked into the sugar/caffeine/alcohol/stress triangle. This makes you more and more tired, unable to sleep well and addicted. If you want high energy and good sleep, cutting out daily sugar and caffeine is essential. If you can't relax or go a day without a drink, something is not right.

Which health and nutrition myths would you like to see debunked?

1. That you can get all the nutrients you need from a well-balanced diet.

This is simply not true for so many nutrients – vitamin D, B12, vitamin C, zinc, magnesium, to name a few. For example, the minimum amount of daily vitamin C that provides optimal protection from heart disease is 500mg. That's 10 oranges' worth.

Drinking milk or supplementing with calcium doesn't make your bones strong. The old adage that "bones are made of calcium, and milk is rich in calcium, so drink milk to strengthen bones" is misleading at best. The general perception is that a lack of calcium increases the risk of thinning bones as you age and the sales of calcium supplements have remained strong, especially among women.

However, evidence¹ clearly shows that there is little correlation between rates of osteoporosis and calcium intake from milk. And recent studies² also show that giving calcium supplements alone doesn't significantly reduce the risk of fractures in postmenopausal women. So does taking extra calcium help?

The RDA for calcium is between 800 and 1200mg, with the average dietary intake around 900mg. Some people incorrectly supplement 1000mg of calcium on top of their normal daily intake. The problem with this is that studies show that in men, those supplementing with more than 1000mg of calcium a day had a higher risk of cardiovascular death, but not stroke-related death. Calcium, particularly if taken without magnesium and vitamin D, encourages deposition in arteries and raises blood pressure. So what does this mean? It means that calcium for bone health needs to be taken with appropriate co-factors to be effective, which include vitamins D and K and also minerals such as magnesium, zinc and boron. Most of this can be achieved by taking a good multivitamin.

If you don't consume dairy products, you must include seeds, nuts and beans on a regular basis. This way you can achieve around 800mg.

1. www.scientificamerican.com/article.cfm?id=eating-made-simplea

2. http://www.medscape.com/viewarticle/737143_2

“If you don't consume dairy products, you must include seeds, nuts and beans on a regular basis.”



Some nutritionists recommend getting at least 1200–1500mg of calcium in later life, which means supplementing a further 400–700mg of calcium in total. This should not be a problem, if the co-factor bone-building nutrients are also included, along with at least 40mcg of vitamin K. Natural sources of vitamin K include spinach, Brussels sprouts and Swiss chard, which are also good sources of calcium and magnesium.

Maintaining exercise, particularly weight bearing, is also important for maintaining healthy bones. Make sure that you exercise regularly, not only for your bones but to keep your joints supple as well.

2. Eating a low cholesterol diet and taking cholesterol-lowering statins is the answer for heart disease.

Every few months the leading health news story in the UK is that by taking a daily cocktail of drugs as a polypill including statins and aspirin, all our ills will be solved. However, the evidence is not as clear as you are led to believe. Statins appear to be good at lowering LDL (bad) cholesterol, but are pretty poor at raising good HDL cholesterol. They also have many common side effects, such as cold symptoms, headaches, nose bleeds, nausea, digestive problems, and muscle aches and pains. Why is HDL cholesterol important? Forty per cent of cardiovascular problems occur in people who have low HDL cholesterol levels.

Before resorting to statins, there are other things you can do to help correct your cholesterol levels. These include following a strict low GL diet and exercise program, encompassing an increase in plant sterols and soluble fibres increasing omega-3 fats (such as from oily fish) and reducing your stress. To help promote your HDL levels, the supplementing of vitamin B, particularly niacin (B3), is a good approach. According to a major review in the *New England Journal of Medicine*³, the most effective way is with vitamin B3 – niacin. Niacin also comes out

on top in a review of the drug trials to raise HDL⁴, which describes the new medications as “disappointing”.

A number of studies have shown that niacin is effective not only in raising HDL – by up to 35 per cent – but also in reducing LDL by up to 25 per cent. It also reduces levels of two other markers for heart disease: lipoprotein A and fibrinogen. By way of comparison, statins only raise HDL by between 2 and 15 per cent.

I recommend 1000mg of niacin a day to lower high LDL cholesterol and raise a low HDL cholesterol. However you must choose a non-blushing form, since niacin, in high doses, makes you blush.

3. That eating wheat bran and high fibre bread will help your constipation.

Fibre is an important part of a healthy diet, helping to improve digestive health, and it may also prevent health issues such as heart disease, constipation, weight gain and some cancers. However, contrary to popular belief, not all fibres are created equally. When people think of fibre, they usually just think about the insoluble fibres – such as those in wholemeal bread, wheat bran and some cereals. These can't be digested and pass through the body unmodified, helping other foods through the digestive system and bowel.

However, there are soluble fibres that can be more beneficial – especially for certain health conditions – including those found in oats, some fruits such as apples, and vegetables such as carrots and potatoes. Chia seeds are also a good source – as well as soluble fibres, they also give you the essential fats and lots of protein. I like to add a teaspoonful to oats or a smoothie for breakfast.

Soluble fibres dissolve and become gel-like, absorbing lots of water, unlike wheat bran, for example, which absorbs very little. The best-known example is oat fibre or bran, rich in a type of fibre called beta-glucans,

3. <http://www.nejm.org/doi/full/10.1056/NEJMcp044370>

4. <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/17699012>

which become viscous when added to or cooked with water, giving porridge its gloomy consistency. This soluble fibre helps to coat foods and the digestive tract in a way that slows down the release of sugars from food, effectively lowering the GL. It also attaches to cholesterol in the gut and helps eliminate it.

What are your secrets to maintaining optimal health?

Sex, no drugs and rock and roll.

Sex: A reasonable weight, plenty of sunshine for vitamin D and a diet that is lower in carbs will keep both energy and libido up. One of the keys is learning how to eat a low GL diet. Eating protein with carbohydrate is key. For example, an apple on its own is far less satisfying than an apple and a few nuts. Scrambled eggs on toast will keep you feeling fuller for longer than toast and jam. Choosing a low GL bread such as rye sourdough is even better.

No drugs: As I explained earlier in the “top three causes of ageing”, the older you get, the more prescription drugs you’ll be offered – and certain combinations can actually accelerate the ageing process. Focus on your diet and taking the right supplements instead.

Rock and roll: Keep moving – walking, dancing and other forms of exercise. Keep your friends around you, stay passionate and relaxed. “Exercise is the closest thing to an anti-ageing pill,” says Professor Wayne Derman, who has studied the effects of exercise in slowing down the ageing process. Keeping positive, doing things you enjoy, learning new things and having a good social life and relationships also add years to life.

Which health trends are destined to succeed?

Essential fats will be more and more recognised for their ability to stave off memory loss and Alzheimer’s.

We will increasingly move away from fat as the culprit of health problems and recognise that sugar, and a high-carb diet, are the main diet problems driving disease epidemics.

Vitamin D RDA will come under fire to change. It was doubled in Nordic countries in 2013.

People will get smart to the notion that neither genes nor miracle drugs will solve Alzheimer’s. Prevention of modifiable risk factors relating to diet and lifestyle is the way forward.

Super fibres, such as glucomannan, will be recognised for their help in both weight and diabetes control.

The dangers of regular statins will become known as big pharma sells in new “super statins”, with the goal of prescribing to millions. Blood cholesterol, as the criteria for prescribing statins will be downplayed to broaden the market.

There will be more emphasis on polyphenols as the hero ingredients in fruit and vegetables, green tea, wine and chocolate, not just antioxidants. There will be more talk about “phytonutrients” – compounds in food – to help stave off various diseases.

The link between dairy products and cancer will become more known. The idea of wheat and dairy products as staple foods will become increasingly questioned. Kamut, an ancient form of wheat, will become popular over modern wheat because of its proven health benefits.

Ketones, generated by eating coconut butter, will be a hot topic of discussion. Basically, cells have two ways of deriving energy – glucose and ketones – much like a hybrid car. Switching to ketones has some advantages in certain states – for example, in endurance sports.

So, ketones will get talked about more and more in sports and also weight loss.

Chromium will be increasingly recognised as the best “drug” for diabetes, helping to reverse insulin resistance. Too much insulin, driven by high carb diets, will be recognised as a very bad thing, driving high blood pressure, cholesterol and blood fat (triglycerides).

What tests do we need to take right now?

If you are over 50, the Cognitive Function test at www.foodforthebrain.org. It’s free.

Your homocysteine level. This is a blood test. If your level is above 10mcmol/l, that equates to faster brain and bone shrinkage and greater risk for heart disease. Keep it down by supplementing enough B vitamin (B6, B12 and folate). The amount you need depends on your homocysteine level.

Will we age like our parents?

In the time of Hippocrates, diseases were thought to be caused by the gods. He didn’t buy that and set out to find the real causes of disease – he had a hunch that a lot of it was down to diet and lifestyle. “Let food be your medicine,” he said. Our current fixation with genes as the mysterious causes of disease are a bit like the gods of old, because genes play a relatively small role in most of the diseases you or I are likely to get.

A maximum of 15 per cent of the risk for breast cancer is due to inherited factors, and since not all inheritance is genetic, that means that even less is “in the genes”.⁵

Lately, people have become paranoid about having a cancer gene, such as BRCA and HER2 gene, and more and more women are electing to remove their breasts or ovaries

– and, for men, the prostate, just in case – without realising that genes can be turned on and off by what you eat. For example, a recent study shows that milk switches on the BRCA breast cancer-related gene. Old school says, “Cut off your breasts.” New school says, “Avoid milk to turn off the gene.”

After all, both breast and prostate cancer incidence goes up with every generation, yet the genes haven’t changed. So why didn’t your grandmother get breast cancer? This idea of removing the part that may get disease is a perverse kind of prevention. What do you remove for heart disease or Alzheimer’s?

All we know genes do is tell the body how to put proteins together, which make enzymes, or hormones, for example. Having defective enzymes or hormones could increase your risk for disease, but rarely causes it. Only 1 per cent of Alzheimer’s disease, for example, is caused by genes.

It’s what you eat and how you live that switches genes on and off. For example a low GL diets switches on a set of genes that keep you young and healthy. Sugar, on the other hand, turns them off. Instead of removing the body part why not remove the diet part, such as sugar in the case of diabetes, or dairy products in the case of prostate and possibly breast cancer?

What’s your secret to maintaining a youthful appearance?

Apply a vitamin A-based skincare product to your skin daily. This keeps the skin young.

Eat plenty of antioxidant- and polyphenol-rich fruits and vegetables.

Keep your omega-3 intake high from eating fish, raw nuts and seeds, such as chia.

Drink the equivalent of six to eight glasses of water a day. ●

5. Lichtenstein et al., ‘Environmental and Heritable Factors in the Causation of Cancer — Analyses of Cohorts of Twins from Sweden, Denmark, and Finland’, *N Eng J Med*, vol 343(2), 2000, pp. 78-85

Yours in Good Health

How to control the odds of getting cancer and heart disease

Three keys to maintain your libido

Why how you eat can reduce how much you eat

Which brain nutrients can help to also reduce physical disease

Four keys to help children live happier and healthier lives

Multi-faceted natural therapies to achieve overall wellbeing

Food fallacies to avoid



"Gone are the days where we got sick and expected the doctor to heal us. Today we have the power and knowledge to be far more proactive about our health. This is what lifestyle medicine is all about.

While we can't prevent every ailment and serious disease can strike the healthiest person, there is much we can do to dramatically reduce our risk, while at the same time boosting our vitality to allow us to get the most from life. This inspiring collection of interviews with health experts in diverse fields from neuroscience to holistic practitioners takes us on a trip through the thoughts, theories and science of what we currently know. It makes for a fascinating read."

Dr Joanna McMillan – Nutrition Scientist, Dietitian & Media Health Presenter

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