

NATURAL HEALTH SERVICES

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Miscellaneous Writings by Keith Post, ND

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The Health Benefits of Garlic

By Keith Post, ND
April, 2003

The medicinal effects of garlic have been known about and utilized since pre-historic times. In this brief article, I will give an overview of the most important modern day usages of this wonderful herbal medicine.

English scientists have done a lot of research to validate garlic's role in the prevention and treatment of arteriosclerosis. It has been shown to decrease blood cholesterol levels, increase fibrinolytic action and decrease the aggregation of thrombocytes (another term for platelets, which can cause blood clots). These therapeutic effects are achieved with a medium-sized dosage over an extended period of time and with none of the side effects common to the usual drug therapies.

Garlic has also been shown to lower chronically elevated blood pressure. Research has shown, however, that the preparations must be made from fresh bulbs, in order to be effective. It also increases the circulation of blood to the extremities, treating conditions such as intermittent claudication and various retinopathies. It also strengthens the action of the heart muscle, in general.

Garlic has a tonifying and stimulating activity on the digestive organs, relieving problems associated with poor digestion. It relieves flatulence by decreasing the bacteria in the bowels responsible for putrefaction. It stimulates the liver and gallbladder, resulting in an increased flow of bile, which leads to improved digestion of fats. It also has an antiseptic, antimicrobial and antifungal activity and is an ideal treatment for diarrhea-producing intestinal infections, such as amoebic and bacillary dysentery, cholera, typhoid and paratyphoid fevers. It can also relieve conditions such as irritable bowel syndrome, due to its' ability to decrease spasms of the

smooth muscle cells of internal organs. Garlic is also anti-parasitic, being an excellent treatment for pinworms and other worms in children, pets and adults.

Here are some other benefits from taking garlic. It stimulates the immune system and is effective in the treatment of chronic colds, bronchitis and ailments of the lungs. Manual laborers have reported that taking garlic gives them more strength for their tasks. It also is known to detoxify chronic lead poisoning out of the body and is protective against lead poisoning, as well.

I usually advise my patients to take garlic during the cold, wet weather, especially in the Autumn to prepare for the long Winter ahead, but is also helpful in the Spring. It can be taken year-round, but "garlic season" is the ideal time for everyone to add some to their diet!

1. Health Tips: How to Prevent Breast Cancer

By Keith Post, ND
April, 2006

How many of you know what the lymph system is? Basically, it consists of a network of ducts and lymph vessels that ensure that most of your body receives moisture at all time in the form of lymphatic fluid which is, biochemically speaking, exactly the same as your blood plasma, but without any blood cells or platelets. Hence, it is colorless and thinner in texture than blood. And, since lymph vessels cannot pump lymph in the same way that blood is pumped through your blood vessels by your heart muscle, it must rely on the alternating contraction and relaxation of your skeletal muscles in order to squish the fluids through your body.

In other words, we have yet another reason that exercise is so valuable for health and longevity. Because, in the absence of any physical activity, lymph movement becomes sluggish and this allows for the growth and development of unwanted guests such as bacteria, viruses, yeast, fungi, parasites, cysts and tumors, both benign and cancerous.

So, a simple solution to prevent the growth of tumors in lymph-rich areas of the body would be regular exercise of the upper body along with self-massage.

Now, as you know, breast cancer has become endemic in our society. Mammograms are touted by the medical profession as a preventative, but they do not prevent anything. In fact, it is a well-established fact that ionizing radiation of any kind is itself carcinogenic. Mammograms are simply a diagnostic tool to supplement, not replace the well-trained physician's manual palpation during a physical examination. It has been stated that the modern version of the mammogram emits fewer rads and is therefore less carcinogenic than earlier versions. However, if I were a woman, I would not entrust my body to regular doses of any form of ionizing radiation, beyond what may be necessary during airline travel and the occasional bite-wing X-ray at the dentist's office.

If you choose, however, there is nothing wrong with getting a baseline mammogram around age 30, but I would not recommend annual follow-ups. For one thing, it is entirely possible that you could test normal in January, then have an aggressive growth occur before the following January.

So, what to do? Well, first of all, realize that at least 80% of all breast cancers begin in the upper outer quadrant region near the axillary tail (armpit). Therefore, a simple and highly effective method of preventing stasis of lymphatic fluid, which would allow a growth to begin forming,

would be to massage that area daily in the shower. If you have any current health concerns, check with your physician first.

Simply use your right hand to thoroughly massage the left pectoral region for a few moments, then alternate and use the left hand to massage your right pectoral region. I would suggest that you begin on either side of the nipple and progress towards and into the armpit in a kneading motion. This will leave your pectoral regions feeling toned and energized.

Another benefit of massaging one's self, besides the great increase in circulation, is that you give your subconscious mind an empowering message of self-love, which also decreases the risk of breast cancer.

TMJ Dysfunction

By Keith Post, ND
February, 2007

Do you habitually grit or clench your teeth? Do you have perpetually tight, painful neck muscles? Has your dentist told you that he/she sees signs that you are grinding your teeth at night? Have you been prescribed a dental appliance? Then, read on.

Many tears ago, I discovered that the neck muscles would not relax during a massage therapy until I had first asked the client to unlock their jaw muscles. Upon further questioning, they would invariably tell me that they had been diagnosed with "TMJ" and issued a splint to wear at night to prevent further destruction to the enamel of their teeth. In most cases, no attention was given to the stresses in their life and no stress reduction counseling classes or techniques were recommended.

A fundamental principle in naturopathic medicine is "Tolle causum" or "First, treat the cause". It is helpful to treat the symptoms, in this case using a dental appliance, but that will not necessarily address the underlying reasons why the person clenches their teeth in the first place.

So, what is a good treatment besides or perhaps in place of using a splint, you might be asking? It is rather simple actually. First of all, a person must become more fully aware of their stresses and how he/she expresses them in their body. Then, they must take measures to learn how to reduce those stresses naturally.

In the case of jaw tension, through constant vigilance during the waking hours, you must make sure that the teeth never touch each other. They should only touch food and that is all! Every time that you notice they are touching, move them back apart slightly, letting the lips touch lightly together. It might also help to observe an infant or someone with limited mental function. They will often exhibit a remarkably slack jaw accompanied by an easygoing demeanor.

Secondly, take some time before bed each night to fully unwind and that doesn't mean watching the news, either! Put on some relaxing music, go for a brief walk, do some yoga stretches, breathe deeply and also stretch the jaw muscles themselves. Move your jaw up, down, side-to-side, make rolling movements, yawn widely like a jungle cat, you get the idea.

You might also enhance your bedtime preparations with a warm cup of tea consisting of mild nervine (nerve tonifying) herbs, such as chamomile or mint. "Sleepytime" by Celestial Seasonings is an excellent blend.

After working consciously with these ideas for a few weeks, you will have no more use for your dental appliance. Plus, your sleep will be far more relaxing and you will awake far more refreshed.

3. Naturopathic Perspective on the Treatment of Gastro-Esophageal Ailments

By Keith Post, ND

April, 2007

For many years, the treatment towards any type of condition causing irritation and/or ulceration of the upper gastro-esophageal tract was usually based on controlling the production of the body's own hydrochloric acid. This was done first by using antacids, which are simply buffering agents that render acid inert to a more neutral pH balance. Lately, the emphasis has shifted to actually blocking the stomach's ability to even produce acid in the first place.

The problem with this approach is obvious to anyone with a basic knowledge of human physiology. Without sufficient hydrochloric acid, the body is unable to digest the protein components of food taken in, meaning that there will be a decrease in cellular repairs and regeneration. This leads to an intensification and increase in the aging process.

There are other potential problems associated with having an increase of undigested proteins in the system. Putrefaction is much more likely to occur, leading to foul-smelling flatus and possibly an increase of abdominal bloating as well. Halitosis or "bad breath" is another common symptom. There may also be more constipation, especially if insufficient fiber is being taken in at the same time.

Naturopathic treatments are much more holistic in nature. First, herbal medicine containing demulcents, which are high in mucilage, are applied in an amount sufficient to relieve the irritation and to allow the tissues time to heal themselves. Think of this as applying an internal bandage, if you will. Then, the diet is analyzed in order to detect any foods or drinks which may be causing or aggravating the condition. These must be eliminated for the duration of treatment in order to make any real progress. Third, any lifestyle or emotional stresses, especially those having to do with self-empowerment issues, should be identified and reduced or brought to resolution. [Note: In yogic teachings, this area of the body is governed by the third chakra]. Fourth, substances of a glandular nature can be utilized to provide a template for the body to rebuild new, healthy gastro-esophageal tissues.

This process is going to take some time, but the cure will be permanent, as opposed to a never-ending dependence on antacids such as Tums, histamine-2 receptor antagonists (also known as "H2-blockers") such as Tagamet or proton-pump inhibitors such as Prilosec.

4. Home cure for Pharyngitis ("sore throat")

By Keith Post, ND

April, 2007

The next time that you are experiencing a sore throat, try this simple, yet remarkably effective home cure. Buy some cayenne or "red pepper" at the grocery and sprinkle a few shakes into an empty coffee cup. Then, add an ounce or two of water to the cup and gargle this mixture for a

few seconds. You can swallow it if you like, but I usually don't unless it is close to a mealtime. The cayenne will warm the area, then give an almost instant sense of pain relief, which will usually last for a ½-hour or more. It also greatly increases the circulation locally, decreasing any sluggishness of lymph fluids that act as a media for viral or bacterial growth, therefore helping the body fight any infection that is present. It has also been verified that there is an increase in white blood cell activity as a result of this practice. If you are also having cold symptoms involving copious nasal discharge, these will dry up naturally as well. All in all, this is my number one remedy for acute or chronic pharyngitis!

5. Moon Cycles

By Keith Post, ND

June, 2007

Have you ever really wondered about the effects that our moon might have on our health, emotions, love life, cyclic nature or other parameters? Women have a monthly reminder of the power of the moon in the form of their menstrual cycle. In fact, women who are most tuned-in to nature and the natural rhythms of the Earth will often start their flow on or around the New Moon. Then, they will ovulate on or very close to the Full Moon. This is a factor that medical doctors should definitely take into consideration, when giving a young woman a prescription for birth control pills. This pattern is the strongest during the years of peak fertility, and then will begin to vary as menopause approaches.

Unfortunately, many modern women are so out of synch with the rhythms of Nature that their cycles will literally “flip,” and they will actually have their flow on the Full Moon. This can be corrected over time by engaging in several key behaviors:

- Spending as much time outdoors as possible
- Camping out
- Going to bed earlier and getting up with the sun
- Lunaception: This is a method to regulate the monthly cycle developed by various practitioners. It involves sleeping with a dim light bulb (15- to 25-watts) on during the 13th, 14th and 15th nights of the monthly cycle (to emulate the full moon), and in total darkness for the remaining nights. Once the cycle is regulated and the woman is aware of when she is ovulating each month, abstinence or extra protection is then practiced on Days 11 through 16 (three days before ovulation and for two days afterwards).
- Using full-spectrum lights in the home and work environment.
- Herbal medicines: it is often necessary to detoxify the liver, especially if the liver is not breaking down the endogenous (self-produced) or exogenous (prescribed) estrogen compounds rapidly enough. This will cause a relative progesterone deficiency and trigger the symptoms of pre-menstrual syndrome, for example.
- Herbal medicines: in order to balance the menstrual cycle, some practitioners will prescribe botanicals that are richest in plant-based phytoestrogens during the first two weeks of the menstrual cycle, then follow up with ones that are richest in plant-based phytoprogestones during the last two weeks of the cycle. This is done to encourage rhythm and predictability, while correcting any deficiencies.

As far as birth control goes, there was an excellent article on the subject on pp. 307-315 in *The Holistic Health Handbook*, compiled by the Berkeley Holistic Health Center and first published by the Stephen Greene Press in May 1984. The article is entitled: “*Natural Birth Control: A Holistic Approach to Contraception*,” by Merilee Kernis.

In it, the author presents information about the various natural contraception methods, including:

- Billings Mucous Method
- Rhythm Method
- Astrological Fertility Cycle
- Basal Body Temperature
- Lunaception
- Psychic or Mental Control

Another great article by Katie Singer is available online from the Weston A. Price Foundation at: <http://www.westonaprice.org/women/fertility.html>

I will often give out copies of these articles, along with a useful chart that illustrates the correspondence between the pituitary and ovarian hormones, along with the ovarian and endometrial cycles.

Now, what about the men you might be asking? Well, certainly there is more rowdiness and crime during the full moon. However, on the plus side, there are also acts of great heroism and courage.

For both genders, in general, there just seems to be more drama and action in the environment during a full moon. This is where the physical, emotional, romantic and sexual energy is naturally at its' fullest. This is also when women are most likely to ovulate, and therefore, conceive. So, this is also the time that birth control needs to be considered most conscientiously, unless you want a "Saturday night surprise."

Health Tip to Reduce Joint Inflammation Naturally

By Keith Post, ND
June, 2007

Here is an easy and inexpensive way to relieve many joint pains. Mix one tablespoon of the fruit pectin product known as Certo with ½ cup of pure grape juice made from Concord grapes and drink three times daily with your meals. Certo is made from Mexican limes and will alkalize the joint space synovial fluids, as it is an overly acidic condition that tends to exacerbate and perpetuate joint inflammation. Be sure to buy a pure grape juice product rather than a grape drink or grape cocktail product. Buying the frozen concentrate will often save you money over the long run, but you can also watch for specials. You will usually find the Certo product at any supermarket right next to where they sell the canning jars and supplies.

6. Kidney Flushes

By Keith Post, ND
August, 2007

The kidneys are the water filters of the body. They also continually monitor and balance the electrolyte levels and acid/base balance of the body. The scientific term for the measurement of this acid/base balance is pH. When the pH is habitually out of balance, minerals in the urine begin to precipitate out of solution creating crystals. These crystals can be viewed under a microscope during a standard urinalysis, hence the importance of the urinalysis as part of any

screening examination. Then, if there is also a progressive narrowing of the kidney tubules due to degeneration, the flow of urine becomes more and more restricted. The combination of these two processes is what leads to kidney and bladder stone formation over time.

Kidney stones are usually composed of a calcium compound, but some are made up of a magnesium compound instead. In terms of prevention, eating a balanced diet rich in fruits and vegetables will usually ensure that the proper pH or acid/base balance is maintained, as long as no serious disease process is going on. Food sources of calcium and magnesium should not be avoided, as these minerals are essential for longevity and good health. However, I caution my clients against many of the cheaper commercially available calcium and magnesium supplements being sold nowadays. For example, most of the calcium supplements are in the form of calcium carbonate, which has a very poor absorption and disrupts the pH as well. And, many of the cheaper magnesium supplements are in the form of magnesium oxide, which is a close relative to rust or iron oxide.

Here is an easy and inexpensive method to keep the tubules of your kidneys clean and clear of debris that I learned about from Dr. Ralph Failor, DC. Take ½-teaspoon of cream of tartar in ½-cup of water after breakfast and after lunch for three consecutive days. Repeat this each month. For those with known kidney dysfunction and those who are know stone formers, I will often increase the number of days per month of this prescription, according to their needs. Many have reported positive results using this simple and cost-effective protocol.

Another way to maintain healthy kidney function is to drink asparagus tea on a regular basis. This is especially helpful for those who have donated a kidney or those who were born with an undersized one.

7. Questions and Answers

By Keith Post, ND
August, 2007

A significant amount of my time with patients is spent helping to correct nutritional fallacies in their minds.

Here is a common one....

Q: I've heard that breakfast is the most important meal of the day. What do you think?

A: It depends on your body type. If you are an ectomorph (referred to as "Vata" in the Ayurvedic system of medicine), a warm, nourishing breakfast is very nourishing and stabilizing. Vata body types have a fast metabolism and skipping or minimizing breakfast would cause their energy to be too erratic. Some high quality animal protein, such as eggs, can also be beneficial. However, if you are an overweight Vata, I would certainly not eat a large volume of food at breakfast time.

If, however, you are a mesomorph (the "Pitta" body type in the Ayurvedic system), eating a light breakfast is better and cold cereals are often fine for this body type. It is best that Pittas do not skip breakfast, as they have a tendency towards hyperacidity, so their digestive organs need some food to work on. Otherwise, they might tend towards gastritis or a duodenal ulcer, especially when habitually drinking coffee by itself or while under sustained stress.

Finally, if you are an endomorph ("Kapha" in the Ayurvedic system), you really aren't hungry right away, so you don't always need to eat. Your metabolism is naturally more sluggish than the others, so you may still be busy digesting what you ate yesterday. Also, once you put on

weight, it is very difficult for you to lose the weight. So, by skipping “break fast”, you are extending the fast that you began the night before by several additional hours. Also, Kaphas can reduce the sluggishness of their metabolism and burn up lots of stored calories by some vigorous sustained exercise in the morning hours, such as speed walking before work or before lunchtime. The Kapha body type is also the one best suited to stimulants such as coffee, although I would recommend that they learn to use exercise as a stimulant instead.

Most people are not entirely one body type, so they might be using one approach during the colder weather months and another during the warmer weather months. An easy way to determine your body type is to complete an Ayurvedic questionnaire in one of these excellent introductory books on the subject.

Perfect Health, by Deepak Chopra

The Science of Ayurveda, by Vasant Lad

The important thing is to listen to your body. Eat if you are hungry, but there is no need to eat a certain standardized way that you have seen advertised. As I have already mentioned, some people do fine with a healthful hot cooked grain cereal that “sticks to their ribs.” (Vata). Others feel more sluggish afterwards (Pitta). Some do fine on a bacon and eggs-type breakfast (Vata). Others find the high fat content to be too rich (Kapha).

Yet another factor to take into consideration is the weather that you will be experiencing. For example, summers often suggest lighter meals with fruits and uncooked grain cereals served at room temperature or cooler. On the other hand, cold weather often demands heavier foods having a higher fat content and served warm.

Here is another common question that I hear...

Q: Aren't low-fat foods better for losing weight?

A: Actually, no. At one time, there were some nutritionists hypothesizing that it would, so the food giants exploded in their marketing fervor to explore the new niche of “Low Fat” foods.

It is and always been an excess of carbohydrates that are most likely to lead to weight gain. Of, course; if you pile on the fats with the carbs and therefore increase your caloric intake even further, you will gain weight even faster. Let me explain further.

Carbos break down into sugars and the body uses them mainly for readily accessible energy sources. Fats, on the other hand, are used for warmth and for long-term energy stores. To use the analogy of a fire, carbs are like the kindling and fats are like the logs. So, you can see the importance of eating a diet rich in saturated fats, especially if you live in a colder weather region.

As far as the belief that eating a diet high in saturated fats will automatically lead to weight gain, if you are an active person, you will still be able to maintain your ideal weight without a problem. Plus, the fat content is what gives food its flavors, for the most part. To illustrate this point, just imagine eating a baked potato, which is almost completely composed of starchy carbohydrates, without any toppings or spices.

Indigenous man, regardless of geography or culture, has traditionally included large amounts of saturated fats in their diets. Yet, they have maintained excellent health, bones and teeth. It is only when these cultures gain access to refined carbohydrates, pasteurized dairy products and other forms of devitalized Western foods, along with adopting a more sedentary lifestyle, that their health begins to decline and their bones and teeth exhibit signs of deterioration.

The **gall bladder** is a case in point. Eating a diet that is consistently high in carbs, yet limited in fats leads to a congealing of the bile in the gallbladder to form what we refer to as “stones”.

Why does the bile tend to congeal in the absence of fat? Simply, it is the presence of fats that stimulate the gall bladder to contract on a regular basis after meals, leading to the release of its' stored bile contents into the lumen of the digestive tract. Then, the bile will emulsify the fats into smaller particles, which can then be assimilated by the body.

So, a continual lack of sufficient fats accompanied by a preponderance of carbs in the diet will eventually cause the gall bladder to become lazy and dysfunctional. If this goes on for too long, the bile will congeal into the small rubbery pellets referred to as “gallstones”, which are often too large in size to easily pass. So, when a high-fat meal is finally taken, there may be pain due to the gall bladder struggling to release the congealed bile.

The medical profession usually gets this patient when the problem is already fully manifested, so the most quick and comfortable solution is the cholecystectomy or removal of the organ. However, the nutritional intake that set up the problem is not fully understood by the patient, so he/she will often continue to abuse carbohydrates, eventually leading to even more difficult health challenges, such as Diabetes mellitus-Type II.

By the way, there is an option to undergoing the surgery and that is to use food substances which have the ability to relax the sphincter and promote the expulsion of the gall stones. There are several variations of these gall bladder flushes, and most of them involve some combination of oil such as olive oil combined with a sour citrus juice taken at bedtime that cause the stones to pass, usually within three days.