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The metabolic poison hiding in plain sight

And my simple 5-step plan for eliminating it from your life for good

What we have all been told about sugar for decades is wrong in two important ways—one you already know, and one I'm going to reveal today.

It's certainly no secret that science shows sugar consumption is unhealthy, lurking behind obesity, diabetes, and cardiovascular disease, as well as other metabolic disorders.

Of course, for decades the government wrongly claimed that dietary cholesterol, saturated fats, and salt were the culprits behind our modern epidemic of chronic diseases. But the *real* problem is sugar and carbohydrate consumption. And the government and the big sugar lobby have repeatedly hidden or deflected this unfortunate fact.

That's bad enough. But what I'm about to tell you is even worse.

A toxin by any other name

The problem with eating sugar is not only the excess calories that can lead to the diseases I just mentioned. The toxic metabolic effects of sugar are much more insidious.

That's because good health is not just a matter of "balancing calories" by matching calories ingested with calories burned. In fact, what has been long seen as a cause of disease, namely excess body weight, is merely a side effect of the *real* cause of disease—consuming excess sugar and carbs.

In short, sugar is *a metabolic poison.* And like arsenic or cyanide or any other deadly poison, it will kill you. Just not as quickly.

It's important to note that I'm talking about cane sugar—otherwise known as sucrose—and not the fructose that is naturally found in fruits and other plants. These two types of sugar are definitely *not* created equal.

Why? Like most aspects of human health, it has to do with biology.

The not-so-sweet history of sucrose

While fructose has existed since the first fruits appeared on Earth, sucrose is a brand-new chemical—at least in terms of biological history.

Sugarcane was initially domesticated in an isolated area of New Guinea about 10,000 years ago. Fully half of the plant by weight is sucrose (so-called "table sugar'). On the other hand, the natural sugars found in honey and other plants and fruits occur in a different chemical form called fructose, and consist of only a small part of the plant by weight.

Sugarcane is easy to grow in tropical climates (botanically it is in the grass family). But it cannot be transported because, due to the extremely high sugar content, the cane quickly ferments, turning into a sticky, stinky, spoiled brown mass of vegetable matter.

But by 500 B.C., as sugarcane cultivation made its way to the tropical regions of China and India, growers learned to mash the cane to extract the juice, and then boil it down to produce a hard, golden-brown cake of relatively pure sucrose.

Meanwhile, in the parched Middle East, growers figured out how to use irrigation to cultivate tropical sugarcane. This occurred just in time for the arrival of the First

In this issue:

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Crusaders from Europe in 1096, who found "reeds filled with a kind of honey known as *zucar*," from the Arabic word for sugar.[1]

Europeans had never encountered sugar before, and they soon became addicted. For a time, Crusaders held territory in what is now Israel, Lebanon, and Syria, and produced sugar on their plantations to take back to Europe. Europeans also seized sugar plantations from Muslim and Byzantine growers in Crete, Cyprus, Majorca, Sicily, and southern Spain (although later, Islamic invaders took them back again, for a time).

But there was never enough sugar to meet European demand, until Portugal and Spain took it to their newfound overseas tropical possessions beginning in the late 1400s.

Columbus brought sugarcane to the Caribbean on his later voyages at the end of the 15th century. The British, Dutch, and French followed suit, cultivating sugarcane in their new territories in the Caribbean and the northern coast of South America. And that's when our modern troubles with sugar began.

How sugar became the scourge of America

Sugarcane came to dominate the economy and politics of the Americas, in one way or another, for the next five centuries. Sugar growing was also responsible for spreading malaria and yellow fever, as well as slavery.

But during the 1660s, British merchants reportedly made more money from planting sugar in Barbados (an island of only 166 square miles) than they did from the entire economy of their colonies in the vastness of North America.

This might help explain why the British were willing to let go of the new United States in 1783, after the American Revolution, but have stubbornly held onto many of their Caribbean islands to this day.

It also explains why the U.S. Monroe Doctrine, of the 1820s, was backed by the British Royal Navy. The Doctrine was designed to keep the Dutch, French, Portuguese, and Spanish from reclaiming Caribbean possessions following the disruptions of the Napoleonic Wars in Europe (which erupted as the War of 1812 in North America).

Not fit for human consumption

Before sugar, honey was the go-to sweetener. Honey has "always" been around in terms of human nutrition, documented since ancient times.

Not only is honey very different metabolically from sugar, but it's also full of nutrients and natural antibiotics. In fact, jars of honey from 3,000 B.C. have been discovered to still retain their taste.

Compared to honey, sugar is like the blink of an eye in terms of human biological history. And that's why the human body is not at all prepared to deal with this relatively new chemical.

As I reported in a March 14 *Daily Dispatch* ("The sneaky reason why people can't stop drinking soda"), new research shows that drinking sugared waters (like soft drinks and so-called sports beverages) fools your body's regulation of thirst and throws off hydration. So in essence, the more sugary beverages you drink, the thirstier you actually are.

And that's just one of the ways sugar interferes with your body's natural biochemical processes.

Sugar is more than just extra calories

Although the dangers of sugar are obvious to everyone, the mainstream big food and beverage industry, along with its crony-capitalist medical codependents, wants us to focus only on the calorie issue—while in fact, sugar should be treated not just as a few "extra calories," but as a toxic chemical and a metabolic poison.

Nutritional science shows us when it comes to carbs, the *source* of calories (not just the *number* of calories) is key. For example, 100 calories of simple carbs such as sugar has a profoundly different effect in your body than 100 calories of complex carbs such as whole-grain pasta.

In other words, not all sources of caloric energy provide nourishment, and some are toxic.

And while extra calories from sugar (or any other food or beverage) can certainly lead to extra pounds, there are also plenty of people who develop chronic diseases without ever having excess body weight. As I have pointed out before, a little extra weight can be helpful is some ways. In fact, normal-weight people can have lots of problems with chronic diseases.

One study found that nearly 24% of normal-weight adults were metabolically abnormal, while 51% of overweight adults were metabolically healthy.[2]

Sounds like the work of a metabolic toxin like sugar—not just excess calories.

All of the science I see shows that people should follow a balanced diet of meat, vegetables, nuts, and seeds, some fruit, a little starch, and no sugar. This kind of diet is consistent with human biological history, metabolism, and dentition.

How the sugar lobby encourages you to eat more of the sweet stuff

Sadly, the sugar and soft-drink industries have buried the real truth about sugar for decades. And the big food and beverage industry has invested many millions of dollars into research and education to ensure that you, your doctors, dieticians, and teachers all are "drinking the Kool-Aid" that deflects the real cause of disease and obscures the true path to health.

In fact, the whole idea of "energy balance" is a deflection. This fallacy proposes that you can eat sugar as long as you burn it off with more exercise.

Many natural health advocates recognize this is not the path to good health. But what most do not recognize is that there are also limits to healthy exercising, as I often report. Too much exercise can damage your joints, and potentially your heart and lungs. Also, building up excess lean body mass may be as harmful as having excess body fat.

The bottom line is, if sugar is a poison, no amount of exercise is going to counteract it. That's like thinking you can consume arsenic or cyanide as long as you "work it off."

Unfortunately, the list of "reputable" organizations that promote the energy-balance myth is long. But guess what they have in common? The Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics, the International Food Information Council Foundation, the National Institutes of Health, the American College of Sports Medicine, and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention have all received funding from Coca-Cola or Pepsico—two of the top sugary beverage pushers.[3]

In addition, other organizations that have signed onto the NIH "We Can" campaign promoting energy balance include the National Hispanic

Two other sweeteners to avoid

You've probably heard about the evils of **high-fructose corn syrup (HFCS)**. In fact, it may be even worse than sucrose.

HFCS is made with a bit of natural fructose added to a lot of corn-syrup sugar. While the manufacturing process is tightly guarded, it's believed that chemicals are used to extract the syrup from corn stalks. And don't forget, virtually all sweet corn grown in the U.S. today is genetically modified, which adds a whole new dimension to the negative health effects associated with HFCS.

There's also evidence that HFCS is absorbed more quickly into the liver and causes spikes in insulin, although the Corn Refiners Association has spent plenty of money on advertisements stating that HFCS acts no differently in the body than sucrose does. (Of course, as we are now realizing, that is hardly a "selling point.")

Artificial sweeteners appear to be just as bad for you as sucrose, metabolically speaking (scientists are still debating exactly how). And, ironically, these low-cal sweeteners seem to increase a person's craving for sweet foods.

Most shocking, as I have reported before, is that recent studies link artificially sweetened beverages with diabetes, obesity, and other diseases typically caused by excess sugar and carb consumption.

If that weren't bad enough, in an August 2016 *Daily Dispatch* ("More reasons to stay away from Splenda and all artificial sweeteners"), I reported on a new lab study showing that sucralose (Splenda) may damage key neurotransmitters and cell membranes. And other evidence links sucralose to leukemia and inflammatory bowel disease.

Medical Association, the President's Council on Physical Fitness, the American Academy of Family Physicians, and the American Academy of Pediatrics.

It's not surprising that the sugar industry could fool the NIH, since the NIH has never hired any real nutritional scientists in the first place. Taxpayers should tell the NIH to can its pathetic "We Can" campaign (which sounds suspiciously like another empty slogan—"yes, we can"—that citizens recently rejected. Nothing like a government health bureaucrat "sucking up to the boss," especially when it comes to soda).

My top 5 "Do's and Don'ts" of avoiding sugar

Not only does sugar consumption lead to serious metabolic disorders in human bodies that are not prepared to process it, but our new "sweet tooth" for sugar has led us to develop even more chemicals with sweet tastes.

But substituting for the sweetness of sucrose in foods and beverages by adding synthetic sugars and artificial sweeteners is no solution to avoiding the empty calories and toxic effects of sugar. These chemical concoctions actually cause all of the same health problems associated with sugar consumption. Plus, they have additional health problems of their own (see sidebar).

All of this misdirection is another reason why I reject the hapless advice of diet and nutrition "experts" whose only credentials are membership in one of the organizations corrupted by big-sugar donations.

As you know, I follow the nutritional science. Here's what research shows can be effective alternatives for toxic sugar…or artificial sweeteners.

1. Skip all sodas in favor of naturally flavored sparkling waters.
2. Use naturally sweet substitutes, such as blueberries or powdered blueberry extract (see article below), instead of brown sugar on your morning oatmeal or whole-grain cereal.
3. Read the nutrition facts and ingredient labels on foods and beverages. A surprisingly large amount have hidden sugar.
4. Avoid products that contain artificial sugar substitutes.
5. Explore natural sweeteners like agave nectar, lo han guo, stevia, and honey. While they're all as calorie-dense as sugar, they can be safe substitutes, in moderation. Choose the one that best suits your taste and lifestyle.

So remember the truth the next time you hear a so-called health expert talk about sugar, or when you see an industry-backed, crony-capitalist "public-health education" campaign.

The problem with sugar is not just excess or empty calories. The real issue is that sugar is a metabolic toxin…and it's slowly poisoning your body.

The brain breakthrough you can grow right in your own backyard

You already know what a lifelong fan I am of blueberries. Over the years, I've reported on many studies showing this fruit's amazing benefits for both body and brain.

Just one cup of blueberries provides nearly 4 grams of fiber, one-quarter of the recommended daily intake of vitamin C, and over one-third of your daily dose of vitamin K.

This colorful fruit is also rich in antioxidants, which help prevent cancer and promote healthy aging. And blueberries protect blood vessels, reduce blood pressure, and lower your risk of cardiovascular disease.

But perhaps most striking of all are the many studies showing how blueberries help prevent memory loss and dementia.

And those studies just keep coming. Today, I'd like to share new research on blueberries' cognitive benefits, along with tips on how you can grow these hearty, healthy fruits yourself for just pennies a year.

And I'll reveal an easy, effective way to get the benefits of blueberries year-round—even if you don't have a green thumb.

Blueberries improve cognitive function in older adults

New research out of the University of Exeter in the U.K. shows that blueberries can significantly boost cognitive function and memory in people in their 60s and 70s.[1]

Researchers gathered 26 healthy men and women, ages 65 to 77, and gave them either concentrated blueberry juice—the equivalent of 1 cup of fresh blueberries—or a placebo once a day.

After 12 weeks of this regimen, the researchers gave the participants a series of cognitive tests, and also did MRI scans of their brains.

Not only did the blueberry group perform substantially better on the tests than the placebo group, but they also had better blood flow and activation in the memory and cognition centers of their brains.

So imagine—just 1 cup of blueberries a day…in your morning steel-cut (not rolled) oatmeal or yogurt, as part of a summer salad, or on their own as a healthy dessert…can help supercharge your brainpower well into your 70s.

There's just one problem—blueberries tend to be expensive. Especially the organic ones I recommend. But there's a simple solution to this problem.

Read on and I'll tell you how easy it is to cultivate virtually unlimited amounts of blueberries in your own backyard, patio, or balcony.

How to have a blue thumb… even if you're not a green thumb

Start by buying a small blueberry bush at your local nursery, grocer, or online as quickly as possible. Ideally, you'll want to plant it around the date of your area's last frost.

The type of bushes available will depend on your climate zone. But if you can, choose lowbush, or wild, blueberries. As I've noted before, these types of blueberries naturally have more nutrients than their cultivated highbush cousins.

According to the *Old Farmer's Almanac*, lowbush blueberries can be cultivated in climate zones 3 to 7, which covers most of the U.S. (Although they only grow naturally in the thin, post-glacial soils and forests of New England, the upper Midwest, and southern Canada.)

Lowbush blueberries are not only perennial, meaning they'll keep coming back in your garden year after year, but they also spread via their roots. So make sure to plant your new blueberry bush in a place where it will have room to grow. If you're planting more than one bush, space each one about 5 feet apart.

If you don't have a yard, blueberry bushes will also thrive in large pots or planters on a balcony or patio. Just follow the same steps I've outlined below.

Blueberry planting 101

Start by choosing a spot that gets sun about three-quarters of the day (blueberries will tolerate shade, but usually only later in the day).

Blueberries tend to be picky about their soil, so choose an area that's well drained. You also want acidic soil, with a pH below 5. Not sure of your soil's pH? You can buy a soil pH test kit. A good local nursery should be able to tell you if soil in your area tends to be acidic or alkaline.

Dig a hole twice the size of the blueberry plant's root ball, ruffle the roots with your hands before placing the plant in the hole, and backfill with compost. You can also toss in conifer sawdust to lower the pH if need be.

After planting, water your new bush well, since the roots are shallow and the plant can become dehydrated. Mulching also helps preserve moisture and prevents weed growth—you can use sawdust, pine bark (but not from cedar or redwood trees), or grass clippings (which you really need to save for mulching, and *not* haul away and discard as refuse). Pine mulch has the benefit of lowering soil pH as well.

Don't forget to prune

After about three years, when the bush starts to thrive, begin pruning it on a regular basis to help the strongest branches grow. This will also avoid over-fruiting, which allows the remaining berries to grow bigger.

Eliminate low growth around the bottom of the bush, clear out dead wood, and remove discolored or short branches. Overall, you'll want to prune about half of the woody parts from the bush in the late fall or winter, after your berry harvest.

In the spring, when the flowers bloom, cut most of them with small clippers or scissors. This will encourage your bush to save its energy for producing fruit rather than flowers.

If you fertilize, use only organic forms to prevent damage to the bush and berries. You'll also improve your health and the health of the environment if you avoid pesticides and chemical fertilizers.

Fertilize in the spring, just when the leaves begin to break out from dormancy, and in the fall after pruning.

When grown this way, your blueberry bush will produce fruit for up to five decades (and you will still be able to remember when you planted it). If you plant two or more bushes, try different varieties of the fruits for cross-pollination, which will help increase the yield.

Benefitting year-round

Your blueberries can be consumed raw; added to pies, muffins, or scones (just be sure to use natural sweeteners, not refined sugars, as I discussed on page 1); or squeezed into juices.

You can also preserve fresh blueberries by canning them at home (choose a recipe with no added sugar), or freeze them so you can enjoy them year-round.

To freeze blueberries, rinse off the whole fruit with water, spread the blueberries in a single layer on a pan or cookie sheet, and place them in the freezer for a couple of hours. Then transfer them from the pan to an airtight plastic bag, and label the bag with the date. Your frozen berries should be consumable for up to a year.

Of course, if this seems like too much trouble, you can get all of the health benefits of fresh blueberries in a powdered, water-soluble blueberry extract, which can be added to any beverage, smoothie, or juice.

Just be sure to look for a food-quantity dose (400 mg) of powdered blueberry, which you really can't get in a pill (it might have been fine for the "Jetsons," but don't kid yourself). And you won't find it, nor the right doses of anything you need, in any of those once-per-day, useless little multivitamin pills.

For an even bigger health boost, look for blueberry powder, and blueberry blends, combined with other food powders.

Even if you don't have a green thumb, that's a blue-ribbon prescription for both brain and body benefits. IC

Sunlight Breakthrough: Solar rays can boost your immunity year-round

For decades we've been warned about the hazards of getting too much sun. But what we *really* should have been worrying about was not getting *enough* sun.

It has become glaringly obvious that people aren't getting enough vitamin D, which comes from healthy sun exposure. In fact, thanks to the photophobic mythology of modern medicine, there is actually an epidemic of vitamin D deficiency, which is associated with virtually every chronic disease.

But it turns out vitamin D synthesis isn't sunlight's only essential function in the human body. An exciting new study shows that solar rays actually help the body fight off infections better and faster.

I'll tell you more about this important breakthrough in a moment. But first, since winter is over and the sun is now at an angle where even people who live in the northernmost climes can produce their own vitamin D from sunlight, you might consider reading this article outside.

Pull up a chair in a sunny spot, roll up your sleeves and pant legs, and *don't* put on any sunscreen. Don't worry…as you're about to discover, there's nothing to be afraid of.

How the science of sunlight got clouded over for so long

Despite the resounding evidence for the benefits of healthy sun exposure, we still remain concerned that too much sun will lead to melanoma.

Of course, melanoma is the one true deadly form of skin cancer, but it's important to note that it accounts for less than 10% of all skin cancers.

And, often, it's *not even caused by natural sun exposure*.

Despite the blanket recommendations for everyone to avoid sunshine in order to prevent melanoma, evidence has been piling up that like all "risk factors," sun exposure recommendations really need to be targeted to the people who need them most (but then again, what would happen to the lucrative mass-market sunscreen industry if that happened?).

So who are those people? Well, first of all, research shows that excess ultraviolet light exposure (which can come from sun or artificial lights) during adolescence and young adulthood is the real risk factor for developing melanoma later in life.

But the bigger problem is not spending time on the beach, but rather racking up hours in unnatural, unhealthy tanning beds.

In fact, the Melanoma Research Foundation reports that using tanning beds that have artificial lights before age 30 increases the chance of developing melanoma by

an astounding 75%.[1] The FDA has finally placed restrictions on the use of tanning beds, appropriately enough.

Another study suggests that recommendations about avoiding sun should be targeted particularly to light-skinned, red-haired people, as they are the most likely to get melanoma.[2]

But, as I wrote in a March 2 *Daily Dispatch* ("Melanoma caused by mistaken medical beliefs"), the biggest breakthrough of all when it comes to melanoma is new research from France that shows the modern increase in this deadly skin cancer does not result from too much sun exposure at all.

Instead, it's due to an antiquated, early 20th century medical practice that has now caught up with unfortunate older generations.

This practice, which involved exposing children to extensive artificial ultraviolet radiation for supposed health benefits, caused the spike in melanoma rates we now see in people over age 60.

Fortunately, by the 1950s, this barbaric practice began to fall out of favor. Instead, during the 1960s, '70s, and '80s—before the misguided dermatologists and government bureaucrats began erroneously telling us to cover up—"sun worshipping" became popular.

People of all ages, but especially the younger generations, began to get more and more natural sun exposure on more and more parts of their bodies (especially for women).

And melanoma deaths are now plunging in middle-aged people who got *more* sunshine, but *no* ultraviolet medical treatments when they were children.

In fact, the French analysis shows that melanoma rates are now dropping as the scantily clad, sun-worshipping generations get older.[3]

The other kind of disease-fighting sunlight

So the benefits of natural sunlight exposure appear stronger than ever, while the rationale for avoiding the sun is vanishing evermore into the shadows of antiquated medical practice.

And, as I mentioned earlier, new evidence out of Georgetown University (in the same Department of Physiology and Pharmacology where I serve as adjunct professor) suggests that sun exposure—even in the dead of winter—can increase your immunity and reduce the duration of colds.[4]

How? Well, it has to do with the solar light spectrum.

When we talk about sun exposure, most people think about ultraviolet B (UVB) wavelengths. UVB light, which is invisible to the human eye, activates vitamin D production in the skin.

But for this study, researchers looked at blue light, which comes from the visible part of the spectrum of solar radiation.

Blue light differs from UVB rays in another key way. As I've told you before, UVB rays only penetrate the atmosphere when the sun is high enough, from April through October, in most parts of the U.S. But blue light reaches the Earth whenever the sun is shining—all 12 months of the year.

So, in essence, you can benefit from blue light rays year-round, wherever you are, simply by going out in the sun. And the Georgetown researchers found that blue light can actually penetrate the top layer of your skin and activate T-cells in your immune system, telling them to move throughout the body.

Essentially, blue light increases synthesis of hydrogen peroxide in your body. This synthesis activates a signaling pathway, increasing T-cell movements. White blood cells in your immune system also release hydrogen peroxide, which "calls" T-cells and other immune cells to the site of an infection to mount a full immune response.

Could sunlight be a cure-all?

Another major new global study shows that vitamin D protects against cold and flu viruses.[5] So maybe the cold and flu season has something to do with not getting enough of the sun's blue light and UVB rays on your skin during the winter?

I'm also intrigued by a new study that shows that blue light mobilizes calcium and a number of other cellular mechanisms.[6]

So is lack of sun a contributing factor to osteoporosis? It wouldn't surprise me.

After all, the Georgetown study revealed that many different kinds of cells in the body respond to the energy of sunlight—not just the skin and the retina of the eye.

Blue light is key because its wavelengths are best able to penetrate into biological tissues. It is not just plant cells that use photosynthesis (relying on quantum effects, according to the latest research) but mammalian cells as well.

So it may very well be that blue light, and sunlight in general, have even more health benefits that haven't been discovered yet.

The best way to get the right amount of sunshine

Researchers published the Georgetown study last December 20, just in time for the winter solstice—the day when we get the least amount of sunlight per year.

Now, with the summer approaching, here is a practical way to put their findings to use.

The main reason to avoid getting too much sun is to prevent a painful—and skin-damaging—sunburn.

So to develop a healthy, vitamin D-boosting tan, spend 15 minutes in the sun *without* sunscreen. There are natural tanning oils, such as coconut oil and cocoa butter, and even natural vegetable-oil sunscreens if you wish to use them

(Learn more in my April 25, 2015 *Daily Dispatch* "Try these 4 tips for safe sun exposure.")

As you develop a light tan, you can gradually add more time in the sun each day if your skin can tolerate it without burning. But if you're fair-skinned, 15 minutes of sunshine a day—with at least part of your legs and arms uncovered—is all you need to manufacture you own healthy dose of D. IC

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NEWS BRIEF

The so-called junk food that can save your life

My report in the March issue of *Insiders' Cures* about the mainstream's misguided recommendations for heart health might make you feel like saying "nuts" to your cardiologist. But she or he should actually be recommending nuts *to you*—at least according to an important new research review.

Although they may still be considered junk food by some ill-informed nutritionists because of their fat content, nuts are very high per ounce in vitamins, minerals, and essential fatty acids. But while eating nuts has long been associated with a reduced risk of cardiovascular disease and diabetes, data on other health benefits had not been systematically evaluated…until now.

Researchers reviewed 20 different studies on the links between nut consumption and heart disease, cancer, and all-cause mortality.[1]

And the results are impressive. Amazingly, the researchers estimate that approximately *4.4 million premature deaths worldwide each year* could be attributable to not eating enough nuts.

Another dietary recommendation the government got wrong

In recent years, the large number of cases of cardiovascular disease and deaths in the overall population have made it easier for researchers to find strong evidence for nuts' heart-health benefits.

Of course, it took considerable time and trouble for the FDA to accept this obvious evidence. Back in 2010, as I reported, the agency refused to allow walnut growers to claim on their product labels the scientific truth that nut consumption protects the heart. The nut growers sued the FDA for permission to tell the truth—and lost.

But the evidence for nuts' heart-health benefits continues to pour in—now extending to other health benefits as well. Which leads me to the new research review.

Nut consumption lowers overall deaths by 22%

The review revealed quite a list of benefits for peanuts and tree nuts such as almonds, cashews, hazelnuts, macadamia nuts, pecans, pistachios, and walnuts.

Just 1 ounce a day of these nuts (basically a handful) reduced the risk of heart disease by 29%, and stroke by 9%.

Consumption also reduced total cancers by 15%, dementia by 35%, diabetes by 39%, respiratory disease deaths by 52%, and kidney disease by 27%.

And a single ounce of nuts a day lowered overall premature deaths by an amazing 22%.

While nuts' heart health benefits have always been impressive, the drastic reductions in dementia, diabetes, and kidney and respiratory diseases are even more impressive—now that they have finally been tallied.

How to easily add nuts to your diet

Nuts make a convenient, healthy snack any time of day. Take a bag of shelled nuts in your pocket to work, or when you go out, to fight hunger. Add them to your breakfast oatmeal, yogurt, or cottage cheese. They're also great in fresh salads, in many vegetable and meat dishes, and with blueberries and other fruit for a healthy dessert.

A little salt and natural spices go a long way with these tasty treats. You can add your own spices like red chili pepper, curry, black pepper, or herbs for a little extra zest. Cinnamon, cardamom, and nutmeg are delicious on almonds. And for added interest, exercise, and entertainment, buy nuts in the shell and crack them to extract the meat.

If you don't like raw nuts, you can get them roasted. But do not eat nuts with added sugars—like the so-called honey roasted nuts, or with an artificial ingredient called maltodextrin, which is just a disguised form of sugar.

While nuts can be a little expensive, I find most "discount" brands also contain artificial ingredients. One exception is Planters nuts, which tend to only have a little salt—which is all right in moderation.

With all of these benefits, I'd have to be nuts not to recommend these dietary delights for virtually every aspect of your health year round.