



The deadly disease often ignored by modern medicine

Your complete guide for conquering it—safely and naturally

A thoughtful reader recently asked about natural approaches to kidney disease. This question is important since a whopping one in three Americans is at risk of chronic kidney disease.¹ And that can lead to dialysis, kidney transplants—even death.

Despite these dire statistics, chronic kidney disease and other kidney problems get almost no attention from the natural know-it-alls. And mainstream medicine and big pharma often overlook the kidneys in favor of supposedly more “important” organs.

But that doesn't mean there isn't anything you can do about kidney disease. Quite the opposite, in fact. Here's what you need to know about this devastating disease, along with simple, easy dietary changes you can make to help keep your kidneys healthy.

Whole body health depends on your kidneys

Our kidneys' main job is to filter our blood. They remove excess electrolytes and fluids from our bodies in order to carefully maintain sodium, chloride, potassium, calcium, phosphorus, and other salts and minerals at just the right levels.

Interestingly, paleontologists believe that the levels of salts and minerals in our blood reflect the salinity of seawater from hundreds of millions of years ago, when life first emerged from the oceans onto

the land. These levels are about half the salinity of seawater today. So, in essence, our kidneys ensure that an ancient “inner sea” continues to course through our circulatory systems every day.

Because kidneys are designed to remove any excess salt from our bodies, the high-salt hypothesis never made sense to me as the cause of high blood pressure. Now, of course, the right kinds of studies are finally being done, and they show that indeed, salt does not cause high blood pressure, as I wrote in one of my very first reports in the June 23, 2012 *Daily Dispatch* “The great salt scam.” We all have the basic physiology of the kidney to thank for that. Too bad more government “experts” on blood pressure didn't pay more attention to their own studies in physiology.

Another function of the kidney is to remove nitrogen-containing waste products from the blood and body. Remember the basic chemical building blocks of life are carbon, hydrogen, oxygen and nitrogen. Compounds containing carbon, hydrogen and oxygen are known as carbohydrates. Adding nitrogen gives amino acids, the building blocks of proteins, which include enzymes as well as structural components of tissues, like bone and muscle.

The body metabolizes carbohydrate by burning it, combining it with oxygen to generate

energy, and forming carbon dioxide and water as “byproducts.” The carbon dioxide is breathed out. And the water produced is the major source of hydration inside our cells, for cellular hydration. (A fact readers are well aware of, but sports and hydration “experts” ignore.)

But what happens to the waste products of nitrogen-containing molecules? These are essentially broken down into urea and uric acid and must be removed by the kidney as well. When urea and uric acid build up in the blood, they can be deposited in the cartilage and joints, causing gout. Gout is an ancient disease and there have been effective

Continued on page 2...

In this issue:

The “controversial” pennies-per-day heart cure every cardiologist in the country should be recommending 4

The diet myth putting your health—and the planet—in danger 6

The suprising secret for shaving decades off your brain's age 8

Marc S. Micozzi, M.D., Ph.D., is a worldwide leader in nutritional and complementary/alternative medicine. He has had a distinguished career as a researcher and physician executive at the National Institutes of Health and Walter Reed National Military Medical Center in Washington, DC, and the College of Physicians in Philadelphia PA. He has published over 30 medical and trade books, and founded and edited the first scientific journal, and the first textbook, on complementary/alternative and nutritional medicine, now going into a 5th edition (2014) and continuously in print since 1995.

Dr. Micozzi's *Insiders' Cures* is published monthly by OmniVista Health Media, L.L.C., 819 N. Charles St., Baltimore, MD 21201 for \$74 per year (\$6.16 an issue).

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to *Insiders' Cures*, 819 N. Charles St., Baltimore, MD 21201.

Author: Marc S. Micozzi, M.D., Ph.D.
 Publisher: Katherine Wheeler
 Executive Editor: Amanda Angelini

All material in this publication is provided for information only and may not be construed as medical advice or instruction. No action should be taken based solely on the contents of this publication; readers should consult appropriate health professionals on any matter relating to their health and well-being. The information provided in this publication is believed to be accurate and sound, based on the best judgment available to the authors, but readers who fail to consult with appropriate health authorities assume the risk of any injuries. The opinions expressed here do not necessarily reflect the views of the publisher. The publisher is not responsible for errors or omissions.

For questions regarding your subscription, please call reader services at 443-353-4398 (8 a.m. to 8 p.m. EDT Mon.-Fri.)

Copyright © 2015 OmniVista Health Media, L.L.C., 819 N. Charles St., Baltimore, MD 21201. Reproduction in whole or in part is prohibited without written permission of the publisher.

herbal remedies. The Autumn crocus was a common treatment and was even grown in medicinal plant gardens in colonial America. However, the plant may be toxic and is better used as the drug colchicine. Of course, the other approach to gout, as with all kidney-related diseases is to manage diet. More on that in just a moment.

Finally, once the blood is filtered by the kidney, urine forms in what is anatomically called the pelvis of the kidney. Then urine travels down the ureters into the bladder where it is stored until elimination through the urethra. The urine is normally a perfectly sterile fluid, free of bacteria and viruses. However, in the pelvis of the kidney, certain salts and minerals can also slowly over time form into kidney stones. (See the sidebar on page 3 for more on kidney stones.)

Healthy heart leads to healthy kidneys

In order for kidneys to do all their jobs properly, their blood vessels must be strong and healthy. But like

any other blood vessels in the body, kidney blood vessels can be damaged by high blood pressure (causing vascular kidney disease) or high blood sugar, known as diabetic kidney disease. In addition, inflammation of the kidney membranes can damage their ability to filter urine.

We now understand that heart disease, metabolic diseases like diabetes, and inflammation are all intricately related—as is kidney disease.

So that means that the best way to prevent kidney disease is to keep your heart healthy, manage your blood sugar, and lower your risk of inflammation.

With that in mind, it's hardly surprising that diet and nutrition are major factors in preventing kidney disease. Just like they are for preventing heart disease, diabetes, and inflammation.

But there are also some foods, herbs, and supplements that are particularly important just for your kidneys.

The whole grain controversy

The National Kidney Foundation, the American Kidney Fund, and the National Institutes of Health all recommend that people who have kidney disease avoid eating whole grains. Ironically, whole grains—which are regarded as more nutritious than refined, white grains—have a higher phosphorous content than their paler cousins.

But a recent study questions that recommendation, arguing that the human body lacks an enzyme that allows us to digest the phosphorous in whole grains.³ Plus, the researchers point out, whole grains have a lot of fiber, which is uniformly agreed to be important for healthy kidneys.

If you're understandably confused about what types of grains you should be eating, let me simplify: I recommend being careful with *all* of your grain consumption—whole or refined. Both types of grains contain carbohydrates, which are now recognized as the leading contributors to cardiovascular disease and diabetes. Which, as I mentioned above, are the two main causes of kidney disease.

So keep it simple and avoid grains, and carbs, for good health all the way around.

What you should—and shouldn't—be eating

Foods that have an effect on kidney disease tend to be divided into two categories. First, there are the antioxidant, anti-inflammatory fruits and vegetables that you should be eating to help your entire body fight disease.

Then there are foods that you should actually *avoid* if you have kidney disease. Poorly functioning kidneys have difficulty filtering out electrolytes like potassium and phosphorus. Too much phosphorus leads to bone, blood vessel, and thyroid disorders. And too much potassium can damage your heart and interferes with proper hydration. So it's critical to limit foods that contain large quantities of these minerals.

Some foods that are particularly high in potassium include avocado, artichoke, banana, dates, potato, prunes, and yogurt. High-phosphorus foods include Brazil nuts, salmon, scallops, and yogurt. These are the foods you should limit.

Fortunately, there are some foods that help fight general diseases, including kidney disease, all in one tasty bite.

Bell peppers are low in potassium and high in vitamins A, B, and C,

as well as fiber. Numerous studies show that fiber can help keep your kidneys healthy. Red bell peppers also contain some lycopene (which I helped discover in the mid-1980s) that protects against many chronic diseases, including kidney disease.

Cabbage is full of healthy phytochemicals and vitamins B, C, and K—and is low in potassium. Red cabbage has additional beneficial plant pigments.

Cauliflower has a large number of indoles and thiocyanates, which help the liver neutralize toxic substances that can damage kidneys. It also has lots of vitamins B and C and fiber. And mashed cauliflower is a good low-carb substitute for mashed potatoes (which are high in potassium).

Garlic and onions are excellent anti-inflammatories and antioxidants. They are also low in potassium and are good sources of chromium—a key mineral for healthy metabolism.

Apples are low in potassium and high in fiber and anti-inflammatory compounds. They also contain malic acid, which research shows can help protect against kidney stones.² (See more about kidney stones in the sidebar below).

Blueberries are high in fiber, antioxidants, and anti-inflammatory

compounds—including anthocyanins, which give them their dark blue color. They are also a good source of vitamin C and manganese.

Cherries reduce inflammation when eaten daily. And, as I wrote in the September 2014 issue of *Insiders' Cures*, cherry extracts are helpful for prevention and treatment of gout. You will probably not get enough of the beneficial ingredients from eating cherries or drinking cherry juice alone, so you should rely on a concentrated cherry extract.

Grape skins contain several beneficial flavonoids that are also responsible for their colors. These flavonoids may stimulate production of nitric oxide, which relaxes blood vessels throughout the body—including the kidneys—and helps improve blood flow and circulation. These compounds are also found in red wine, and bonus!—the alcohol in wine also relaxes blood vessels. But don't overdo the grapes (they are relatively high in sugar) or the wine.

Raspberries and strawberries are good sources of fiber, vitamins B and C, and manganese. They're also powerful antioxidants.

It is not just fruit and vegetables that are important for overall nutrition

Continued on page 4...

Natural treatments for kidney disease

Kidney stones are different than kidney disease, and can have several causes. Generally, they occur when salts and minerals, such as calcium, build up in the blood, urine and drainage system of the kidneys, called the ureters, over time. This is one of the reasons I warn against taking calcium supplements. They result in excess calcium in the blood and urine and increase the risk of kidney stones (see the February 3, 2015 *Daily Dispatch* "Three steps for stronger bones" for more on calcium. I'll also cover this topic in more detail in a future issue of *Insiders' Cures*.) Urinary stones may also be caused by the oxalic acid in green and black tea. Herbal teas, such as South African rooibos, are usually free of oxalic acid and thus are a better choice for kidney health.

And, as I wrote in an August 15, 2014 *Daily Dispatch*, when there is not enough fluid for adequate urine flow out of the kidneys, stones form more easily. So proper hydration is key. I recommend Red Joe brand rooibos, which I helped develop. It will help hydrate your entire body—including your kidneys—at the cellular level.

If you do get a kidney stone, it can be treated without drugs. Ask your urologist about using ultrasound in a water bath to eliminate kidney stones using only sound waves.

that supports kidney health. Eggs provide high quality protein with all the essential amino acids, as well as essentially fatty acids and vitamins D and E. Fish also provides high quality protein as well as omega-3 fatty acids. Try to eat fish at least twice per week. Olive oil is a great source of oleic acid, another anti-inflammatory fatty acid. And of course it is a key ingredient in the heart healthy Mediterranean Diet, which also helps prevent kidney disease—and many other diseases as well.

Unfortunately, when patients with kidney diseases require hospitalization—as they frequently do for treatments—the hospital diets provided do absolutely nothing to support these patients.

You have to wonder what hospital dieticians are doing all day when we know hospital meals are a disaster not only for kidney patients, but for all patients. That's one reason I never accept the facile “recommendations” of your typical internet dieticians. I honestly can't believe some of the outdated, unfounded nonsense they continue to spout. I sometimes have to wonder about their training, knowledge, or understanding of human nutrition.

Supplement your way to healthier kidneys

B vitamins, especially **vitamin**

B12, are important for proper kidney function because they help keep dangerous homocysteine levels from building up in the blood. Homocysteine damages blood vessels and is associated with many diseases of aging, including chronic renal failure. (For more about vitamin B and homocysteine, see article below).

For optimum kidney health and overall good health, I recommend taking a high-quality vitamin B complex that contains at least the following dosages: 50 mg each of thiamine, riboflavin (B2), niacin/niacinamide, B6, and pantothenic acid, plus 400 micrograms of folic acid/folate, 12 mcg of B12, and 100 mcg of biotin.

Dandelion appears to be a powerhouse in terms of protecting the kidneys. It also helps the kidneys stimulate urine production. The name dandelion is originally from the French “dents-de-lion” or lion's teeth, due to the sharp, serrated edges of the leaves. But the modern French colloquial name for dandelion is actually “pis-en-lit,” which literally means wet-the-bed, in recognition of the plant's mild diuretic effects.

Recent laboratory and human research has found that a daily combination of 400 mg of dandelion and 400 mg of **rooibos** not only keeps your cells and kidneys properly

hydrated, but also supports overall vitality, physical activity and agility.

Finally, to protect your kidneys (and your muscles), you need to stay off **statin drugs**. Statins can destroy your muscle tissues, which leads to production of a dangerous substance called myoglobin. Myoglobin can poison your kidneys as they work to filter it out of your blood. To learn more about this problem and how to avoid it, please read my new report *The Insiders' Guide to a Heart Healthy and Statin-Free Life*. To order your own copy, please call 1-800-682-7319 and use code GOV2R2AA. Cost is \$19.95 plus \$3.00 shipping.

By following the right diet and taking a few simple supplements, you can keep your entire body healthy, including your kidneys. **IC**

Citations available online at www.DrMicozzi.com

Red-flag foods for kidney disease controversy

If you have kidney disease or impaired kidney function, avoid foods high in phosphorus and potassium. Here is a quick list of some of the top food sources to limit:

- avocado
- artichoke
- bananas
- Brazil nuts
- dates
- potatoes
- prunes
- salmon
- scallops
- yogurt

The “controversial” pennies-per-day heart cure every cardiologist in the country should be recommending

The *New York Times* recently published some very interesting statistics. Over the last half-century, from 1958 to 2010, the annual U.S. death rate from heart disease declined by a monumental 68 percent. And, during that same time period,

the death rate from strokes fell even more—79 percent.¹

So, looking at it a different way, back in 1958, 56 out of every 10,000 Americans died from heart disease. In 2010, that number plummeted to just 18 people.

And in 1958, 18 out of every 10,000 Americans died from strokes—compared to only 4 out of 10,000 in 2010.

Why the dramatic reduction?

Well, in 1978, 20 years into this trend, a nationwide conference of

experts was convened by the National Institutes of Health to answer that very question.

The experts noted that the decline in deaths from heart disease and stroke was evident before the government's misguided dietary recommendations and major anti-tobacco campaigns and lawsuits went into effect, and long before any drugs were available to address the myth of "killer cholesterol." So, faulty dietary advice, smoking cessation and prevention, and anti-cholesterol drugs could not be responsible for this early decline.

The experts looked at other potential factors. In 1978, there had already been some favorable trends in physical activity. Plus, more intensive and effective hospital management and treatment of heart disease and stroke would have been expected to help reduce mortality. But at the same time, Americans were eating more fat and meat, and gaining more weight.

So the experts were flummoxed. They couldn't identify a probable cause for why so many fewer people were dying of heart disease and stroke.

Nonetheless, the government-industrial-medical complex embarked on its faulty campaign to reduce consumption of meat, saturated fats, and salts, and to push cholesterol-lowering drugs. None of which had anything to do with the actual decline of heart disease and stroke that had already occurred.

But I and my colleague, Dr. Kilmer McCully, think we have the answer. And it's a simple one.

We believe the reduction in heart disease and stroke is because Americans are consuming more of three simple nutrients: vitamins B6 (pyridoxal), B12, and folate/folic acid (B9).

What B can do for you

These B vitamins are required for normal metabolism of an amino acid called homocysteine. And high levels of homocysteine in the blood can result in cardiovascular disease.

Dr. McCully is a pioneer in B vitamin/homocysteine/heart disease research. He also introduced the "homocysteine hypothesis" way back in 1969. At the heart of this hypothesis is the belief that introduction of highly processed foods during the early 20th century caused lower B vitamin intakes and higher heart disease rates during the 1940s to 1960s.

Food processing involves heating, chemical treatment, extraction of purified carbohydrates and oils, and milling of grains—all of which strip foods of their naturally occurring B vitamins.

In fact, in the rice-dependent populations of Asia, it has been observed that removing the B vitamin-rich bran layer to convert brown rice to white rice leads to beriberi, a vitamin B (thiamine)-deficiency disease.

Along with unprocessed foods, B vitamins are also found in meat, eggs, dairy products, and whole grains. That's why vegans and vegetarians can have difficulty getting enough Bs to keep them—and their hearts—healthy.

For example, in the country of Chad in Sub-Saharan Africa, the population subsists on beans, cassava, ground nuts, millet, and sweet potatoes. The semi-arid climate and poor soil results in poorly nourished livestock, with fewer dairy foods and rare consumption of meat (see page 6 of this issue).

Dr. McCully and a colleague conducted a study in which they

found that even though people in Chad eat very little saturated fat and have low cholesterol levels, they have high homocysteine levels. And even more tellingly, they have *more* cardiovascular disease than people in other African countries who get more protein and B vitamins in their diets.²

Need more convincing? In the U.S., the famous Framingham Heart Study found that the participants who were between the ages of 67 and 96 had major nutritional deficiencies during the 1950s, which led to them having low vitamin B status for years.³ Consumption of vitamin B6 rose from 0.23 mg a day in 1955 to 3.5 mg a day in the 1970s.

Likewise, folic acid intakes increased beginning in the 1960s, and in 1998, the FDA mandated fortification of processed grains with folic acid. The Framingham Heart Study demonstrated that folate blood levels doubled after this fortification began. And homocysteine levels decreased by 15 percent.

In addition to this compelling research, several large-scale studies conducted in the 1990s and 2000s evaluated whether supplementing with vitamins B6, B12, and folate could prevent heart attacks or strokes.

In the HOPE 2 trial, people who supplemented with B vitamins had a notably significant 27 percent reduction in strokes.⁴ And in the VISP trial, people who had the highest blood levels of vitamin B12 had a 21 percent reduction in heart disease, stroke, or death.⁵

Why mainstream medicine is B-fuddled about heart disease

You'd think this research would convince doctors that low B vitamin intake and high homocysteine levels are real risk factors for heart disease. So why is the medical profession and

Continued on page 6...

the general public so uninformed about this key finding?

One answer has to do with what happened to Dr. McCully after his pioneering B vitamin/homocysteine/heart disease studies.

Since then, over 17,500 scientific studies have shown that high homocysteine levels can also lead to blood clots, cancer, dementia, kidney disease, low thyroid levels, osteoporosis, retinal degeneration of the eyes, and mental illness.

But while some of these studies were underway, the mainstream was marginalizing Dr. McCully's research linking homocysteine levels with heart disease.

He says there was a "violent" reaction against his findings on homocysteine from the "cholesterol cartel," and he consequently was denied promotions and tenure and was blackballed within the research community and industry.

In fact, after a decade of groundbreaking research on this subject at Harvard Medical School and Massachusetts General Hospital, Dr. McCully was exiled to try to continue his work at the VA Medical Center in Providence, Rhode Island.

Dr. McCully believes his findings were not a threat to the multibillion-dollar food or pharma industries. But many of his colleagues disagreed. In fact, in the late 1990s I received funding from a private, non-medical foundation to bring Dr. McCully to speak at the College of Physicians of Philadelphia, a bastion of traditional biomedicine. But I was quickly reminded about the Biblical story of trying to "bring pearls before swine."


Dr. McCully's expulsion from Harvard came just at the time that big pharma was getting ready to launch its new "blockbuster" cholesterol drugs. And therein lies the conflict. If you can prevent heart disease by taking a simple B vitamin supplement, why bother with the dangerous and expensive new drugs?

The fact is, this simple, inexpensive, safe, natural approach should be the very first recommendation made by every cardiologist and general physician to patients at risk of heart attack or stroke.

In his 2014 book, *Homocysteine: Biosynthesis and Health Implications*, Dr. McCully notes that "it is significant that the 80-year history of the cholesterol/dietary

fat approach has yet to provide a coherent and comprehensive scientific theory which explains how cholesterol, a normal constituent of the body, or excess dietary fat in the diet of susceptible populations, produces arteriosclerotic plaques," which is the cause of heart disease and stroke. You can read more about the scandalous, deadly history of statins and cholesterol in my new report, *The Insider's Guide to a Heart-Healthy and Statin-Free Life* (see page 4 for ordering information).

And in the meantime, for optimum heart health and overall good health, I recommend taking a high-quality vitamin B complex that contains at least the following dosages: 50 mg each of thiamine, riboflavin (B2), niacin/niacinamide, B6, and pantothenic acid, plus 400 micrograms of folic acid/folate, 12 mcg of B12, and 100 mcg of biotin.

But beware—you must get started with B supplementation early. Once you have well-established cardiovascular disease, B6, B12, and folic acid supplementation may not be enough alone to reverse the disease. 

Citations available online at www.DrMicozzi.com

The diet myth putting your health—and the planet—in danger

When I consider the many outright myths cloaked in pseudo-science that have been promulgated over the years by the government, it's no wonder the American public struggles to identify, let alone consume, a healthy diet.

Take the politically correct—yet scientifically incorrect—recommendations against eating beef, for example. Here are two of the biggest arguments:

1. Meat contains saturated fats that will supposedly kill you.
2. Raising cattle is bad for the environment.

This is pseudo-science at its best (or worst). Let's take a look at the real science, which shows that beef really should be what's for dinner.

Saturated fat: not as evil as you've been told to think

The government has done a great

job of brainwashing the American public into thinking that the saturated fat found in meat, butter, and other animal products is a major cause of heart disease. But a growing number of studies are proving this is simply a big fat myth.

In fact, one report looked at 21 studies of 350,000 people whose eating habits were tracked for more than two decades. The researchers' conclusion: Eating saturated fat

does not make you any more susceptible to heart disease, stroke, or cardiovascular disease.¹

But what about all the other ways saturated fat is supposed to kill you?

Well, research shows eating red meat doesn't boost your risk for colorectal cancer.² And a surprising new study reports that the saturated fat found in dairy products can actually *lower* your chance of getting type 2 diabetes.³

The truth is, there is more and more data every week pointing to sugar and simple carbs as the culprits not only for diabetes and obesity, but also for high blood pressure and heart disease. Not saturated fat.

So while you should avoid white bread and doughnuts, don't turn away from a juicy steak. Not only will your taste buds thank you, but so will your body—especially your muscles—and brain.

Beef is packed with essential nutrients. It's high in protein (of which most older men don't get enough) as well as calcium, magnesium, potassium, and selenium—key disease-fighting minerals that many Americans are lacking.

So with the anti-beef health claims cleared up, what about the argument that raising cattle has a negative impact on the environment?

Good for you, good for the environment

Semi-educated environmentalists continually lecture us that cattle use up water and soil, trample edible plants, and consume grains that could otherwise be nourishing hungry humans. Jumping onto the global-warming bandwagon, critics blame bovine flatulence, burps, and even breathing for contributing methane and other “greenhouse” gases to the atmosphere.

But these concerns are completely unjustified. In fact, research shows that raising cattle is actually *beneficial* for the environment.

Let's start with an “inconvenient truth” about climate change. First of all, the EPA reports that only 9 percent of all U.S. greenhouse gas emissions come from agricultural activity. And about half of that 9 percent comes from improper soil management—not flatulent Flossies.⁴

In fact, according to the Union of Concerned Scientists, only about 2 percent of U.S. greenhouse gases can be linked to cattle.⁵ And appropriate pasture management can reduce that amount even further.

On the other hand, cattle are key to a promising strategy for actually reducing global warming through restoration and trapping of carbon into the soil (instead of being released as greenhouse gases).

Tilling the soil releases carbon and strips the earth of protective vegetation. But land used for grazing is rarely plowed, meaning the carbon greenhouse gases remain in the dirt.

Furthermore, foraging animals keep our grasslands healthy. Constant munching of plants stimulates them to grow, and animal wastes help with nutrient recycling and seed germination.

These beneficial effects used to be provided by wild grazing herds (“big game”) that once roamed the grasslands. Now, in many parts of the country, it's up to cattle to do that job.

Research in the U.K. has shown that when beef cattle are raised on grasslands using good management practices, enough carbon is sequestered in the soil to offset methane emissions from all of Britain's beef cattle and half of its dairy herds.⁷

Similarly, in the U.S., the Union of Concerned Scientists estimates that virtually all of the greenhouse gases our cattle emit can be offset by sequestering carbon in the soil of grazing grasslands.

But what about the water associated with beef production?

Some critics assert that it takes about 2,500 gallons of water to produce one pound of beef. Vegans cite wildly higher estimates. But once again, science proves these catastrophists wrong.

Research conducted at the University of California, Davis shows that producing a typical pound of beef requires only 441 gallons of water.⁸ That's the equivalent of what it takes to grow a pound of rice, which is much lower in protein, vitamins, and minerals than beef.

And there's another factor to take into account. Over thousands of years of human history, people have raised cattle on land that is too dry to grow any crops. And our digestive systems don't allow us to eat the native grasses that do thrive in this arid soil. But cattle can consume these grasses and convert them into highly nutritious meat we can eat.

This agricultural development is one of the most important achievements in the history of human civilization. Even in ancient China, famous for growing vast amounts of rice to feed a large population, the semi-mythical Emperor Shen Nong (“The Divine Husbandman”) was accorded celestial divine status for teaching the Chinese how to raise livestock. He is also considered the father of agricultural and medicinal plants, as well as a “rainmaker.”(You can read more about these connections between culture, cultivation, and

Continued on page 8...

health in my book *Celestial Healing*, available at www.drMicozzi.com.)

Basically, livestock convert the vast spaces of the planet that could never grow crops for human consumption into productive lands that provide meat. Which exposes another myth—that raising cattle somehow contributes to world hunger. In many parts of the world,

meat and dairy from cattle keep tens of millions of people from going hungry.

The meat of the matter

Healthy grasslands are key to protecting and conserving the world's land, water, soil, and climate. And ever since cattle were first domesticated about 10,000 years ago, they've been an important part of that equation.

Not to mention, meat is a highly nutritious source of food. Check out the May 2014 issue of *Insiders' Cures* for a comprehensive look at all of the nutrient deficiencies that result from eating a purely plant-based diet.

Bottom line? Beef is important for a healthy body and a healthy planet. **IC**

Citations available online at www.DrMicozzi.com

The suprising secret for shaving decades off your brain's age

There is a constant flow of research showing more and more health benefits for chocolate. Now, studies are reporting that this tasty treat can actually *reverse* cognitive decline in older adults. And reduce blood pressure and insulin sensitivity to boot.

A 2012 Italian clinical trial called the Cocoa Cognition and Aging Study is the first scientific examination of how consumption of cocoa flavonols can affect cognition in older people.¹ Cocoa flavonols are the ingredients that give chocolate its healthy properties.

The study included 90 people, ages 65 to 85, who had mild cognitive impairment but not dementia. The participants who consumed a drink with the most cocoa flavonols daily for eight weeks had notably better scores on cognition and verbal fluency tests.

In addition, the people who drank the cocoa beverage with a high or intermediate amount of cocoa flavonols had lower blood pressure and insulin resistance than the people who consumed the least flavonols.

A recent follow-up to that study found that cocoa flavonols can do even more for our brains. The researchers found that daily

consumption of a cocoa flavonol beverage substantially reversed age-related memory decline in healthy people ages 50 to 69.²

“If a participant had the memory of a typical 60-year-old at the beginning of the study, after three months that person on average had the memory of a typical 30- or 40-year-old,” said lead study author Dr. Scott Small of the Columbia University Medical Center.

Keep in mind these studies used specially formulated cocoa flavonol-containing drinks. You can get the same effects from eating chocolate, but you need to be careful. Unfortunately, many methods of processing cocoa remove a lot of the flavonols found in the raw plant.

Bitter is better (and why you might like it more than you think)

The best approach for getting the benefits of cocoa flavonols is to consume moderate amounts of dark chocolate with as little added sugar as possible. Or you can drink hot or cold dark-chocolate beverages. After all, the Mayans traditionally consumed chocolate as a beverage, as did the Spanish who “discovered” it in the 16th century. Solid chocolates were not widely available until the late 18th century.

Either way, you're better off avoiding the less-nutritious milk chocolate or white chocolate.

You may think you won't like dark chocolate because it does not have as much sugar and fat as “milk chocolate.” But you may be surprised. A recent study conducted—perhaps unsurprisingly—at Penn State Medical Center in Hershey, Pennsylvania, found that most people enjoy dark chocolate, once they give it a chance.³

But here's the interesting part...

It didn't make a difference whether they were self-professed milk chocolate lovers or dark chocolate lovers. About the same number of people who said they preferred milk chocolate as those who said they preferred dark chocolate accepted the highly bitter, 80 percent cocoa powder sample.

So therein lies the lesson.

Even if you think you're a milk chocolate lover, you can probably tolerate a more bitter chocolate... something with at least 65 to 80 percent cacao. If you already like the taste of dark chocolate, try some with 100 percent cacao and see what you think. **IC**

Citations available online at www.DrMicozzi.com