

Dietary Supplements



**Creating expensive
urine?**

or

**A Key addition to
Modern Medicine?**

by

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Table of Contents

Introduction

Section 1. PREVENTION

You can make a real difference to your health!

Complementary versus Conventional Medicine

The miracle of the human body

Nutritional medicine can allow the body to heal itself

Should everybody be taking nutritional supplements?

The medical literature on disease reduction with good nutrition

Coronary Heart Disease

Stroke

Cancer

High blood pressure

Cataracts

Arthritis

Alzheimer's disease

Conclusions on disease prevention:

Nutritional Supplements in reducing today's diseases

Conclusions – our advice on how to stay healthy and how we can protect our children's health:

Section 2 - TREATMENTS

For everybody

Alzheimer's Disease

Aneurism

ANGINA

Arthritis (Osteo)

Arthritis (rheumatoid)
Asthma
Athletes,
Cancer
Coeliac disease
Crohn's disease
Depression
Diabetes
Epilepsy
Eye diseases
Fibromyalgia and chronic fatigue
Gout
Heart attack
Heart failure
Haemochromatosis
Hepatitis
High Blood Pressure
Insect bites
Insomnia
Migraine
Multiple Sclerosis
Osteoporosis
Palpitations
Poor blood circulation in the legs
Pregnancy
Prostate enlargement
Shingles
Ulcerative colitis

CONCLUSION

Appendix:

Low stress diet

CoEnzyme Q10 (CoQ10)

Good fats and bad fats

Chelation therapy

EECP therapy

Introduction

Dietary supplements - Fad, Fable or Fact?

There are probably few topics in medicine where there is so much controversy as there is concerning the use of nutritional supplements. We write this book because we see real value in the correct use of supplements and hopefully will separate passing fads, unsubstantiated claims (or fables) from helpful factual scientific information.

We strongly believe that merging the best of conventional medical therapy with good nutritional supplementation will not only strengthen the body's ability to fight disease but will also be exceptionally powerful in preventing disease.

In our fast paced world, many people do not stop to evaluate what is happening to our health and how much the ageing processes have escalated over the last 50 years, affecting many younger people.

In the past being carefree was part of being young, and only as we get older do we get wiser. Sadly this is now unacceptable. With the health problems besetting young people today, if they do not make changes now, they will grow into an appallingly unhealthy generation. Authorities have stated that it is likely that this generation will be one of the first in history where their parents outlived them in years [click here](#).

We personally believe we need to train our young people how to survive and thrive in today's world. We hope this book may give some guidance in a very confusing field. We have included references for those wanting to know more, and also the sceptics, and rather than supplying the reference details, where possible we have made the link directly to the paper or it's abstract.

The book is divided into two sections:

1. **PREVENTION** - The value of good nutritional supplementation in maintaining good health and wellbeing, so reducing the risk of developing diseases.
2. **TREATMENT** – How nutritional supplements and other complementary therapies can be used to help people who have already developed health problems.

Section 1. **PREVENTION**

You can make a real difference to your health!

As we enter the twenty-first century, the diseases which killed and maimed our parents and their friends continue to flourish. Statistically, one in three of us will die of cancer, one in three of coronary disease and one person in five of a stroke. Sadly, most of these people will die before their time, not ready to give up on life, and their families not prepared to say goodbye. In addition to these fatal diseases, degenerative diseases cause our bodies to ‘wear out’ before their time, resulting in a huge amount of suffering. These diseases include arthritis, emphysema, Alzheimer’s disease, colitis, heart failure, asthma, diabetes, depression, and osteoporosis.

Modern Medicine is failing us and our children.

The mortality statistics are alarming, but because we usually talk about individuals dying one by one at home or in hospital, we don’t notice them; unlike a plane crash or terrorist attack which kills many people simultaneously and makes headlines. However heart disease every day in the USA kills the same number of people as would fill six full 747 aircraft. This, we have become resigned to accept. Every one of these deaths leaves behind a grieving family and friends.

Can we do better?

Along with an increasing number of people, we say YES!

WHO ARE WE? We both graduated from Medical School in 1976 and have seen and used the best of modern medicine. Dr Gerald wrote his MD thesis on drugs and their treatment of heart disease, Dr Monica has had over 30 years in General Practice and medicine ‘at the coal face’. We have seen the failings of today’s medicine and how poorly we manage to help so many of our patients and friends.

In this book we will discuss some ways in which you can help yourself and more ways that your doctor can help you.

If there are simple changes which you and your family can make which could greatly reduce the risk of developing crippling illnesses, relieve symptoms or prevent an early death, then don’t you want to know about it?

Crucial in this holistic approach to disease prevention is our **lifestyle**.

- **Exercise** – it doesn't have to be vigorous, just a daily walk is all most people require for health benefit.
- **Avoiding toxins** – sadly in today's world this is impossible, but eat organic and minimally processed foods as much as possible. Drink plenty of pure filtered or clean water and support your liver with good nutrition to help its work in detoxification – removing the toxins.
- **Good nutrition** - what we eat and drink are the building blocks for our bodies. With today's highly processed food grown in poor soil, for our bodies to acquire all the necessary nutrients is impossible for most people. We believe that we all need to add some nutritional supplements. We are not alone, as this article in the [*Journal of the American Medical Association*](#); the authors also recommend daily nutritional supplementation.
- **Mind and spirit** - we also need to appreciate that health is more than just keeping our bodies in good physical condition. As any good sports coach will appreciate, success is only achieved when we address our body, our mind and our spirit. In medicine this is even more important.
 - This means we need to look at how we feel towards our bodies and disease. We need to learn how to **relax** and be at peace within. The damage caused by **stress** on our bodies is well understood. It affects our nerves, hormones and many other body systems. We need to be able to switch off and allow these stressful changes to subside. Primitive man, after the hunt or after escaping from a predator, lay down in his cave and relaxed. Modern men and women need their 'cave'.
 - People of all cultures believe that we benefit if we have a **spiritual** dimension to our lives, be it religion, meditation, yoga or an appreciation of nature: anything which helps us appreciate that there is some energy or something which is bigger and beyond ourselves.

Complementary versus Conventional Medicine

It is sad – in fact it is a tragedy – that medical therapies have become divided into conventional and ‘alternative’, and that a patient is usually offered only one of these two options. Few doctors have any alternative training, and many alternative practitioners actively dissuade people from seeking conventional advice.

Complementary treatment, where the patient can use the best advice from all therapeutic modalities, is by far the most likely to be successful, and this is one of our driving reasons for writing this book.

As the reader will see in the ‘[Therapeutic](#)’ section of the book, by combining all therapies, a great deal more can be achieved in both preventing and treating disease.

It is interesting that so-called conventional medicine has only been there for the past 100 years; before that the alternative treatments such as nutrition, herbs, spiritual healing, acupuncture, had been the ‘conventional’ therapies for millennia.

Today ‘modern medicine’ has the upper hand, and uses a double standard when reviewing the science behind its ‘conventional’ and what it calls ‘alternative’ therapies; making it much easier for conventional treatments to be accepted, and almost impossible for so called alternative therapies. .

Dr Ian Chambers, director of the UK Cochrane Centre stated that *“critics of complementary medicine often seem to operate a double standard, being far more assiduous in their attempts to outlaw under-evaluated complementary medical practices than under-evaluated orthodox practices”*... *“More than 60% of orthodox treatments have not been scientifically proved”* ([BMJ 1998, 6 June; 1694](#)).

Dr Richard Smith, Editor of the *British Medical Journal* said in his own publication ([BMJ 1991;303:798](#)) *“only about 15% of medical interventions are supported by solid scientific evidence...This is because only 1% of the articles in medical journals are scientifically sound and partly because many treatments have not been assessed at all.”*

A pretty damning statement from a man who has spent a lifetime reviewing medical papers.

Maybe this situation would be acceptable if orthodox medicine were safer than complementary therapy – but sadly the reverse is true. The reported deaths from complementary treatments worldwide are infinitesimal. In a [review](#), the Acting Chairman of the NZ Coroner’s Council, was unable to find ONE death caused by complementary medicines, natural products, supplements or vitamins.

At the same time, conventional medicine is now one of the leading CAUSES of death in many countries.

Dr Barbara Starfield of the Johns Hopkins School of Hygiene and Public Health gave these horrifying statistics in a paper in the [Journal of the American Medical Association](#) (July 26, 2000;284(4):483-5).

In the USA doctors and medicines were the third highest cause of death:

1. Heart disease
2. Cancer
3. Orthodox medical treatment: yes we doctors have become the third highest cause of death:
 - 12,000 – deaths during unnecessary surgery
 - 7,000 -- medication errors in hospitals
 - 20,000 -- other errors in hospitals
 - 80,000 -- infections in hospitals
 - 106,000 -- non-error, negative effects of drugs
 - 225,000 deaths per year from orthodox medicine!**
 - and these were only hospital statistics

This is horrifying information and behoves all those practising medicine to seek both the best and the safest therapy to offer their patients. To make operations and drugs the last not the first step for any ailment. All doctors swear a version of the Hippocratic Oath, which includes the statement “and first do no harm!” With information like this, we in the 21st Century are falling very short of our Hippocratic duty. Hopefully, this book will suggest safer alternatives, which both patients and doctors can consider before resorting to pharmaceutical agents or which if taken with conventional treatments, make the required amount smaller. We never say there is not a role for drugs – it just shouldn’t be the first and only offering.

The miracle of the human body

Our bodies are made up of many trillions of cells. All of these developed from the original single cell created when our father's sperm fertilised our mother's ovum.

This one cell divides into 2, then 4, 8 and so on until a small ball of identical cells has formed. Then the cells start specialising and form the many types of cell that make up our bodies: muscle, stomach, pancreas, lung, bone, brain and so on.

After 9 months we have the miracle of a new born baby. All these developments are controlled by the nucleus which contains the genes that make us unique transferred from the parent to the baby. In each gene is DNA, which is the blueprint or plan for our bodies. This DNA contains all the instructions – boy or girl, fair or brown hair, short or tall – everything which creates the miracle of the human body. When we are born, we should have a perfect set of brand new cells.

But this process of forming new cells does not stop at birth. As our cells age or become damaged, they are removed and replaced by new cells. As the DNA instructions found in the nucleus have not changed, these new cells should be as perfect as the very first original ones - provided the body has all the raw materials to create perfect cells. Just as a builder cannot build a perfect house without wood, bricks, nails, glass and other necessary materials, our bodies cannot create a perfect cell without the necessary vitamins, minerals, proteins and fats.

This is the basis of nutritional medicine.

In fact the news is even better, because all our cells are programmed to have a limited life span, after which they are removed and replaced by new cells. We replace sperm and white blood cells every day, stomach cells every 2 days, colon cells every 4 days, skin cells every 3-6 weeks and bone cells every 25 years. Only the brain and nerve cells are not replaced – they are repaired. Thus every year, apart from our nerve and bone cells, all the cells in our body cells are brand new.

If we provide all the building blocks for the cells, the new ones should be just as good as the very first cells we were born with. In the womb, a baby receives almost perfect nutrition, because its mother supplies this from the food she eats and if this is deficient, nutrients are scavenged from her own body. Once we are born, we can only get nutrition from the food we eat and the supplements we take.

NOW consider an exciting possibility; if your tissues are injured by trauma, infection or disease, as these damaged cells are replaced, this damage can be rectified, and with perfect nutrition, you can create perfect replacement cells.

Nutritional medicine can allow the body to heal itself

The cells of our bodies have specialised functions. As well as making up our structures and organs, they:

- make secretions like saliva and the stomach juices
- make hormones like insulin, adrenaline, cortisol, melatonin, progesterone
- attack invaders (viruses and bacteria) using the white blood cells and the immune system

When we look at these and all the other complicated systems we have, we begin to realise just what a miracle our bodies are.

When creating a meal, a chef needs the raw ingredients recommended in the recipes he or she is using. Likewise, in our bodies

- we need the building blocks to make the structure of skin, bones, nerves, muscle, and our internal organs
- our cells, which make secretions, juices and hormones, need the raw materials to make them
- our body defence systems require all the nutrients necessary to enable them to identify invaders and abnormal cells
- We need antioxidants to help the body neutralise and repair oxidative damage.

Is it surprising that our body cells do not function optimally when they are not given all the nutrients they need?

Supplying our bodies with a complete range of nutrients has a number of benefits:

1. It will enable the body to replace its cells with new ones which can be better than the older damaged ones and be as near perfect as possible.
2. Enables all the cells to function optimally as they were designed to do.
3. Can also help us defend our bodies from attack by the huge number of toxins and free radicals found in our modern polluted world:
 - Toxins – sprays, pesticides, heavy metals, fumes, smoke and preservatives.
 - Free radicals are unstable damaging molecules with only one instead of paired outer electrons and they damage anything they touch. A free radical steals electrons from nearby molecules, turning them into free radicals, which causes a chain reaction of damage. A free radical is like a spark: short lived but very damaging. This process is often called oxidation. Free radicals are caused by many things including stress, saturated fat in our food, sunlight, toxins, fumes, drugs, smoke, exercise and radiation.

Our bodies require extra nutritional help to eliminate these toxins and poisons. For example to eliminate excess lead from the body, we need additional calcium, zinc, selenium, vitamin C, flavonoids, and chromium. To eliminate mercury we need

selenium, lipoic acid, manganese, chromium, vanadium, and so on. Remember, this need for nutrients is over and above our usual daily requirement.

The oxidation caused by free radicals damages the cells and is the basis for the development of many diseases, including heart disease, arthritis, cancer and strokes. Antioxidants in our diet (vitamins, proanthocyanidins and minerals) are compounds which can donate electrons and can help neutralise these free radicals, thus protecting our bodies.

Should everybody be taking nutritional supplements?

We now come to some vexing questions which are dividing the medical fraternity:

- Should we all be taking nutritional supplements?
- Is it necessary to take additional vitamins and minerals, on top of nutrition from our food? Is it helpful or just a waste of money, ‘creating expensive urine’?
- Is there any information out there which can help you come to a decision for yourself and also your family?
- Can you help your children’s future by improving their nutrition?

There is an enormous amount of information available, and in this book we will look at some of the information which is available in good medical journals and then let you make up your own mind.

First we should declare where we stand:

- We strongly believe that the body can only function properly when it has all the nutrients it needs.
- We also believe that in today’s polluted world we need more protection, especially with antioxidants.
- We are also aware of the poor nutritional content of much of our food. ([The UN 1992 Earth Summit](#) reported on the way intensive farming has depleted our soil and the fruit and vegetables. For example, carrots contain 75% less magnesium and tomatoes 90% less copper than 30 years ago and there are many other frightening statistics. Total minerals in the soils have plummeted: the [mineral content of the soil](#) in the past 50 years has fallen 76% in Europe and 80% in the USA.
- Processing our food to make it more attractive or palatable also removes many of the nutrients found in the natural state. For example, the removal of husks from rice and grains takes away almost all of the B vitamins.

- Omega 3 fish oils present people with a dilemma. As outlined in the following pages, omega 3 oils have huge health benefits – from improving the baby’s brain and IQ while in the womb, to helping joints, nerves, hormones and skin health. Studies suggest that they may reduce the incidence of cancer and heart disease and reduce sudden unexpected death (cardiac arrest). BUT fish also take up mercury and other toxic heavy metals from their surroundings, and mercury is toxic to the brain, nerves and other tissues. This is so important that the FDA has recommended that pregnant women should eat less than 1 fish meal per week because of potential mercury toxicity and consequent harm to the baby. Eating low mercury fish (wild salmon, herring, sardines, trout, flounder and sole, crab, scallops, oyster, shrimps and also krill) may reduce the risk, but taking a regular dose of omega 3 fish oil free from mercury is a safer way to go. Because most of the mercury (and PCBs and dioxin) are found in the flesh, the amount found in most fish oils, especially those involving a distillation process, is quite low; however, it is best to seek out fish oils made to ‘pharmaceutical grade.’ This is especially important when high doses are being used, as in heart disease, arthritis and mental illness, and during pregnancy.

Along with most doctors and health bodies, we agree that many of today’s diseases are caused or aggravated by nutritional deficiency. Improving our nutrition should not only improve but help in the prevention of these conditions.

Therefore, this is the advice we give to our patients:

- Eat as well as possible
 - Eat raw food whenever possible; if heating food, do not overcook
 - Eat whole foods, avoiding processed foods as much as you can
 - Chose organic foods if they are available
 - Eat coloured fruits and vegetables – eat in Technicolor
 - Eat whole grains, the good fats, fish and nuts
 - Drink plenty of pure water
- We also recommend taking good multivitamins and multi-minerals as well as a high-quality fish or flax seed oil supplement. By doing this the body will obtain all its nutritional requirements from both food and supplements. With a good supplement, the body can eliminate what it does not require.
- We do not recommend any supplement which contains iron or vitamin A. These materials can build up in the body and can have [serious health consequences](#).

We feel justified in giving this advice to our patients and indeed to our families, because of our research, our own personal health experiences, and also because of the benefit we have seen in many of our own patients when high-quality supplements have been used.

The medical world is currently divided into two camps:

- Those who believe that nutritional supplements are essential and can make an enormous contribution to vibrant health, energy, well-being and recovery from disease.
- Those who believe supplements are a useless waste of money.

As with most arguments, there is truth on both sides, there are reasons for this difference of opinion.

This book reviews some of the scientific studies suggesting the benefits of adding nutritional products to our diet.

To be fair, there are also negative trials, but in almost every therapeutic endeavour there are negative studies. We can point to many negative trials with drugs which have been ignored because of the positive trials – drugs which doctors have no hesitation in recommending to patients. The fact that there are so many positive nutritional studies, involving large numbers of people, all presented in reputable peer-reviewed journals, behoves medical practitioners to look carefully at the data.

Possibly more importantly, we doctors need to think twice before scoffing at a nutritional therapy which our patient may wish to follow, because most of us are not knowledgeable in this area.

Modern food – our food should contain all the nutrients our bodies require. However poor soil and exhaustion of the soil by modern farming techniques lower the value of food grown in it. Then early picking of fruit before its full food value has been established, the use of toxic sprays and chemicals, storing, processing and cooking – all deplete many foods of the nutrients they would have contained if they had been grown and prepared in optimal conditions.

Our bodies require many minerals and vitamins which are building blocks for our billions of cells, to protect them from bacteria and other invaders, and to help our bodies recover from injury and illness. If these essential nutrients are not in our food, then our bodies will be starved and will work less efficiently.

What are our choices?

Many modern scientists believe nutritional deficiency is a major cause of today's chronic degenerative diseases (heart attacks, heart failure, strokes, cancer, osteoporosis, arthritis, emphysema). The aging process is accelerated. For most people it is acceptable to die of a heart attack or cancer in your 90's, but not at 40–50 years of age – which is common in today's world. With inadequate nutrition, our bodies degenerate faster than they should.

We can choose:

1. To accept this current situation. This means conceding that today's chronic degenerative diseases and premature ageing are inevitable.

2. To find top quality food – preferably grown organically, from soils containing all the nutrients we require; food, picked at its prime and eaten before any nutrients are lost by storing or cooking. A complete selection of such foods needs to be very carefully chosen to provide all the nutrients we require. There are not many places on this planet where this is now possible.
3. To eat as well as possible but in addition take a good quality nutritional supplement. This allows the body to select the compounds and nutrients it requires, from both food and supplement. The body's larder is complete and the cells can work optimally. When cells are replaced, all the building blocks for creating perfect new cells are available.

Quality nutritional supplement - the choice of supplement is also very important. The supplement should

- Contain all the many nutrients required in the correct amount.
- Contain no nutrients which might build up in the body and cause damage, such as iron and vitamin A.
- Be in a formulation which is easy to digest and absorb (bio-available).
- Be easy to eliminate if surplus to requirements.

This means that the supplements must be carefully chosen, and few people or even health professionals are in a position to advise on these.

Many people take a range of supplements made by a number of different companies. The risk in this is that some supplements may overlap and other nutrients could be left out completely. Many supplements work synergistically, where the sum of the whole can be greater than when using individual ingredients. (For example vitamin E is a fat-soluble antioxidant, and removes free radicals from fat in the artery walls. But it requires water soluble vitamin C and selenium to eliminate the free radicals from the body).

We have to rely on the supplement manufacturers to do this for us. Much of the professional resistance to the use of dietary supplements and poor results from their use is because inferior supplements were used. High-quality supplements are now available; these should make a real difference to health and recovery. Perhaps the best [independent review](#) is by scientist and ex-Canadian parliamentarian, the Hon L. McWilliam. We have constructed a graph of some of the more commonly used supplements described in McWilliam's book:

This shows the variation in contents and also explanation why the results of supplement studies and trials are so inconsistent. Sadly most of the over the counter supplements used by most people and also in many studies, are on the right side of the graph, rather than those on the left which provide the optimal levels of nutrients.

The medical literature on disease reduction with good nutrition

The medical literature contains many excellent articles in peer-reviewed, top-quality journals which confirm that people who take adequate or additional doses of nutrients and supplements can greatly lower the risk of developing disease, and can aid recovery from illness. The tragedy is that medical bodies and governments take so little notice of these data – while at the same time they struggle under the enormous financial burden that disease is costing the countries.

In the USA in 1977:

Heart disease cost	\$58 billion
Cancer	\$46 billion
Diabetes	\$10 billion
High blood pressure	\$18 billion
Stroke	\$16 billion
Osteoarthritis	\$16 billion

Total cost of these diseases in the [US economy in 2003](#) was \$1,323 billion

Now, if eating a good diet and taking good nutritional supplements could reduce the incidence of these diseases, as discussed below, most countries could save a fortune.

Listed below is a selection of some of these papers, each with a brief synopsis and the reference.

Some of the papers reviewed come from the [USA Nurses Study](#). This is perhaps the largest and most reliable preventive study of disease in the history of medicine. In the study 88,000 healthy female nurses were followed carefully for 26 years. The researchers looked at the nurses' diet and all aspects of their lifestyles – and observed the effects these had on the development of disease. In addition to looking at what the nurses ate and drank, the researchers also documented their supplement use. Of those participating in the study 8% were taking multivitamin tablets, 23% vitamin C, 15% vitamin E and 4% vitamin A.6

The researchers used a scientific technique called 'multivariate analysis' which enabled them to separate the effect of each of the different lifestyles and nutrition intakes.

In the next few pages we will detail some of the data on how good nutrition could reduce the incidence of many of today's diseases.

Coronary Heart Disease

Coronary heart disease includes angina, heart attacks, and cardiac arrest. Many nutrients have been shown to reduce these, including vitamin E, alpha-linolenic acid, folic acid, vitamins C, B6 and B12, unsaturated fats, fruit and vegetables, dietary fibre, whole grains, nuts, alcohol, fish oils and magnesium.

Even today in the twenty-first century, heart disease statistics are frightening:

In a study performed in the [UK in 1999](#), 48% of everyone who had a heart attack died within 30 days.

Half of those who died had NO prior symptoms – the first warning that they had heart disease was the last! Sadly, this is especially the case when young people have a heart attack.

If half of heart attacks are fatal, then waiting until one develops symptoms is much too late for many people.

Prevention, therefore, is essential, and good nutrition is a very powerful part of prevention.

As you will read below, some of the reductions are truly remarkable. These results suggest that relatively simple and inexpensive changes in nutrient intake can dramatically reduce the risk of coronary heart disease, which continues to kill almost one third of the populations of most Western countries.

Sudden unexpected death (cardiac arrest) is very common with heart disease. Many of us have friends, colleagues and even family members who simply drop dead and who never had the opportunity to reach the high-tech facilities in our hospitals which may have saved them. Because of these horrifying figures prevention is far more effective than waiting until symptoms appear and then starting treatment.

Here are some of the studies showing how coronary heart disease can be affected by nutrition and supplementation:

1. Vitamin E

- Women in the Nurses Study who [took vitamin E](#) for short periods showed almost no benefit; however, when they took it for more than 2 years, the risk of coronary disease was reduced by 41%.
- The USA [Male Health Professionals Study](#): 44,000 male doctors and other health professionals were followed for 4 years. Those men who took at least 100iu of vitamin E per day for more than 2 years had 37% less coronary artery disease.
- A study of [11,000 older people](#) aged 67-105 years: taking vitamin E supplements reduced coronary heart disease deaths by 47%, and taking both vitamin C and E by 53%.
- Despite the negative attitude of the medical press, many doctors recommend antioxidant vitamins.
 - In a survey of [cardiologists](#) from the USA, 44% personally used antioxidant supplements and 37% recommended them to their patients.

- A [smaller survey](#) was taken from members of the Royal Australasian College of Physicians: 15% consumed antioxidants and 20% recommended them to their patients. However, when they developed heart disease themselves, 34% of Australasian physicians took antioxidants supplements.

2. Alpha-linolenic acid

This is one of the few fats our bodies cannot manufacture. This is an omega 3 fatty acid found in oily fish and flax seed oils, which seems to be beneficial for the optimal function of blood vessels, nerves, skin, hormones and joints.

Women in the [Nurses Study](#) who had a high intake of alpha-linolenic acid had 45% fewer heart attacks than those taking only a little or none.

3. Folic acid and vitamins B6 and B12

These B vitamins help lower the blood homocysteine. High blood homocysteine level is an important risk factor for heart disease.

Women in the [Nurses Study](#) who took higher doses of folic acid (greater than 700ug/day) had 31% less coronary heart disease. Those who took vitamin B6 (more than 4mg/day) had a 33% reduction.

4. Dietary fat intake

We eat four types of fat – saturated fats (animal fats), polyunsaturated fats (vegetable and fish oils), monounsaturated (olive oil) and trans fats (mostly man-made fats). It appears that the trans fats are by far the worst, although most medical authorities recommend also reducing the amount of saturated fat eaten as well.

- Women in the [Nurses Study](#) who had high overall fat intakes did not have more heart disease. But looking at the types of fat, there was a difference. Trans fats were the worst – doubling the risk of heart disease to 200%, while saturated fat increased heart disease by 17%. Monounsaturated fat reduced heart disease by 19% and eating more polyunsaturated fat reduced it by 38%.
- Trans fat intake: the partial hydrogenation of vegetable oils to produce margarine and shortening produces trans-fatty acids. Women in the [Nurses Study](#) who had higher intakes of trans fats had more coronary heart disease. Regular users of margarines for 10 or more years had a 67% increase.

5. Refined sugars

Sugars which are rapidly absorbed into the blood stream cause peaks in blood glucose and insulin. These are called high glycaemic sugars, and have been blamed for obesity, diabetes and also can aggravate heart disease. Many processed carbohydrates fall into this category: e.g. bread, white rice, sweets, cakes and cookies.

- Women in the [Nurses Study](#) who ate high glycaemic foods had more than 2½ times the risk of developing coronary heart disease.

6. Fruit and vegetables

Fruit and vegetables contain many antioxidants and other protective nutrients. The Nurses Study did show some benefit, but it was small when compared with the vitamin studies shown above.

- Women in the [Nurses Study](#) who had a high intake of fruit and vegetables had 20% fewer heart attacks than those on low intakes.

7. Dietary fibre

Fibre is an indigestible part of vegetables and fruits and is often removed in the processing of food. Fibre in the diet keeps the bowels moving, helps eliminate some of the toxins in our food and can also lower the cholesterol. Fibre is made up of complex carbohydrates which are not absorbed and stay in the bowel. Unrefined grain fibre appears to be one of the best sources. When grains are refined, the outer layer, or husk, is removed. Most of the nutrients and fibre are in this outer husk.

- Women in the [Nurses Study](#) who had a high intake of fibre in their diet had less coronary artery disease, reducing cardiac events by 37%.

8. Whole grain

In addition to fibre, whole grains also contain many vitamins and other nutrients which are lost when the grain is processed and refined.

- Women in the [Nurses Study](#) regularly eating whole grain foods had 25% less coronary disease than those eating few or no whole grain foods.

9. Nut consumption

Nuts are the seeds for a new plant and provide all the necessary nutrients for the first few weeks of its life. They are a rich source of many beneficial fats, oils, proteins and vitamins.

- Women in the [Nurses Study](#) who ate more than 5 ounces of nuts per week had 45% fewer heart attacks than those who ate no nuts.

10. Alcohol

Alcohol raises the level of the good HDL cholesterol in the blood. Wine, especially red, also contains many beneficial antioxidants. Alcohol in moderation appears to have a substantial benefit in reducing heart disease – but probably not enough to make a non-drinker start drinking! However, it does mean that one does not need to stop having one or two pleasurable evening drinks – BUT no more!

- Women in the [Nurses Study](#) who were light to moderate drinkers (½ -2 drinks per day) had fewer deaths (18%) – mainly due to reduced coronary artery disease. Heavier drinkers had more breast cancer and deaths from cirrhosis of the liver.
- In a number of studies, two drinks per day reduced the risk of heart attacks by 30-50%. [click here](#) [and here](#)

However, we stress that more than two drinks per day is bad not only for the heart, especially the heart muscle, but also the liver, pancreas and brain.

11. Fish oils

Fish contain omega 3 oils which are very long chained polyunsaturated fatty acids derived from the plankton at the bottom of the food chain. These appear to have many beneficial actions within the body. Some nutritionists recommend eating krill rather than fish because it reduces the risk of mercury toxicity. However all the research is with fish oils, and quality fish oil supplements should have no mercury in them. With regard to the heart, fish oils appear to reduce the incidence of heart attacks, but most excitingly, they stabilise the heart rhythm and so have a major effect upon sudden death (cardiac arrest is the cause of most deaths from heart attacks).

- Women in the [Nurses Study](#) who had a higher intake of fish in their diet had less coronary disease. Compared to women who did not eat fish, women who ate one fish meal per week reduced their risk of heart disease by 29%, 2-4 fish meals per week by 31% and those eating five or more fish meals per week had 44% fewer cardiac events.
- In the 44,000 men in the [Health Professionals Study](#), those eating some fish in their diet reduced coronary disease by 26%, but surprisingly, increasing the fish intake further made little difference.
- In the Chicago [Western Electric study](#), 1,822 men were followed for 30 years. Those with the highest fish intake had a 44% reduction in deaths from heart attack. There is no drug which can reduce heart death by even a fraction of this number.
- In the Italian [GISSI-P](#) trial, 11,000 people were given either fish oil or dummy capsules after suffering a heart attack. The people taking fish oil had 20% fewer heart deaths and a 45% reduction in sudden cardiac death. Remember, Italians already eat quite a lot of fish, so more fish oils gave additional protection.

Sudden death is reduced by 81% in men who eat fish regularly. This is the latest data to come from the 22,000 men in the ongoing [Health Professionals Study](#) This is not a typing mistake: in the meticulously conducted Health Professionals Study, taking fish oils reduced the incidence of sudden death by 81%.

Because most heart attack fatalities are due to sudden death caused by ventricular fibrillation, such a simple preventive action as taking regular fish oils could save literally millions of lives worldwide each year.



12. Vitamin C

A report from the US [Nurses Study](#) confirmed heart benefit from taking vitamin C supplements. The report found that those nurses taking vitamin C supplements had 28% fewer cardiac events (heart attacks and death).

13. Vitamin D

The importance of Vitamin D is becoming increasingly appreciated. Low vitamin D levels are present in people with many diseases. In a [study in Kansas](#) of 10,000

people, 70% were found to have low vitamin D blood levels, and correcting this with supplements reduced the risk of heart disease by over 60%.

14. Magnesium

This mineral appears to be important in the function of muscles (enabling them to relax), and also in the control of heart rhythm. A number of studies have shown magnesium to be beneficial:

- In a study conducted by the USA [Centres for Disease Control](#), 12,000 healthy people (25-74 years) were followed for 19 years. Those who had high magnesium levels in their blood had 31% fewer heart-related deaths than those with low blood magnesium levels.
- After a heart attack magnesium given intravenously reduced the mortality by 24% and heart failure by 25% in 2,300 patients in the [LIMIT 2](#) study.
- Magnesium and sudden death. A review of [published data](#) on magnesium suggests that sudden death is common in magnesium deficient areas and that heart magnesium levels are low in people who die suddenly. Heart rhythm irregularities occur with low magnesium levels and intravenous magnesium can reduce arrhythmias after a heart attack. However few large scale clinical trials have been done to see if there is benefit in using oral magnesium supplementation.

15. Selenium

This mineral is low in the soil of a number of countries – New Zealand, Scandinavia, parts of the USA, Australia and China. In these areas, farmers routinely supplement their animals with selenium to avoid heart disease, muscle disease and cancer.

It appears that selenium is necessary for the full function of vitamin E, as well as having other important effects in the body. In areas where the levels are low there

is a higher incidence of cancer and in a [study in Arizona](#) supplementation hugely reduced the risk of developing cancer. In China selenium has been used to treat heart failure in children (Keshan's disease). Many people believe that selenium supplementation is a good idea in areas where selenium levels are low. Unfortunately, because it is a problem in only a few areas, there is not a lot of research being performed.

From these studies, it is obvious that if people had a nutritious diet plus supplements, we could make a huge reduction in heart disease. These results combined, or in some cases individually, are more powerful than any pharmacological or surgical intervention. With such compelling data published in reputable peer reviewed journals, it is difficult to see why the medical profession and cardiologists have not been stressing the benefits of good nutrition. The difference it could make and the savings on the health budget of most countries would be huge, and the cost – negligible.

We recommend to our patients, especially those with any family history of heart disease, to eat as well as they can and to take the following supplement:

A good multivitamin multimineral, quality mercury free fish oil 1- 2 grams daily, Vitamin C 1 gram and vitamin D 5000 IU daily.

As you will see below, this also reduces the risk of stroke, cancer and other chronic degenerative diseases. Of course we also take these ourselves and encourage our families to do so too.

Stroke

Many strokes develop from blockages in the arteries feeding the brain or from pieces of these blockages breaking off (emboli). The process is very similar to that in coronary artery disease and the action required to prevent it is similar, and all the advice for heart disease applies to people at risk of stroke. High blood pressure is a major risk factor for stroke as well, so the [notes on high blood pressure](#) also apply.

In addition, specifically for strokes:

- **Calcium and potassium** – Women in the [Nurses Study](#) who had a high intake of calcium from diet or supplements had 31% fewer strokes than those with low intakes. High potassium intake reduced strokes by 28%.³⁵
- **Fish oil consumption** – Women in the [Nurses Study](#) who ate fish regularly had significantly fewer strokes. Nurses eating 1-3 fish meals per month had a 7% reduction in strokes compared to those who did not eat fish. One fish meal per week gave a 22% reduction, 2-4 fish meals per week 27% and those who ate five or more fish meals per week had a 52% reduction in strokes when compared with those who did not eat fish.
- **Whole grain consumption** – Women in the [Nurses Study](#) who regularly had high levels of whole grain in their food had 31% fewer strokes.

For many people, a stroke is more frightening than having a heart attack, and again the benefits of good nutrition and supplements seems so sensible. We encourage our patients who may be at risk of having a stroke to take a good multivitamin multimineral, quality mercury free fish oil 1- 2 grams daily, Vitamin C 1 gram and vitamin D 5000 IU daily.

The above information relates to a thrombotic stroke (blockage in an artery going to the brain). Brain haemorrhage is a more rare form of stroke, and while the above steps may be of some benefit, the most important preventive step for this often devastating condition, is to control the blood pressure well throughout life. For those with a family history of cerebral haemorrhage, firstly check with your doctor that there are not familial abnormalities in the arteries which may be treatable (aneurisms) and also read the section on [blood pressure](#) .

Cancer

This is probably the most feared of diseases, and yet most people, including their doctors, have little idea on how they can reduce their chances of developing it. Considering that one in three people will develop cancer, protective measures are very important

We should not leave to chance whether we develop cancer or not!

There are many causes of for cells to become cancerous, and it is believed that all of us develop early cancer cells during life, but a healthy immune system working to its optimum, identifies and destroys most of them. The immune system requires good nutrition to function properly. We do not know how these nutrients help reduce cancer, but a number of simple dietary steps have been shown to greatly reduce the risk of developing this feared disease. These include: multivitamins, antioxidant vitamins, Vitamin D, selenium and other minerals, fruit, vegetables and fish oil.

1. Multivitamins and folic acid

Folic acid and other B vitamins appear to be very important in cancer protection. As with many nutritional therapies, treatment needs to continue for a number of years to have a demonstrated effect. When they are taken for some time, the effect can sometimes be huge.

- Women in the [Nurses Study](#) who took multivitamin tablets containing folic acid for 15 years or more reduced their risk of developing colon cancer by 75%. It took many years for this effect to be apparent – after 5 years there was no benefit and after 10 years the reduction was 50%. But after 15 years of multivitamin intake there were only 15 cases of colon cancer per 10,000 women, compared with 68 in those who did not take multivitamin supplements – a 75% reduction
- Breast cancer: alcohol appears to increase the risk of developing breast cancer. In the [Nurses Study](#), folic acid did not lower the incidence of breast cancer, except in alcohol drinkers. In those women who had more than 1 -2 drinks of alcohol per day, taking a multivitamin supplement containing folic acid reduced their breast cancer risk by 36%.

2. Vitamin E

It is believed that free radicals and oxidation may play a part in causing many cancers and vitamin E is a powerful antioxidant, mopping up free radicals.

- In a study of 11,000 [older people](#) (67-105 years) those taking vitamin E supplements had 59% fewer cancer deaths.

3. Selenium

Selenium is a trace element and appears to take part in many body functions, especially working with antioxidants. In some areas of the world the levels of selenium in the soil are low. (New Zealand is one of those places).

Selenium appears to have a powerful protective action against some cancers:

- In a study performed in [Arizona](#), where there are relatively low levels of selenium in the soil, 1,312 people took either 200ug of selenium or dummy tablets and were followed for six years. Those taking selenium had 36% less cancer reported and 50% fewer cancer deaths (63% fewer prostate cancers, 58% fewer colon and rectal cancer and 46% fewer lung cancers).
- In a small study of [patients with prostate cancer](#), the risk of prostate cancer was 4-5 fold higher in those who had low levels of selenium in their blood.
- In the [Health Professional's Study](#) 44,000 of men, toenail clippings were used to detect their selenium status. There was 51% less prostate cancer in men with the highest selenium level, compared with the lowest level.

4. Vitamin D

The power of this vitamin has only recently been appreciated. Vitamin D is created in the skin from UV B sun exposure, and low levels of vitamin D have been associated with many diseases, especially cancer. Of all the preventive approaches to reducing cancer, optimising vitamin D levels is probably the most important. Regular sun exposure may be possible in some areas, but supplementation is not being appreciated by health bodies all round the world.

- Reports of the incidence of cancer rising the further from the equator or the lower vitamin D levels have been described for [many years](#)
- In a 4 year study of post-menopausal [women in Nebraska](#) to see if vitamin D and calcium supplementation reduced the risk of bone fractures, they also looked at the incidence of cancers. All cancers were reduced by taking vitamin D, but when they looked at cancers which started after 12 months of therapy (i.e. were possibly not there when the study started) there was an enormous 77% reduction of cancers in those taking vitamin D
- Johns Hopkins University, one of America's leading institutions makes the following statements about vitamin D and prostate cancer *"Even though it's not yet proven that increasing your vitamin D intake will decrease your risk of prostate cancer, there's clearly an association between the two"* and then suggest either regular sun exposure or [supplementation](#).
- Preventing breast cancer in women has huge interest, and although all studies with vitamin D have not been as positive, [a review](#) of vitamin D sun exposure plus supplementation papers revealed that women taking 2,000iu of vitamin D plus very moderate sun exposure could reduce their risk of breast cancer by up to 50%.
- Similar data is proposed for other cancers including colon and rectum. The problem is that it is difficult to assess sun exposure, there is a huge variety in the

amount and quality of Vitamin D used, few large blinded trials have been done, and for cancer the duration of studies need to be long to get a result.

However, there are good theoretical reasons for Vitamin D to be beneficial, there are many positive trials as well as some which have not shown benefit. Negative trials exist for almost every medical treatment we have, and it is not a reason for giving a drug or treatment – especially if there is no downside to the therapy. In addition to possible cancer benefit, there are many other diseases Vitamin d is being shown to benefit (including heart and nerve diseases), and there are no studies showing any disadvantages in supplementing with moderate doses of the vitamin (2 – 5,000iu daily).

5. **Fruit and vegetables**

➤ The fibre and antioxidant content of fruit and vegetables has been thought to reduce the risk of cancer but in the [Nurses Study](#), surprisingly, eating plenty of fruit and vegetables did not reduce the incidence of either colon or rectal cancer. This just shows that studies are not positive. The logic and obvious benefit of eating fruit and vegetables of all colours (preferably as organic as possible) is so strong that all bodies, including us strongly recommend it, even though this study shows no benefit.

6. **Cruciferous vegetables**

This is an especially powerful group of vegetables for reducing the risk of cancer. They help in the production of DIM (di-indol methane) and Indol-3-Carbinol which can neutralise carcinogenic (cancer producing) toxins. The [American Institute of Cancer Research](#) gives some references to studies on the topic. Sadly, these are vegetables many people don't like to eat, such as watercress, broccoli, cauliflower, Brussels sprouts, kale. Overcooking or prolonged storage can reduce some of the neutralising action, but it is interesting that if eaten with meals, these vegetables can neutralise cancer-producing toxins found in the rest of our diet.

7. **Fish oils**

➤ A long term study in Sweden involving 1 [1,000 men](#), showed a 2-3 fold increase in prostate cancer in those men who ate little or no fish, when compared with those eating moderate or high amounts.

8. **Lycopene**

A substance found in cooked tomatoes that has been shown to reduce the development of prostate cancer. It appears to be more concentrated in tomato sauce; however, a good supplement containing lycopene would probably be a more palatable and healthier option.

➤ [Harvard University](#) followed 47,000 health professionals for over 12 years. Those eating 4–7 servings of tomato sauce per week had 20% less prostate cancer, and those eating more than 10 servings per week had 45% less.

- In a large epidemiological study, [Vogt](#) tested blood lycopene levels in over 500 people. Those with high blood lycopene levels had 35% less prostate cancer than those with low levels.

9. Melatonin

A sleep hormone produced by the pineal gland in the brain that appears to have a protective effect against the development and progression of cancer. Shift workers who sleep in the light and produce very little melatonin have a higher risk of developing cancer. In the USA [Nurses study](#), those nurses who worked night shifts for more than 30 years had a 36% higher risk of developing breast cancer.

In a review of [ten randomised](#) trials involving 643 patients, cancer patients given melatonin in high doses (10-40mg at night) reduced their risk of death at one year by 34%.

Conclusions for cancer – in epidemiological trials it is often difficult to reach a clear-cut answer. Negative results will often be seen, for example the surprising data in the Nurses study that fruit and vegetables do not reduce bowel cancer. Many studies conclude with the statement that these results are suggestive, but more studies need to be done to fully confirm them. That's great for our grandchildren, but in the meantime there is overwhelming suggestion that good nutrition and supplements could reduce the incidence of many cancers, and it seems almost mal practice for doctors not to recommend them – especially as they can do no harm and may also benefit other conditions.

We recommend that everyone eats as well as possible and also takes a good multivitamin and multimineral tablet (with sufficient selenium in low Se areas), fish oils (mercury free), and 5,000iu of Vitamin D. Men could consider taking lycopene and perhaps shift workers might benefit from melatonin.

High blood pressure (hypertension)

High blood pressure causes strokes, heart attacks, aneurisms, kidney failure and many other diseases. In most cases the cause is unknown.

While drug treatment is frequently required, doctors stress the benefits of a healthy active lifestyle, weight reduction, smoking cessation, stress reduction and a low salt diet. What is rarely mentioned is the value of taking calcium and magnesium.

- **Calcium and Magnesium:** Women in the [Nurses Study](#) who, through their food or supplements took higher doses of calcium or magnesium, had less hypertension than those taking lower doses. Those taking 800mg of calcium/day had 22% less instances of high blood pressure than those taking less than 400mg/day. Those taking more than 300mg of magnesium per day had 23% less, compared to those taking less than 200mg; and those taking higher doses of BOTH calcium and magnesium had a 45% reduction in developing hypertension.
- In a [study](#) involving 20,000 Dutch men and women, a diet rich in calcium, magnesium and potassium were all associated with lower blood pressure.

The important feature of high blood pressure is not simply the pressure reading, but the fact that hypertension leads to the development of coronary heart disease and stroke. So in addition to lowering the blood pressure, it is also important to reduce the risk of heart disease and stroke. As we have discussed above, good nutrition can also greatly reduce the risk of these diseases.

Cataracts

These are opacities which develop in the lens of the eye. Sunlight on the lens causes damaging free radical formation. The antioxidant vitamin C can neutralise the free radicals thus reducing cataract formation. Some carotenoids may provide additional protection:

- **Vitamin C.** Women in the [Nurses Study](#) who took vitamin C for more than 10 years had 77% fewer early cataracts and 83% less severe cataracts, compared to women who did not take vitamin C supplements.
- **Lutein and Zeaxanthin.** These are carotenoids found in spinach and curly kale. They [reduced cataracts](#) by 22% in a section of the Nurses Study. Sadly, few people eat enough of these greens.

Arthritis

Osteoarthritis is simply a process where the protective cartilage that covers the ends of the bones wears away, exposing the bone which also becomes damaged. Apart from a very few people who have a genetic predisposition, this is an almost totally preventable disease.

- **Protect the joints during exercise** – stretch and warm up before exercise, wear good shoes which cushion the foot and reduce jarring. Do not play through pain; don't allow steroids or NSAIDs to be injected into the joints. These enable people to exercise on damaged surfaces and increase the damage. Steroids also weaken the cartilage and bone.
- Regular walking keeps the joints supple and can result in better function.
- Avoid being overweight; it puts excess wear, tear and strain on the spine, hips and knee joints.
- **Green tea** has a number of [phenol compounds](#) which block an enzyme (cytokine) which can damage cartilage, and may be beneficial for people at risk of developing arthritis.
- **Vitamin C** is essential for making the collagen fibre that is essential for muscle, tendons and bones. A [small study](#) found that vitamin C supplements reduced the development of osteoarthritis, but did not appear to help those with the condition.
- A good **multivitamin and multimineral** will make sure the bones and cartilage have an adequate supply of nutrients for optimal repair.
- **Glucosamine** is a glyconutrient which is essential in the formation of cartilage. Trials have shown that it does protect joints from damage and can repair the cartilage. A review of [15 studies](#) involving 1,775 patients concluded that glucosamine statistically and effectively reduced pain and improved function. Often glucosamine is given with chondroitin, but there is little data that chondroitin with or without the glucosamine adds any benefit. For people at risk of osteoarthritis, especially sports people, taking regular glucosamine seems a wise choice.
- **Omega 3 fish oils** keep the tissues supple and may also help lubricate the joints. In a study with [guinea pigs](#) which develop osteoarthritis, fish oils reduced the disease by up to 50%

Alzheimer's disease

Sadly, the incidence of this debilitating condition, where our loved ones slowly lose their memories and ability to cope with everyday life, is rising in the Western world. It has been calculated that by 2050, over 16 million Americans will be suffering from this incurable condition. There have been few if any answers offered to slow this epidemic, and health researchers are very worried.

➤ **Vitamins C & E supplements:**

these supplements can make a difference. In a study performed at [Johns Hopkins](#) University Medical School, 4,700 people aged over 65 years were studied for 4 years. At the start of the study, those taking more than 500mg vitamin C and 400 iu of vitamin E as supplements had 78% less Alzheimer's disease. When they were reviewed after four more years more of these people had developed Alzheimer's disease but those still taking these supplements had 64% less disease. Interestingly, vitamins from fruit and vegetables did not appear to have the same protective benefit (possibly because the vitamin content of modern produce is so poor).

➤ **Mercury amalgams:** many people believe that the toxic effects of mercury fillings placed in our teeth may be adding to the Alzheimer's epidemic. Unless mercury is very carefully removed the dose entering the brain can be increased, so great care is needed if fillings are to be removed. For children, however, we strongly recommend that parents take them to a dentist who does not use mercury fillings!

Conclusions on disease prevention:

Modern medicine is not good at preventing disease, it is much better at treating symptoms. All of the studies discussed above show the power of good nutrition, both from good food and supplementation, in preventing many of today's diseases. **These results are far greater than any drug or other available 'traditional' therapies.**

These trials have shown that:

- **Antioxidant vitamins (C and E) benefit coronary heart disease, cancer, cataracts, Alzheimer's disease.**
- **Multivitamins (B vitamins) can reduce heart attacks and cancer.**
- **Fish oils can reduce heart attacks, cardiac arrest, stroke, cancer.**
- **Minerals can help high blood pressure, heart disease, and stroke.**

Modern medicine has become highly specialised, we have different drugs for all our different systems. So we tend to regard each system – like the heart – as one entity, to be treated without much consideration to other systems. Yet when we consider that all our cells need similar nutrition, and that nutritional deficiency and excess production of free radicals cause or aggravate many different diseases, then it is not surprising that the same nutritional regimen is beneficial for many of these.

To reduce the risk of developing all these diseases, we recommend that everyone eats a diet as good and as varied as possible, AND also takes on a daily basis a good multivitamin/multimineral (including selenium in areas where it is low), and omega 3 fish oils.

We are not alone in recommending this - a top medical journal now advocates the use of vitamins:

In a paper in the *Journal of the American Medical Association*, Drs Fletcher and Fairfield, who wrote the *JAMA* nutritional guidelines, confirm that Americans are not consuming enough nutrients in their diet. We believe this statement holds true for all nations. [Click here](#) for the full paper

The researchers recommended that doctors talk to their patients about using vitamins. They reviewed over 30 years of articles concerning the effects of vitamins on disease and concluded:

- “It appears that people who get enough vitamins may be able to reduce their risk of common illnesses such as cancer, heart disease and osteoporosis.”
- “Suboptimal intake of some vitamins above levels causing classic vitamin deficiency is a risk factor for chronic diseases, and common in the general population, especially the elderly.”
- “Most people do not consume an optimal amount of all vitamins by diet alone.”

➤ “It appears prudent for all adults to take vitamin supplements”.

Reversing a longstanding anti-vitamin policy, the Journal of the American Medical Association today is advising all adults to take at least one multivitamin and mineral pill each day.

Nutritional Supplements in reducing today's diseases

You have the choice:

- i. Ignore all the above data and hope that your body will get all the nutrients it requires from the food you eat. If you do this, then you need to be very choosy in the type and the quality of your food. Unfortunately, many of today's chronic degenerative diseases - coronary disease, stroke, cancer, emphysema, arthritis - have flourished in our modern, polluted and nutrient-depleted world.
- ii. We can accept the logic and evidence that, by providing the body with all the minerals, vitamins and other nutrients it needs to function properly, it will be more resistant to disease and should be able to cope with illness better. **This will require the addition of good nutritional supplements.**

We must never forget that our main weapon against disease is our own body – its defensive and immune systems. The body can also mend itself when injured or when recovering from disease. These protective and repair systems are incredible. Most modern medicines only provide a crutch, while the body does the work of healing. How can we expect our wonderful bodies to function properly if we starve them of essential nutrients?

Combining this logic with the above compelling scientific data from some of the most prestigious journals in the world leaves no doubt that our bodies do benefit from top quality nutrition.

Nutritional or dietary supplements review

In today's world an ideal diet supplying all the nutrients the body requires is almost impossible to achieve, so good quality supplementation is necessary. We have underlined the words "good quality" deliberately. A good supplement should provide a complete range of all the required nutrients, in the right dose, in a form which is easily absorbed into the body – preferably made to pharmaceutical standards which guarantee the quality of contents and ensure the exclusion of potentially injurious impurities.

The regulations for supplement manufacture allow them to be made to food standard. Modern drugs are made to a totally different standard, i.e. pharmaceutical standard.

Sadly, most supplements available to the public do not achieve these ideals as their manufacture complies with food standards, which is why so many doctors and health professionals are unconvinced of the value of using supplements. It is worth looking for the few good quality supplements which are made to pharmaceutical grade. [Independent authorities](#) can provide insight to help you in your search.

What supplements should NOT include:

In this book we use the term 'supplements' simply to describe the nutrients which should be in our food, but in most situations, are not. Thus people and patients can take a good quality nutritional supplement if they are allowed to eat good food.

But what happens if we take too many? Provided we take supplements which our bodies can excrete, there is no problem.

There are however two ingredients frequently found in supplements which can build up in the body and have toxic effects and so should NOT be included in a routine vitamin/mineral supplement. **These are vitamin A and iron.**

- **Vitamin A:** this is a fat-soluble vitamin and its level can build up in the tissues causing skin problems, bone pain and fractures, nausea, vomiting and weakness. A good vitamin supplement should have beta carotene instead of vitamin A. If the body needs more vitamin A it can create it from the beta carotene, but if not then the beta carotene can be harmlessly excreted.
- **Iron:** this is frequently found in supplement tablets, and for most people it causes no problem. BUT one person in 300 has a condition called haemochromatosis which causes the iron to build up in the body tissues. This especially occurs in the liver, pancreas and heart, leading to cirrhosis, diabetes and heart failure, and can be fatal. Unfortunately only a special blood test can confirm the presence, so to include iron in a routine supplement could potentially kill or maim one person in three hundred. Some people do need iron (for anaemia), but it should be taken as a separate tablet, only after a blood test has confirmed that there is a need.

Supplements and Anticoagulants (warfarin)

Many people are taking anticoagulants to reduce the risk of clots forming in the arteries, veins or in the heart. Doctors monitor a blood clotting test called the INR. In

patients requiring anticoagulants it is important that the INR is within the ideal range (usually 2-4). Lower figures may cause clotting; higher levels increase the risk of bleeding. Usually regular blood tests are done to check the level, and the doctor will increase or reduce the warfarin dose to keep the INR in the desirable range.

Vitamin K can neutralise the effect of warfarin, and so if a person eats a lot of food containing vitamin K, or takes a supplement containing vitamin K, the action of the warfarin is reduced. Foods which contain a lot of vitamin K include: avocado, broccoli, Brussels sprouts, raw cabbage, chick peas, green beans, green tea, liver, lettuce and raw spinach. If you overindulge in these it can lower the INR. It is best to try and eat a similar amount of these foods most days, so that they have a consistent effect on the INR.

Most good vitamin supplements contain vitamin K which could also lower the INR. This is where the quality of the supplement is very important. If the supplement is made to pharmaceutical standards then each tablet contains exactly the same amount of vitamin K, and if you take the supplement regularly then it will make a consistent change to the INR, so that the doctor can then increase the dose of warfarin to maintain a stable INR level. The supplement must not be stopped or there may be an increased risk of bleeding.

If, however, the supplement is made to food standards, as most supplements are, the variable amount of vitamin K in each tablet will have a chaotic effect upon the INR. **So supplements containing vitamin K and made to food standards should not be used by people taking anticoagulants.**

Some good supplement companies can also manufacture multivitamin products that do not contain vitamin K and so are much safer to use.

Some other supplements (e.g. co-enzyme Q10) can have a small effect upon the INR, thus **it is much safer for people taking warfarin to always to use pharmaceutical grade supplements.**

What about all those negative supplement trials we read about in the papers?

There is no doubt there is a disapproving attitude amongst many health professionals towards the use of nutritional supplements. Some of this may come from a desire to concentrate on eating good food and the belief that taking supplements may stop people worrying about what they eat.

Another important reason for this antagonism to supplements is because of the poor quality, contents and accuracy of most supplements which are available on the market; and as a consequence, many doctors have been unimpressed with the benefits they have seen in their patients.

However, there is possibly a more ominous side to this discussion – the involvement of the pharmaceutical companies, whose major interest is in treating the symptoms of disease with drugs. If people stay healthier, they will need less medication.

It is interesting to see how the medical journals and the public press ignore the many positive trials detailing the value of supplements, but if there is ever a negative study, this makes headlines – no matter how dubious the conclusions. There is one trial in which vitamin A and vitamin E were given to patients who smoked and - believe it or not – the subjects were encouraged to continue to smoke throughout the trial. There was a higher mortality in those people taking vitamin A (but not vitamin E). This trial has been included in all the major reviews since then and of course is able to skew the results against the use of any antioxidant treatment.

Most reviews (called meta analyses) which come out with negative results have a number of factors which almost guarantee the adverse result:

- They only included trials where a lot of people died. Because supplements are as nontoxic as the placebo dummy tablets, there will be a low mortality in most trials, and these trials are ignored.
- They analyse trials where supplements of any quality were used. In drug trials the drugs assessed are made to pharmaceutical standards. No so in supplement trials.
- In most studies any dose of supplement could be used. One recent study included vitamin E trials with doses ranging from 50 to 5,000mg. The ideal safe and most effective dosage range for vitamin E is 400-800mg. In drug trials they always logically insist that the therapeutic dose is used.
- The studies do not account for the fact that, unlike drugs, supplements often work together in synergy. For example, vitamin E works best as an antioxidant when it is given with vitamin C and there is sufficient selenium available.
- The studies do not differentiate between prevention trials, and secondary trials – where supplements are given to people who already have a disease (heart disease, cancer, high blood pressure). It is much more likely that supplements over many years will reduce the development of these diseases (as the studies described earlier in this book confirm). However, once people have the disease, although supplements can help (as we will discuss in the second half of this book), their benefits will be less powerful or obvious.
- Believe it or not, in some trials the dummy (placebo) treatment can be a low dose of the very vitamins they are studying – which could have given some benefit.
- In most trials they do not measure blood levels so there is no guarantee that the subjects were actually taking the supplement. This is especially important in some fish oil trials where people did not like the taste or after-effects of some of the poorer quality fish oil preparations; they just did not take it.

Remember, the pharmaceutical industry is one of the largest businesses in the world, and if people were kept healthy, this would impinge on their profits.

Our advice – be cautious about major reviews of trials, look at who wrote them and ask about the motivation behind the trial. Also look at the quality of the studies, the number of people in each and also see how many were excluded by the authors of the analysis.

Do we need to take nutritional supplements?

We believe that in this polluted, highly stressed modern world, with the quality of most food and the difficulty in eating a perfect diet – the answer for almost everyone should be **YES!**

1. **There is much to gain** - the studies listed above are just a small selection of the data available. Premature ageing and chronic degenerative diseases are crippling and killing our generation and it is likely to be even worse for our children. If good supplementation can reduce this, as these studies suggest, then surely it should be carefully considered.
2. **Which supplements do we recommend?** Because of the poor level of nutrition in our diets we would recommend that all people should take:
 - A regular good quality **multivitamin and multimineral** preparation. Appropriate formulations should also be given to children over the age of one. In areas of the world where selenium levels are low, selenium should be included in the supplement.
 - In addition we would suggest that unless a person has a substantial regular diet of fish, then he or she should take an **omega 3 fish oil** supplement – but make sure it is mercury free.
 - Because magnesium is so important for many bodily functions, including absorption of calcium, for most people we would also recommend a good quality **calcium and magnesium** supplement as well.
3. **What is there to lose?** Supplements which simply provide the body with what should be in an optimal diet are as safe as eating that optimal diet. Higher doses of some nutrients may provide additional benefit, but even these have been shown to be safe. In the recent [Oxford Heart Protection Study](#) involving over 10,000 people taking vitamin E for 5 years, no adverse events were seen.
4. **Our children:** even if you yourself do not wish to take supplements, think about your children. Many diseases are becoming more common in the children of today (diabetes, obesity, cancer, asthma, allergies, eczema, depression, suicide) and poor nutrition is playing a significant part in this. Just look at what our children and young adults eat and ask yourself if their growing cells are receiving proper nutrition. We strongly believe that providing quality nutritional supplements to our children will have a profound beneficial effect on their future health. **What better legacy could we leave them?**

We believe everyone should take supplements (as recommended in the [*Journal of the American Medical Association*](#)) because:

- Today's food values have fallen so much.
- High levels of processing and prolonged storage affect the quality of food.
- Most people are unable to eat the wide range of foods in our fast-moving world.
- Fast foods, with all their problems, continue to be the staple diet for many people and their children.
- Our world is more polluted, toxic and chemically laden. We need additional good nutrients to enable our bodies to detoxify.

Note

- **We do not believe supplements should replace a good diet.** We have continually stressed throughout this book the need to eat as well as possible, paying attention to the quality and source of the food (organic, minimally cooked and fresh is best). There are many additional beneficial nutrients in our food which we have not yet recognised. Unfortunately, quality food containing everything we require is almost impossible to obtain. It is expensive and beyond the budget constraints for most people who would benefit from them. The utopian diet is not available to most people in this world; BUT nonetheless, we should try. It would be wonderful if we could get all our nutritional requirements from our food.
- We are not suggesting that nutritional supplementation should replace other forms of medical treatment - it should complement them (see section 2).
- We are strong advocates for a holistic approach to health and illness. We believe that good modern medicine is hugely assisted by a positive attitude and a mind at peace with itself. We also believe that optimal nutrition must be of benefit, and hopefully in this book we have shown that there is good evidence that this is so.

Conclusions – our advice on how to stay healthy and how we can protect our children's health:

Our recommendations for a preventive lifestyle

1. Avoid toxins and preservatives as much as possible
2. Regularly exercise – as appropriate throughout life
3. Learn relaxation – take time out for your body and mind
4. Eat as well as you can – especially fruit & vegetables
5. Take nutritional supplements to make sure that your body receives all the nutrients it needs – from childhood right through till old age:
 - a. A good complete multivitamin/multimineral
 - b. Additional vitamin C – at least 2 grams daily and vitamin D at least 5,000iu daily
 - c. Omega 3 fish oils (mercury free) – at least 1 gram/day
 - d. Calcium and magnesium – 500-800mg daily
 - e. Selenium 150ug daily – in countries where it is not in the soil or food supply
 - f. In men as they age – saw-palmetto and lycopene for prostate health
 - g. For eye protection, a supplement containing xanthene and zeaxanthine may also be beneficial.

If we start this in our children and they carry it on through their lives, we genuinely believe that:

**WE COULD REVERSE THE EPIDEMIC OF TODAY'S
DEGENERATIVE DISEASES* IN ONE GENERATION**

WHAT A LEGACY FOR US TO LEAVE OUR CHILDREN!

*coronary disease, cancer, Alzheimer's, arthritis

Section 2. TREATMENTS

In this section we list alphabetically most of today's common diseases and conditions, with a brief review of the condition, how conventional medicine treats them, what patients can do for themselves and what complementary therapies are available.

PLEASE NOTE – these are simply guidelines and we would like you to discuss what you will be doing with your health professional before making any changes.

The purpose of this segment of the book is to give people a list of possible treatments, both conventional and complementary, so that when they see their health professional, they can discuss all of the therapies, and in some cases help refresh their doctor's memories, or maybe even teach them something new.

Some treatments and conditions may require additional information – these will be labelled and further information will be available in the appendix at the end of the book.

For everybody

(with any disease or condition)

We hope you will have already read the first half of this book which shows the preventive power of good nutrition. We explain why the body requires good nutrition to function perfectly, to enable it to fight and then recover from disease.

We also show how nutritionally poor our food is in today's world, and this is compounded by our limited food choices. Even worse is the quality and type of food most of our children choose to eat.

Because of this we believe that **EVERYBODY**, in addition to eating a diet as good and varied as possible, should regularly take a number of nutritional supplements:

- **A good multivitamin/multimineral:** to make sure that the body cells have all the nutrients and minerals required to stay healthy and fight and recover from disease.
- **Omega 3 fish oils:** 1–2 grams daily. This improves the elasticity and strength of tissues, has beneficial effects on brain and nerve function, helps with heart health, mental function, joints and skin.
- **Vitamin C 2 grams and Vitamin D 5,000iu:** benefit many conditions
- **Calcium and magnesium:** 800-1,000mg/day. Calcium is essential for bone health, and nerve and muscle function. Magnesium is also essential for nerve and muscle function, especially relaxation. Without magnesium it is more difficult to absorb calcium.

Alzheimer's Disease

(Pre-senile dementia)

Description: this terribly sad disease, where a person's mind slowly fades into oblivion, has become increasingly common and the incidence continues to rise. The cause is not known; some suspect infections, toxins or poisons, heavy metals such as mercury from teeth or free radical damage may be precipitating factors.

What your doctor can do

- Nothing
- They have tried some drugs (cholinesterase inhibitors and Memantine to try to improve nerve transmission) - but these have many side effects, can temporarily make some patients better but in many cases they can get worse, but they have no effect on the ongoing disease process. Other drugs NSAIDs, oestrogen replacement and Selegline have similarly been shown not to help

What you can do

- ✓ Stop some drugs - Make sure you are not taking any drugs which can blunt mental function – especially important ones are the STATIN drugs (stop these), antidepressants (stop unless essential), other mind altering drugs (sedatives, sleeping pills, tranquilisers), beta blocking drugs (discuss with your doctor before stopping),
- ✓ Lifestyle - While it has not yet been proven to slow the progression of the disease, keeping the mind active with enjoyable tasks seems a logical approach to take. Regular exercise (walking) is also valuable and in one study did show some slowing in deterioration.
- ✓ Avoid possible toxins such as aluminium (in cooking ware and also deodorants). Mercury is a real problem as often removal of mercury from teeth can hugely increase exposure - but certainly avoid more mercury fillings

Nutritional supplements

Good nutrition is essential for the mind to stay healthy.

- ✓ **A good multivitamin / multimineral:** to ensure that brain tissues have all the nutrients and minerals required to function perfectly. Studies show that some B vitamins can make a difference (B6, B9 and B12 in high doses) – make sure your multi is complete and comprehensive.

- ✓ **Omega 3 fish oils**, 1–2 grams daily are very important for good brain function. In Alzheimer's disease a high omega 3 intake can be very beneficial although not all trials have shown benefit. (NB make sure the fish oils are pure and contain no mercury - which could make Alzheimer's worse)
- ✓ **Calcium and magnesium**, 800-1,000mg/day, especially the magnesium, has a very calming effect, helps with sleep and enables people to cope better
- ✓ **Vitamin D** is a nutrient we are only just beginning to appreciate. People with Alzheimer's often have low vitamin D levels and there has been some suggestion that high dose vitamin D may help the symptoms (and perhaps the underlying disease) Take 5 - 8,000iu of a good vitamin D preparation daily.
- ✓ **Tumeric (curcumin)** - this cooking spice acts on the cell membranes and may slow the entry of damaging amyloid tissue into the nerve cells. Either as a supplement or added to the cooking 2 or 3 times per week, it can do no harm and may well help.
- ✓ **Ginkgo Biloba**: this ancient Chinese herb has for centuries been used to help mental function in people all over the world, it is the 3rd most popular supplement used in the USA. It has a number of actions which can help brain function (including protecting brain cells in animal tests, improves nerve transmission in the brain, and opens up arteries in the brain). In a [study in the USA](#) involving 309 Alzheimer's patients, 20% had a mild improvement in their symptoms and mental function tests did not change, while those on the dummy tablets became significantly worse.
- ✓ **High dose Antioxidant vitamins**: because free radical damage is believed to be a cause of Alzheimer's, high doses of the antioxidant vitamins should help. In [one study](#), elderly people who regularly took high doses of vitamin C (500mg) and vitamin E (400mg) had 78% less cases of Alzheimer's disease, this does not prove that they help once Alzheimer's has developed, but it does seem a logical conclusion.
- ✓ **Hormones** - while oestrogen has not been shown to help in women, no studies using bio-identical female hormones (oestrogens and progesterone) have been done. In men, Alzheimer's is more common in men with low testosterone levels, and it has been suggested that testosterone replacement (cream or implants) may be helpful. These treatments seem logical, especially when low levels are present. We would suggest that you discuss with your doctor about taking either testosterone or 'natural' female hormones – but not HRT.
- **Body/mind/spirit/energy therapies** – most people appreciate that a person with a positive outlook and happy disposition is much more likely to overcome a disease than those who turn their faces to the wall. When we consider that the atoms that make up our bodies are actually spinning [energy particles](#) (electrons, quarks, leptons, bosons, neutrinos...the further they look, the more they find.) with no demonstrable mass. It seems so obvious that treatments involving energy should

affect our bodies. Some therapies (acupuncture, Reiki, healing touch...) address the energy directly. There are many simple, safe and beneficial ways of improving the energy round out bodies. These include looking positively at life, forgiving events of the past, loving, hugging, meditation, listening to good uplifting music or TV programmes, Tai chi, hypnosis, massage, aroma therapy.....

Accept the support and love of others. Studies have shown that positive thoughts, prayers, love and concern can travel around the world and lead to beneficial outcomes. We don't understand it, but then there are many things we don't understand. Just accept it as another implement in your recovery – possibly the most powerful tool.

On the other side of the coin, negative thoughts and input can be detrimental. We health professionals and care givers need to be very careful what we suggest or say to our patients, especially if it involves creating doubt in a treatment which they believe may work.

Aneurism

(Artery blow-out, rupture)

Description: occasionally the pressure inside an artery can stretch the wall and a 'blow out' (similar to what happens in a car tyre) can occur. The most common area for this to happen is in the abdominal aorta, which is the large artery feeding blood to the pelvis, kidney and legs. Often, aneurisms cause no symptoms and are found by chance on a routine examination or x-ray. They may cause an aching abdominal pain which can become very severe. The major danger is rupture or bursting of the aneurism, so treatments which can reduce the stress on the aorta, strengthen it and improve its elasticity may help.

What doctors can do

- Investigations: x-rays, ultrasound, CT or MRI scans, plus blood tests.
- Treatments: if the blood pressure is elevated this is usually treated, and if the aneurism exceeds a certain size, surgical repair is necessary.

What you can do

Lifestyle

It is best not to raise the blood pressure too much, so hard physical exercise and weight lifting should be avoided. Make sure that your blood pressure is well under control. If the abdominal pains become worse then see your doctor quickly.

Nutritional supplements

- A good multivitamin / multimineral: to make sure that the aorta has all the nutrients and minerals it requires to stay strong.
- Omega 3 fish oils, 1–2 grams daily, improve the elasticity and strength of the aorta wall.
- Calcium and magnesium, 800-1,000mg/day help the arteries to relax and can help lower blood pressure.
- Grape seed extract (proanthocyanidins) reduces inflammation and can aid healing.
- Vitamin C may help strengthen the blood vessel wall as it is essential for the formation of collagen which makes up the fibres of the artery wall tissues.

ANGINA

(angina pectoris)

Description: a tight, heavy, constricting pain felt in the chest, arms, throat or back, usually brought on by exercise, cold or stress. It is caused by a narrowing of one or more of the arteries feeding blood to the heart – the coronary arteries. When the heart beats harder or faster it does not get enough blood through the narrowed artery or arteries, and this causes the heavy tight pain.

What doctors can do

- Investigations: ECG, exercise ECG, stress echocardiogram, coronary angiogram (taking an X-ray picture of the coronary arteries). Newer techniques using CT and MRI images are also being used.
- Procedures: angioplasty (opening the arteries with a tiny balloon), stenting (using a fine lattice work stent to keep the artery open), and coronary artery bypass surgery (CABG), where arteries and veins are used to bypass the narrowed arteries.
- Drugs: aspirin (to reduce blood clotting), beta-blockers (to make the heart beat more gently and slowly so it needs less blood), calcium channel blockers, nitrates – either inhaled for immediate relief (GTN spray) or slow release tablets. Statin drugs to reduce cholesterol and inflammation (these are further discussed in the appendix [click here](#)). The statins have been shown to reduce the risk of heart attack and death, but they do have side effects.
Other drugs can also be prescribed – perhexiline, ACE inhibitors. The new sodium pump inhibiting drug Ranolazine is very effective but is only available in a few countries..Another new class of drugs IF inhibitors (Ivabradine) is also available in some countries.

What you can do

Lifestyle

- Regular mild exercise: walking is the best, but slow or stop when the anginal pain comes on. Reduce the stresses in life, lose weight if overweight and do not smoke. If you have diabetes, optimal control is helpful.
- The ideal diet – whatever that is. There is huge debate on what is and is not good and this is further discussed in the appendix [[click here](#)]. Plenty of fruit and vegetables, fish, white meat, lowish fat, avoid trans fats, too much red meat, processed foods and low carbohydrates - is the diet we recommend.

Nutritional supplements

- A good multivitamin and multimineral: to provide all the nutrients the heart requires to heal and function perfectly, this can also lower the homocysteine which is believed to be bad.
- Selenium (150-200mg daily in countries where this is low).
- Omega 3 fish oils (1–2 grams daily) to reduce the risk of a heart attack and stabilise heart rhythm.
- Calcium and magnesium (800–1,000mg daily), to reduce artery spasm, keep the heart rhythm stable and lower raised blood pressure.
- Grape seed extract (proanthocyanidins), powerful antioxidants and anti-inflammatory. It is believed that these may play an important role in the low incidence of heart disease in Mediterranean countries.
- Co-enzyme Q10 [[click here](#)] 60–200mg daily is important for delivering energy to the heart muscle cells. CoQ10 supplement is mandatory if the doctor has prescribed a statin drug which reduces the production of this essential substance.
- Alcohol – this is a controversial topic and a double edged sword. However we must mention that people who drink 1-2 glasses of any alcoholic beverage do have less heart disease. More can damage the heart but 1 or 2 is good for you – but probably not by enough to convert a teetotaler to a drinker!

Other therapies

- EECPP – enhanced external counter pulsation [[click here](#)] is a very effective treatment for angina by creating bypass channels (collaterals) and possibly by affecting the artery walls. It can be used when the artery narrowing is not life threatening, and especially when no further treatments are possible.
- Chelation therapy [[click here](#)] can sometimes be helpful, especially if the angiogram shows that the disease is not life threatening, or if nothing further can be done in the way of operations or procedures..

Arthritis (Osteo)

Degenerative arthritis

Description: some consider arthritis to be a normal part of joint aging but it does not have to be. In every joint, there is a cushion of soft cartilage at each end of the bones to enable them to slide and move on and bump into each other without grating. With age or excessive use, this cartilage can wear out, and then the bones start grating upon each other causing pain, swelling and deformities.

What doctors can do

There is no medical treatment which can heal the cartilage; most therapies only help relieve the pain.

- Anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs and COX 2 inhibitors) are very effective in reducing pain, but have been shown to increase the risk of [stomach bleeding](#). The COX 2 drugs may cause less bleeding but increase the risk of [heart attack and stroke](#).
- Other pain relieving drugs, such as aspirin and codeine, tend to be less effective but are safer.
- When the joints have become sufficiently damaged joint replacement surgery can be considered, but the joint replacements are never as good as the original.

What you can do

In many cases, complementary therapies are not only more effective than conventional medical therapies, they are infinitely safer and some also aid in the repair of the joint tissue and cartilage.

Lifestyle

- Mild regular movement of the joints is important to maintain a good range of movement and suppleness, but don't overdo the workload. Swimming and walking in water is a great option once arthritis in the legs has developed. If overweight, then losing some kilograms can help the ankle, knee and hip joints and the spine.

Nutritional supplements

- A good multivitamin / multimineral ensures that the cartilage has all the nutrients and minerals it requires to stay strong and repair itself.
- Omega 3 fish oils, 1–2 grams daily – improves the elasticity and strength of the cartilage. They also improve the strength and flexibility of the tendons around the joint, and improve the quality of the fluid lubricating the joints.
- Calcium and magnesium, 800-1,000mg/day – help the bones and cartilage to heal, and reduce the risk of osteoporosis which weakens the bones and can lead to their collapse. Calcium is poorly absorbed without magnesium, and a little boron and vitamin D is also necessary in the supplement.
- Glucosamine is a complex sugar which forms a vital part of the cartilage tissue. Taking a high dose of glucosamine has actually been shown to repair cartilage

tissue. Some also believe that chondroitin is beneficial, but there is less evidence for this. (Ref [click here](#))

- Grape seed extract (proanthocyanidins) is a powerful antioxidant and can reduce pain and inflammation, improving the symptoms without upsetting the stomach.
- High dose vitamin C, 2-4 grams per day may also help with inflammation, pain and with tissue repair.
- Turmeric, a yellow spice, has many properties similar to COX 2 inhibitors without their dangers, and can effectively reduce some of the arthritis pain and inflammation.

Arthritis (rheumatoid)

Description: this is an immune disease where the body attacks its own tissues. The inflammatory process eats into the cartilage and bone of the joints, and causes swelling and weakness of the ligaments, and deforms the limbs. It not only affects the joints, causing pain and distortion, but can also affect many other parts of the body as well, causing anaemia, neck pain, dry eyes, pericarditis and pleurisy.

What doctors can do

Most therapies are aimed at reducing the inflammation and relieving pain, however there is a strong trend to use disease modifying drugs to slow the process of the disease.

- Disease Modifying Agents (DMAs) Very powerful (but toxic) anti-inflammatory drugs (methotrexate, azathioprine, corticosteroids, gold, penicillamine) are sometimes used to try to reduce the body's inflammatory response which is damaging the tissues. These used to be used as a last resort, but now many rheumatologists are treating patients early to try to slow the disease before it does too much damage.
- Anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs like Voltaren and Brufen and more recently COX 2 inhibitors like Celebrex and Vioxx,) are very effective in reducing pain, but have been shown to increase the risk of [stomach bleeding](#), and the COX 2 drugs may cause less bleeding but increase the risk of [heart attack and stroke](#).
- Other pain relieving drugs such as aspirin, codeine tend to be less effective but are safer.
- When the joints have become sufficiently damaged joint replacement surgery can be considered – but joint replacements are never as good as the original.

What you can do

We are still not sure if the Disease Modifying Agents (DMAs) are beneficial in the longer term. They may slow the process but do have toxic affects which in some cases are permanent. However because rheumatoid arthritis can cause severe damage, many rheumatologists are starting these drugs early. Our suggestion is to use all the

therapies recommended below as well, and this may reduce the need or the dose of these more toxic drugs.

Lifestyle

- In most cases the cause of the immune system's attack on the body is not known, although some people believe it may be due to some as yet undiscovered infection, allergy or ingested foreign protein. Detoxification of the body and reducing the stress on the immune system may reduce the inflammation.
 - Low stress diets [see appendix] – eliminate all milk products and gluten from the diet. Also, if any foods (chocolate, red wine) appear to aggravate the arthritis, then eliminate them too.
 - A leaky or unhealthy gut may allow large molecules into the body which can cause immune diseases. Eat plenty of fibre to cleanse the bowel, and take pro-biotics to bring healthy bacteria back and make the gut healthy. Perhaps an occasional colonic washout may be helpful.
- Mild movement of the joints is important to maintain a good movement range and suppleness, but don't overdo the workload. Exercise in a warm pool can keep the joints supple without weight bearing. If overweight, then losing weight can help the ankle, knee and hip joints.
- Acupuncture performed by a skilled practitioner has been shown to both reduce pain and also [improve joint function](#).
- Low dose Naltrexone (LDN) – this is a newish therapy for many immune and other conditions. For more details [click here](#). It is not expensive and has very few side effects. We have no experience with this compound, but our reading all suggests positive benefits and we would suggest you research it and discuss with your specialist. Considering the toxic alternatives NDN may come into more widespread use soon.

Nutritional supplements

- A good multivitamin/multimineral to make sure that the cartilage and tissues have all the nutrients and minerals they require to stay strong and repair themselves. It can also help the immune system to work more accurately and not attack the body.
- Vitamin D – we are only now realising how important this vitamin is for [preventing](#) and healing diseases – especially immune ones. A good vitamin D supplement taking at least 5 – 8,000iu daily (best in two divided doses may be hugely beneficial).
- Grape seed extracts (proanthocyanidins) are powerful antioxidants and can reduce the inflammation and can improve symptoms without upsetting the stomach. In rheumatoid arthritis high doses should be used, because inflammation causes much of the damage.
- Omega 3 fish oils, 1–2 grams daily. These improve the elasticity and strength of the cartilage. It also improves the strength and flexibility of the tendons round the joint, and improves the quality of the fluid lubricating the joints. They have been shown to reduce symptoms and allow lower doses of NSAID drugs. [Click here](#)

- Calcium and magnesium, 800 -1,000mg/day of each help the bones and cartilage to heal, and reduce the risk of osteoporosis (see below) which weakens the bones and can lead to collapse. Calcium is poorly absorbed without magnesium, and a little boron; vitamin D, molybdenum and silicon are also necessary. The magnesium also helps relax tightened muscles and reduce some of the pain.
- Glucosamine is a complex sugar which forms a vital part of the cartilage tissue. Taking a high dose of glucosamine has been shown to actually [repair cartilage](#) tissue. Some also believe that chondroitin is beneficial, but there is less evidence for this and should be avoided in people with seafood allergies.
- Turmeric, a yellow spice, has many properties similar to COX 2 inhibitors but without their dangers, and can effectively reduce some of the arthritis pain. Use this before using the NSAIDs or COX2 inhibitor drugs (see above) if possible. There is also a possibility that Turmeric may reduce some of the [bone damage](#) as well.
- High dose vitamin C 2-4 grams per day may also help with the inflammation and pain, as well as helping with tissue repair.
- Co-enzyme Q10 is essential for energy production in the cell. It also has anti-inflammatory actions, and some people find 30-100mg of good quality CoQ10 helps their symptoms as well as giving them more energy.
- Fibre drinks and shakes, in addition to the fibre found in vegetables. Because the benefits of bowel cleansing are so important, taking good quality fibre drinks and shakes on a daily basis seems wise advice.

Asthma

Description: is defined as reversible spasm of the muscles in the bronchial (breathing) tubes which lead to the lungs – causing breathlessness and wheezing, and a distressing feeling of not being able to get in enough air. It is often, but not always, caused by inhaling or eating something which initiates an attack.

What doctors can do

- Relievers: drugs which relax the muscles in the bronchial tubes and open them (bronchodilators). These are usually delivered directly into the lungs via an inhaler – Ventolin, Serevent, Bricanyl. Note if the asthma gets bad, then it is difficult to get the drugs down into the lungs in one breath, so spacers and nebulisers are used so over a number of breaths it gradually gets down to where it can work.
- Preventers: usually a form of an inhaled corticosteroid aimed at reducing inflammation – Pulmocort, Flixatide, Respocort. People with recurrent severe asthma should be taking these.
- In severe attacks, oral steroids such as prednisone are sometimes used.
- Intravenous drugs – salbutamol, magnesium, hydrocortisone, aminophylline are often used in hospital.

What you can do

Lifestyle

- Prevention: avoid, if you can, things which bring on an asthmatic attack – cigarette smoke, pollens, food, seafood, chocolate, stress.
 - Sometimes a low-stress diet can help- eliminate all milk products and gluten from the diet for at least a month. Also, if any foods (chocolate, red wine) appear to aggravate the asthma, then eliminate them too.
 - A leaky or unhealthy gut may allow large molecules into the body which can cause immune diseases. Plenty of fibre to cleanse the bowel, pro-biotics to bring back good bacteria in the gut may be helpful.
- Learn good breathing techniques – diaphragmatic (tummy) breathing and more specialised breathing techniques like [Buteyko breathing](#) has helped many thousands of people to control their asthma.
- Low dose [naltrexone](#) is being suggested for many immune and allergic conditions. We have no experience with this product and suggest people research the product and discuss with their doctor before starting any treatment.

Nutritional supplements

- A good multivitamin/multimineral makes sure that tissues have all the nutrients and minerals required to function perfectly.

- Omega 3 fish oils, 1–2 grams daily improve the elasticity and strength of the lung tissue. They also have a strong anti-inflammatory action and can reduce attacks, especially asthma caused by [exercise](#).
- Calcium and magnesium, 800-1,000mg/day. Magnesium can relax the bronchial muscles and can relieve the asthma, both as a preventative and also as [treatment](#). Many asthmatic people are short of magnesium. Magnesium can improve the effects of salbutamol given iv and is frequently given in hospital either [nebulised](#) or by infusion. Magnesium is known to relax muscles (cramp is often due to low Mg), so it seems logical for asthmatics to have the optimal magnesium in their bronchial muscles to enable them to relax properly. Take 500 – 800mg daily and perhaps an extra dose if an attack occurs. .
- Selenium. [Studies](#) have shown that people with low selenium levels have a higher incidence of asthma In areas where this mineral is low in the soil (for example New Zealand, parts of Australia, USA and China), the addition of 150–200ug of selenium daily may help [reduce asthmatic](#) attacks.
- Vitamin C levels in patients with severe asthma are lower than those with milder or moderate disease. High dose vitamin C 1-2 grams daily may asthmatics in a number of ways including reducing inflammation and infections. Lower dose vitamin C has been shown to help in [children](#).
- CoEnzyme Q10 is essential for energy transfer inside the cells and is lowered by steroid drugs. Supplementing with CoQ10 may reduce the severity of asthma and has been shown to [reduce the dose](#) of drugs required. A dose of good quality CoQ10 of at least 100mg per day may be helpful.

Athletes, sports men and women

(Hard physical exercise)

Description: while most athletes would be indignant at any suggestion that their sport does them anything other than good, they should be aware of the wear and tear and free radical damage that hard physical activity can do to the body. Free radicals are created every time we breathe or metabolise food, so the more we exercise, the more free radicals are created. These can cause damage and disease. Weight-bearing joints are overworked and can wear out faster. Occasionally, sudden death or cardiac arrest occurs in athletes. Iron loss in the urine from ‘foot strike’ breaking the red cells on the sole of the foot can also cause anaemia.

What doctors can do

Their role is to treat diseases, and usually doctors play little role in advising and treating athletes, except when they are injured.

What can you do?

Many athletes have coaches who advise them, but it is helpful if they can understand what is best for their bodies – not just to create optimal performance. We are looking at what can keep an athlete healthy and well, for life. To reverse the oft used statement, too much concentration on a performance may create “short term gain for long term pain!”

Lifestyle

For many athletes, training, training, training dominates their competitive life, and while it is essential to reach peak performance at the right time, it is crucial to have more in life than just ‘the race.’ Make time for family, friends and relaxation. Quality sleep allows the body to repair damage; repairing usually occurs at night. Eat well, and although carbohydrate-loading before a race helps with the energy stores, between times eat plenty of fresh fruits and vegetables, and keep up the protein intake to build and repair muscles.

- Do NOT exercise hard when you have ‘the flu’ or other viral illnesses. Some viral infections which seem like simple ‘flu’ can affect the heart causing myocarditis. Occasionally, hard exercise when a virus is present can cause heart damage, called cardiomyopathy or cause [rhythm disorders](#). Train gently but don’t force yourself at these times.
- Always warm down at the end of exercise. The reason you pant after exercise is to breathe in more oxygen and blow out carbon dioxide which comes from the lactic acid built up in the muscles. If you suddenly stop exercising this lactic acid will stay in the muscles and damage them. When the hard exercise is finished, walk round using those muscles gently, so that they continue to have a good blood supply, and the lactic acid has been washed out. Continue the warm down until breathing has returned to normal.

Nutritional supplements

Almost all athletes realise the need to supplement their diet to:

- ✓ Improve their performance
- ✓ Speed recovery
- ✓ Reduce injury
- ✓ Reduce long term health problems

However, many fear the dangers of disqualification if these supplements are not accurate in their contents. The 2001 Olympic committee stated that “over 25% of supplements available to athletes contained substances which could have the athletes banned in a [drug test](#).” So be cautious about the supplements you choose, make sure they are always made to pharmaceutical standards, read the contents of the label carefully, and preferably use a product which has given athletes a [guarantee](#) of purity.

- A good multivitamin/multimineral makes sure that the body has a surfeit of all the nutrients and minerals required to function, grow and to repair damaged tissues. Plenty of antioxidants (vitamins C, E and beta carotene) to neutralise the enormous number of free radicals produced by exercise. Selenium is also essential to help antioxidants function
- Omega 3 fish oils, 1–2 grams daily. These are very important for tissue, joint, ligament and brain health. They keep the tissues supple and also provide improved lubrication in the joints. Make sure the product does not contain toxic mercury.
- Calcium and magnesium, 800-1,000mg/day. Calcium is essential for bone strength, but most people are unaware that it is essential for every muscle contraction. If there is not enough for the muscles, the body will take it out of the bones.

Magnesium is essential for athletes because when a muscle relaxes the magnesium moves back into the muscle cells. If there is not enough magnesium, the muscles cannot relax and cramp develops. Because magnesium is stored inside the cells and not in the blood, blood tests do not give any indication of the magnesium status. Much magnesium is lost in sweating and breathing during exercise, and a good rule of thumb is ‘if you get cramp when resting at night, you are probably short of magnesium’

- Grape seed extract – proanthocyanidins. These are nature’s powerhouse antioxidants, and it is wise to take these all the time or at least on the days of hard physical exercise. They also have a powerful and safe anti-inflammatory action.
- Glucosamine. This complex sugar is an essential building block for cartilage, and good medical studies have shown that taking glucosamine can actually repair [cartilage](#), and reduce pain. Most athletes who stress these joints should be taking this.
- Anti-inflammatories. Many athletes take NSAIDS and COX2 inhibitors (Voltaren, Celebrex, VIOX) drugs to ‘aid healing’. In fact these just mask the inflammatory repair process, and in the long term may well lead to a weakened and damaged muscles and joints. Use natural anti-inflammatories – omega 3 fish

oils, grape seed extract and turmeric (which has a weak COX-2 action) – these are much less likely to mask injured tissues and can help with healing.

- Iron loss from ‘foot strike’. The continual striking of the sole of the foot on hard pavements can damage and rupture the red blood cells in the veins on the bottom of the foot so that haemoglobin leaks out of them and is lost in the urine. This iron may need to be replaced but it is essential for an athlete to make sure they are not one of the 1 in 300 people who have inherited haemochromatosis, for whom taking iron supplements could be fatal. Check with your doctor and only take iron supplements if the blood iron level is low.
- Co-enzyme Q10. This enzyme is found in the mitochondria, the energy furnaces within the cells, especially the muscle cells. CoQ10 is essential in the process of burning sugars and fats and converting them into energy and transferring this energy to the muscle fibres. CoQ10 levels become lower as we age, with fatigue and also some drugs, especially the statins, lower the CoQ10 levels. Some athletes supplement with CoQ10 and can improve their performance, but make sure it is quality CoQ10 (in a gel capsule) as cheaper brands are useless.

Cancer

Description: this remains one of the most feared of all diseases. These notes will be of necessity very brief, and we would encourage you to read our book *Cancer. A threat to your life? or A chance to take control of your future?*

While the treatment of different cancers may differ, there are basic fundamentals which apply to most types of cancer.

What doctors can do

- Surgery: to remove the cancer or debulk it (make it smaller).
- Chemotherapy: to kill as much of the cancer as possible. Unfortunately, chemotherapy often also affects normal healthy cells.
- Radiotherapy: uses radiation to selectively damage the cancer cells, although nearby normal cells can also be damaged.

These treatments reduce the overall cancer load, and with the helpful complementary treatments described below, the immune system has a better chance of beating the remaining cancer cells.

What you can do

Lifestyle

- Have a positive confident attitude towards your recovery – this is very important. Believe you can and will recover, plan an exciting future. This may be the most powerful therapy you have. Mind body medicine is now being realised to have enormous power
- Make the body inhospitable to cancer cells by having high levels of oxygen which they do not like. Walking and being out in the open air or along the beach may help with this. Keep the body tissues as alkaline (cancer cells prefer an acid surrounding) as possible by eating alkaline foods and maintain a low blood sugar level by eating low glycaemic foods (cancer cells can only metabolise sugars, not proteins or fats). All of these give the cancer cells a much more hostile environment in which to grow.
- Strengthen the body's immune system with diet, juicing of fresh organic fruits and vegetables, green tea and supplements.
- Eat as well as you can, because almost 40% of cancer patients die of malnutrition and not of the cancer, and malnutrition weakens the body's immune defences.

Nutritional supplements

- A good multivitamin/multimineral to ensure that immune cells have all the nutrients and minerals required to function perfectly and fight the cancer. This is

essential because most cancer patients have a poor appetite and also the cancer cells take up many nutrients.

- Vitamin D is a vitamin we are only now realising is essential in preventing and fighting diseases, including cancer. [Click here](#) and [here](#) . It affects the DNA which is the very core of cancer cell creation, and all patients with cancer should be taking high doses of vitamin D orally, and preferably also creating some of their own by judicious sunbathing. At least 800 – 1,000iu of vitamin D daily (spread into 2 daily doses). Note some cancers (especially breast) can raise the blood calcium levels and vitamin D can make this go higher, so before starting Vitamin D and after a few weeks of using it, ask your doctor to check your blood calcium levels.
- Selenium (150–200ug/day) has a powerful anti-cancer [action](#). Although this was a preventive study showing a 50% reduction in cancer mortality and fewer patients developing lung, colon and prostate cancers (it was only in men so breast was not tested), many patients probably had undiagnosed cancer when they entered the trial, so the selenium may well have also helped in ‘treating’ it
- High levels of oral vitamin C (4–6 grams daily) helps the body fight the cancer cells by helping the immune system. There is some debate whether it should be given at the same time as chemotherapy and radiotherapy. Most people advise a moderate intake as suggested above, but not very high doses or intravenous while these treatments are being used. Vitamin C is also essential for building collagen and may strengthen the collagen fibres between the cells and slow the cancer cell spread.
- Intravenous vitamin C in very high doses of about 40-60 grams can have a very powerful chemotherapy-like action, but without the side effects.
- Omega 3 fish oils, 1–2 grams daily. These are very important for the immune system. There is conflicting evidence on whether fish oils are beneficial in patients with cancer, some believe it is an important [preventer](#).
- Melatonin (10–40mg/day). This hormone from the pineal gland helps us sleep and has a powerful anti-cancer effect. In a [review](#) of all ten randomised trials using melatonin in patients with solid cancer tumours, those receiving melatonin in high doses (10-40mg at night) reduced their risk of death at 1 year by 4%.

These therapies and other approaches to cancer are more fully discussed in our [cancer book](#).

Coeliac disease

(Coeliac disease, non-tropical sprue)

Description: a very common disease affecting almost 1 in 130 people. Gluten, from grains in the diet, causes an allergic response in the small intestine wall, where the villi, whose tiny fronds project into the small bowel, are destroyed, therefore absorption of food is reduced. This can vary from a mild disease to a very severe one. In coeliac disease food is always poorly absorbed and leads to nutrient deficiency. Patients with coeliac disease can have excess gas, cramping, diarrhoea, weight loss, fatigue, anaemia, cramps and many other symptoms, and many complications due to poor nutrition.

What doctors can do

Previously the diagnosis has been difficult, but there are now blood tests, immunoglobulin A (IgA), anti-tissue transglutaminase (tTGA), and IgA anti-endomysium antibodies (AEA). Note that these tests must be done while eating a diet that contains gluten.

However the best diagnosis is to totally stop ALL gluten for at least one month and see if the symptoms improve.

What you can do

Lifestyle

Even a tiny amount of gluten can cause the reaction, so it is best to be meticulous in taking no gluten – this means a person with coeliac disease should not eat most grain, pasta, cereal, and many processed foods. Check the label for gluten because many additives and fillers contain gluten.

There is some debate about oats. It is best to eliminate those initially and then when stable, try and see if oats also cause the problem.

Foods which are gluten FREE include soybean, tapioca flour, rice. Corn, buckwheat and potatoes.

A gluten-free diet is not easy to adhere to, but the benefits for people with this disease are huge, because untreated, the condition can lead to some very serious illnesses, including cancer. Fortunately, more and more gluten-free foods are becoming available. It is important to check the labels on food, as many fillers and additives can contain gluten.

Remember, this is an inherited disease, so check other family members.

Nutritional supplements

➤ In coeliac disease, where poor absorption of food is the major pathology and causes symptoms and complications, the potential value of taking supplements

seems so obvious that it is hard to understand why the medical profession ignores it.

- A good multivitamin/multimineral makes sure that the body has a surfeit of all the nutrients and minerals required to function, grow and develop perfectly. But make sure that it is a good quality supplement and has the optimal amount of nutrients, not just the barest minimum (RDA).
- Omega 3 fish oils, 1–2 grams daily. These are very important for tissue, joint and brain health.
- Calcium and magnesium, 800-1,000mg/day. Magnesium has a very calming effect, helps with sleep, and relieves the cramps which many coeliac patients suffer.
- Vitamin D is very important in many diseases by modulating the genes (turning them on and off). For patients with coeliac disease we would recommend taking 5000 – 8000iu daily.
- Selenium. In countries where there are low levels of selenium in the soil, selenium supplements are very important in reducing the risk of developing a number of diseases.
- Probiotic – because poor absorption can affect the bacteria in the gut, it seems wise to support the healthy bugs with regular probiotic top ups.

Crohn's disease

Description: this disease is similar to ulcerative colitis, with ulceration and inflammation of segments of the intestines. It can occur anywhere from the mouth to the anus, but the small bowel is the area most commonly affected. It causes diarrhoea, bleeding from the bowel, bloating and discomfort.

What doctors can do

- Anti-inflammatory drugs to reduce the inflammation which causes the symptoms – aspirin containing drugs (salazopyrine), steroids, taken by mouth or into the rectum as suppositories.
- Antibiotics – metronidazole or ciprofloxin – in the belief that some unknown infection may be the cause of the disease.
- Immune suppressors – methotrexate, imuran – to reduce the inflammatory response from the immune system.
- Surgery – to remove damaged areas of the bowel if the symptoms are very serious.

What you can do

Many people suggest a **4-R** approach to inflammatory bowel diseases such as ulcerative colitis and Crohn's disease.

Remove all suspicious foods from the diet that precipitate inflammation. The following are the most likely to be troublesome: dairy, eggs, nuts, fruit, tomatoes, corn, wheat (gluten), and red meat. All refined carbohydrates should be removed. All fats except for essential fatty acids should be eliminated, because hard or trans fats are detrimental to people with Crohn's disease. Removal of gastrointestinal parasites, undesirable bacterial and fungal elements is important.

Replace vital nutrients. Because the gut absorbs many vitamins and minerals poorly, high doses of these are required to reduce the inflammation and oxidative stress, a good multivitamin and multimineral is essential.

Reinoculate. A normal, healthy intestine contains good bacteria that are responsible for manufacturing some vitamins and other nutrients in the intestine. In a diseased intestine, these bacteria are often replaced by bad organisms or a yeast overgrowth. Reinoculation consists of taking mixtures of the friendly bacteria *Lactobacillus acidophilus* and *Lactobacillus bulgaricus* - probiotics

Repair. Frequently the lining of the small intestine becomes leaky, allowing toxins and incompletely digested products to pass through the bowel wall. Many nutrients are essential to allow the wall to recover and be repaired – again a good multi and probiotics.

Lifestyle

As with all autoimmune diseases, a positive mental approach is very important and may in itself reduce relapses. Plenty of rest, regular exercise and stress reduction are beneficial. Because it is possible that some foods and toxins can aggravate this disease, the low stress diet [see above in 4 R's] should be tried. Some people suggest that hair analysed for heavy metal toxicity, and having the teeth checked for excess mercury, infected root canals and jaw cavitations may help.

If there is anything – food, stress, exposure - which is known to precede a relapse then try to avoid it.

Nutritional supplements

- A good multivitamin/multimineral makes sure that bowel tissues and the immune system have all the nutrients and minerals required to function perfectly.
- Vitamin D is important in all immune diseases, so optimal D levels should be sought – 5,000 – 8,000 iu daily. Vitamin D switches genes on and off and many diseases improve by taking good doses of vitamin D.
- Calcium and magnesium, 800–1,000mg/day. Magnesium has a very calming effect, helps with sleep and enables people to cope better. It can also relax the bowel spasm. But sometimes the calcium or magnesium can aggravate the diarrhoea; if so just lower the dose.
- Grape seed extract (proanthocyanidins) is a powerful antioxidant and anti-inflammatory agent and some people find that taking high doses can help both with the pain and the relapses. This may also reduce the relapse rate.
- Coenzyme Q10 is an anti-inflammatory supplement and also provides additional energy. 30–100mg/day may be helpful.

- Intravenous vitamin C can sometimes be helpful, but oral vitamin C in high doses may aggravate the diarrhoea.
- Fibre drinks and shakes can help keep the bowel motions softer and comfortable, and help cleanse the bowel.
- Probiotics (good bacteria) such as *Lactobacillus acidophilus* and *bulgaricus*, allow the bowel to re-colonise with good bacteria, reduce some symptoms and allow many vitamins and other nutrients to be absorbed.
- Because the small bowel may be affected, and this area is essential to absorb vitamin B12, check the B12 level, and if necessary have monthly B12 injections.
- Low dose Naltrexone may help patients with Crohn's Disease. This drug is used in high to suppress the opioid receptors in some addiction situations, but many immune tissues have opioid receptors and low dose Naltrexone is being trialled and appears to help patients with immune disease and perhaps other conditions. (One trial using low dose Naltrexone significantly helped 80% of patients with Crohn's [click here](#)). If the Crohn's is bad, chat to your doctor about trying this, at low doses it appears to have very few side effects.

There are a number of other nutrients and herbs which have been suggested for inflammatory bowel diseases, but we have no experience in their use and are beyond the boundaries for this book.

We will list them and suggest interested readers check them on Google (type in Crohns and the name of the nutrient). These include:

Dehydroepiandrosterone (DHEA), can reduce inflammation and protect the bowel.

Butyrate (butyric acid) seems to reduce inflammation.

Glutamine helps protect the lining of the intestine and improves blood flow, and may also reduce leaky gut.

Arginine can suppress the growth of undesirable bacteria and stop them releasing toxins. It may also help healing of the ulcers.

Depression

(Mental disorders)

Description: people are beginning to realise just how common this debilitating condition is and how many potentially productive lives it ruins. While life events play a large part, for many people there is also a biochemical abnormality.

Depression can vary from just feeling low, right through to being totally incapacitated or contemplating suicide.

What your doctor can do

- Psychological and psychiatric assistance. Counselling, exploring the past and looking for solutions can be very helpful, but is only available to the minority.
- Drugs. The older drugs (amitriptyline, monoamine oxidase inhibitors) had many side effects and often took some weeks to start working. The SSRI group of drugs (Aropax, Prozac) have been a major advance, but their use, especially in children, where they cause an increase in suicide, is still debated. Parents need to be aware of this if their children are prescribed these drugs.
We also recommend that people try to avoid taking tranquillisers and sleeping pills as both can increase the symptoms of depression.

What you can do

Lifestyle

- It is essential for you to have someone to whom you can talk, in confidence and without fear. This may be a doctor, friend, social worker, church member or minister, counsellor.
- Almost anyone can counsel if they learn to listen. We have used the book [PET \(parent Effectiveness training\)](#) by Thomas Gordon with our children and also our patients, it teaches simple listening and counselling techniques which is possible for everyone to follow.
- Regular exercise such as walking helps release endorphins (mood elevating hormones), and also helps with sleep which is often of poor quality in people with depression. It is best to walk with a friend or a dog!
- Diet. Many people with depression tend to either overeat or to shun food altogether; either way the body suffers.
- Avoid depressing or negative experiences (consider your choice of films, TV, books and even friends) and watch and listen to as much positive reinforcing material as you can. We would strongly recommend watching or reading *The Secret*, and books by authors such as John Kehoe and Wayne Dwyer.
- Some people find meditation and affirmation very helpful. Walking and enjoying the beauty of nature and sunshine can be therapeutic.
- L tryptophan is a building block for serotonin which transmits nerve impulses in the brain, and also induces sleep and tranquillity. Many patients with depression have low L tryptophan and serotonin levels. L tryptophan can be taken as a

supplement, and is also found in cottage cheese, milk, brown rice, meat, peanuts and soy products. Note discuss this with your doctor before starting L tryptophan supplementation, as it may affect other antidepressant drugs.

- St John's wort (*Hypericum perforatum*) is a prescription drug used in Germany for depression and appears to be as effective as conventional antidepressants in patients with mild depression. In a review of over 20 trials involving 1757 patients, St John's wort was much more effective than placebo and slightly more effective than conventional drugs in improving symptoms. [click here](#) However, it took 6-8 weeks for the maximal benefit to be seen, so continue treatment for at least 3 months before making any decision on its value.

Nutritional supplements

These are almost ignored by the medical profession, even though in the late 1800's people discovered that many mental disorders were caused by vitamin deficiency. Many people were discharged from asylums after being given [vitamin B](#). Depressed people often eat poorly so providing optimal nutrition to the brain and nerve cells is especially important.

- A good multivitamin/multimineral makes sure that brain has all the nutrients and minerals it requires to function perfectly.
- Omega 3 fish oils, 1–2 grams daily. These are very important for good brain function. Children whose mothers had high fish oil intake during pregnancy had higher IQs. In depression a high omega 3 intake can be very beneficial.
- Calcium and magnesium, 800-1,000mg/day, Magnesium has a calming effect, promoting restful and restorative sleep and enables people to cope better during the day.

Diabetes

(Diabetes Mellitus, sugar diabetes)

Description: there are 2 forms of diabetes which cause similar diseases – high blood sugar, heart and artery disease, stroke, cataract, kidney and nerve damage.

Type 1 diabetes is due to destruction of the insulin producing cells in the pancreas (beta cells). These patients have little or no insulin which is essential to lower the blood sugar, by allowing it to enter the liver, muscle and fat cells.

Type 2 diabetes used to be called adult onset or obesity diabetes, but now because of our diet, it affecting more and more young people and children. In this form, the muscle and other cells become resistant to insulin, and even though it is present in high levels in the blood, the sugar remains in the blood stream and cannot get into the cells. [In fact it is a great deal more complicated than this: high blood sugar peaks (due to eating high glycaemic sugary foods) raise both insulin and leptin hormones. Insulin lowers the blood sugar and leptin turns off the appetite. But after being

exposed to persistent high blood sugars and thus insulin and leptin levels, the cells become resistant to their effects – insulin and leptin resistance. (Similar to the nose being continually exposed to a smell, after a time it no longer notices it.) So even though the insulin levels are high, the cells do not take in the sugars, and high leptin levels no longer make us feel satiated.]

What doctors can do

- Encourage you to eat a good diet (low sugar and low saturated fat) and reduce your weight to ideal levels.
- Insulin injections may be necessary to control the blood glucose and are essential in type 1 diabetes.
- In type 2 diabetes, oral drugs (metformin, sulphonyl ureas) can often control the blood sugar levels. Newer drugs like rosiglitazone can make the cells more sensitive to insulin and can be used when the other oral drugs fail however these drugs have side effects (increase the risk of heart failure and heart attacks) and so are rarely used. In fact only metformin has been shown not to cause more disease.
- Treat other risk factors – high blood pressure and cholesterol
- Encourage good care of feet and legs to prevent ulceration.

What you can do

Unfortunately the treatments detailed above have not been shown to reduce the complications and mortality from diabetes. But despite this many people now realise that type 2 diabetes is not only preventable, but its effects can be stopped and even cured with a more ‘natural’ approach to treatment.

Lifestyle

A good healthy lifestyle is essential in people with diabetes so as to avoid very nasty complications in the future.

- Get your weight as near as possible to the ideal, using a sensible approach, with low glycaemic foods, with plenty of fresh vegetables and whole grains. In most cases a short course of low glycaemic foods and shakes is needed to reset the cells and their responses. It is important to strive towards an ideal body weight.
- Exercise moderately and regularly most days. This is crucial as exercise makes the muscle cells more sensitive to insulin. (reduces insulin resistance). Regular walking, gym, biking or swimming.
- Reduce the stresses in life and have plenty of rest at night. These are important too as stress releases cortisol which raises the blood sugar. Melatonin, the hormone that helps us sleep, raises the leptin levels (which is why we are not hungry at night), and this make us more easily satiated by food.
- Diet - There are some good low glycaemic shakes and bars which diabetics can use as snacks and meal replacements. High glycaemic foods contain sugars which are rapidly absorbed and shoot the blood sugar levels up high. This causes an over response of insulin which can then push the blood sugar level too low

causing hunger. Low glycaemic foods contain sugars which enter more slowly and cause a gentle insulin response. We believe that the increase in eating high glycaemic sugars are a major cause of the epidemic of diabetes worldwide. If possible try to eat mostly low glycaemic foods, and for a list of high and low glycaemic foods [click here](#).

Fructose, a sugar found in fruit does not raise the insulin or leptin levels, and may also play a part in causing diabetes. Fruits and vegetables are fine, in fact we should eat plenty of them, but many foods and drinks now contain high fructose corn syrup which fills us with empty calories in excess to what our bodies believe we are receiving.

It is best to limit red meat and excess fat.

- Of course, cigarettes are absolutely verboten!

Nutritional supplements

Treatment does not just involve controlling the blood sugar but aims to reduce the risk of developing heart disease, kidney disease and stroke. As we discussed in the first segment of this book, good nutrition can play a huge part in reducing them as well.

- A good multivitamin/multimineral makes sure that the tissues have all the nutrients and minerals required to function perfectly. Many of the vitamins (especially the B group) help preserve nerve function. The minerals chromium, magnesium and vanadium have been shown to improve the response to insulin, and although doctors don't yet recommend their use, they should be in a good multimineral preparation. In one [study](#), diabetic patients given a trace dose of chromium picolonate, improved their diabetic control, needed less insulin and decreased their total cholesterol.
- Calcium and magnesium, 800-1,000mg/day. Magnesium not only has a very calming effect, it helps with sleep and enables people to cope better. Magnesium also helps dilate the blood vessels, increasing blood flow to the legs and kidneys. These two minerals also reduce the risk of osteoporosis and high blood pressure.
- Grape seed extract (proanthocyanidins) is a powerful antioxidant and anti-inflammatory agent. As oxidative damage is more common in diabetes and most of the complications are aggravated by free radicals, a surfeit of antioxidants seems a wise idea.
- Omega 3 fish oils, 1-2 grams daily. These can help lower the triglyceride fats which are often raised in diabetes, and also have major benefits for the heart, skin and blood vessels. Even conventional medical doctors are now encouraging their patients with diabetes to take fish oils.
- Low glycaemic fibre drinks and shakes can help keep the blood sugar under control, as well as washing the toxins out of the bowel.

Epilepsy

(Grand Mal, Petit Mal, Seizures)

Description: ‘brain attacks’ when groups of brain cells are stimulated in a chaotic fashion – causing unusual sensations, emotions, ‘fits’ or seizures and sometimes loss of consciousness. In some cases injury, an abnormality in the brain, abnormal brain development or childhood infections may be the cause, but in most cases no underlying reason can be found.

What doctors can do

- Investigations. Head scans such as CT or MRI, and an EEG to record the brain waves. Sometimes these may find the cause and can occasionally assist in the decision on what therapy to use.
- Drug therapy. There are a number of drugs which can be used to treat epilepsy, and sometimes the doctor may need to combine a number of combinations to control the episodes.

What you can do

Lifestyle

- Avoid being in dangerous situations if you are at risk of having a seizure, e.g. driving, climbing, heavy machinery and swimming alone.
- Sometimes a cause of the seizures is apparent – flashing lights, foods (chocolate, shellfish), sleep deprivation, alcohol, emotional stress, hormonal changes - avoid these if you can.
- Alcohol, up to 2 drinks per day usually does not affect epilepsy, although some people are very sensitive, however binge or excessive drinking can definitely cause epileptic turns, sometimes up to 48 hours after the event.
- Always take your medication regularly and never stop without discussing with your doctor. If there are side effects you don't like, ask for another treatment.
- Feedback programmes – these are specialised therapies but can be beneficial, especially if the epilepsy is poorly controlled. These include [Neurobehavioral therapy](#) and [EEG neuro feedback](#).
- Diets – a number of diets have been suggested to help diabetics – [low glycaemic diet](#), modified [Atkins diet](#) and [Ketogenic diets](#). These may help, but can affect medications so discuss first with your doctor before embarking on one of them.

Nutritional supplements

- A good multivitamin/multimineral makes sure that brain tissues have all the nutrients and minerals required to function perfectly – this is very important. Occasionally, the absence of a single element or vitamin may aggravate epilepsy, thus a good comprehensive multi-tablet can occasionally have major benefits.

- Calcium and magnesium, 800-1,000mg/day. Magnesium has a very calming effect, helps with sleep and enables people to cope better and frequently reduces the number of seizures.
- Omega 3 fish oils or flax seed oils are very beneficial to the brain's function and development. Also some people have found a reduction in epileptic seizures when taking high doses of omega 3 oils, 1-2 grams daily.
- Some people have suggested melatonin to help with epilepsy, but although some studies have shown benefits, others have increased the epileptic turns. So if you consider melatonin, discuss with your doctor and be aware that the epilepsy could worsen.

Eye diseases

(Macular degeneration, cataracts)

Description: **cataracts** are opacities developing in the lens of the eye caused by UV light creating free radicals in the tissues. This initially causes blurring of vision but can lead to blindness.

In **macular degeneration**, the nerves in the central seeing part of the back of the eye – the retina – become damaged. This can lead to progressive blindness.

What doctors can do

- Cataract – remove the lens and replace it with a clear one, or thick glasses.
- Macular degeneration – recently drugs (anti-vgef) have been developed which reduce the damage and can slow down the process.

What you can do

Lifestyle

PREVENTION is the name of this game, especially if eye disease runs in the family. The ultraviolet and other damaging rays from the sun oxidise the lens which causes cataracts; they also burn the macula which causes degeneration. Keep out of direct sunlight where possible, wear a hat and good sunglasses which will filter out UV rays. NB Cigarette smoke can aggravate both these diseases and should be stopped if there is a family history or vision becomes affected.

Nutritional supplements

Because oxidation and free radicals are the major cause of these conditions, antioxidants are powerful defences.

- Vitamin C in large doses, 1-2 grams twice daily, can protect the lens, and some vitamin E may help.
- Omega 3 fish oils especially if combined with low glycaemic foods have been shown to slow the damage of macular degeneration [click here](#)

- There is a layer of pigment lying in front of the retina to protect it from the UV rays. Two important nutrients – lutein and zeaxanthin – are required to make the pigment; these come from some vegetables such as eggs, kale, spinach and other dark green vegetables, peas and brussel sprouts. They can also be taken as nutritional supplements. Taking these nutrients may help reduce the development of macular degeneration and slow its progress.

Fibromyalgia and chronic fatigue

Description: weakness, fatigue, tiredness, lethargy, aching muscles and joints, ‘brain fog’, inability to sleep – with almost no abnormal physical signs or blood tests. The cause is unknown, but many people have blood tests suggesting recent viral infections, especially glandular fever. Many believe that the symptoms are due to poor function of the hypothalamus in the brain.

What your doctor can do

- Usually nothing.

Because conventional medicine is so ineffective, we have described treatment of this common condition in somewhat greater detail.

What you can do

Treatment involves 5 parts: THINS – Toxins, Hormones, Infections, Nutritional deficiency and Sleep. Fix these and many people are greatly improved.

Lifestyle

- **Toxins.** Based on hair mineral analysis, some people find they have excess heavy metals. Have your teeth checked for excess mercury, infected root canals or jaw cavitations.
Go onto a low stress diet (no milk products, gluten, chocolate or alcohol, and reduce simple sugars) for 2 months. Drink filtered water and eat organic foods as much as possible.
Some people believe that the disease is caused by phosphate overdose in the cells, possibly caused by exposure to fertilisers. Guaifenesin, which is found in cough syrups, may be helpful, as it can help excrete this phosphate.
- **Hormones.** Thyroid function is usually lower than normal. If hands or feet are cold, treatment is often helpful. The levels of sex hormones oestrogen and progesterone may be low, and in many cases bio-identical progesterone can help sleep and mood. In men, testosterone cream may help too. Low levels of adrenal hormones are very common and low dose hydrocortisone – 10mg in the morning and at noon (a total of 20mg per day) – may be very helpful.
- **Infections.** The immune system is weak and patients often have fungal, viral, parasitic or bacterial infections. Nearly all patients have yeast infections - avoid

sweets and simple sugars, take regular acidophilus, and use the drugs mycostatin (1 million units twice daily for 4-6 weeks) and fluconazole (200mg/day [4 weeks after starting mycostatin] for 6 weeks). Also avoid peaks in blood sugars – eat mainly low glycaemic foods. Take high dose vitamin C 2-4 grams daily, this can treat or reduce infections.

- Nutritional deficiency (see below). Better nutrition is absolutely essential to treat this condition. (NB. get your doctor to check your iron and vitamin B12 levels)
- Sleep. Eight to nine hours of good sleep is essential. Melatonin 1mg at night. Sometimes a mild sleeping tablet (imovane) may be necessary but is better avoided as it can become addictive and has a depressant effect on some people. GHB (gamma hydroxyl butyrate) is also very effective.

Nutritional supplements

This possibly holds the greatest promise for improvement, although the response may be slow.

- A good multivitamin/multimineral makes sure that the tissues have all the nutrients and minerals required to function perfectly.
- Omega 3 fish oils, 1–2 grams daily. These are very important for good brain function, energy and the tissues.
- Calcium and magnesium, 800-1,000mg/day. Magnesium has a very calming effect, relaxes the tight muscles, helps with sleep and enables people to cope better.
- Coenzyme Q10 (60–200mg/day). This energy-producing Coenzyme can restore energy, stamina and strength.
- D Ribose (5 grams 3 times a day for 3 weeks then twice a day) – ribose is a sugar made by the body and not found in food. It is an essential building block to make ATP the body's energy carrier. Its production may be reduced in chronic fatigue and has been shown to help in these patients [click here](#)
- Gamma linoleic acid (found in evening primrose oil).
- Olive leaf extract can reduce yeast infection (candida) in the bowel.
- Grape seed extract (proanthocyanidins) is a powerful antioxidant and anti-inflammatory and many people benefit from high doses of this supplement.
- Fibre shakes keep the bowels moving and help eliminate toxins.
- For brain fog take ginkgo biloba (60 mg twice daily).

Gout

(Uric acid arthritis)

Description: gout is a form of arthritis caused by elevated levels of uric acid in the blood. When the uric acid reaches a certain level, the uric acid crystallises out in the joints and tissues causing extreme pain. Uric acid is a breakdown product from the metabolism of a series of proteins called purines which are found in the blood when we eat liver, kidneys, sweetbreads, tongue, shellfish, peas, lentils, beans, red wine and port.

Gout can cause destructive arthritis, disfiguration of joints and Tophi, which are deposits of uric acid in the soft tissues causing swelling and hard lumps. Gout can also cause damage to the kidneys.

What doctors can do

There are two phases of treatment - pain relief during an attack and also ways to reduce the uric acid level in the blood.

- Acute pain relief: NSAID drugs (voltaren, brufen, naprosyn), colchicine, corticosteroids.
- Drugs to lower the uric acid in the blood: probenecid, allopurinol (this is the best and the drug most commonly used).

What you can do

As with most diseases, prevention is better than treatment.

Lifestyle

- Avoiding the foods and drink which precipitate the attacks (see list above). This may seem like deprivation, but it is better than getting gout! You may find that once the uric acid level has fallen after taking allopurinol, you may be able to eat some of these foods again in moderation.
- Avoid dehydration, and keep water intake high, especially in warmer climates.
- Keep the body alkaline by avoiding acid-forming food. [Click here](#) for a list of acid and alkaline foods.
- Eat plenty of fibre in the diet, and use fibre drinks and shakes because these can help flush uric acid from the body

Nutritional supplements

- Anti-inflammatory nutrients like high-dose grape seed extract and turmeric are helpful.
- Omega 3 fish oils, 1–2 grams daily improve the elasticity and strength of the cartilage and tendons round the joint, and improve the quality of the synovial fluid which lines and lubricates the joints.
- Glucosamine is a complex sugar which forms a vital part of the cartilage tissue. Taking a high dose of glucosamine has actually been shown to repair cartilage tissue ([click here](#)) as well as reduce pain.

- Turmeric is a herb from the curcumin plant, and has actions very similar to some of the Cox 2 drugs, but without their side effects [click here](#). Some good glucosamine preparations also contain turmeric
- A good multivitamin/multimineral will ensure that the cartilage and tissues have all the nutrients and minerals they require to stay strong and to repair themselves.
- High dose vitamin C, 2-4 grams daily, may also help reduce the inflammation, pain, and help with tissue repair.

Heart attack

(myocardial infarction, coronary occlusion)

A HEART ATTACK IS A TRUE EMERGENCY

Description: a heart attack feels like severe angina pain (as described in the angina section) lasting more than 30-40 minutes and is often associated with sweating, nausea, faintness and a feeling of being unwell. It is caused by a total blockage developing in one of the coronary arteries. The greatest danger at this stage is the occurrence of a serious change in heart rhythm when the heart fibrillates. Ventricular fibrillation is the cause of cardiac arrest or sudden cardiac death.

What doctors can do

- Paramedic ambulances provide coronary care facilities at home.
- Drugs. Aspirin to reduce the clot formation and thrombolytic drugs which can dissolve the clot which is causing the heart attack. Sometimes other drugs are used to control pain, blood pressure or rhythm disturbances.
- Investigations. ECG, heart monitors are used to detect any abnormal rhythms and an echocardiogram can review the degree of heart damage. When indicated, an angiogram is arranged and this may be followed by angioplasty and stent or bypass surgery.

What you can do

Act immediately – this is not the time to have doubts or think it is a false alarm.

- Take one or two puffs of GTN spray every 5 minutes, sit quietly and try to relax,
- If the angina pain lasts more than 20-30 minutes, call an ambulance.
- Chew one aspirin tablet (300mg).
- Chew a magnesium tablet (800mg) if you have one.

The most important thing is to get to a place where your heart rhythm can be monitored and treated if necessary – this means in an ambulance or a coronary care unit. CPR can keep someone alive until the ambulance arrives, if ventricular fibrillation occurs – everyone should be able to do CPR – note we no longer recommend mouth to mouth respiration, just chest compressions. – watch this video ([click here](#))

Thrombolytic drugs can actually reverse the damage caused by a heart attack, so the earlier this treatment is given, the less damage there is to the heart. So get to hospital as fast as possible, preferably by ambulance, do not drive yourself!

Heart attack plan:

- ***Don't waste time, or pretend it isn't happening, always assume any prolonged chest pain could be a heart attack.***
- ***Call the emergency number 111, 999, 911 depending on our location.***
- ***Sit or lie comfortably, take 2 puffs of GTN if you have some and repeat every 5 minutes***
- ***Chew one aspirin tablet, and if you have, a magnesium one too.***
- ***Get to hospital or an ambulance as soon as you can***
- ***Keep someone nearby in case then need to do CPR***
- ***In hospital they can reverse the heart damage (drugs or angioplasty) but only if you get there soon enough.***

After the heart attack

Usually a patient spends 4-5 days in hospital and then goes home. Convalescence is usually about 4-6 weeks to allow the heart to completely heal. Once the heart is healed the most important thing is to prevent another heart attack.

What doctors can do

- **Drugs.** Most patients are put on aspirin, a statin drug [see appendix] to lower the cholesterol; a beta blocker, to reduce the work of the heart and sometimes an ACE inhibitor.
- **Investigations.** An exercise ECG and an echocardiogram are usually organised after a few weeks and, depending upon the results and symptoms, an angiogram may be performed.

What you can do

Lifestyle

- **Exercise** - gradually increase physical activity; walking is the best. Don't overdo it and slow down if the exercise causes breathlessness or chest pain. Always warm up before doing more strenuous activity.
- **Sleep** - Have a good night's sleep and if necessary have an afternoon nap for the first few weeks. Learn how to relax or even meditate, and reduce the stresses in life.
- **Diet** is important. Don't eat huge meals and don't exercise after eating. Eat lots of fruit, vegetables, grains and fish. Limit the red meat, and use mainly monounsaturated oils and avoid saturated and trans fats.

Nutritional supplements

Although there are few trials on the use of supplements after a heart attack, the powerful data on the preventive benefits of supplements as discussed in Section 1 still apply.

- A good multivitamin and multimineral provides the heart tissue with all the nutrition for efficient repair and also will lower the homocysteine which is a strong heart risk factor. In areas where the selenium levels of the soil are low make sure the multi contains selenium, 150ug/day.
- Calcium and magnesium, 800-1,000mg daily, help the heart function, enabling it to relax. Magnesium can also lower blood pressure and reduce rhythm abnormalities. Magnesium is very important for heart disease and everyone after a heart attack should be taking it.
- Omega 3 fish oils – at least 1 gram daily, preferably 2-3 grams daily – are very important in reducing recurrences and also reducing the risk of serious rhythm abnormalities.
- Coenzyme Q10 is very important at this stage. It is essential for energy production and transfer within the cells, and the heart muscle usually has a very rich supply of CoQ10. The statin drugs (Zocor, Lipex, Lipitor), used in nearly all heart patients to lower cholesterol, also block the production of CoQ10. Many people suspect this could increase the risk of developing heart failure later in life. All people taking statin drugs should also be taking Coenzyme Q10 supplements (60–200mg daily).

Other therapies – some people suggest that chelation therapy with EDTA may be helpful with heart disease, but there is little (or no) good data that it helps.

However **EECP (enhanced external counter pulsation)** is very different, and I would recommend that most people after a heart attack should consider this treatment if it is available. Read [this link](#) to the Cleveland Clinic, and also [click here](#) for a description of the technique

Heart failure

(cardiac failure, cardiomyopathy, congestive heart failure)

Description: any situation where the heart is not pumping strongly enough to keep the circulation moving satisfactorily. There can be many causes: heart attack, heart muscle disease called cardiomyopathy, abnormalities of the valves inside the heart, excess fluid in the body, some drugs – especially anticancer drugs – toxins and some heart infections, high blood pressure and congenital heart disease. With more people living longer and effective treatment of heart conditions, heart failure is becoming more and more common.

The usual symptoms are breathlessness with exercise or when lying flat, tiredness, lack of energy, and fluid build-up in the legs and stomach.

What doctors can do

- Investigations
 - Physical examination and history usually reveal the diagnosis but in all cases the doctor should also order an ECG, chest X-ray, blood tests and an echocardiogram (insist that you have an echo).
 - Sometimes the doctor will organise a cardiac catheterisation test or angiogram to study the heart and its valves in greater detail.
- Treatments
 - Surgery. If there is a cause which can be treated (abnormal valve, blocked arteries, hole in the heart) this should be attended to.
 - Drugs. Diuretics, such as frusemide, which remove excess fluid; ACE inhibitors, which reduce the effect of some hormones and lower the load on the heart; and sometimes other drugs such as digoxin, beta blockers, aldactone and anticoagulants, are used.

What you can do

Lifestyle

Mild exercise is beneficial, but not to excess. Little or no alcohol, a good night's sleep, raising the head of the bed up 4-6 inches if night time breathlessness is a problem, and limit the salt or sodium in the diet.

Nutritional supplements

- A good multivitamin/multimineral makes sure that the heart has all the nutrients and minerals it requires to beat as well as it can.
- Selenium is very important for heart function, and in areas with low selenium in the soil, supplemental selenium, 150-200 micrograms should be taken daily. This can be a very powerful additional therapy.
- Omega 3 fish oils, 1 to 2 grams daily, can reduce the risk of the more serious rhythm disturbances which can occur in heart failure.
- Co-enzyme Q10 is essential to create energy in the heart muscle cells. Taking statin drugs reduces the levels of CoQ10 in the body. Therefore, everyone with heart failure should be taking a good quality CoQ10, 100 to 400mg daily.
- L Carnitine – is a protein found in red meat and dairy products (which many patients are told to avoid). It transports fats to the mitochondria where they are burnt to create energy, and also takes waste metabolites away. Taking 250 – 750mg of l-carnitine can help the heart muscle get energy.
- D ribose is a building block of ATP which is essential in energy production in the heart muscle cell. Dose is 5 – 15 grams daily.
- Calcium and magnesium, 800–1,000mg/day, are essential for the heart muscle to contract and relax.

Other therapies:

- Testosterone (in men) - men with heart failure often have low testosterone levels, and studies have shown testosterone replacement can help the heart failure. [click here](#) The easiest way is to rub testosterone cream onto the skin daily
- Hawthorne - this has been used for the treatment of 'dropsy' (heart failure, since the middle ages. Many people swear by their hawthorne treatment and a Cochrane review of all trials has shown it is effective in the treatment of heart failure. [click here](#) Dose 900 – 1800mg per day.

Haemochromatosis

(Hemochromatosis)

Description: this is the most common genetic disease, affecting one person in 300. Normally, when there is enough iron in the body, a 'switch' in the gut stops any more being absorbed. In hemochromatosis this 'switch' does not work and the body continued to absorb iron even when the iron stores are saturated. Because our bodies cannot excrete the excess iron, in patients with haemochromatosis, iron builds up in the body and is stored mainly in the heart, the pancreas and liver, causing heart failure, diabetes and cirrhosis.

What your doctor can do

- Regular blood removal (as a blood donor) can remove excess iron and gradually drag it out of the tissues.
- Occasionally, intravenous chelation is used, where a drug is given which binds to the iron and takes it out of the body in the urine.

What you can do

Lifestyle

- It is best to avoid iron-rich foods and especially supplements containing iron.
- Look after and support your pancreas by eating a low sugar diet; your liver by taking liver-cleansing supplements such as milk thistle; and your heart by taking Co-enzyme Q10.
- Vitamin C is a double-edged sword. It increases iron absorption, which is not helpful, but is very helpful in protecting the tissues from oxidation caused by the iron, and can also help in removing the iron. So don't take vitamin C supplements within 4 hours of eating foods like red meat and spinach which contain iron.
- Calcium reduces the absorption of iron, so should be taken at the same time as eating foods which contain iron.

Nutritional supplements

- A good multivitamin/multimineral makes sure that the body has all the nutrients and minerals required to function perfectly BUT make sure it does not contain any IRON.
- Calcium and magnesium, 800-1,000mg/day. Take this at the same time as food that contains iron in order to reduce iron absorption.
- Alpha lipoic acid, 100–200mg helps eliminate some iron.
- Milk thistle and Coenzyme Q10 as above for heart failure.

Hepatitis

Description: a viral infection of the liver. There are a number of different viruses whose names are identified by a different letter. Hepatitis A is caught through eating or drinking food with viral faecal contamination. Most other types of hepatitis such as B,C,D,E,F and G are transmitted by blood or blood products through needles, cuts or sometimes unprotected sexual intercourse. Acute hepatitis is a very serious disease with liver failure of varying degrees. After the patient has recovered chronic hepatic disease can lead onto cirrhosis or even liver cancer. Excess alcohol can also cause hepatitis and cirrhosis.

What your doctor can do

- Provide you with protection a with hepatitis vaccine before going into countries where hepatitis is a risk.
- In acute hepatitis there is no effective treatment, but in time most patients recover.
- Chronic hepatitis may be helped by a number of drugs such as interferon alpha, lamivudine or steroids. These may reduce the inflammation and may lower the risk of subsequent cirrhosis or cancer.

What you can do

Lifestyle

Avoiding hepatitis is by far the best, so make sure you are vaccinated if going to at-risk areas. Only drink bottled water and do not use any ice; eat only freshly cooked vegetables and avoid salads. Demand non reusable needles and intravenous tubing sets. Always use a condom during sexual intercourse.

If you have contracted hepatitis, don't overstress the liver. Avoid toxins, poisons and preservatives which rely on the liver for their detoxification before they can be excreted. Eat organic, non-fatty and simple food.

Some people believe that high doses of intravenous vitamin C (30–45 grams) can damage the indolent hepatitis virus and be beneficial in both the acute and chronic phases of the disease. I believe it is worth having a course of iv vitamin C

Nutritional supplements

Because the liver may not be functioning well, these are especially important:

- A good multivitamin/multimineral makes sure that the liver and the immune system have all the nutrients and minerals required to function perfectly. These contain the nutrients the liver needs to detoxify and change potentially damaging materials in the body to less harmful ones.
 - Grape seed extract (proanthocyanidins) is a powerful antioxidant and anti-inflammatory agent. In the detoxification process many free radicals are produced, and proanthocyanidins help neutralise these before they cause damage.
 - Coenzyme Q10 is an anti-inflammatory supplement; it also provides additional energy. Dosages of 30–100mg/day help the liver cells to work.
 - Specific compounds can also help the liver work and heal, in addition to those found in a good multi-tablet: tri methyl glycine (Betane), selenium, glutathione, dietary flavonoids – green tea extract, curcumin, indole 3 carbinol, sulfapyrone, milk thistle.
- Some good supplement tablets contain all of these, and they should be used by people who have had hepatitis and/or hepatic damage.
- If you cannot have iv Vitamin C, then perhaps high dose oral C (4-6 grams 3 times daily for a couple of weeks may damage the virus in the liver.

High Blood Pressure

(hypertension)

Description: the heart pumps blood round the body through a series of pipes called the arteries. As the heart beats the pressure goes up, the systolic pressure, and when it relaxes the blood pressure falls, the diastolic pressure. Ideally, the blood pressure should be below 140/80 mmHg as measured on the blood pressure cuff or sphygmomanometer. There are a number of causes of high blood pressure such as kidney disease, hormonal abnormalities, and diseases in the arteries.

High blood pressure usually has no symptoms, and can only be measured with a sphygmomanometer; it has been called “the silent killer.” It damages the arteries, the brain, the heart and the kidneys – and is a major cause of disease.

What doctors can do

- Investigations such as blood and urine tests, chest X-ray, kidney ultrasound, ECG, are usually arranged. In most cases, no cause for the raised blood pressure can be found, and this is ‘reassuringly’ called “essential hypertension.”
- Drugs are the treatment usually recommended by doctors. Today these are very effective and have fewer side effects (thiazide diuretics, beta blockers, calcium

blockers, ACE inhibitors, A2 inhibitors), and in many cases are given together in lower doses, which further reduces the side effects.

What you can do

Lifestyle

The name of this condition – hypertension – gives a clue on the best therapy: ‘hyper’ means too much, and ‘tension’ speaks for itself. Reduce the tension of life, relax, meditate and take time out – and frequently the blood pressure will come down. In some people, reducing the salt in the diet will lower blood pressure. Alcohol can raise blood pressure, any more than two glasses per day is too much. Regular mild exercise, like walking, can also reduce blood pressure a little. Being overweight also raises the pressure.

Meditation and acupuncture have both been shown to lower blood pressure.

Remember that two major complications of high blood pressure are heart attack and stroke, so the aim of treatment is to prevent these.

Caffeine can cause a temporary spike in blood pressure (so don’t have a coffee fix before going to get the pressure checked). For most people longer term the effects of caffeine are small or non existent, but some people are more sensitive. If you drink a lot of coffee or even a little, it may be worth stopping it for a few weeks to see if it makes any difference.

Nutritional supplements

- A good multivitamin/multimineral makes sure that the heart and tissues have all the nutrients and minerals it requires.
- Magnesium is absolutely crucial for treating high blood pressure. It is essential to allow the blood vessels to relax and in opening up reduce the blood pressure. Take 800-1,000mg/day.
- Omega 3 fish oils, 1–2 grams daily helps protect the arteries and also lowers the pressure a little.
- CoEnzyme Q10 (100mg daily) has a marked effect on the cardiovascular systems and many studies [click here](#) have shown it has a powerful blood pressure lowering effect. .
- Arginine (10grams/day) is a protein essential to make nitric oxide which opens the smaller arteries. It is found in nuts and legumes. It has been shown to lower blood pressure [click here](#). So either take lots of nuts or consider arginine supplements.
- Dark chocolate, although hardly a supplement, has been shown to lower blood pressure in a number of trials [click here](#). Only dark chocolate and not all brands seem to be effective. The effect is relatively small, but it is a pleasant therapy and possibly useful in people with borderline high blood pressure.

Insect bites

(Mosquito bites)

Mosquito bites usually are not a disease in themselves, but they can cause serious illnesses – malaria, dengue fever, yellow fever, encephalitis – which is why we have included them in this section.

What doctors can do

- Encourage the use of insect repellents most of these contain a chemical called DEET. This can be absorbed through the skin, especially in children, and it has been shown to be toxic to the brains in rats and some people have reported memory loss, headache and muscle and joint pains.
- Vaccination against insect-borne diseases prevalent in the area you are travelling to.

What you can do

- Use mosquito nets, wear long trousers and tuck them into your socks, and wear long sleeve shirts in the evening.
- Take Vitamin B1 (at least 100mg) daily, mosquitoes don't like it.
- Don't eat bananas! Mosquitoes love this flavour on you.
- Good natural insect repellents include – Vick's vapour rub, citronella soap or oil.
- Plant marigolds round your yard; mosquitoes don't like the smell of the flowers.
- Avoid areas where there is stagnant water. If you have a pond or water trough, put goldfish or guppies into it because they will eat the mosquito larvae.
- Electronic insect destroyers give off a frequency similar to male mosquitoes and so attract the biting females to their doom.
- It has been suggested that spraying mouth wash (Listerine) on the ground keeps insects away – eg round a table or BBQ area. Does it work – we don't know.
- Get a frog!

Insomnia

Description: difficulty in getting off to sleep or waking up soon after. Note that early morning waking can sometimes be an indication of depression.

What doctors can do

- Prescribe sleeping pills. While these help people get off to sleep, many of them make people drowsy and depressed the following day. Many are habit forming or addictive and prolonged use usually means the person cannot sleep if the medication is suddenly stopped, so it is best to slowly reduce the dose to zero.

However, in some situations there are benefits of using sleeping pills to get a good night's sleep.

What you can do

- Sleep in complete darkness or as near dark as possible. Any light, no matter how small, can turn off melatonin, the sleep hormone produced by the pineal gland.
- Go to bed at the same time each night.
- Listen to a CD or tape of relaxing music, the sound of the sea or the forest can help lull you into a good sleep.
- No TV before bed – it is too stimulating to the brain and the brightness can turn off the melatonin.
- Read something relaxing while in bed before going to sleep.
- Keep anything with an electrical field, including electric clocks and radios, as far from the bed as possible.
- Avoid eating a heavy evening meal.
- Wear bed socks – this stops the feet getting cold which can sometimes cause waking.
- If your mind is active and you have thoughts you want to remember, have a pad beside your bed and write the thoughts down so you can dismiss them until morning.
- Learn a relaxation technique or how to meditate and simply relax yourself to sleep. Consider doing some yoga before going to bed.
- Avoid excess alcohol before bed – it may help you fall asleep but you may wake up a few hours later.
- Caffeine can have an effect for many hours; even an afternoon coffee or tea can keep some people awake. So if you have a sleep problem drink none after noon!
- Have a warm bath, spa or sauna before bed, the raised body temperature helps induce sleep.
- Acupuncture and meditation can help with sleep problems

Nutritional supplements

- Magnesium has a relaxing action on the brain and the muscles, and can reduce night cramps and restless legs syndrome.
- Melatonin: the sleep hormone produced by the pineal gland. In people who are exposed to night light, shift workers, and in those who sleep poorly, taking 1 or 2mg of melatonin half an hour before bed helps with sleep, and it has been suggested it may also help reduce the risk of [developing cancer](#).
- Herbs – valerian does seem to help with sleep, but there are some concerns of its safety with long term use, camomile and passion flower have little evidence of benefit.

Migraine

Description: this debilitating headache can destroy a person's quality of life. It usually starts with an aura – jagged visions, unusual lights, sounds or even smells and other unusual sensations. This is then followed by a severe thumping headache, often with nausea, vomiting and sensitivity to light. Something like chocolate, cheese or red wine can precipitate a migraine. In women it may be premenstrual.

What your doctor can do

- Investigations. These are usually unnecessary because the history gives the diagnosis.
- Treatments. There are a number of drugs which can be tried as preventatives: beta blockers, clonidine, pizotifen. Note that these do have side effects and it is best to try more 'natural therapies' first (see below). In the past, injections of ergotamine were used to treat migraine, but today, a newer drug (sumatriptan, also known as Imigran) orally or by injection can be very effective. (Botox has been suggested but there is no evidence that it works).

What you can do

Lifestyle

Every time you have a migraine, look back on what you have done, eaten or drunk in the preceding 24 hours and see if you can find a common cause. If you do, then avoid this in future if possible. Avoid bright lights or flashing light areas.

Nutritional supplements

These can make a real difference in the treatment of migraine and it is hard to see why more people are not given this information.

- Magnesium helps the arteries to relax, and reduces spasm, which creates the 'aura'. It takes some months for the full effect to occur, but over time 800–1,000mg taken daily may eliminate migraine completely.
- Some doctors give an intravenous injection of magnesium when the migraine occurs and can stop it. 1 gram is given over 15 minutes.
- A good multivitamin/multimineral ensures that the arteries have all the nutrients and minerals required to function optimally.
- Omega 3 fish oils, 1–2 grams daily. These, when incorporated into the artery walls and the brain tissue, can help in the prevention of migraine.
- Coenzyme Q10 100mg per day has been shown to help prevent migraine [click here](#)
- Grape seed extract (proanthocyanidins) is a powerful antioxidant and anti-inflammatory which can help in the prevention of migraine.
- Sometimes hormonal changes cause migraine attacks and the use of some hormones (especially natural progesterone) can be helpful.

Multiple Sclerosis

Description: the cause is unknown, but it may fit into the ‘autoimmune’ group of diseases, where the body’s immune system attacks itself. The myelin sheath around the nerves and the brain is slowly destroyed, causing short circuits and malfunction of the nerves. Imagine damage to the plastic coating around an electrical wire. Multiple sclerosis patients tend to relapse with stepwise deteriorations.

What your doctor can do

- Usually nothing. Some doctors try steroids, or immune suppressors there is not huge evidence of their benefit. Pulses of high dose steroids or immune suppressing drugs (cyclophosphamide, methotrexate) and interferon do help some people but any evidence of their consistent benefit is lacking.

What you can do

Lifestyle

- A positive mental approach is very important and may in itself reduce relapses. Mind/body medicine is a great deal more effective and powerful than most realise. Acupuncture, Reiki, healing touch, forgiveness, loving energy, meditation, positive thoughts, prayer and many other therapies not only comfort, but they can also lead to healing and reducing attacks.
- Plenty of rest and regular exercise are beneficial. Avoid getting over tired.
- Some people suggest bowel cleansing and a low stress diet (gluten, dairy foods, chocolate, caffeine) to see if this reduces the relapses.
- Do hair mineral analysis for heavy metal toxicity, and check the teeth for excess mercury, infected root canals or jaw cavitations.
- If there is anything which precedes a relapse (stress, pollen, changes in temperature, dietary change), try to avoid these.
- Enjoy some time out in the sun to generate vitamin D (see below)
- Hunter gatherer diet – Dr Terry Wahls cured her own MS using this diet. You can watch her video [click here](#).

Nutritional supplements

- A good multivitamin/multimineral makes sure that brain tissues have all the nutrients and minerals required to function perfectly.
- Vitamin D, 5-8,000 IU daily – we are realising that MS occurs more in areas with low vitamin D production away from the equator. Sunshine on the skin creates vitamin D. Vitamin D turns on and off the expression of many genes, how it affects MS we do not currently know, but sunshine and vitamin D supplements seem a very important approach to take. [Click here](#)
- Omega 3 fish oils, 1–2 grams daily. This is very important for good brain function. The nerve tissue and covering myelin sheath also incorporates omega 3 oils. Because MS is a disease affecting the nerves and myelin, a high omega 3 intake can be very beneficial. It may also reduce the relapse rate and improve

symptoms. In a small study of patients with multiple sclerosis, over 2 years the incidence of recurrences fell from 1.39 to 0.06 in those taking omega 3 fish oils, B vitamins and vitamin C. [click here](#)

- Calcium and magnesium, 800-1,000mg/day. Magnesium has a very calming effect, helps with sleep and enables people to cope better. It can also help with nerve function.
- Grape seed extract (proanthocyanidins) is a powerful antioxidant and anti-inflammatory agent and some people with multiple sclerosis find that taking high doses can help both with the severity and the frequency of the relapses.
- Vitamin C, 1-3 grams/day, is a powerful antioxidant, which is essential in the repair of fibrous tissue, and may help the repair of the myelin sheaths round the nerves.
- Because the muscles can become weak, exacerbating tiredness, Coenzyme Q10 (100mg/day) can be helpful to improve energy. Other supplements which can help energy function are L carnitine and D ribose.
- Whenever there is an exacerbation of the multiple sclerosis, the Co Q10 and grape seed extract should be greatly increased, by up to 3 or 4 times the usual dose, and may well blunt the relapse.

Osteoporosis

Description: ‘thinning’ and weakening of the matrix of the bones which become more fragile. While a little thinning is expected as we age, collapse of vertebrae in the neck and back, fractures of the hip and other bones are becoming increasingly common in younger people, and osteoporosis is the underlying cause.

There are many causes including changes in hormone level in women as they age, reduced weight-bearing exercise, low calcium in the diet, excess alcohol, poor nutrition, some drugs (especially steroids) and low vitamin D and magnesium levels.

What your doctor can do

- Give additional calcium in the hope this will enter the bones. Most people do not realise that without magnesium, vitamin D and a little boron, silicon and manganese, most supplemental calcium goes out in the urine.
- Hormone replacement therapy in women (HRT). This does improve bone density but as this has been now shown to increase the risks of heart, stroke and other diseases [click here](#), consider using bio-identical hormones like progesterone.
- Bisphosphonates such as Fosamax, pamidronate, etidronate. Bone is continually being reabsorbed and rebuilt. These drugs bind to the bone and stop the reabsorption, so the bones just keep building.

What you can do

Lifestyle

- Walking. The most important stimulus to strengthening bone is weight-bearing exercise causing slight jarring on the bones. So walking is perhaps the best thing a person with, or at risk of, osteoporosis can do. But be careful not to jar too hard if you already have osteoporosis; this frequently occurs with jogging. Wear good shoes with well cushioned soles.
- A new weight reduction and muscle building system called ‘vibration training,’ where people stand and hold positions on a very rapidly vibrating plate, should be very helpful for osteoporosis. This technique was, in fact, devised by the Russian Space Agency to stop osteoporosis developing in cosmonauts in the weightlessness of space. These vibration plate units are very effective in strengthening bones [click here](#), and it is surprising that conventional medicine has not picked up this very simple and easy to use therapy.
- Do not smoke or drink excess alcohol.
- Expose your body to a few minutes of sunlight to raise vitamin D levels.

Nutritional supplements

- A good multivitamin/multimineral ensures that the bone has all the nutrients and minerals it requires to stay strong and repair itself.
- Calcium and magnesium, 800-1,000mg/day helps the bones retain their strength. Calcium is poorly absorbed without magnesium and a few trace elements such as boron, silicon and manganese.
- Vitamin D, if not already in the multivitamin; at least 4000iu/day.
- Vitamin K2 is widely used to treat osteoporosis in Japan. [Click here](#)
- Omega 3 fish oils, 1–2 grams daily, improve the elasticity and strength of the bone.
- Testosterone therapy may be helpful in men. The easiest way to take this is as a cream rubbed on the skin.

Palpitations

(arrhythmias, abnormal heart rhythms)

Description: the heart appears to be beating abnormally, dropped beats, irregular or beating too slowly or too fast and sometimes it seems to beat abnormally hard. Some irregular dropped beats are common and usually benign, but persistent irregularity, fast or very slow rates should be discussed with your doctor. There can be many causes for palpitations. Women around menopause time often experience them.

What your doctor can do

- Investigations.
 - Confirm what the abnormal rhythm is with an ECG, or a Holter monitor which is an ECG recorder worn for 24 hours.

- To identify any cause for the palpitations: an echocardiogram, blood tests or stress ECG.
- More serious palpitations may require electrophysiological testing where soft flexible wires are placed in the heart chambers via the veins to localise the origin of the abnormal rhythm.
- Procedures.
 - Cardioversion: an electric shock is used under general anaesthetic, to return the rhythm to normal.
 - Electrophysiological therapy: catheters placed in the heart which can ablate (destroy) the cause of some heart abnormal rhythms. For some persistent rhythm problems (WPW and others) this treatment can be extremely effective.
- Drugs. There are a number of drugs used to treat palpitations, but many of the more effective ones can have quite severe adverse effects – discuss all of these with your doctor or cardiologist. Drugs you may be asked to take include: beta blockers, flecainide, amiodarone, calcium blockers, digoxin, rythmodan. It is best to control palpitations without needing to resort to long term drug therapy if possible.

What you can do

Lifestyle

- First make sure you understand what the palpitations mean and if they are serious or just a nuisance.
- Then relax and stop worrying because stress creates adrenaline which makes palpitations much worse.
- Study to see if anything precipitates them such as vigorous exercise, some foods, coffee, cigarettes, severe stress. If you can find a cause, try to avoid it.
- Try techniques that may stop the palpitations, these include the supine valsalva manoeuvre for paroxysmal atrial tachycardia (lie flat, block our mouth and nose and blow/strain hard for as long as you can then breathe normally), taking deep breaths and lying down.
- Palpitations are very common around menopause, and some hormonal treatment may be all that is necessary to control them. (We prefer to recommend bio-identical hormones rather than synthetic HRT).

Nutritional supplements –

- A good multivitamin/multimineral will make sure that the heart has all the nutrients and minerals it requires.
- Omega 3 fish oils, 1–2 grams daily, can have a rhythm-controlling effect, and may also reduce the risk of the more serious rhythm disturbances that can cause a cardiac arrest. Everyone with significant palpitations (in fact everyone) should be on a fish oil supplement.

- Magnesium (and calcium). Magnesium is essential to keep the heart rhythm regular. It is often used intravenously in coronary care. I recommend everyone with palpitations to take supplemental magnesium 800–1,000mg daily.

Poor blood circulation in the legs

(intermittent claudication, peripheral vascular disease)

Description: blockages that develop in the arteries supplying blood to the legs and feet causing aching in the calves or buttocks when walking, feet with a painful burning sensation, especially in bed at night, and in some severe cases gangrene. It is more common in diabetic patients.

What the doctor can do

- Investigations. Physical examination includes checking the pulses in the legs. Blood tests and more specialised blood flow tests, ECG, and sometimes ultrasound and angiograms of the leg arteries can also be performed.
- Treatments.
 - Surgery: sometimes it is possible to bypass the blockage with a graft made from a vein or other tissue.
 - Angioplasty and stents can sometimes be effective in opening blocked arteries.
 - Drugs: aspirin and cholesterol-lowering drugs (statins) are often used but there are no drugs which help open the arteries.
 - Amputation may be necessary if symptoms are too severe or if gangrene develops.

What you can do

Lifestyle

- If you have diabetes, make sure your blood sugar is well controlled.
- You **MUST NOT SMOKE** or be exposed to second hand smoke.
- Look after your feet, and treat infections and cuts very carefully.
- Regular walking is helpful but stop when the pain occurs and then restart when it has gone. This encourages the development of natural bypasses, called collaterals.
- If your feet hurt or have a burning sensation in bed at night, even though they may feel cold, take the blankets off your feet to keep them cool. It is heat which causes the pain.
- EECP – enhanced external counter pulsation is discussed in the angina section and [click here](#), but in many people it has been shown to improve the blood circulation to the legs and pelvis

- Chelation therapy can sometimes help improve the circulation. Anyone in the situation of having an amputation should consider having this very safe therapy, although there is not a lot of good evidence that it works.

Nutritional supplements

These are very important because with reduced blood supply, nutrition to the feet is reduced.

- A good multivitamin/multimineral makes sure that the legs and feet have all the nutrients and minerals they require.
- Omega 3 fish oils, 1-2 grams daily, help the blood flow through the arteries and improve tissue healing.
- Calcium and magnesium, 800–1,000mg/day, can relax the muscles in the artery wall and may improve circulation.
- Ginkgo Biloba, an ancient Chinese herb is the only therapy which has been shown in a reputable trial to improve circulation to the legs. [Click here](#)
- L Carnitine, CoEnzyme Q10 and D ribose are important parts of the energy production in muscles. These may help some people with claudication.
- Grape seed extract (proanthocyanidins) is a powerful antioxidant and can be protective of the tissues which have a poor circulation.

Pregnancy

Description: while pregnancy is not a disease, and is the most natural thing in the world, we include it here for both the mother and her baby. These suggestions ensure that everything is optimal, making both the pregnancy and delivery easier, and can in fact create a healthier and more intelligent baby. What happens to the mother during pregnancy can affect the baby for the rest of its life.

What doctors (or midwife) can do

- Regularly check the mother's weight and blood pressure, and the baby's progress.
- Take 5mg of folic acid daily to reduce the incidence of spinal and brain defects such as spina bifida and hydrocephalus.
- If the mother's iron levels are low, or if she becomes anaemic she should take iron tablets.

What the mother can do

BEFORE becoming pregnant -

Because the spine and brain develop very early in the foetus, well before the mother knows she is pregnant, folic acid is essential from the very start. However most mothers will not be taking protective folic acid. The only safe way to protect your baby is to be taking a supplement containing folic acid ALL THE TIME when

conception is possible. So as soon as the baby is conceived, the nerve tissues will have plenty of folic acid to develop normally.

Lifestyle

What the mother eats will supply both her own and also her baby's needs. She generously gives to her baby before herself, so she must eat a good healthy diet with plenty of fresh fruit and vegetables, avoiding toxins and preservatives as much as possible, eat organic foods, to provide a better outcome for her developing baby.

She should avoid chemicals and drugs, both ingested and on the skin, as much as possible, because again these find their way into the baby. If possible use preservative free skin care products, without parabens and sodium laurel sulphate. Avoid dental work which may stir up mercury in the mouth, because babies are very sensitive to mercury. Because fish can have a high mercury content, even though fish oils can have major benefits (see below), health authorities now recommend that pregnant women eat less than one fish meal per week. [Click here](#)

Regular exercise, such as walking, is important, as is having a good night's sleep and often a nap during the day.

Nutritional supplements

Supplementation seems so obvious that it is hard to understand why many in the medical profession ignore this area. Perhaps it is because most supplements have such poor contents and so give little benefit. Some supplements may contain potentially damaging impurities with no guarantee of their contents. Examples of these include mercury in fish oils; and lead, which is frequently found in cheaper calcium supplements. However there are supplements made to pharmaceutical levels which provide all the nutrients the body requires. Pregnancy is not a time to take any risks. So give your baby and yourself the best supplements you can and make sure they are made to pharmaceutical grade quality.

- A good multivitamin/multimineral ensures that mother and baby have all the nutrients and minerals required to function, grow and develop perfectly. Make sure that it contains at least 5mg folic acid. Also make sure that the supplement contains beta carotene not vitamin A because vitamin A can build up in the baby and cause toxic effects.
- Omega 3 fish oils, 1–2 grams daily are very important for good brain function and development in the foetus. Studies have shown that mothers who eat plenty of fish or fish oils during pregnancy have babies with [higher IQs](#). Omega 3 oils also improve the tissue elasticity which can be a great help during childbirth. However since eating fish can expose the baby to high mercury levels, use quality fish oil supplements which guarantee that they are mercury free and are made to pharmaceutical standards.
- Calcium and magnesium, 800–1,000mg/day. Magnesium has a very calming effect and helps with sleep. This dosage provides mother and baby with enough

calcium to maintain and develop bones. Magnesium can also help with nerve function and reduce night cramps.

- Extra fibre in the diet can help prevent or reduce the risk of developing piles (haemorrhoids).

Prostate enlargement

Benign prostatic hypertrophy (BHP)

Description: the prostate gland surrounds the urethra in males. This is the tube taking urine from the bladder to the penis. With increasing age, the prostate gland can swell, restricting and then finally blocking the flow of urine.

What Doctors can do

- Usually doctors recommend surgery; either removal of the prostate gland by prostatectomy or they shave a larger track through the prostate for the urine to go (TURP).
- There are a number of drugs which can relax the bladder neck muscles and improve the flow (Hytrin, doxazosin) and others, such as finasteride (Proscar) which can block the hormone dihydro testosterone (DHT) which is what causes the gland to swell.

What you can do

Lifestyle

Don't allow the bladder to overfill as this can sometimes result in a complete blockage. Make sure that the bladder empties completely. Physical activity such as walking 2-3 hours per week can reduce the symptoms by 25%. [Click here](#)

Nutritional supplements

- Saw Palmetto is a Chinese herb which suppresses swelling of the prostate improving symptoms in an unexplained yet effective way. [Click here](#). In some European countries, Saw Palmetto is prescribed as first line therapy.
- Lycopene is found in pink fruits, especially cooked tomatoes. When concentrated in the prostate gland it can reduce BHP. [click here](#)

Shingles

(Herpes Zoster)

Description: a very painful condition where a virus infects usually just one nerve and causes a painful rash on the skin supplied by that nerve. The rash often becomes infected, and sometimes after healing, a deep pain called post herpetic neuralgia, persists. The virus is closely related to the chickenpox virus, and it is best for older people, especially if frail or with reduced immunity, to avoid children with chickenpox.

What your doctor can do

It is essential to see your doctor as soon as possible.

- Antiviral treatment (acyclovir or famcyclovir) can make a huge reduction in suffering. It is most beneficial if started within 72 hours of the onset of the pain, which can often precede the rash.
- Pain relief and antibiotics for secondary infections.
- Drugs which may help the pain of post herpetic neuralgia include tricyclic antidepressants, tegretol, lignocaine patch, and sometimes even morphine-like drugs may be required if the pain is very severe.

What you can do

See your doctor as fast as you can to start antiviral therapy. If it is a weekend, go to the emergency doctor because [this is an emergency](#).

Nutritional Supplements

- Vitamin C in very high doses can also damage viruses, and as soon as the diagnosis is made start 2-4 grams of vitamin C, 3 times a day (or until diarrhoea develops). If there is a facility near you which can give it, ask for some intravenous vitamin C, 30-40 grams twice weekly for 2 weeks. Iv Vitamin C is extremely effective. Again start as soon as possible and it is fine to use with antiviral drugs. [click here](#)
- Good nutrition: multivitamin/multimineral supplements and omega 3 fish oils may aid healing and could possibly reduce the risk of post herpetic neuralgia.

Ulcerative colitis

Description: this is an autoimmune disease where the immune system attacks the lining of the colon (the large bowel). It causes abdominal pain, distension, flatulence and bloody diarrhoea and can be very debilitating.

What your doctor can do

- Suppressing the immune system is the major medical treatment, using salazopyrine and steroids, either by mouth or rectally.
- Surgery – removing badly affected segments of bowel.

What you can do

Many people suggest a **4-R** approach to the inflammatory bowel diseases, ulcerative colitis and Crohn's disease.

Lifestyle

As with all autoimmune diseases, a positive mental approach is very important and may in itself reduce relapses. Plenty of rest and regular exercise is beneficial. Because it is possible that some foods and toxins can aggravate ulcerative colitis, a low stress diet (avoid sugar, white flour, grains (gluten), chocolate, dairy foods, tea, coffee, alcohol, known allergens, tobacco, food additives. (All fast foods, biscuits and cakes also have gluten should be avoided.)). Have some hair analysed for heavy metal toxicity, and teeth should be checked for excess mercury, infected root canals or jaw cavitations.

If there is anything which precedes a relapse such as stress or dietary change, then try to avoid it in future.

Nutritional supplements

- A good multivitamin/multimineral makes sure that bowel tissues and the immune system have all the nutrients and minerals required to function perfectly.
- Calcium and magnesium, 800–1,000mg/day. Magnesium has a very calming effect, helps with sleep and enables people to cope better. It can also relax the bowel spasm. Sometimes the calcium or magnesium can aggravate the diarrhoea – if so, lower the dose.
- Vitamin D – this vitamin appears to be important in immune diseases, it plays a central part in switching genes on and off as needed. [click here](#) UC is much less common in areas where there is high sunlight exposure and thus high vitamin D levels. Despite the overwhelming evidence that low vitamin D levels worsen UC there have been no good trials looking at its efficacy in treatment in man. Some animal studies suggest it should. [click here](#) I would recommend 5,000 – 8,000iu daily
- Grape seed extract (proanthocyanidins) is a powerful antioxidants and anti-inflammatory agent – and some people find that high doses of grape seed extract can help both with the severity and frequency of relapses.
- Coenzyme Q10 is an anti-inflammatory supplement and also provides additional energy. Dosages of 30–100mg/day may be helpful.

- Intravenous vitamin C can sometimes be helpful, but oral vitamin C in high doses may aggravate the diarrhoea.
- Fibre drinks and shakes can help keep the bowel motions softer and comfortable, and help cleanse the bowel.
- Probiotics – good bacteria – such as *Lactobacillus acidophilus* and *bulgaricus*, allow the bowel to re-colonise with good bacteria, reduce some symptoms and allow many vitamins and other nutrients to be absorbed.
- It has been noted that ulcerative colitis can be less severe in cigarette smokers. We would never suggest that people take up smoking, but nicotine patches may be helpful if other measures are not working.

There are a number of other nutrients and herbs which have been suggested for inflammatory bowel diseases, but are beyond the boundaries for this book. We will list them and suggest that interested readers check them on Google (type in ulcerative colitis and the name of the nutrient). These include:

Dehydroepiandrosterone (DHEA) can reduce inflammation and protect the bowel.

Butyrate (butyric acid) seems to reduce inflammation.

Glutamine helps protect the lining of the intestine and improves blood flow, and may also reduce leaky gut.

Arginine can suppress the growth of undesirable bacteria and stop them releasing toxins. May also help healing of the ulcers.

CONCLUSION

If you were to read the section on different diseases as you would read a book, you would quickly notice how many of our recommendations are repeated.

We doctors who are used to treating diseases (not the body), thus we use a range of arthritis drugs for arthritis, heart drugs for heart disease and asthma drugs for asthma. Occasional drugs such as steroids, treat a whole range of conditions, but pharmaceutical research has generated specific products for specific diseases.

Occasionally the focus can change: for example the drug Viagra was initially being investigated for the treatment of angina, when certain side effects were noted!!!

Viagra is no longer being recommended for heart disease.

However the human body is composed of trillions of cells, and although the cells may appear different in the brain, the heart, the sweat glands and muscles, they all have the same basic structure – a cell wall, a nucleus, organelles within to make energy, hormones or secretions, and a gel called cytoplasm which fills the cell. Only the organelles differ between the different types of cell in the body.

Thus to keep the cells functioning perfectly and to help them to recover from damage or injury, they all need basically the same things – food, vitamins and minerals, which the body cannot produce, and a few types of fat found in fish oils.

Provide the body cells with an adequate supply of these, and they can recover from most setbacks.

Even more important is the fact that apart from our nerve cells, every cell within our body has a finite life span, from a few days to months. These cells are continually dying, then removed and being replaced by brand new cells. Provided the nucleus blue print has not changed, these new cells should be just as perfect as the cells we had when we were babies. But when we were babies, our mothers generously gave us all the nutrients our cells required, from the placenta and in her milk. If she did not have sufficient, she took it from her body and gave it to us!

Now we are grown, we are responsible for giving our cells all they require. When you actually look at the food we actually put into our mouths, and realise just how incomplete and damaging our diet is, is there any wonder that our cells wear out faster. As a direct consequence of this, our generation has developed an epidemic of degenerative diseases such as heart attacks, Alzheimer's, arthritis and cancer.

And why are we surprised that our bodies do not heal as well as our pets do? Have a look at the supplements added to pet food.

The answer to the prevention and treatment of today's diseases is perfect cellular nutrition – not drugs. In some cases drugs may also be necessary, but they come a very distant second.

Today we talk about alternative and conventional medicines. In fact modern medicines with drugs and operations are the ‘new boys on the block’. The so called alternative therapies have been used by humankind for millennia, and until the past couple of centuries, heart disease, Alzheimer’s, immune disease and cancer, have been rare.

We hope that in this book we have given a balanced view of both conventional and complementary therapies. The need for optimal nutrition to the cells seems so obvious to us that we have difficulty in understanding why our colleagues in medicine and the dietary professions are so resistant to the understanding and use of good supplementation. Perhaps it is because of the poor supplements that are available on the shelves. However if we doctors gave our patients drugs made to the same standards as the supplements most recommend, then they too would be ineffective. Using supplements which contain a full pantry of all the nutrients required by the body, in a formulation where they will be absorbed, and where the company guarantees that the contents are accurate is a completely different science. These supplements made to pharmaceutical standard or using Good Manufacturing Practices are really effective. We know because we have seen their effects upon ourselves, our families and our patients over many years.

And the future?

We strongly believe that if we could instil into our children and grandchildren the following simple guidelines:

- Do some exercise most days
- Avoid toxins as much as possible
- Eat as well as you can – with as few preservatives and poisons in the food
- Daily take a good comprehensive multivitamin/multimineral plus omega 3 fish oil

This would give them a nutrient intake similar to that of our grandparent’s time. We believe if they do this, in one generation we could almost eliminate the epidemic of today’s premature ageing and degenerative diseases (heart attacks, cancer, inflammatory immune diseases, arthritis, Alzheimer’s). These diseases were rare in our grandparent’s time – let’s also make them rare in the lifetimes of our children and grandchildren! WE CAN DO IT!

Gerald and Monica Lewis

Appendix:

Appendix 1

Gluten free diet: A gluten-free diet means not eating foods which contain wheat, rye, and barley. In patients with coeliac disease the small bowel reacts to gluten by some probably allergic process, the bowel wall becomes damaged (the small finger like digestive fronds disappear) and food is badly absorbed – leading to bloating abdominal pain and diarrhoea and also malabsorption of food and especially vitamins. People with full blown coeliac disease have obvious symptoms after eating gluten, but there are many people with mild coeliac, who feel much better eating gluten free foods. This problem is much greater than had been previously believed, and most good food outlets do not provide a good and palatable selection of gluten free foods. For example, instead of wheat flour use potato, rice, soy, amaranth, quinoa, buckwheat, or bean flour instead of wheat flour. Buy gluten-free bread, pasta, and other products from stores that carry organic foods, or order products from special food companies. Gluten-free products are increasingly available from regular stores, and some are available on line.

Checking labels for "gluten free" is important since many corn and rice products are produced in factories that also manufacture wheat products. Hidden sources of gluten include additives such as modified food starch, preservatives, and stabilizers. Wheat and wheat products are often used as thickeners, stabilizers, and texture enhancers in foods.

"Plain" meat, fish, rice, fruits, and vegetables do not contain gluten, so people with coeliac disease can eat as much of these foods as they like. Recommending that people with coeliac disease avoid oats is controversial because some people have been able to eat oats without having symptoms. Scientists are currently studying whether people with coeliac disease can tolerate oats. Until the studies are complete, follow the physician's or dietitian's advice about eating oats.

The gluten-free diet is challenging. It requires a completely new approach to eating that affects a person's entire life. Newly diagnosed people and their families may find support groups to be particularly helpful as they learn to adjust to a new way of life. People with coeliac disease have to be extremely careful about what they buy for lunch at school or work, what they purchase at the grocery store, what they eat at restaurants or parties, and what they grab for a snack. Eating out can be a challenge. If in doubt about a menu item, ask the waiter or chef about ingredients and preparation, or if a gluten-free menu is available.

Gluten is also used in some medications. One should check with the pharmacist to learn whether medications used contain gluten. Since gluten is also sometimes used as an additive in unexpected products, it is important to read all labels. If the ingredients

are not listed on the product label, the manufacturer of the product should provide the list upon request. With practice, screening for gluten becomes second nature.

Appendix 2

Low stress diet

Eliminate the stressors: By eliminating foods and substances which can irritate or create allergic responses, the body has a chance to recover and heal itself. For many diseases, especially the so called 'autoimmune' diseases where the body's immune system attacks the body, and also allergic conditions, starting treatment with a Low Stress Diet gives the greatest likelihood of success.

EAT NO – sugar, white flour, grains (gluten), chocolate, dairy foods, tea, coffee, alcohol, known allergens, tobacco, food additives. (All fast foods, biscuits and cakes also have gluten).

EAT – fish, fruit, vegetables, nuts, berries, seeds, rice, meat and chicken. Use spices and herbs for flavour

Appendix 3

CoEnzyme Q10 (CoQ10)

This is an essential component of all cells. CoQ10 is necessary to transport energy created in the mitochondria from the burning of sugars, fats and proteins to the parts of the cell needing the energy. CoQ10 levels tend to fall as we age. The levels are also reduced in some situations where the body is not working optimally such as in chronic fatigue, heart failure and multiple sclerosis. In these diseases when the energy is down, taking supplemental CoQ10 is often helpful.

CoQ10 supplements are very expensive to produce, currently only Japan can make high-quality effective CoQ10. It should be Gel coated. Many of the cheaper brands, usually in a normal capsule form, have little action.

The Statin Drugs - The statin group of drugs such as Zocor, Lipitor, Lipex, used to lower cholesterol, are almost universally recommended to people who have coronary artery disease. These drugs lower the cholesterol by blocking an enzyme (HMGCoA reductase) in the liver. This enzyme is necessary to make cholesterol. Unfortunately HMGCoA Reductase is also essential to make CoQ10, and it has been well demonstrated that patients on Statin drugs have low levels of Co Q10. Might this lead to the development of heart failure, is it a cause of the tiredness, mental confusion and muscle pains that sometimes occur with these drugs? We are not certain.

Most people who understand the actions of statins and CoQ10, agree that *everyone who is taking statin drugs should also be taking a good Coenzyme Q10 supplement*. There is much debate on the use of statin drugs, from conventional doctors recommending them for virtually all patients, to those who say it should never be used. As with most things the intermediate situation is correct. In our view there is good evidence that statin drugs reduce the incidence of heart attacks, stroke and death particularly then those who have evidence of heart disease or strokes, and in these patients statin drugs should be used. The evidence to use statins to prevent heart disease however is very much less convincing, and we believe that unless the cholesterol is extremely high, or the risk of heart disease is high, there dangers outweigh the benefits.

Appendix 4

Good fats and bad fats

This is possibly the most confusing topic in the field of nutrition, and the problem is made worse because in many cases, nutritionists, doctors and scientists really don't know the answers but say they do. We have producer bodies, food manufacturers, supplement and pharmaceutical companies who naturally want to promote their own products and run down the opposition. The result is utter confusion. We, who have no barrow to push, will endeavour to give our dispassionate opinion.

Fats have been classified into 2 groups –

1. The degree of saturation – monounsaturated fats, polyunsaturated and saturated fats. In recent years trans fats have also been added.
 2. And whether they are Omega 3 or omega 6 fats.
1. **Degree of saturation.** Fats have a 'backbone' of carbon atoms all joined together by bonds, like thread through a string of beads. If there is a single bond, then each carbon atom has 2 hydrogen atoms attached to it.
 - If all carbons had just a single bond, then the fat is called saturated – it is saturated with hydrogen. This is the composition of most animal fats and some tropical oils, such as coconut oil.
 - If there is one double bond, then it is mono-unsaturated. Such as Olive oil, almond, peanut, cashew and avocado oils.
 - If there are a number of double bonds – then it is poly-unsaturated. Most vegetable oils are poly-unsaturated, they are liquid at room temperatures and are prone to oxidation and rancidity.

- A new group of fats, artificially produced from poly-unsaturated fats, are the Trans fats. These are a completely different shape, can easily pack together and very likely cause heart disease and perhaps other diseases of today. Trans fats are found in –many margarines and spreads, cake mixes, baked goods, fried fast food, potato chips, whipped toppings...read the label and avoid them.

Please do not ask us to tell you what to eat! If we say one thing, the National Heart Foundation and other Bodies will boycott this book, if we say the opposite then we will be at the mercy of the Primary Producers. We also, like most of our colleagues, if asked to give a completely honest answer, would say we really do not know. Suffice to say – our grandparents and forefathers all ate fully saturated animal fats, and had much less coronary heart disease and cancer than we currently have.

- We have no doubt that monounsaturated fats such as olive oil and fish oil fats are good for us – unless they are heated repeatedly, when they can turn into trans fats.
- Polyunsaturated fats are probably good, but not too much
- Saturated fats, we are not sure, we would suggest caution and don't overdo them
- Trans-fats, these are pure evil, and should be avoided if at all possible. But in today's world, this is almost an impossibility.

2. **Omega 3 vs omega 6 fats** – our liver can make most of the fats our body requires with two exceptions – Linoleic Acid (omega 6) [BAD] and alpha linolenic (omega 3) [GOOD]. These have very similar names, but their effects within the body are totally different. However the important point is that it is a matter of balance. Let's look at each in turn:

Linoleic acid is omega 6 which turns into arachidonic acid AA which promotes inflammation, and is very useful for fighting infections. It helps white blood cells to find and attack bacteria and viruses, boosts the immune system, makes the blood more likely to clot, closes up the arteries and also can narrow the bronchi going to the lungs.

While these actions are handy in the presence of an infection, at other times they can hurt the body – causing heart attacks, asthma, inflammatory bowel disease and arthritis.

Linoleic acid comes from plant oils, and AA is found in animal fats, especially red meats, egg yolks and shellfish.

Alpha linolenic acid is omega 3 and is found in cold water fatty fish and flax and some other seed oils. This turns into Eicosapentaenoic acid (EPA) which does the opposite to AA. They reduce inflammation, dilate the arteries and the bronchi and reduce the clotting tendency of the blood. They also block some of the unnecessary damaging effects of AA on the body.

So omega 3 oils are powerful 'treatments' for any disease caused or aggravated by inflammation such as arthritis, inflammatory bowel disease and asthma. People

are beginning to realise that the onset of a heart attack in many cases is initiated by inflammation, so omega 3 oils are very important in people with coronary artery disease.

So we need a little omega 6 oil (AA) to fight infections and stay protected, and some omega 3 (EPA) to protect the body, and the best amount is the ration of 4 : 1 (AA : EPA). But in our Western diet, the ratio is more like 40 – 80 : 1 – so is it surprising that we have so much inflammatory (immune) diseases and heart disease?

The answer – cut down on the red meat, egg yolks and animal fats, and also increase the amount of omega 3 oils (flax seed and fish oils), to get the ratio closer to the healthy 4:1 ration. Our bodies will thank us for that.

Appendix 5

Chelation therapy

This is a technique used to remove heavy metals from the body. In the great scheme of things, we were never designed to be exposed to lead, iron, cadmium, mercury and aluminium. Therefore we have no mechanism to remove them when they enter our bodies. This is not quite true, a tiny amount is removed through our hair and nails, this is why analysis of hair is often used to diagnose heavy metal toxicity.

There are a number of compounds which can bind to the heavy metal in our bodies, and as these compounds are excreted, they take the heavy metal with them – this process is called chelation. Some chelating agents can be taken by mouth, such as lipoic acid, DMSA and DMPS, while others need to be given as an intravenous drip (EDTA), although some believe EDTA can also be given orally. Chelation is recommended to remove lead and other heavy metals from the artery walls and so open blocked arteries. There is little good evidence for this, but a recent trial [click here](#) did show that it was beneficial in patients with diabetes, but not others.

Appendix 6

EECP therapy

This treatment for coronary artery disease (angina) has been available for many decades after being developed in the 1950s by Harvard university but was eclipsed by angioplasty and bypass surgery. It involves inflatable cuffs placed around the legs being inflated between heart beats driving blood back through the coronary arteries and developing bypass collateral blood vessels. It is an extremely effective and painless treatment and is more effective the worse the coronary disease is. So anyone with ongoing angina despite medical treatments should consider having EECP. For more information [click here](#)