



Dr. Joseph Mercola
Author of the
[Total Health Program](#)

11 More Important Articles Containing Key Health Secrets You Need to Know

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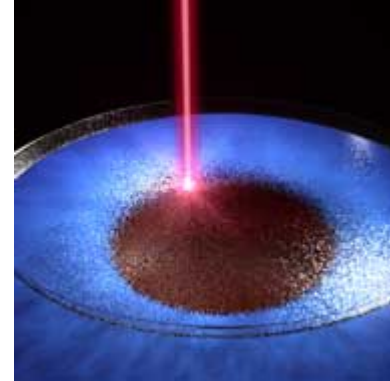
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The Dangers of LASIK Surgery: Why You Want to Avoid This Like the Plague

For those who have entertained the idea of getting Laser-Assisted In Situ Keratomileusis -- commonly referred to as LASIK surgery -- in hopes of correcting their vision ... think again.

What exactly is LASIK surgery? It is a procedure that permanently changes the shape of your cornea (the clear covering of the front of the eye) with an excimer laser:



- Using a knife known as a microkeratome, a flap is cut in the cornea; a hinge is spared at one end of the flap.
- The hinged flap is then folded back, revealing the stroma (the middlesection of the cornea).
- Finally, pulses from a computer-controlled laser vaporize a portion of the stroma and the flap is replaced.

The end result: perfect vision, right? Not necessarily.

Seeing Trouble

Many patients are under the impression LASIK surgery will end in instant perfect vision; however, that simply is not the case.

That's because, while the procedure is quick in itself, it is likely to lead to at least six months of impaired vision and significant discomfort, at the end of which only one eye may have normal sight. (And if the first eye does not heal to expectation, the second operation on the other eye will never be done and the imbalance will be permanent.)

Then there are the surgical disasters that can happen. You can visit SurgicalEyes.org to review some of the horror stories. The site is devoted to focusing attention on the unique problems faced by those who have undergone unsuccessful LASIK (and other eye) surgeries.

SurgicalEyes.org

Seeing.org

Dr. Mercola's Comment:

The bottom line is that laser eye surgery (LASIK) does absolutely nothing to treat the cause of your vision loss, and is 100-percent guaranteed to make your vision

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worse over time. Please trust me on this one, as I am convinced that it is true.

Eventually, Even Glasses Worsen Vision

The same actually holds true for glasses of any kind -- they're guaranteed to worsen your vision over time. The additional problem with LASIK is that you permanently make your cornea your "glasses" and it is obviously very difficult to get a new pair of glasses when they are part of your eye.

Fortunately, there are effective alternatives. I turned 50 last year, and for the last five years, like most of you in this age range, I have noticed a progressive decline in my near vision (presbyopia).

It was becoming progressively more difficult to read the menu in a dark restaurant without glasses. Well, a few weeks ago I flew to Los Angeles to undergo some private mentoring in a vision restoration process that has been around for nearly 100 years.

And I have to tell you that it worked! I am so excited as I can now see about 50 percent better, and it is likely I will soon be able to read 4-point font at six inches from my eyes -- even in dim light -- with the new exercises I am doing. This is one of the most exciting personal health benefits I have ever experienced. To regain lost vision without the use of glasses is absolutely amazing. Even I am still having a hard time believing it.

While it is great to recover my vision, it is even more exciting to realize that this will also likely prevent mental deterioration and [Alzheimer's disease](#). Pretty phenomenal deal from my perspective.

Exercise Your Vision

The key I have learned is to remove the mental strain, stop staring and relax, and you can start to read very tiny print. There are a number of practical exercises you can do to achieve this. I have been exercising for nearly 40 years, and I never realized that your eyes need to be exercised just like the rest of your body. What is really surprising, though, is that these exercises are not what you'd expect at all and most are the opposite of what is commonly recommended.

New Course in the Fall

It cost me several thousand dollars to learn this technique, and I am still working through it, but once I have fully regained my near vision I plan on working with a company that will be developing and offering an entire course on this process in the fall. The course will have hundreds of pages of documentation on this century-old process that has restored the vision for tens of thousands of people who have had access to clinicians who understood the secret of restoring vision loss.

The process works for recovery of both near and far vision. The course will initially be offered for those with presbyopia (far sightedness or loss typically associated with old age). Visual recovery for those with myopia is a bit more challenging as there are many more variables to address. However, many of the principles will work for

both types of vision loss.

Sun Exposure

I can give you a hint that exposing yourself to the sun is a very powerful part of the recovery. One of the exercises involves nothing more than looking at the sun with your eyes closed and moving your head in an Infiniti loop for about five minutes. It is important to make sure that your eyelids are closed. This exercise will only work on a sunny day, though, as you really need bright sun exposure to obtain the benefits.

In my free time I am reviewing more than 2,000 pages of text that have been written about this process and most of the pages are over 75 years old. Until this company is able to put the course together, I would give you some serious cautions.

Avoid LASIK

Please NEVER, NEVER, NEVER get [laser eye surgery \(LASIK\)](#) done, as it has a significant failure rate and can cause serious side effects. It will be far easier to achieve full vision recovery if you have not had this surgery.

If you have already had LASIK done, there's hope as it is still possible for you to recover your vision; it is just a bit more challenging and will take longer.

Please also remember that, in addition to vision improvement exercises, it will always be of vital importance to make dietary choices that will support the integrity and resiliency of the tissue in your eyes, as well as the rest of your body. These recommendations include:

- [Avoiding trans fats](#)
- [Eating dark-colored berries](#)
- [Getting plenty of lutein](#)
- [Increasing your intake of omega-3 fats](#)

Gary Craig's Comments:

In addition to other ideas within this article, let me also urge the use of EFT for vision issues. Our eyes consist of countless delicate muscles, veins and nerves and thus are clearly among the body's most sensitive organs. It takes no stretch of the imagination, then, to conclude that they can be affected by the chemical changes brought about in our bodies by our unresolved angers, traumas, fears and anxieties. In one of my recent workshops, for example, over 90 percent of the participants said they had vision issues.

To give you an example EFT's striking use in this regard, about two years ago I spent an afternoon with four vision patients of Dr. Larry Jebrock (optometrist). Dr. Jebrock took vision measurements for each participant both before and after our EFT session. Even though I dealt ONLY with their emotional issues (not vision issues), the result was a 30 percent improvement in their vision. This case is written up in more detail [on the EFT Web site](#).



Gary Craig is a pioneering developer of EFT, a profoundly effective emotional/mental healing approach. Dr. Mercola attributes much of the incredible and permanent patient successes at his clinic, The Optimal Wellness Center, to the fact that EFT is used with every patient to address all three levels of healing: mind, body and spirit. Of the thousands of natural treatments Dr. Mercola has studied and used in his 20 years of practicing medicine, he feels that EFT is the greatest healing technique that exists.

[Read more about Gary Craig's EFT Course.](#)

Related Articles:

[Lasik Eye Surgery Affected by Climate](#)

[More Dangers of LASIK Surgery](#)

[Laser Eye Surgery Has 10 Percent Failure Rate](#)

Reduce Grains and Sugar to Lose Weight and Improve Health

For several million years, humans existed on a diet of animals and vegetation. It was only with the advent of agriculture a mere 10,000 years ago - a fraction of a second in evolutionary time - that humans began ingesting large amounts of sugar and starch in the form of grains (and potatoes) into their diets. Indeed, 99.99% of our genes were formed before the advent of agriculture; in biological terms, our bodies are still those of hunter-gatherers.

While the human shift to agriculture produced indisputable gains for man - modern civilization is based on this epoch - societies where the transition from a primarily meat/vegetation diet to one high in cereals show a reduced lifespan and stature, increases in infant mortality and infectious disease, and higher nutritional deficiencies.

Contemporary humans have not suddenly evolved mechanisms to incorporate the high carbohydrates from starch- and sugar-rich foods into their diet. In short, we are consuming far too much bread, cereal, pasta, corn (a grain, not a vegetable), rice, potatoes and Little Debbie snack cakes, with very grave consequences to our health. Making matters worse, most of these carbohydrates we consume come in the form of processed food.

That 65% of Americans are overweight, and 27% clinically obese, in a nation addicted to sesame seed buns for that hamburger, with a side of French fries and a Coke, is no coincidence. It is not the fat in the foods we eat but, far more, the excess carbohydrates from our starch- and sugar-loaded diet that is making people fat and unhealthy, and leading to epidemic levels of a host of diseases such as diabetes.

If you are experiencing any of the following symptoms, chances are very good that the excess carbohydrates in your body are, in part or whole, to blame:

- Excess weight
- Fatigue and frequent sleepiness
- Depression
- Brain fogginess
- Bloating
- Low blood sugar
- High blood pressure
- High triglycerides

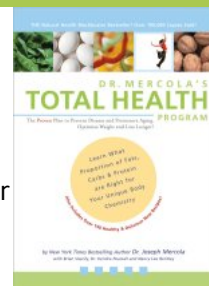
We all need a certain amount of carbohydrates, of course, but, through our addiction to grains, potatoes, sweets

Prevent Disease, Optimize Weight, Live Longer -- Guaranteed

Find out why my new book, "[Dr. Mercola's Total Health Program](#)," is guaranteed to improve your health and weight. It will:

- Help you prevent disease, lose weight, look and feel younger, and increase your energy quickly and permanently
- Reveal your particular biochemistry, or "metabolic type," and how to eat the right proportions of carbohydrates, proteins and fats for your type
- Provide everything you need to know about all the healthiest foods, and those you should avoid

Plus it contains over 150 original delicious, nutritious low-carb recipes that are easy to prepare and immensely satisfying. My first book, [The No-Grain Diet](#), was a New York Times bestseller, and you will love what this life-time guaranteed "TOTAL HEALTH" does for you, as well! [Find out more...](#)



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and other starchy and sugary foods, we are consuming far too many. The body's storage capacity for carbohydrates is quite limited, though, so here's what happens to all the excess: they are converted, via insulin, into fat and stored in the adipose, or fatty, tissue.

Any meal or snack high in carbohydrates generates a rapid rise in blood glucose. To adjust for this rise, the pancreas secretes the hormone insulin into the bloodstream, which lowers the glucose. Insulin is, though, essentially a storage hormone, evolved over those millions of years of humans prior to the agricultural age, to store the excess calories from carbohydrates in the form of fat in case of famine.

Insulin, stimulated by the excess carbohydrates in our overabundant consumption of grains, starches and sweets, is responsible for all those bulging stomachs and fat rolls in thighs and chins.

Even worse, high insulin levels suppress two other important hormones - glucagons and growth hormones - that are responsible for burning fat and sugar and promoting muscle development, respectively. So insulin from excess carbohydrates promotes fat, and then wards off the body's ability to lose that fat.

Excess weight and obesity lead to heart disease and a wide variety of other diseases. But the ill effect of grains and sugars does not end there. They suppress the immune system, contributing to allergies, and they are responsible for a host of digestive disorders. They contribute to depression, and their excess consumption is, in fact, associated with many of the chronic diseases in our nation, such as cancer and diabetes.

I encourage you to delve into this subject in greater detail by clicking on the links below, or by using our powerful search tool above.

Subscribe to [my free e-newsletter](#) for ongoing detail on reducing grains and sweets, and for a comprehensive dietary plan geared toward fighting illness, preventing disease, increasing energy and optimizing your weight, check out [my new book](#).

The bottom line is this: Americans need to reduce their intake of grains, including corn-based foods, and all sweets and potatoes, dramatically.

Related Articles:

[The Paleolithic Diet and its Modern Implications](#)

[Low Grain and Carbohydrate Diets Treat Hypoglycemia, Heart Disease, Diabetes Cancer and Nearly All Chronic Diseases](#)

[Lower Your Grains & Lower Your Insulin Levels!](#)

[Grass Fed Cattle Benefits Animals and People](#)

[The Cancer/Sugar Connection](#)

[78 Ways Sugar Can Ruin Your Health](#)

Burn Fat, Not Sugar, to Lose Weight

Dr. Mercola's Comment:

Dr. Ron Rosedale is one of this country's leading experts on [leptin](#), a hormone whose appreciation is where insulin's was 10 years ago. Over the past few months, he has been kind enough to expand on [the new appreciation of leptin](#) a number of times on my Web site.

The original draft of his book, [The Rosedale Diet](#), has the best explanation of the science of leptin written; however, publishers are under pressure to sell books to the masses to make money, and therefore the book is edited to do so, and some of the science did not make it past the scissors.

The public's loss is your gain, as you are now able to read some excerpts of his original version that have not been previously published.

By Ron Rosedale, MD

When we talk about what to eat, we must first realize who, or rather what, is eating.

In fact, we, ourselves, are not really doing the eating. It is our cells that eat. When we put food in our mouth, that is just a continuation of the transport of food from the farms to the grocery store then into our mouth; the food is then transported to our cells by our bloodstream. It is our cells that really do the eating and that need the fuel and the parts to regenerate themselves.



Ron Rosedale, MD

And cells can only eat two kinds of food for fuel. They can eat sugar or they can eat fat, and their health and your health will be determined by the primary fuel that they burn.

I have been asked to summarize in a single sentence what would best promote health. It is this: Health and lifespan is determined by the proportion of fat versus sugar people burn throughout their lifetime. The more fat that one burns as fuel, the healthier the person will be, and the more likely they will live a long time. The more sugar a person burns, the more disease ridden and the shorter a lifespan a person is likely to have.

Becoming a Fat Burner

How does one learn to, and how does one become a fat burner? How does one change their primary fuel from sugar to fat?

One gets good at most anything by doing it frequently. You can become a good tennis player by playing tennis frequently and a good golf player by golfing frequently. Likewise, your body becomes adapted to burning fat by burning fat frequently.

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However, most people become very adapted at burning sugar; your body continues to want to "keep playing" sugar, to burn more sugar, even when you are not eating. When you're sleeping at night, your body then prefers to burn sugar and it gets that sugar by breaking down proteins in your body, which means lean body mass, which includes muscle and bone. I call that metabolic momentum.

Your body continues to like to do what it has become accustomed to doing. If you have burned sugar throughout the day, you prefer to burn sugar at night even when you are not eating. Your body does not store very much sugar and prefers to hold onto much of it and, therefore, you'll continue to manufacture sugar by a process called gluconeogenesis from lean body mass. You store fat -- and, in many people, lots of it -- in your "cupboard" and not very much sugar, because fat is the fuel that your body would prefer to store and later to burn to stay healthy.

However, when you eat sugar and fat together, your body will burn sugar first. I believe that it burns the sugar off because that is one way to get rid of it. Sugar causes damage by glycosylation and having it around too long is extremely damaging and accelerates aging.

Therefore, your body might get rid of sugar to minimize the damage caused by keeping it around. You'll have to burn off almost all the sugar that you eat before you can start burning fat and, in most cases, that means that the fat you have eaten with sugar gets stored. Your body continues to become adapted to burning sugar and not fat.

People get fat not so much because they eat fat, but because they have forgotten how to burn it, and because of poor hormonal communication.

Leptin Resistance

Leptin resistance causes an increase in visceral fat. This smothers your liver from receiving proper hormonal signals. Your liver is a very important metabolic organ and when it cannot listen to signals properly -- for instance from insulin -- it makes too much sugar contributing to insulin resistance and diabetes.

Insulin and Leptin Resistance

Obesity is the price you pay to keep your blood sugars down. If you continue making fat out of sugar, it takes sugar out of your bloodstream, keeping your blood sugars low. You continue getting fat and having poor insulin sensitivity, but are not yet diagnosed with diabetes.

However, your fat stores start leveling off. When you stop making fat and finally stop becoming more and more obese, your blood sugars rise because you have no place left to dump it into. A popular class of diabetic drug (the PPAR gamma agonists) works by making more fat cells to dump sugar into. They make you fatter but, once again, do not address the primary problem.

It is important to note that, contrary to the belief of almost everyone, the public and medical professionals alike, diabetes is not a disease of blood sugar: It is a disease of insulin signaling.

Lowering blood sugar without addressing the primary problem of insulin resistance gets you nowhere at best, and most of the time will make you worse. Just as you can become hard of hearing, so too do your cells become "hard of hearing." Two hormones that they have a difficult time listening to over time are insulin and leptin.

Just as increased noise exposure can cause increasing deafness, so does increasing insulin and leptin exposure cause your cells to become more and more deaf to the life-promoting messages that insulin and leptin are trying to deliver to them.

A Note on Health

We are really a colony of cells. We are not a single individual. We are 10 to 15 trillion individual cellular lives that are trying to live in harmony. It is only a testament to the fine behavior orchestrated by hormonal orders that we perceive our 10 trillion lives as a single individual. We are really a finely tuned ant colony or beehive.

Our 10 trillion lives are like an extremely cooperating military. The military is controlled by officers handing out orders. The officers comprise a hierarchy; some are generals, some are corporals, and some are captains. There are sergeants and privates. Insulin and leptin would most definitely be considered generals giving orders to many other hormones, many other subservient officers, which in turn must give orders to others.

I would consider cholesterol to be perhaps a corporal only because cholesterol itself can be made into more prominent officers, into other hormones. Glucose is nothing more than a private listening to orders.

It isn't the glucose that you want to change per se, but orders given to it. The same goes for cholesterol. If you want to be healthy, you must change the orders being handed out. That means changing hormonal signals as high up the hierarchy as one can. Fortunately, it is not that difficult to change those orders, or have those orders better heard and understood, especially of the two important generals: leptin and insulin.

Related Articles:

[Diabetes Is Not A Disease Of Blood Sugar!](#)

[Cholesterol is NOT the Cause of Heart Disease](#)

[Insulin and Its Metabolic Effects](#)

Toxic Compounds in Food Containers Wreak Havoc on Your Health

Women may want to think twice before using plastic food containers and cans, for a study found a chemical widely used in such packaging--known as bisphenol-A, or BPA--may be linked to the incidence of breast cancer.



Researchers reported persistent alterations to mammary gland development after giving doses of the compound to pregnant mice that were designed to mirror human exposure levels. Experiments suggested mammary glands of female mice grew in a way that made them more susceptible to breast cancer development and also to respond unusually to estrogen--which fuels most breast cancer in humans.

Toxic Exposure

The mice involved in the study were treated late in pregnancy and about four days after birth; the offspring were examined when they reached puberty about a month later. Due to BPA exposure, researchers found:

- Large increases in the number and density of terminal end buds, part of the mammary gland structure where breast tumors originate in both animals and humans.
- A decrease in the ability to get rid of damaged cells that could be cancerous.
- Mice exposed to higher doses of the compound developed mammary glands more sensitive to estrogen.

What's more, while the results of the study are indeed concerning, they are not the first to highlight the negative health consequences of widely used chemicals: Research has also found that phthalates (also found in plastics) affect the genital development of baby boys.

[Endocrinology](#) **May 26, 2005**

[The Guardian](#) **May 30, 2005**

Dr. Mercola's Comment:

Studies have shown that [BPA can mimic the actions of estradiol \(a type of estrogen\)](#) in the body, contributing to, among other symptoms, the following changes in mice and rat studies:

- Early puberty

- Increased fat formation
- Abnormal sexual behavior
- Disrupted reproductive cycles

As exposure to estrogen from external sources has been [linked to breast cancer in the past](#), the above results are consistent with previous findings on this topic.

The disruption of your hormone system, and all of the consequences resulting from it, is a typical way that environmental toxins [negatively impact your body](#).

Cancer has many contributing factors, so it is important to appreciate that prevention is not necessarily dependent on a single item. While there are [many steps you can take](#) to strongly influence your chances of avoiding this extremely common killer, reducing your exposure to toxins is an important step in the right direction. And, while for most of us it may be next to impossible to [completely avoid all toxins](#), the following tips can certainly be helpful:

Tips to Avoid Toxins

1. First and foremost [store your food in glass containers](#) whenever possible, as it is the most inert container you can use.
2. Buy and eat, as much as possible, [organic foods](#). If you can only purchase one organic product it probably should be free-range organic eggs. Fortunately, most grocery stores now have these available. If they don't, contact the store manager and encourage him or her to carry them. Additionally, I believe [raw milk products](#) are a key to staying healthy. They are best obtained locally but many people have a great challenge finding them. To find a raw milk distributor in your area, try the by-state and by-country locator at: <http://www.rawmilk.org/>.
3. Rather than eating fish, which is largely contaminated with PCBs and mercury, consume a high-quality, purified fish or cod liver oil. Contact your favorite health food store to find it or another high-quality brand, or use [our store](#) for your convenience. Another option is to have your wild-caught fish lab tested to find out if it is a pure source (we've found a delicious, wild [Alaskan salmon](#) that is free from harmful levels of mercury and PCBs).
4. Avoid processed foods--remember that they're frequently processed with a variety of chemicals!
5. Only use natural cleaning products in your home. Most health food stores will have these available or you can search online for them.
6. Switch to [natural brands of toiletries](#), including shampoo, toothpaste, [antiperspirants](#) and cosmetics. Same sources as above for these, either your local health food store or you can search online.
7. Remove any metal fillings, as they're [a major source of mercury](#). Be sure to have this done by a [qualified biological dentist](#). Although nearly any dentist is technically qualified to replace your amalgam fillings, far less than 95 percent have any clue on how to do it properly so your risk of mercury exposure is minimized. Please avoid the mistake I have seen THOUSANDS of patients make of having your fillings replaced by a non-qualified dentist. I made this mistake myself nearly 20 years ago. Do it right the first time and save yourself the expense and grief. If you don't personally know a qualified

- biological dentist, many people find one by contacting several of the health food stores in their area and asking the employees who they know. This is typically an excellent resource as they are usually networked quite well in the local health community.
8. Avoid using artificial air fresheners, dryer sheets, fabric softeners or other synthetic fragrances as they can pollute the air you are breathing.
 9. Avoid artificial food additives of all kind, including [artificial sweeteners](#) and [MSG](#).
 10. Get plenty of safe sun exposure to [boost your vitamin D levels](#) and your [immune system](#) (you'll be better able to fight disease).
 11. Seek to build your health up through the nutrition insights detailed in my [Total Health Program](#), and then limit your use of drugs (prescription and over-the-counter) as much as possible. Drugs are chemicals too, and they will leave residues and accumulate in your body over time.

Related Articles:

[Why Plastics Can Make You Sick](#)

[Two Thirds of Canned Foods Found to Have Low Levels of Potent Carcinogen](#)

[Nalgene Water Bottles Appear to be Unsafe](#)

Do What You Love: Time is Too Short to do Anything Else ...

Steve Jobs, CEO of Apple Computer and Pixar Animation Studios, delivered a truly inspirational commencement address to some 5,000 Stanford University graduates. Without further adieu, his message:

"I am honored to be with you today at your commencement from one of the finest universities in the world. I never graduated from college. Truth be told, this is the closest I've ever gotten to a college graduation. Today I want to tell you three stories from my life. That's it. No big deal. Just three stories.



The First Story is About Connecting the Dots.

I dropped out of Reed College after the first 6 months, but then stayed around as a drop-in for another 18 months or so before I really quit. So why did I drop out?

It started before I was born. My biological mother was a young, unwed college graduate student, and she decided to put me up for adoption. She felt very strongly that I should be adopted by college graduates, so everything was all set for me to be adopted at birth by a lawyer and his wife.

Except that when I popped out they decided at the last minute that they really wanted a girl. So my parents, who were on a waiting list, got a call in the middle of the night asking: 'We have an unexpected baby boy; do you want him?' They said: 'Of course.' My biological mother later found out that my mother had never graduated from college and that my father had never graduated from high school. She refused to sign the final adoption papers. She only relented a few months later when my parents promised that I would someday go to college.

And 17 years later I did go to college. But I naively chose a college that was almost as expensive as Stanford, and all of my working-class parents' savings were being spent on my college tuition.

After six months, I couldn't see the value in it. I had no idea what I wanted to do with my life and no idea how college was going to help me figure it out. And here I was spending all of the money my parents had saved their entire life. **So I decided to drop out and trust that it would all work out OK. It was pretty scary at the time, but looking back it was one of the best decisions I ever made.** The minute I dropped out I could stop taking the required classes that didn't interest me, and begin dropping in on the ones that looked interesting.

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It wasn't all romantic. I didn't have a dorm room, so I slept on the floor in friends' rooms, I returned coke bottles for the 5¢ deposits to buy food with, and I would walk the 7 miles across town every Sunday night to get one good meal a week at the Hare Krishna temple. I loved it. And much of what I stumbled into by following my curiosity and intuition turned out to be priceless later on. Let me give you one example:

Reed College at that time offered perhaps the best calligraphy instruction in the country. Throughout the campus every poster, every label on every drawer, was beautifully hand calligraphed.

Because I had dropped out and didn't have to take the normal classes, I decided to take a calligraphy class to learn how to do this. I learned about serif and san serif typefaces, about varying the amount of space between different letter combinations, about what makes great typography great. It was beautiful, historical, artistically subtle in a way that science can't capture, and I found it fascinating.

None of this had even a hope of any practical application in my life. But ten years later, when we were designing the first Macintosh computer, it all came back to me. And we designed it all into the Mac. It was the first computer with beautiful typography. If I had never dropped in on that single course in college, the Mac would have never had multiple typefaces or proportionally spaced fonts. And since Windows just copied the Mac, it's likely that no personal computer would have them.

If I had never dropped out, I would have never dropped in on this calligraphy class, and personal computers might not have the wonderful typography that they do. Of course it was impossible to connect the dots looking forward when I was in college. But it was very, very clear looking backwards ten years later.

Again, you can't connect the dots looking forward; you can only connect them looking backwards. So you have to trust that the dots will somehow connect in your future. You have to trust in something--your gut, destiny, life, karma, whatever. This approach has never let me down, and it has made all the difference in my life.

My Second Story is About Love and Loss.

I was lucky--I found what I loved to do early in life. Woz and I started Apple in my parents' garage when I was 20. We worked hard, and in 10 years **Apple had grown from just the two of us in a garage into a \$2 billion company with over 4000 employees.** We had just released our finest creation--the Macintosh--a year earlier, and I had just turned 30.

And then I got fired.

How can you get fired from a company you started? Well, as Apple grew we hired someone who I thought was very talented to run the company with me, and for the first year or so things went well. But then our visions of the future began to diverge and eventually we had a falling out. When we did, our Board of Directors sided with him. So at 30 I was out. And very publicly out. What had been the focus of my entire adult life was gone, and it was devastating.

I really didn't know what to do for a few months. I felt that I had let the previous generation of entrepreneurs down--that I had dropped the baton as it was being passed to me.

I met with David Packard and Bob Noyce and tried to apologize for screwing up so badly. I was a very public failure, and I even thought about running away from the valley. But something slowly began to dawn on me--I still loved what I did. The turn of events at Apple had not changed that one bit. I had been rejected, but I was still in love. And so I decided to start over.

Fired From Apple

I didn't see it then, but it turned out that getting fired from Apple was the best thing that could have ever happened to me. The heaviness of being successful was replaced by the lightness of being a beginner again, less sure about everything. It freed me to enter one of the most creative periods of my life.

During the next five years, I started a company named NeXT, another company named Pixar, and fell in love with an amazing woman who would become my wife. Pixar went on to create the world's first computer animated feature film, Toy Story, and is now the most successful animation studio in the world. In a remarkable turn of events, Apple bought NeXT, I returned to Apple, and the technology we developed at NeXT is at the heart of Apple's current renaissance. And Laurene and I have a wonderful family together.

I'm pretty sure none of this would have happened if I hadn't been fired from Apple. It was awful-tasting medicine, but I guess the patient needed it.

Sometimes life hits you in the head with a brick. Don't lose faith. **I'm convinced that the only thing that kept me going was that I loved what I did. You've got to find what you love.** And that is as true for your work as it is for your lovers.

Your work is going to fill a large part of your life, and the only way to be truly satisfied is to do what you believe is great work. And the only way to do great work is to love what you do. If you haven't found it yet, keep looking. Don't settle. As with all matters of the heart, you'll know when you find it. And, like any great relationship, it just gets better and better as the years roll on. So keep looking until you find it. Don't settle.

My Third Story is About Death.

When I was 17, I read a quote that went something like: 'If you live each day as if it was your last, someday you'll most certainly be right.'

It made an impression on me, and since then, for the past 33 years, I have looked in the mirror every morning and asked myself: 'If today were the last day of my life, would I want to do what I am about to do today?' And whenever the answer has been 'No' for too many days in a row, I know I need to change something.

Remembering that I'll be dead soon is the most important tool I've ever encountered to help me make the big choices in life. **Because almost everything--all external**

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expectations, all pride, all fear of embarrassment or failure--these things just fall away in the face of death, leaving only what is truly important. Remembering that you are going to die is the best way I know to avoid the trap of thinking you have something to lose. You are already naked. There is no reason not to follow your heart.

Diagnosed With Cancer

About a year ago I was diagnosed with cancer.

I had a scan at 7:30 in the morning, and it clearly showed a tumor on my pancreas. I didn't even know what a pancreas was. The doctors told me this was almost certainly a type of cancer that is incurable, and that I should expect to live no longer than three to six months.

My doctor advised me to go home and get my affairs in order, which is doctor's code for prepare to die. It means to try to tell your kids everything you thought you'd have the next 10 years to tell them in just a few months. It means to make sure everything is buttoned up so that it will be as easy as possible for your family. It means to say your goodbyes.

I lived with that diagnosis all day. Later that evening I had a biopsy, where they stuck an endoscope down my throat, through my stomach and into my intestines, put a needle into my pancreas and got a few cells from the tumor. I was sedated, but my wife, who was there, told me that when they viewed the cells under a microscope the doctors started crying because it turned out to be a very rare form of pancreatic cancer that is curable with surgery.

I had the surgery and I'm fine now.

This was the closest I've been to facing death, and I hope it's the closest I get for a few more decades. Having lived through it, I can now say this to you with a bit more certainty than when death was a useful but purely intellectual concept:

No one wants to die. Even people who want to go to heaven don't want to die to get there. And yet death is the destination we all share. No one has ever escaped it.

And that is as it should be, because Death is very likely the single best invention of Life. It is Life's change agent. It clears out the old to make way for the new. Right now the new is you, but someday not too long from now, you will gradually become the old and be cleared away. Sorry to be so dramatic, but it is quite true.

Your time is limited, so don't waste it living someone else's life. Don't be trapped by dogma--which is living with the results of other people's thinking. Don't let the noise of other's opinions drown out your own inner voice. And most important, have the courage to follow your heart and intuition. They somehow already know what you truly want to become. Everything else is secondary.

When I was young, there was an amazing publication called The Whole Earth Catalog, which was one of the bibles of my generation. It was created by a fellow named Stewart Brand not far from here in Menlo Park, and he brought it to life with his poetic touch.

This was in the late 1960s, before personal computers and desktop publishing, so it was all made with typewriters, scissors, and Polaroid cameras. It was sort of like Google in paperback form, 35 years before Google came along: it was idealistic, and overflowing with neat tools and great notions.

Stewart and his team put out several issues of The Whole Earth Catalog, and then when it had run its course, they put out a final issue.

It was the mid-1970s, and I was your age. On the back cover of their final issue was a photograph of an early morning country road, the kind you might find yourself hitchhiking on if you were so adventurous. Beneath it were the words: 'Stay Hungry. Stay Foolish.' It was their farewell message as they signed off. Stay Hungry. Stay Foolish. And I have always wished that for myself. And now, as you graduate to begin anew, I wish that for you.

Stay Hungry. Stay Foolish.

Thank you all very much."

[The Stanford \(University\) Report June 14, 2005](#)

Dr. Mercola's Comments:

Apple Computer founder Steve Jobs' commencement speech to some 5,000 graduates on the campus of Stanford University last month is truly inspirational, especially in light of his recent health challenges.

What Jobs shared about his life to students was priceless. It came in the form of three short and vividly candid life stories. I was especially affected by the final story about death and the unspoken subject of regret.

Clearly one of the best commencement speeches I have seen or heard.

The last thing you want to do is lay on your death bed and realize you didn't give every bit of energy you had to achieve the really important goals in life.

You will not find me in that position, and I hope I won't find you there either.

Related Articles:

[What I Have Learned About Goal Setting as a Means to Success](#)

[Goal Setting as a Way to Achieve Optimal Wellness](#)

[How to Make a Change for the Better](#)

Optimal Wellness Center's

Guide to a Good Night's Sleep

If you are having sleep problems, whether you are not able to fall asleep, wake up too often, don't feel well-rested when you wake up in the morning, or simply want to improve the quality and quantity of your sleep, try as many of the following techniques below as possible:

- **My current favorite for insomnia is [Emotional Freedom Technique \(EFT\)](#).** Most people can learn this gentle tapping technique in several minutes.

EFT can help balance your body's bioenergy system and resolve some of the emotional stresses that are contributing to the insomnia at a very deep level. The results are typically long lasting and the improvement is remarkably rapid.

- **Listen to White Noise or Relaxation CDs.** Some people find the sound of white noise or nature sounds, such as the ocean or forest, to be soothing for sleep. An excellent relaxation/meditation option to listen to before bed is the [Insight audio CD](#).
- **Avoid before-bed snacks, particularly grains and sugars.** This will raise blood sugar and inhibit sleep. Later, when blood sugar drops too low (hypoglycemia), you might wake up and not be able to fall back asleep.
- **Sleep in complete darkness or as close as possible.** If there is even the tiniest bit of light in the room it can disrupt your circadian rhythm and your pineal gland's production of melatonin and serotonin. There also should be as little light in the bathroom as possible if you get up in the middle of the night. Please whatever you do, keep the light off when you go to the bathroom at night. As soon as you turn on that light you will for that night immediately cease all production of the important sleep aid melatonin.
- **No TV right before bed.** Even better, get the TV out of the bedroom or even out of the house, completely. It is too stimulating to the brain and it will take longer to fall asleep. Also disruptive of pineal gland function for the same reason as above.
- **Wear socks to bed.** Due to the fact that they have the poorest circulation, the feet often feel cold before the rest of the body. A study has shown that this reduces night wakings ([Click Here](#)).
- **Read something spiritual or religious.** This will help to relax. Don't read anything stimulating, such as a mystery or suspense novel, as this may have the opposite effect. In addition, if you are really enjoying a suspenseful book, you might wind up unintentionally reading for hours, instead of going to sleep.

- **Avoid using loud alarm clocks.** It is very stressful on the body to be awoken suddenly. If you are regularly getting enough sleep, they should be unnecessary. I gave up my alarm clock years ago and now use a sun alarm clock. [The Sun Alarm™ SA-2002](#) provides an ideal way to wake up each morning if you can't wake up with the REAL sun. Combining the features of a traditional alarm clock (digital display, AM/FM radio, beeper, snooze button, etc) with a special built-in light that gradually increases in intensity, this amazing clock simulates a natural sunrise. It also includes a sunset feature where the light fades to darkness over time - ideal for anyone who has trouble falling asleep.
- **Journaling.** If you often lay in bed with your mind racing, it might be helpful keep a journal and write down your thoughts before bed. Personally, I have been doing this for 15 years, but prefer to do it in the morning when my brain is functioning at its peak and my cortisol levels are high ([CLICK HERE](#))
- **Melatonin and its precursors.** If behavioral changes do not work, it may be possible to improve sleep by supplementing with the hormone melatonin. However, I would exercise extreme caution in using it, and only as a last resort, as it is a powerful hormone. Ideally it is best to increase levels naturally with exposure to bright sunlight in the daytime (along with full spectrum fluorescent bulbs in the winter) and absolute complete darkness at night. One should get blackout drapes so no light is coming in from the outside. One can also use one of melatonin's precursors, L-tryptophan or 5-hydroxytryptophan (5-HTP). L-tryptophan is the safest and my preference, but must be obtained by prescription only. However, don't be afraid or intimidated by its prescription status. It is just a simple amino acid.
- **Get to bed as early as possible.** Our systems, particularly the adrenals, do a majority of their recharging or recovering during the hours of 11PM and 1AM. In addition, your gallbladder dumps toxins during this same period. If you are awake, the toxins back up into the liver which then secondarily back up into your entire system and cause further disruption of your health. Prior to the widespread use of electricity, people would go to bed shortly after sundown, as most animals do, and which nature intended for humans as well.
- **Check your bedroom for electro-magnetic fields (EMFs).** These can disrupt the pineal gland and the production of melatonin and serotonin, and may have other negative effects as well. To purchase a gauss meter to measure EMFs try Cutcat at 800-497-9516. They have a model for around \$40. One doctor even recommends that people pull their circuit breaker before bed to kill all power in the house (Dr. Herbert Ross, author of "Sleep Disorders").
- **Keep the temperature in the bedroom no higher than 70 degrees F.** Many people keep their homes and particularly the upstairs bedrooms too hot.
- **Eat a high-protein snack several hours before bed.** This can provide the L-tryptophan need to produce melatonin and serotonin.
- **Also eat a small piece of fruit.** This can help the tryptophan cross the blood-brain barrier.
- **Reduce or avoid as many drugs as possible.** Many medications, both



prescription and over-the-counter may have effects on sleep. In most cases, the condition, which caused the drugs to be taken in the first place, can be addressed by following the guidelines elsewhere on this web site.

- **Avoid caffeine.** A recent study showed that in some people, caffeine is not metabolized efficiently and therefore they can feel the effects long after consuming it. So an afternoon cup of coffee (or even tea) will keep some people from falling asleep. Also, some medications, particularly diet pills contain caffeine.
- **Alarm clocks and other electrical devices.** If these devices must be used, keep them as far away from the bed as possible, preferably at least 3 feet.
- **Avoid alcohol.** Although alcohol will make people drowsy, the effect is short lived and people will often wake up several hours later, unable to fall back asleep. Alcohol will also keep you from falling into the deeper stages of sleep, where the body does most of its healing.
- **Lose weight.** Being overweight can increase the risk of sleep apnea, which will prevent a restful nights sleep. [CLICK HERE](#) for my diet recommendations.
- **Avoid foods that you may be sensitive to.** This is particularly true for dairy and wheat products, as they may have effect on sleep, such as causing apnea, excess congestion, gastrointestinal upset, and gas, among others.
- **Don't drink any fluids within 2 hours of going to bed.** This will reduce the likelihood of needing to get up and go to the bathroom or at least minimize the frequency.
- **Take a hot bath, shower or sauna before bed.** When body temperature is raised in the late evening, it will fall at bedtime, facilitating sleep,
- **Remove the clock from view.** It will only add to your worry when constantly staring at it... 2 AM...3 AM... 4:30 AM...
- **Keep Your Bed For Sleeping.** If you are used to watching TV or doing work in bed, you may find it harder to relax and to think of the bed as a place to sleep.
- **Have your adrenals checked by a good natural medicine clinician.** Scientists have found that [Insomnia may be caused by adrenal stress](#) (Journal of Clinical Endocrinology & Metabolism, August 2001; 86:3787-3794)?
- **If you are menopausal or perimenopausal, get checked out by a good natural medicine physician.** The hormonal changes at this time may cause problems if not properly addressed.
- **Don't Change Your Bedtime.** You should go to bed, and wake up, at the same times each day, even on the weekends. This will help your body to get into a sleep rhythm and make it easier to fall asleep and get up in the morning.
- **Make certain you are exercising regularly.** [Exercising](#) for at least 30 minutes everyday can help you fall asleep. However, don't exercise too close to bedtime or it may keep you awake. Studies show exercising in the morning is the best if you can do it.

Related Articles:

[Too Little Sleep May Accelerate Aging](#)

[Daytime Sleepiness Prevalent](#)

[Sleep Pattern May Indicate Depression](#)

[Sleep Deprivation Lowers Percentage of Natural Killer Cells In Blood](#)

[Exercise one of the BEST Cures for Insomnia](#)

The Hidden Toxin You May be Breathing in Your Shower

Nearly 9 million people in the United States are exposed to manganese levels that may cause toxic effects. And while small levels of this naturally occurring metal can be found in food and many types of rocks and enters the air, soil and water, high levels of manganese are mainly found in wells and private water supplies.



With that said, according to an analysis based on animal studies, showering in manganese-contaminated water for a decade or more could permanently affect one's nervous system as well as induce learning and coordination disabilities, behavioral changes and a condition similar to Parkinson's disease. Worse, the damage could occur in levels considered safe by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)--an upper limit of 0.5 milligrams/liter.

This research is the first to find the potential for permanent brain damage from inhaling vaporized manganese while taking a shower.

Animal Studies

Researchers reviewed a number of animal studies to determine how much manganese patients absorb by showering 10 minutes a day for a decade. The results correlated that:

- Children would be exposed to doses of manganese three times higher than doses resulting in manganese deposits in the brains of rats.
- Adults would be exposed to doses 50 percent higher than rodents.

Breathing in manganese, rather than eating or drinking it, is much more efficient at transporting manganese to the brain. That's because the nerve cells involved in smell are a direct pathway for toxins to the brain; once inside these small nerves, manganese has the ability to roam throughout the brain.

And a major problem with manganese exposure in the shower: The EPA based its 0.5 milligrams/liter limit on odor and taste, but not the amount one can accumulate in their brain by showering. Thus, regulatory agencies may want to rethink existing drinking water standards for manganese ... and soon.

[Medical Hypothesis](#) **May 23, 2005**

[Science Blog](#) **June 30, 2005**

Dr. Mercola's Comment:

Although [manganese is an important and necessary nutrient](#), as is so often the case, too much of a good thing can be harmful. While it is quite difficult to ingest too much of certain nutrients, such as vitamin C or magnesium, because your body will let you know you are getting too much (diarrhea), other nutrients that are essentially trace minerals needed in small quantities, like [manganese](#), can become overloaded in your body without your being aware that anything is wrong.

Exposure to high levels of manganese is becoming increasingly well known as a contributor to nervous system damage. The high levels of manganese in soy formula is [one of the primary concerns many experts have with soy formula](#).

Additionally, some researchers believe high manganese exposure combined with exposure to certain types of pesticides is [the root cause of mad cow disease](#).

Please remember, water, although it is as fundamental to life for you as breathing, can be a powerful source of numerous toxins. I would never drink a glass of tap or well water that hadn't been either purified or tested and found to be [void of contaminants](#), unless it was absolutely necessary.

If you are still drinking water from the tap, I urge you to investigate the large volume of information on this topic [available on my Web site](#).

Related Articles:

[High Iron & Manganese Linked to Parkinson's](#)

[Is Your Water Filter Really Working?](#)

[Flooding and Well Water: A Dangerous Mix](#)

Counting the Many Ways Sugar Harms Your Health

Contributed by Nancy Appleton, PhD
Author of the book [Lick The Sugar Habit](#)



In addition to throwing off the body's homeostasis, excess sugar may result in a number of other significant consequences. The following is a listing of some of sugar's metabolic consequences from a variety of medical journals and other scientific publications.

1. Sugar can suppress your immune system and impair your defenses against infectious disease.^{1,2}
2. Sugar upsets the mineral relationships in your body: causes chromium and copper deficiencies and interferes with absorption of calcium and magnesium.^{3,4,5,6}
3. Sugar can cause a rapid rise of adrenaline, hyperactivity, anxiety, difficulty concentrating, and crankiness in children.^{7,8}
4. Sugar can produce a significant rise in total cholesterol, triglycerides and bad cholesterol and a decrease in good cholesterol.^{9,10,11,12}
5. Sugar causes a loss of tissue elasticity and function.¹³
6. Sugar feeds cancer cells and has been connected with the development of cancer of the breast, ovaries, prostate, rectum, pancreas, biliary tract, lung, gallbladder and stomach.^{14,15,16,17,18,19,20}
7. Sugar can increase fasting levels of glucose and can cause reactive hypoglycemia.^{21,22}
8. Sugar can weaken eyesight.²³
9. Sugar can cause many problems with the gastrointestinal tract including: an acidic digestive tract, indigestion, malabsorption in patients with functional bowel disease, increased risk of Crohn's disease, and ulcerative colitis.^{24,25,26,27,28}
10. Sugar can cause premature aging.²⁹
11. Sugar can lead to alcoholism.³⁰
12. Sugar can cause your saliva to become acidic, tooth decay, and periodontal disease.^{31,32,33}
13. Sugar contributes to obesity.³⁴
14. Sugar can cause autoimmune diseases such as: arthritis, asthma, multiple sclerosis.^{35,36,37}
15. Sugar greatly assists the uncontrolled growth of *Candida Albicans* (yeast infections).³⁸
16. Sugar can cause gallstones.³⁹
17. Sugar can cause appendicitis.⁴⁰
18. Sugar can cause hemorrhoids.⁴¹
19. Sugar can cause varicose veins.⁴²
20. Sugar can elevate glucose and insulin responses in oral contraceptive users.⁴³
21. Sugar can contribute to osteoporosis.⁴⁴
22. Sugar can cause a decrease in your insulin sensitivity thereby causing an abnormally high insulin levels and eventually diabetes.^{45,46,47}

23. Sugar can lower your Vitamin E levels.⁴⁸
24. Sugar can increase your systolic blood pressure.⁴⁹
25. Sugar can cause drowsiness and decreased activity in children.⁵⁰
26. High sugar intake increases advanced glycation end products (AGEs)(Sugar molecules attaching to and thereby damaging proteins in the body).⁵¹
27. Sugar can interfere with your absorption of protein.⁵²
28. Sugar causes food allergies.⁵³
29. Sugar can cause toxemia during pregnancy.⁵⁴
30. Sugar can contribute to eczema in children.⁵⁵
31. Sugar can cause atherosclerosis and cardiovascular disease.^{56,57}
32. Sugar can impair the structure of your DNA.⁵⁸
33. Sugar can change the structure of protein and cause a permanent alteration of the way the proteins act in your body.^{59,60}
34. Sugar can make your skin age by changing the structure of collagen.⁶¹
35. Sugar can cause cataracts and nearsightedness.^{62,63}
36. Sugar can cause emphysema.⁶⁴
37. High sugar intake can impair the physiological homeostasis of many systems in your body.⁶⁵
38. Sugar lowers the ability of enzymes to function.⁶⁶
39. Sugar intake is higher in people with Parkinson's disease.⁶⁷
40. Sugar can increase the size of your liver by making your liver cells divide and it can increase the amount of liver fat.^{68,69}
41. Sugar can increase kidney size and produce pathological changes in the kidney such as the formation of kidney stones.^{70,71}
42. Sugar can damage your pancreas.⁷²
43. Sugar can increase your body's fluid retention.⁷³
44. Sugar is enemy #1 of your bowel movement.⁷⁴
45. Sugar can compromise the lining of your capillaries.⁷⁵
46. Sugar can make your tendons more brittle.⁷⁶
47. Sugar can cause headaches, including migraines.⁷⁷
48. Sugar can reduce the learning capacity, adversely affect school children's grades and cause learning disorders.^{78,79}
49. Sugar can cause an increase in delta, alpha, and theta brain waves which can alter your mind's ability to think clearly.⁸⁰
50. Sugar can cause depression.⁸¹
51. Sugar can increase your risk of gout.⁸²
52. Sugar can increase your risk of Alzheimer's disease.⁸³
53. Sugar can cause hormonal imbalances such as: increasing estrogen in men, exacerbating PMS, and decreasing growth hormone.^{84,85,86,87}
54. Sugar can lead to dizziness.⁸⁸
55. Diets high in sugar will increase free radicals and oxidative stress.⁸⁹
56. High sucrose diets of subjects with peripheral vascular disease significantly increases platelet adhesion.⁹⁰
57. High sugar consumption of pregnant adolescents can lead to substantial decrease in gestation duration and is associated with a twofold increased risk for delivering a small-for-gestational-age (SGA) infant.^{91,92}
58. Sugar is an addictive substance.⁹³
59. Sugar can be intoxicating, similar to alcohol.⁹⁴
60. Sugar given to premature babies can affect the amount of carbon dioxide they produce.⁹⁵

61. Decrease in sugar intake can increase emotional stability.⁹⁶
62. Your body changes sugar into 2 to 5 times more fat in the bloodstream than it does starch.⁹⁷
63. The rapid absorption of sugar promotes excessive food intake in obese subjects.⁹⁸
64. Sugar can worsen the symptoms of children with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD).⁹⁹
65. Sugar adversely affects urinary electrolyte composition.¹⁰⁰
66. Sugar can slow down the ability of your adrenal glands to function.¹⁰¹
67. Sugar has the potential of inducing abnormal metabolic processes in a normal healthy individual and to promote chronic degenerative diseases.¹⁰²
68. I.V.s (intravenous feedings) of sugar water can cut off oxygen to your brain.¹⁰³
69. Sugar increases your risk of polio.¹⁰⁴
70. High sugar intake can cause epileptic seizures.¹⁰⁵
71. Sugar causes high blood pressure in obese people.¹⁰⁶
72. In intensive care units: Limiting sugar saves lives.¹⁰⁷
73. Sugar may induce cell death.¹⁰⁸
74. In juvenile rehabilitation camps, when children were put on a low sugar diet, there was a 44 percent drop in antisocial behavior.¹⁰⁹
75. Sugar dehydrates newborns.¹¹⁰
76. Sugar can cause gum disease.¹¹¹

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Twelve Reasons to Avoid the South Beach Diet

By Dr. Joseph Mercola
with Brian Vaszily

Overall I believe *The South Beach Diet's* success is a powerful influence in several important respects. With sales in the millions, *The South Beach Diet* has joined the groundbreaking Atkins Diet in prompting deeper inquiry into the value of low-carbohydrate dieting, and has been central to making lower-carb cuisine more widely available. Just as important, it has also helped to destroy the dangerous myth -- a myth that prevailed for thirty years -- that low-fat dieting is safe and effective.

That said -- and as a physician with over two decades of clinical experience who is highly respected for my dietary program, with a New York Times bestseller of my own, and most importantly, who maintains strict adherence to the Hippocratic oath to "first do no harm" -- I would never recommend *The South Beach Diet* to any of my patients. In fact, I'd like to warn everyone about the dangers of adopting Dr. Agatston's popular diet.

First, I have great respect for Rodale Press, the book's publisher. They also publish Prevention Magazine, which I used to read regularly back in the 1970s (one of their articles in fact inspired me to select [osteopathic medicine](#) as opposed to a traditional M.D. school), and the <http://www.prevention.com/> website, which is the number two natural health website on the Internet behind only my own, <http://www.mercola.com/>. Rodale is also an exceptionally astute and effective marketing company, which leads me to my first point:

If you know anyone on or considering The South Beach Diet, please so that they can make an informed decision

"*The South Beach Diet* must be a worthwhile diet," a widely prevalent logic goes, "or else it wouldn't have sold millions of copies!"

By now Americans ought to know that just because something sells well it doesn't mean that it's worth buying, and yet the flawed logic above prevails. Bottom line is, the major reason for *The South Beach Diet's* success is that Rodale has spent in excess of one million dollars **per month** to promote this book. A marketing budget of that size could turn a bicycle repair manual into a major bestseller.

What's more, according to various reports that are easily accessible by searching Google, with all they've spent on marketing the book versus all the book's sales, it is my understanding that Rodale has actually taken a loss on the book. They're a clever company, though, and I believe that loss is only temporary, serving more so as an investment in their ever expanding publishing empire. But don't be swayed by the book's phenomenal sales -- there are many reasons for you to avoid jumping on the *South Beach*

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bandwagon. I list twelve important ones below that should be enough to help you think twice about this diet that is synonymous with "fad" (in all honesty, I could write an entire book pointing out how misguided Dr. Agatston's diet is, but I am hoping twelve suffice here for you to think twice about this diet):

Reason 1: Gets the "Good" Carbs Wrong -- At the Risk of Many People's Health

Dr. Agatston promotes the concept that I have long recommended and detail in my [TOTAL HEALTH Program](#)--there are good carbs that you should be consuming and bad carbs you should avoid. But then, on the simplest levels, he gets the "good" carbs wrong, including promoting both whole grain breads and fruits as good carbs. This advice can seriously impair the health of the *millions* of people in this country with sub clinical gluten sensitivity. It is also a prescription for disaster for the large number who have high carbohydrate sensitivity and struggle with controlling their insulin. It is best that ALL grains and sugars (fruits, as opposed to vegetables, have high sugar content) be avoided until [insulin levels are normalized](#).

Reason 2: Severely Misguided Advice Can Lead to Dangerous Levels of Mercury and PCBs in You

Dr. Agatston recommends fish, displaying absolutely no understanding that nearly all fish from every type of water source are now contaminated with dangerous levels of mercury and PCBs from generations of water pollution from coal plants and other sources. Mercury and PCBs can lead to all kinds of very serious disease including neurological disorders.

The dangerous levels of toxins in fish is not hearsay but a warning that has been issued by many health practitioners and major health and government agencies--even the very conservative [EPA advises pregnant women to avoid fish](#) --and I have witnessed the epidemic with thousands of patients in my own clinic.

Either Agatston is not aware of this important issue or decided not to cover it; no mention is made that, to safely avoid the mercury and PCB issue in fish while still getting proper omega-3 intake, **substituting** clean sources of bottled or capsule fish oil is by far the wisest option.

Moreover, a USA Today report suggested that it would cost over \$90 a week to follow the misguided fish intake recommended by *The South Beach Diet* anyway.

Reason 3: Advice on Milk May Worsen a Common Allergy

Dr. Agaston freely advocates commercial pasteurized milk. He is obviously unaware of the major problems many people have with pasteurized casein and its prevalence as one of the most common food allergies (further, as he is positioning himself as a dietary expert, he should be aware and note that many people aren't even yet aware they have this allergy).

Though consuming raw (unpasteurized) milk is still a controversial topic, for some people many of the problems they experience with pasteurized milk disappear when they consume clean milk in its raw state (raw milk is becomingly [increasingly available](#)

again). However, even in a clean, raw state many still are unable to tolerate it. The point is, none of this essential information that impacts many people is covered in *The South Beach Diet*.

Reason 4: Buys Into the Old Myth of Saturated Fat -- at Your Expense

Dr. Agatston fortunately does not buy into the myth that eggs are bad (eggs can be quite healthy for you, especially organic eggs), but he is still under the delusion that saturated fat is bad for everyone. Like carbohydrates, though, some high quality saturated food is not merely okay but [needs to be part of a truly healthy diet](#). What matters, as with carbs and all macronutrients, is that you are getting your saturated fat from a clean and healthy source such as organic virgin coconut oil. (Search "saturated fat" on Mercola.com for more on this issue.)

Reason 5: Recommends Aspartame ... Widely Recognized as a Health Hazard

Though NutraSweet/aspartame has been shown in many studies to be dangerous, linked to a wide range of diseases such as cancer and diabetes and various emotional disorders (read "[Articles on Aspartame](#)" on Mercola.com or input "aspartame" into the Mercola.com search engine), Dr. Agatston actually encourages its use in *The South Beach Diet*.

Reason 6: Dangerous Misguidance on a Serious Trans-Fat Issue

Perhaps Dr. Agatston's most significant oversight is his lack of understanding of trans fats. Early in the book he states that trans-fats are dangerous and need to be avoided, yet on page 54 he makes the outrageous claim that French fries and potato chips are healthier choices than baked potatoes because of the "fat in which they're cooked." This is extremely dangerous misinformation, as French fries and potato chips tend to be profoundly high in trans fats and are amongst the unhealthiest foods on the planet.

I perceive this statement as irrefutable evidence of his nutritional ignorance. I can't possibly imagine anyone with even a minimum amount of nutritional biochemical education making a recommendation like that. Although Dr. Agatston is a cardiologist as Dr. Atkins was, he was never part of the pioneering group of physicians who understood nutrition as it relates to health (which Atkins was). I have some disagreements with Dr. Atkins' program, but they are relatively minor compared to my objections with *The South Beach Diet*. Dr. Atkins would never have advocated eating French fries or potato chips. These foods are the toxic equivalent of a cigarette and should be avoided like the plague.

Reason 7: Even More Misguidance on Fats

Further displaying his lack of knowledge on fats, Dr. Agatston promotes the use of synthetic margarines like "I Can't Believe It's Not Butter" (versus the healthier choice, real butter). He is not aware that the process of creating this type of margarine completely distorts the physical structure of its fats, making it nearly as dangerous as margarines that have trans-fats. He is apparently making this recommendation due to his phobia of saturated fat without realizing that, as mentioned above, some saturated fat -- such as healthy saturated fats that are found in raw organic butter and coconut oil -- are necessary for optimal health. Moreover, he classifies all *unsaturated* fats as *healthy*, obviously

unaware that the high omega-6 unsaturated fat that causes a distortion of the omega 3:6 ratio is one of the major contributing factors to most chronic degenerative diseases.

Reason 8: The Lack of Nutritional Insight Can Be Carcinogenic!

Dr. Agaston continues to display his lack of nutritional awareness by advocating peanut butter on page 49 as a good source of monounsaturated fat and the polyphenolic bioflavanoid, resveratrol. While I am a fan of both of these nutritional items, it is very important to pay attention to the quality of the peanut butter, and the type of peanuts in general. He does advise to avoid peanut butters with added sugar and to use only all-natural peanut butter (though he ought to expand a bit on why -- peanuts are probably the crop most heavily sprayed with pesticides in the world, for instance). But he fails to mention one of the most serious peanut issues of all and make recommendations accordingly: most peanuts are very susceptible to contamination by aflatoxin, a carcinogenic mold spore, and so you should seek to restrict peanut butter (and any type of peanut product) consumption to Valencia peanuts only. This species grows in dry climates, which seriously restricts the growth of aflatoxin. Fortunately, Arrowhead Mills Organic Peanut Butter (which you can find in many stores now) meets both qualifications.

Reason 9: An Effective Diet Can Eliminate Dependency on Statins, but This One Does Not

Dr. Agatston is still absolutely unaware of the power of an optimized diet to normalize cholesterol, as he still takes a statin drug to lower his own cholesterol and is apparently unaware of the [many dangers associated with statin drugs](#). It is quite possible to avoid statin drugs and supplements to normalize cholesterol levels, and my patients have experienced this success by following my own [TOTAL HEALTH Program](#). I encourage Dr. Agatston to give my program a try as well so he can get off the statin drugs and avoid their risks.

Reason 10: Many Will Not Even Temporarily Lose Weight

The South Beach Diet is a one-size-fits-all diet that completely ignores the fact that we have different genetic requirements for optimal health ... one-size-fits-all diets **never** work for all, or even close to all. Because of their biochemistry, some people actually need a high carb diet (with limited or no grains), while others require the low-carb, high-protein diet that Dr. Atkins advocates.

This is the principle of "metabolic typing," and explains why one person will lose weight on a low-carb diet (though, as covered throughout this article, they may not necessarily improve their health or lose it permanently, unless it is a healthy low-carb diet) while another person will not lose any on the identical diet. To understand this principle in more detail and learn your own metabolic type so you can optimize your efforts at truly effective weight loss and improve your health while you are at it, I urge you to read "[Modify Your Diet So You Feel Terrific](#)" on Mercola.com, or type in "metabolic typing" on the Mercola.com search engine. You can also find a basic test to determine your specific type in my [TOTAL HEALTH Program](#), or you can [take my free online metabolic type test now!](#)

The South Beach Diet also contains a serious lack of appropriate guidance on the Glycemic Index. Dr. Agatston relies on this index as a tool in weight loss, but I have found it anything besides useful, as it contains far, far too many exceptions to be of any value. A classic example is fructose, which has a very low glycemic index yet has been clearly established as a [major reason why many people are overweight](#). If you follow Dr. Agatston's advice in this regard you will be going down the weight gain path for sure. This is also an issue with some of the low glycemic index foods like chocolate, cherries, and apple juice, which we know should be avoided if you want to lose weight, yet would seem to have nearly unlimited access to if you follow *The South Beach Diet*.

Reason 11: Too Lax on the Exercise for Most Readers

[Exercise](#) is a critical part of any permanent weight loss regime, but Dr. Agatston's advice on exercise is highly debatable. While I absolutely agree with his central thesis that we don't need to train like an Olympic hopeful and that 20 minutes a day is sufficient, this advice is only for people who are already in shape. Most people in this country, and likely even a higher proportion of those reading a weight loss book, have developed a serious exercise deficiency and will need far higher levels of exercise to make a significant influence on up-regulating the body's metabolic machinery to burn fats continuously, especially while one sleeps.

Reason 12: Most Will NOT Lose Weight Permanently with this Diet

The book is subtitled, *The Delicious, Doctor-Designed, Foolproof Plan for Fast and Healthy Weight Loss*, but I suspect many people buying the book care much more about the weight loss aspect than the "healthy" aspect. As you can figure out from points above, the diet has very little to do with improving your health anyway, and can lead you in the opposite direction.

Even in terms of losing weight, though, the book might succeed for some in the short-term like many fad diets, but most will not permanently lose weight. Agatston even alludes to this in the chapter entitled "Why Do People Occasionally Fail on This Diet?" though he seems to demonstrate just more lack of insight on the real "why" in that chapter.

By far the main reason most people will fail at losing weight permanently on this diet (and many other popular diets) is because no real solutions have been presented for the emotional challenges that come with dieting ... and those challenges are, far more than knowing what is right and wrong, the biggest challenges of all.

There are solutions to the emotional challenges such as cravings, food addictions, self-image issues and the other self-sabotaging behavior (I encourage you to search Mercola.com for more on this topic), so it is extremely distressing that in Dr. Agatston's program -- and in this day and age in **any** dietary program -- these weren't covered effectively.

In short, even if *The South Beach Diet's* nutritional recommendations were solid -- and they are by no means solid -- without covering the emotional component, adherents to the diet are left with a void where some of the most important advice to them should be. Therefore, most who "swear by" the diet because it helped them shed a few pounds in the

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short-term will ultimately end up where they started before *The South Beach Diet* ... that is, desperate for real help and a prime target for yet another heavily marketed fad diet book promising the world but delivering

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Are Vitamin Supplements Safe After All?

An estimated 70 percent of the U.S. population uses dietary supplements at least occasionally and 40 percent use supplements on a regular basis. Vitamin E and vitamin C are among the most commonly used supplements.



Contrary to the belief some have, there are many studies that show vitamins E and C are safe for the general population. Why? Because these nutrients supply antioxidants for the protection against free radical damage. Thus, in light of these supposed benefits, many consume quantities of both vitamins E and C far beyond the recommended daily allowances (RDA).

Researchers tend to support the consensus of published studies that it is safe to consume:

- Vitamin E doses up to 1,000 mg/d
- Vitamin C doses up to 2,000 mg/d

Moreover, compared with the previous RDA, new recommendations for vitamin E have increased by 50 percent for men and almost 100 percent for women, while recommendations for vitamin C have increased by 25 percent for women and 50 percent for men.

Low Intakes of Vitamins E and C

Low intakes of these antioxidants, however, may increase the risk of certain chronic diseases and accelerate several indicators of the aging process. Such effects may be partially due to inadequate protection of tissues against oxidative damage from free radicals.

On the other hand, researchers have not found any consistent pattern of evidence to support concerns over serious adverse effects of taking quantities of vitamins E and C well above what is recommended.

So Are These Vitamins Really Safe?

Vitamin E and C supplements are widely used in the United States (and other industrialized countries). In relation to dosage concerns and the health implications of such, it is important to understand that the upper limits for using these vitamins were designed to protect the most sensitive individuals in the general population; **upper limits were not intended to apply to the most sensitive persons, but rather the healthy general population.**

Additionally, healthy people are not recommended to "routinely" take vitamin E and C in amounts beyond the upper limits.

[American Journal of Clinical Nutrition, April 2005;89\(4\)4: 736-745](#)

Dr. Mercola's Comment:

This recent study regarding the safety of vitamin supplements is important because it supports the notion that vitamin supplements are helpful, not harmful.

This is a [controversial topic](#), and I have concluded the answer really is dependent upon the specific circumstances involved with whomever I'm considering recommending them to.

However, I most certainly **do not** support using supplements as [a way to justify poor food choices](#). I firmly believe that whatever supplements you choose to take, there is simply [no substitute for healthy eating](#).

I am also a firm believer in the concept that it's not necessarily the amount of nutrients you ingest that is important. Rather, [it's the form of the nutrients](#), and how much is bio-available, that counts the most.

When discussing supplements, whether or not they are safe, when and how much of them you should take, most people often forget about something that I feel is more important than any single supplement or food you can eat.

I am talking about **DIGESTION**.

I would be willing to bet that more than half the people out there taking supplements are actually gaining little to no benefit from the nutrients supplied by them.

The reason for this is simple. If your digestive system is not working properly, you aren't absorbing your food and nutrients well.

Unfortunately, most of us have digestive systems that could be working better. Consider the following questions:

- Do you feel bloated after meals?
- Do you get heartburn or reflux?
- Do you experience gas, loose stools or constipation on a fairly regular basis?
- Do you often notice undigested food particles in your stools?
- Do you have less than two to three well-formed bowel movements everyday?

If you answered yes to any of the questions above, it is extremely likely that your digestive system is not working like it should be.

If that is the case, then whenever you take a supplement, especially one that is not food-based, you are **wasting your money**.

[Seven Tips for Optimizing Your Digestion](#)

1. **Eat appropriate quantities.** This may seem obvious, but some people just don't realize that they are overeating on a regular basis. I usually recommend that people take a slightly smaller portion than they normally would and wait for 10 minutes after finishing it before going back for seconds. Usually they find they don't need them.
2. **Chew your food.** Another seemingly obvious one that is very commonly overlooked. At your next meal, try chewing each bite 20-30 times (an optimal amount for good digestion). You will quickly realize how little you chewed before.
3. **Avoid eating on the run or if you are emotionally upset in any way.** The effects that stress has on your digestive system cannot be overstated. In fact, for a majority of young and middle-aged people, this is often the number one cause of poor digestion.
4. **Ensure adequate secretion of your digestive juices.** Eating regular meals containing protein, chewing your food well, and eating bitter tasting foods at the beginning of your meal will help stimulate the secretion of [hydrochloric acid](#) and pancreatic enzymes, both of which are necessary for good digestion. You may also want to consider drinking a glass of water with a little lemon juice or apple cider vinegar in it five to 10 minutes before you eat.
5. **Eat your veggies.** Vegetables can provide you with all the fiber you need to help improve bowel function. Another excellent choice for increasing your fiber intake is freshly ground flax seeds. Usually, two to three tablespoons mixed in a smoothie or sprinkled on your food will suffice. Eat your vegetables raw or very lightly steamed to maximize the enzymes that help you digest them properly.
6. **Make sure you eat your bugs.** Regular consumption of beneficial bacteria is one of the most important things you can do for your health. The best way to do so is by consuming [fermented foods](#) or [drinks](#) on a daily basis.
7. **Exercise, exercise, exercise.** [Daily movement](#) is essential for proper bowel function and also helps relieve the stress that can wreak havoc on your digestion.

Combining the tips above with the [Total Health Program](#) and [metabolic typing](#) will ensure that you get all the nutrients you ever need.

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[Does Vitamin C Really Damage Your DNA?](#)

Why Don't the Amish Have Autistic Children?

Autism is a difficult disorder to miss, as it is characterized by noticeably abnormal or impaired development in social interaction and communication and a markedly restricted array of activities and interests. And while scientific consensus claims autism has been around for millennia at generally the same prevalence, that prevalence is now considered to be **one in every 166 children born in the United States.**



Therefore, with this devastating statistic in mind, one reporter set out to analyze the autism rates among Amish communities. Why? Because perhaps searching for autistic Amish children would reveal clues to the cause of autism ... and it did.

The Clues Come Together

Since they have been cut off for hundreds of years from American culture and scientific progress, the Amish may have had less exposure to some new factor triggering autism in the rest of population. The likely culprit: vaccines.

Traveling to the heart of Pennsylvania Dutch country in search of autistic Amish children, the reporter, based on national statistics, should have found as many as 200 children with autism in the community -- instead, he found only three, the oldest age 9 or 10:

- The first autistic Amish child was a girl who had been brought over from China, adopted by one family only to be given up after becoming overwhelmed by her autism, and then re-adopted by an Amish Mennonite family. (China, India and Indonesia are among countries moving fast to mass-vaccination programs.)
- The second autistic Amish child definitely had received a vaccination and developed autism shortly thereafter.
- The reporter was unable to determine the vaccination status of the third child.

Dangerous Effects of Thimerosal

In some vaccines, they use a mercury-based preservative called thimerosal that keeps multiple-dose vials from becoming contaminated by repeated needle sticks. After health officials became concerned about the amount of mercury infants and children were receiving through thimerosal-tainted vaccines, the toxin was phased out of U.S. vaccines starting in 1999.

However, due to mislabeling and other problems, its presence is still being felt, and more and more children are suffering because of it.

[Washington Times](#) April 18, 2005

[Washington Times](#) April 19, 2005

Dr. Mercola's Comment:

Does anyone out there really need more evidence than this?

Admittedly, this was not a placebo-controlled scientific trial but an evidence-based fact analysis that, in my mind, provides an irrefutable link to a lifestyle and, most likely, mercury-containing vaccine connection to autism.

Folks, you don't have to be a medical doctor, hold advanced epidemiology degrees or teach molecular genetics to figure this one out. You don't even need a degree in rocket science. How much more obvious could it be?

The link between autism and vaccines is certainly not a new idea. In fact, suggestions of this link have been in the national news for [at least six years now](#). Just last year a study, that reviewed data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) Vaccine Data Link, concluded that [children who receive thimerosal-containing vaccinations](#) are 27 times more likely to develop autism than children who do not.

That's a **2,700 percent increase**. The numbers just don't lie.

Considering how important this issue is for nearly everyone you know, it might be a good one to forward to your friends and relatives. You can easily do this by using the E-mail to a friend button in the upper right hand section of this page, just under the search box. You can make a larger impact if you write them a personal message in the e-mail as to why they should seriously consider the advice -- and why they may want to subscribe to the newsletter.

This most recent investigation simply provides the proverbial icing on the cake. There aren't too many other places, if any, in America where you can find large groups of children who haven't been vaccinated.

The reporter found three children with autism. One child was adopted and previously vaccinated, another was one of the few Amish children who were vaccinated, and the third had an unclear vaccine history. That leaves, at most, potentially **one** child out of an expected **200** (from national statistics) with autism. The odds of this being mere coincidence are slim to none.

At Least Change the Rules Concerning the Hepatitis B Vaccine

Because of their religious beliefs, the Amish community chooses not to give their children any vaccines. Understandably, many of you may not choose such a radical approach. However, if you were to focus on just one vaccine, I would encourage you to look at the issues surrounding the [hepatitis B vaccine](#).

The multi-dose version of this vaccine, which is typically administered to newborns

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before they leave the hospital, still contains thimerosal. This is reprehensible, irresponsible negligence of the highest magnitude. The immature central nervous systems of these helpless newborns are particularly susceptible to toxic insults, and thimerosal, the mercury-containing preservative used in these vaccines, is one of the worst.

It would be much easier to understand if the hepatitis B vaccine had some value, but most natural health experts who study this are convinced that this is nearly always an absolutely unnecessary vaccine.

There are only about 5,000 people a year who develop the most serious consequence of hepatitis B infection, liver cancer. That means we are immunizing tens of millions of infants and causing brain injury that has caused an epidemic of autism to protect liver cancer in 5,000 adults. And, many of these adults have serious social problems like IV drug abuse, alcoholism and poor nutrition that seriously increases their risk for this disease.

If you're a young parent weighing the pros and cons of vaccines, I strongly urge you to learn more about the [toxicity of thimerosal](#), which, again, is still present in multi-dose hepatitis B vaccines, and nearly all the mandated flu vaccine for infants.

Gary Craig's Comment:

For those families dealing with autism, you should know that consistent application of EFT can help with the angers, frustrations and other behavior problems that accompany this affliction. As an example, Linda Johnson writes the following on the EFT web site ...

"With my autistic son, I tapped one night as a surrogate for "focus and attention", "hearing what people are saying", "better social connection" and "neurological symptoms". The next morning, for the first time, he got dressed without prompting at each step while watching the news on television. An absolute first. Doing two things at the same time."



Gary Craig is a pioneering developer of EFT, a profoundly effective emotional/mental healing approach. I learned it from Gary and have taught it to patients in my clinic for years, and they have experienced truly incredible and permanent results with it.

[Read more about Gary Craig's EFT Course.](#)

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