



# Your ultimate guide to eating right in 2019—and beyond

## *The best plan for a longer, stronger disease-free life*

Just once, I'd like us to ring in the New Year without being barraged by advertisements to go on some cockamamie weight-loss diet.

Don't get me wrong—it's always a good idea to maintain a healthy weight. But what I wish more people realized is that there's a simpler, safer, and more effective way to accomplish this. One that doesn't require subscribing to the latest, low-fat, high-carb "diet du jour," which is basically a prescription for accelerated aging and increased risk of chronic diseases.

Instead of looking for ways to cut fat out of your diet, you should instead focus on adding more protein—whether you need to lose weight or not. And you should always avoid sugar and simple carbs, which are the deadliest foods on the planet.

There's only one diet I know of that checks both of these boxes, effectively and deliciously. And you don't have to join a sob-sister support group, guzzle down dastardly diet shakes, or buy a hyped-up book to learn how to follow this particular eating plan.

I'm talking about the Mediterranean diet. This sensible eating plan is one of the most powerful tools on the planet when it comes to preventing chronic diseases and maintaining a healthy weight.

But since it's so simple, it often gets ignored—especially during the "New Year diet" hype period.

Today, I'm going to give you a

refresher, along with a checklist of what you should and shouldn't eat to help ensure optimum health—not only for this year, but years to come.

But first, let's take a look at why a Mediterranean-style eating plan is so good for your overall health and longevity.

### **Fat and protein: Two keys to healthy aging**

A Mediterranean diet includes plenty of vegetables, along with fruit, extra virgin olive oil, red wine, seeds, nuts, full-fat dairy, meat, and seafood.

While this diet is naturally low in carbs, it doesn't stint on protein or fat. This part makes everyone from government bureaucrats to self-proclaimed diet "gurus" nervous, as it fails to adhere to the mainstream diet myths they've been spewing to the public for decades...

What they still refuse to understand is that high-protein, low-carb, balanced eating *plans* (not diets) featuring meat, full-fat dairy, and seafood not only help you lose weight sensibly, but also maintain muscle mass and improve your heart and metabolic health, especially as you age. All are key factors for healthy aging.

Inexplicably, the government and mainstream medicine (which really ought to know better) don't seem to comprehend this basic science.

Plus, study after study shows that when you don't eat enough protein, you drastically increase your risk of age-related muscle loss—which

means you'll be less likely to function physically, and more likely to experience restricted mobility and become more prone to falls.

And all of that clearly adds up to a decreased life expectancy.

In fact, many studies show that functional capacity (sitting, standing, walking) is the *single strongest* predictor of longevity. So a healthy "anti-aging" regimen may be as simple as starting by getting enough protein in your diet.

### **The vast benefits of a daily dose of protein**

A new analysis from the famed Framingham Heart Study looked at how protein intakes affected physical functioning in adults as they age. Researchers examined diet records from study participants over a 12-year period and found that people who ate the most protein were more likely to complete common functional tasks, even as they got older.<sup>1</sup>

### *In this issue:*

**The "medicine cabinet miracle" that can prevent liver cancer..... 4**

**What can't this reliable, all-natural diabetes drug do?..... 6**

**The common, painful prostate problem researchers and experts ignore..... 7**

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I'm talking about important tasks like going up and down stairs, stooping, kneeling, crouching, shoveling sidewalks, cleaning the house, walking, and lifting at least 10 pounds.

The current U.S. recommended daily allowance (RDA) for protein intake is 0.8 grams per kilogram of body weight per day. But studies indicate far greater amounts are needed to stimulate muscle protein synthesis and maintain muscle mass as we age.

For instance, the recent Health, Aging, and Body Composition Study—which tracked about 1,800 men and women in their 70s for five years—found that those who ate more protein had 40 percent better muscle mass retention. They also had less mortality risk than people who didn't eat as much protein.<sup>2</sup>

International experts recommend 1.2 grams of protein per kilogram of body weight per day for people ages 65 and older, and higher amounts for older adults who are more physically active.

So that means if you weigh 150 pounds, you should eat at least 3 ounces of protein a day—which equals a small steak or chicken breast, a can of tuna, three eggs, 3 tablespoons of peanut butter, or about five slices of swiss *cheese*.

In other words, a completely reasonable amount of protein for anyone.

### **My favorite ways to get the daily protein your body needs**

Of course, you can get protein from plants like beans and peas. But your body needs “complete proteins,” which contain key amino acids, some of which simply aren't found in all plant proteins. These complete proteins also help you function better physically as you age.

Let's take a look at the types of proteins (with correlated fats) you need to add to your diet, as well as the slew of health benefits associated with each:

#### ***Full-fat, grass-fed dairy***

I recently wrote about how a 22-year

study of 3,000 adults age 65 and older showed that those who ate the most full-fat dairy had a whopping 42 percent lower risk of dying from stroke.<sup>3</sup>

Research is also showing how dairy consumption reduces your risk of diabetes. One of the most impressive is a nine-year study of nearly 64,000 men and women from 12 countries. Researchers found that those with high levels of the fatty acids found in full-fat dairy had a 35 percent lower risk of diabetes compared to those with the lowest levels.<sup>4</sup>

The study didn't distinguish between which type of dairy, but the two staples in the Mediterranean diet are yogurt and cheese—both of which are easy to work into your daily diet.

Simply eat yogurt for breakfast, topped with some fresh fruit. For lunch or dinner, sprinkle grated cheese on any kind of dish, add cheese cubes to salads, or finish your meal with a cheese platter instead of a sweet dessert. And it doesn't even matter what type of cheese (as I wrote in a recent *Daily Dispatch*, “What color is your cheese?” Simply search the title via [www.DrMicozzi.com](http://www.DrMicozzi.com) to read it). Just make sure neither of these options are low-fat, reduced-fat, or processed.

In fact, a key part of the Mediterranean Diet is eating cheese at each and every meal, a fact that gets omitted by the experts, since it doesn't fit with their faulty narrative.

I recommend three servings a day (about 4 ounces) of full-fat cheese or other full-fat dairy from grass-fed animals. And in just a moment, I'll explain why buying grass-fed products is so important.

#### ***Wild-caught fish***

Considering how easily available fresh, wild-caught fish is in all parts of the country, it always surprises me that many Americans fail to eat the minimum requirement of two 3-ounce servings a week.

I don't have to tell you how important omega-3 fatty acids (most notably, EPA

and DHA) in fish are for your heart and other organs. And now, a new study shows that EPA in particular is linked to healthy aging.

The study included approximately 2,600 participants with an average age of 74, who were enrolled in the U.S. Cardiovascular Health study. During the 23-year study period, blood samples collected from participants were analyzed for omega-3 content.<sup>5</sup>

People who had the highest EPA levels had a 24 percent lower risk of what the researchers called “unhealthy aging.” This includes developing a chronic condition like cardiovascular disease, cancer, lung or kidney disease after age 65, or experiencing physical or cognitive dysfunction.

The bottom line is that just two servings of wild-caught fish a week can play a key role in keeping you healthy after retirement age. If you're not already eating that much, consider making it a new year's resolution.

While you're at it, I also suggest supplementing with a high-quality, omega-3 fish oil supplement. In case

you missed it, I upped my recommended dosage in 2018 based on the latest science. I encourage you to revisit my June 2018 issue (“Why I'm upping my recommendations for this ‘controversial supplement’”) to see how much fish oil you should take based on your weekly fish consumption.

### **Grass-fed red meat**

In the traditional Mediterranean diet, lamb is a lot more plentiful than beef, and it turns out that lamb has the healthiest profile of fatty acids of any meat. But beef is a close second, which is why I also recommend it.

An interesting new study shows that Mongolian women, who regularly eat lamb and goat (plus full-fat dairy), have breast cancer rates that are one-eighth of Europe's and an impressive one-tenth of America's.<sup>6</sup>

I believe these low cancer rates aren't only due to Mongolian women's meat consumption, but also the *type* of meat.

My wife, Carole O'Leary, and her colleagues have done a lot of fieldwork with Central Asian populations like Mongolia. She tells me their meat is

grass-fed, free-range, and organic, because Mongolians are nomadic pastoralists—roaming with their livestock across natural, completely uncultivated grasslands. They don't use antibiotics or hormones on their livestock, nor do they board them in unnatural, unhealthy environments.

Chances are, you're not going to find any Mongolian meat in your local supermarket. However, you *can* find grass-fed, organic lamb and beef. Which leads me to a new study that found a key compound in grass-fed meat can help lower risk of breast cancer.<sup>7</sup>

The beneficial compound is conjugated linoleic acid (CLA), and research shows that when animals consume foods with CLA, it actually becomes incorporated into the breast's fatty tissue and serves a protective role.

This cutting-edge study found that mice who ate a CLA-rich diet had a 50 percent decreased risk of breast cancer. And other animal studies have found that adding CLA to the diet for just four months helped protect against prostate, colon, liver, and skin cancer.

## The only eating plan you'll ever need

Here's a handy checklist of what I recommend you eat each day to help protect against chronic disease, boost your longevity, and maintain a healthy weight. The time has come to toss out those useless “diet” books (recycle the paper). Instead, simply stick this page on your refrigerator, and carry an extra copy in your purse while you grocery shop.

- **Vegetables** - Five to eight servings, preferably organic. Aim to eat a “rainbow” of colors to get the most nutrients. A serving is a half-cup, or equivalent.
- **Fruit** - At least two servings of any kind of fruit, preferably organic.
- **Dairy** - 4 ounces of full-fat, grass-fed cheese, yogurt, or other dairy.
- **Fish** - At least two 3-ounce servings of wild-caught seafood per week.
- **Meat** - 4 ounces of grass-fed beef, lamb, or other red meat.
- **Eggs** - At least one free-range egg.
- **Nuts and seeds** - Half a cup of any type of nut or seed, preferably organic.
- **Organic extra virgin olive oil** - Use as a salad dressing and for cooking.

And here's what I recommend you avoid:

- **Sugar** - If you must have a sweetener, honey or agave are healthier options.
- **Simple carbs** - White bread, pasta, or baked goods can be just as bad for your metabolic system as pure sugar. If you eat carbohydrates, opt for whole-grain products.
- **Non-fat or low-fat foods** - Not only do these artificial Frankenfoods lack protein, but they can also be full of added sugar.
- **Canned foods** - While frozen fruits and vegetables *may* contain as many nutrients as fresh varieties, canned produce usually has added sugar, preservatives, or other unhealthy ingredients.
- **Fortified foods** - They sound like a good idea, but research shows they still don't contain enough nutrients. High-quality dietary supplements are much more effective for filling in missing nutrients in your diet.
- **Processed foods** - These are essentially sugar and chemicals wrapped in plastic. Doesn't sound very appetizing, does it? Just say no... your body will thank you.

There's also a growing amount of research linking grass-fed meat consumption with lower risk of cardiovascular disease. I recently wrote about the PURE study, which showed that people who included as much as 1.4 servings of red meat (a little over 4 ounces) per day in their diets had a significantly lower risk of heart attack and stroke, and a 25 percent reduction in overall mortality.<sup>8</sup>

### **Free-range eggs**

In my view, eggs are Nature's perfect food. Not only are they good sources of heart-healthy vitamins A, B, and D, but they also contain key carotenoids lutein and zeaxanthin, which give the yolk its bright yellow color. Carotenoids act as antioxidants with strong cancer-fighting properties.

Four eggs will provide you with about 1 ounce of protein. But you only need one egg a day to lower your risk of cardiovascular disease by 18 percent, according to a recent nine-year study of half a million adults.<sup>9</sup>

The lutein in eggs also makes them "brain food," especially as we get older. Research shows that lutein penetrates the blood-brain barrier (which regulates which compounds reach the brain) and accumulates in the regions responsible for preserving healthy cognitive function during aging.

In one long-term study of nearly 2,500 Finnish men, researchers discovered

that those who regularly ate eggs performed better on tests evaluating the frontal lobe of the brain as well as executive brain functioning (which includes imperative skills like decision-making and verbal fluency).<sup>10</sup>

In fact, my mentor, former U.S. Surgeon General C. Everett Koop (1915 – 2013) knew this long before the study was conducted. I used to work with him on national health education programs in the 1980s and 1990s, and personally witnessed him eat two or three eggs every morning. He remained as mentally keen and sharp as anyone I've ever known throughout his career working in health and medicine, and until his death at age 97.

But you don't have to eat as many eggs as Dr. Koop to get the health effects. I recommend one egg a day from free-range chickens, which have a healthier, more diverse diet (and more humane upbringing) than chickens confined to coops and fed synthetic pellets.

### **The importance of organic food**


Another reason the Mediterranean diet is so healthy is because most of the food is local and minimally processed. That being said, I encourage you to buy organic produce, meat, and dairy whenever you can. This helps ensure your food doesn't contain pesticides or antibiotics, and isn't genetically modified.

I also know that buying organic can be expensive, so if you *have* to pick and choose, opt for organic versions of the produce that the nonprofit Environmental Working Group has identified as the most contaminated with pesticides and other harmful chemicals. This list is called the "Dirty Dozen" and is released each year.

Below are the conventionally grown foods you should avoid buying, ranked in terms of just how badly they're infiltrated with toxins. They include:

- Strawberries
- Nectarines
- Grapes
- Cherries
- Tomatoes
- Potatoes
- Sweet bell and hot peppers
- Spinach
- Apples
- Peaches
- Pears
- Celery

And a good rule of thumb is that grass-fed meat and dairy, wild-caught fish, and free-range chickens (and eggs) are usually raised with minimal toxic chemicals as well, even if they're not specifically registered as organic.

So this year—and every year—strive to make sustainable, commonsense dietary choices. The more your diet parallels natural, traditional ways of eating—as in getting your food from both land and animal sources—the more your body, environment, and local agriculture will benefit. And that's something we can all feel good about. 

## **The "medicine cabinet miracle" that can prevent liver cancer**

***Plus, it cools inflammation and protects your heart***

While most people think of aspirin as an over-the-counter drug, you may be surprised to learn that it was originally a botanical remedy.

And that's just one of the reasons why I recommend this humble pain reliever for everything from preventing heart

attacks to lowering your risk of cancer.

This drug dates back to the ancient Egyptians, who used extract from white willow tree bark (which contains salicin—a compound chemically similar to aspirin) in medicines to reduce pain, fever, and inflammation.

In 1899, Bayer® figured out how to create a chemical based on these compounds and named it Aspirin. (Eventually, Bayer® lost their right to the trademark, which is why we refer to it as generic aspirin today).

Like another botanical-remedy-turned-

drug, metformin (which I discuss on page 6), aspirin has been around long enough to be studied for a number of medical conditions beyond its traditional use.

For instance, it's been established for decades that regular consumption of aspirin reduces your risk of heart disease. It's thought that aspirin helps "thin the blood," meaning that it stops blood clots that can lead to heart attacks.

More recently, convincing evidence has accumulated that taking aspirin can prevent colon cancer. In fact, I covered this finding in a recent June 2017 *Daily Dispatch* ("Daily aspirin reduces cancer risk by up to 30 percent"). To read more, simply type the title into the top right search bar on [www.DrMicozzi.com](http://www.DrMicozzi.com).

And now, a new study shows that regular aspirin use may lower your risk of liver cancer by more than *50 percent*.<sup>1</sup>

### Two aspirin each week keeps liver cancer away

Researchers at Massachusetts General Hospital in Boston analyzed data from approximately 87,500 women in the Nurse's Health Study, and about 46,000 men in the Health Professionals Follow-up Study. These were the same studies that first discovered the aspirin-heart health link years ago.

The researchers tracked the study participants' aspirin use for more than 26 years. During that time, 65 men and 43 women were diagnosed with liver cancer.

Overall, the study participants who regularly took at least two standard-dose aspirin per week had a whopping *49 percent* lower risk of liver cancer.

Furthermore, the longer the participants took the aspirin, the more that percentage increased.

For instance, ingesting at least 1.5 standard-dose aspirin a week for five or

more years was linked to a *59 percent* lower risk of liver cancer.

The researchers think aspirin may help prevent the inflammation or liver scarring that can lead to cancer. And because liver cancer can take years to develop, taking aspirin for longer periods of time may help stave off this inflammation in the early stages of cancer, or even at pre-cancerous stages.

### Why I like aspirin more than NSAIDs

The bottom line is, there's nothing not to like about aspirin.


And yet, some doctors (who should really know better) continue to shy away from prescribing this ancient remedy because it may cause stomach irritation and bleeding in some people.

But these are the same short-term side effects caused by every other over-the-counter pain reliever, including NSAIDs, like ibuprofen. And NSAIDs can also *increase* your risk of cardiovascular disease—while aspirin reduces it.

Nevertheless, many doctors are enamored with more "modern"—but dangerous—pain relievers instead of good old time-tested standbys like aspirin. I suspect pharma companies sustain the chatter about aspirin side effects simply to encourage doctors to prescribe more of their newer, expensive drugs instead.

That said, some new drugs like ibuprofen are a real therapeutic advancement for people with the intractable pain of late-stage rheumatoid arthritis, and for women with menstrual pains. When I was in medical training, some people with arthritis were given 20 or more aspirin per day. Obviously, that's not an optimal treatment regimen (although it *does* show that aspirin can be tolerated in very high doses).

But for most people, aspirin is an

effective and relatively safe pain reliever. So if you want to fight pain, inflammation, or fever—and protect yourself against heart attacks and cancer—always keep a bottle of aspirin in your medicine cabinet. 

### Aspirin's okay for the kids and grandkids, too

For decades, aspirin was considered perfectly safe and effective for children—even babies. Remember St. Joseph® Children's Aspirin?

But in the 1960s, an extremely rare condition of the liver called Reye's Syndrome was linked to aspirin use in children. Consequently, the CDC, the FDA, and the American Academy of Pediatrics recommend that aspirin not be given to reduce fever in anyone under age 19.

So, what did doctors do instead? They happily gave out Tylenol® (acetaminophen) to babies and children—including before, during, and after vaccinations—to stop a fever.

This practice is wrong on so many levels! First of all, vaccinations should never be given to children running a fever. And it's also highly inappropriate to give Tylenol to *anyone, at any time—especially children*.

Even the government acknowledges that taking too much acetaminophen can damage the liver.<sup>2</sup> In fact, pain relievers like Tylenol® are the leading cause of acute liver failure in the U.S. today. And the irony is that in order to prevent a very rare liver condition linked to aspirin, these doctors gave children with fevers a drug that actually *promotes* liver failure...

If your child or grandchild is running a mild fever—with a body temperature of 102 degrees or lower—there's usually no need to do anything. In fact, there are benefits to letting a fever run its course. As I mention in my latest textbook, *Fundamentals of Complementary and Alternative Medicine*, 6<sup>th</sup> edition, fever helps your body overcome infection, like a natural antibiotic.

So don't panic if Junior's temperature is slightly elevated. Kids can typically tolerate thermometer readings of up to 104 degrees. But anything higher means you should seek treatment immediately.

# What can't this reliable, all-natural diabetes drug do?

## *New research reveals its cancer-preventing, brain-boosting powers*

You know I'm no fan of most pharmaceutical drugs. But I make an exception for metformin.

First of all, metformin can hardly be considered a drug, since it's derived from the French lilac plant, also known as goat's rue. And this botanical ancestry is one reason why metformin has so many metabolic benefits (which I'll talk more about in just a moment).

Of course, metformin's chief metabolic effect is controlling blood sugar in people with Type II diabetes. And now, a new study shows it can also influence iron metabolism.

As you know, excess iron in the blood is a major risk factor for cancer, heart disease, liver disease, and a variety of infections. (The mainstream, on the other hand, continues to ignore this.) So this study may show another key way metformin helps to prevent chronic disease beyond diabetes.

And that's not all this amazing drug can do. More and more, I'm seeing studies demonstrating metformin's ability to rapidly penetrate the blood-brain barrier (the membrane that shields your brain from harmful compounds). Researchers believe it protects brain cells by supporting energy metabolism and preventing inflammation.

So it's not surprising that a new study found that metformin can also improve cognitive function in older adults.

And the reason why metformin can provide all of these health benefits is because it appears to work differently—and more effectively—than other diabetes drugs.

### **The drug that works right in the gut—and beyond**

Over the past year, I've been keeping you updated on all the new research

showing that metformin works (at least in part) through its fast-acting effects on the microbiome—the environment inside the GI tract where healthy probiotic bacteria thrive—before it even gets into the bloodstream.

(Keep in mind most medications are first absorbed by the gut, and then transported into the blood before you even start to feel the effects...)

That's one way that metformin is clearly different from other diabetes drugs.

And with its minimal side effects, and host of health benefits, it's one drug that goes well beyond just simply preventing the complications of diabetes in the eyes, kidneys, and peripheral nerves...

Metformin is also the only diabetes drug that doesn't cause weight gain. In fact, it's now being studied for use as a *weight loss* drug.

Additionally, it's also recently become the treatment of choice for polycystic ovarian syndrome in women of all ages.

It's even being touted as a healthy aging drug because it helps balance levels of hormones like estrogen and testosterone that can diminish as we age.

And if that weren't enough, there's growing evidence that metformin can also lower your risk of pancreatic, breast, ovarian, colon, lung, and prostate cancers.

Which leads me to the new study on metformin's effects on iron metabolism.

### **Metformin runs interference with iron levels**

Researchers continue to study how metformin works to help cells better absorb and use glucose. These efforts led to new lab research showing that metformin appears to make cells

behave as if they're "starving for iron" by interfering with how iron is distributed within the cell.<sup>1</sup>

Researchers have long suspected there's a connection between iron metabolism and diabetes, but this study is the first to illustrate that metformin's ability to mimic iron starvation appears important to glucose metabolism.

The researchers said this effect may also help explain the potential benefits of metformin for prevention of many chronic diseases, including cancer.

As my research with Nobel laureate Baruch Blumberg showed 30 years ago, excess iron in the body is a risk factor for all types of cancer in both men and women. And other research shows that excess iron is a risk factor for heart disease, infections, and liver disease.

### **Metformin outperforms a dementia drug**

As I mentioned earlier, metformin can also influence the brain as well as the body. In fact, I've suggested for years that Alzheimer's disease could be considered "type 3 diabetes," so it should come as no surprise that treating diabetes with metformin has cognitive benefits as well.

In the new study I mentioned earlier, Chinese researchers gathered 100 men and women, with an average age of 68, who suffered from impaired glucose metabolism and cognitive issues related to vascular effects rather than dementia.<sup>2</sup>

The study participants were divided into two groups. For a year, one group was given metformin plus the dementia drug donepezil, and the other group was given acarbose (an enzyme inhibitor that lowers glucose) plus donepezil.

All participants' cognitive status, glucose metabolism, and blood flow

in the internal carotid artery—which supplies the brain with blood—were measured at the start and end of the trial.

Those who were given metformin had improved cognitive functions and auditory verbal learning (which measures your ability to encode, combine, store, and recover verbal information) at the end of the study.

But there was no improvement in the group that received acarbose.

Remember, both groups also received the dementia drug donepezil. But only the metformin group had improved cognitive function—so it appears that the effects were also due to metformin rather than donepezil.

Although it's clear the dementia drug did no good in either group, the researchers still recommended that donepezil be taken—with metformin—to improve cognitive function.

### **An effective tool to fight cardiovascular disease**

Another interesting finding from this study is that the metformin group had a significant decrease in fasting insulin and insulin resistance compared with the acarbose group. And those on acarbose had more carotid artery atherosclerosis (hardening of the arteries) after one year, compared to the metformin group.


So this leads us to believe that metformin prevents cardiovascular

disease *as well as* cognitive problems.

So if you have blood sugar issues or Type II diabetes, you should absolutely ask your doctor about taking metformin. It can be a surefire way to protect yourself from a whole host of chronic, age-related diseases.

Unfortunately, for a majority of doctors, it's not currently prescribed solely to treat any other conditions (aside from some cases of PCOS).

However, if you suffer from any of the other conditions I mentioned today, it's well worth speaking to your doctor to see if they can recommend a specialist.

Science has shown us that yet again, nature-derived drugs rein supreme. 

## **The common, painful prostate problem researchers and experts ignore**

*Here's what you should look for—and the best treatments to consider*

There are plenty of studies on how common chronic diseases like cancer, diabetes, heart disease, and lung conditions affect men. But researchers inexplicably continue to neglect one of men's most frequent health concerns—especially as we get older... I'm talking about prostate disease.

In the past, prostate health tended to be a taboo topic that men didn't like to discuss or deal with. Now that the taboo has been lifted and prostate disease is finally getting some (although not enough) attention, almost all of the concern has centered on prostate cancer screening, treatment, and the problem of fake, or overdiagnosed, "cancers."

That's why today, I'd like to talk about one common, but rarely discussed, prostate health condition, and how you can safely navigate treating it.

### **Frequent—but neglected—prostate conditions**

In the November 2018 issue of *Insiders' Cures*, I discussed benign

prostatic hyperplasia, or BPH ("Urgent warning for men: The shocking reason you need to pay attention to your prostate—even if you're symptom free"). To revisit this story, simply go to [www.DrMicozzi.com](http://www.DrMicozzi.com).

Today, I'm focusing on prostatitis, which has similarities—but also key differences—to BPH.

Like BPH, prostatitis involves enlargement of the prostate. But unlike BPH, this enlargement is caused by inflammation (rather than hormone fluctuations, as theorized with BPH). And while BPH often doesn't have *any* symptoms, prostatitis can result in painful urination and/or ejaculation, and even generalized groin or abdominal pain.

But not every man with prostatitis has these symptoms, making it difficult even for doctors to tell the difference between BPH and prostatitis.

Based on simple statistics, your prostate condition is more likely to

be BPH if you're *over* age 50, and prostatitis if you're *under* 50. I'll tell you why in just a moment.

### **The types of prostatitis**

There are two kinds of prostatitis: bacterial and chronic.

Bacterial prostatitis is frequently caused by *E. coli* bacteria in the urinary tract. This bacteria normally lives in the GI tract, and just as it can migrate to the bladder in women (causing cystitis), it can also contaminate the urinary tract in men and trigger prostatitis.

Often, this urinary tract contamination is due to sexual activity, which is why bacterial prostatitis tends to be more common in younger, more sexually active men.

If you have bacterial prostatitis, along with the symptoms listed above, you may also have symptoms of infection like fever, chills, joint and muscle pain, and fatigue.

Then there's chronic prostatitis, which is less straightforward. We don't really know what causes this condition (again, it's been a neglected area of men's health), but we know it's not bacteria.

Both types of prostatitis are relatively easy to diagnose during a digital rectal exam, during which your doctor will insert his or her index finger in your rectum to examine the size, texture, and firmness of your prostate. Your doctor may also order urine and blood tests to check for infection.

Because prostatitis symptoms can be overlooked or confused with other diseases, it's key that you get a digital rectal exam as part of your annual physical exam once you turn 50. If for some reason you have a doctor who doesn't routinely do this exam, find another doctor right away.

### The conventional—but dangerous—treatment for prostatitis

If your doctor suspects you have bacterial prostatitis, he or she will commonly prescribe one of the following treatment methods, each of which has its own set of precautions:

- **Antibiotics:** I always recommend you use sparingly, if at all, due to their effect on diminishing the “good” probiotic bacteria in your GI microbiome.
- **Nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs)** (like Aleve®): I've written many times about the dangers of NSAIDs. For one, they increase your risk for heart attack or stroke, as well as liver and kidney damage. Not to mention, these drugs are associated with dangerous side effects in the GI tract, including ulcers, bleeding, and colon perforations.

If you must take an NSAID, I recommend ibuprofen or aspirin, as the benefits outweigh the risks.

- **Anticholinergic agents:** I'd steer clear of these entirely, especially considering a large new study found that these drugs substantially increase the risk of dementia in older adults, by

as much as 54 percent. If that wasn't enough, other reported side effects include dry mouth, constipation, urine retention, blurred vision, increased heart rate, confusion, and drowsiness.

Some doctors also prescribe BPH drugs for chronic prostatitis, including:

- **Alpha blockers** (like Flomax® and Rapaflo®): These are designed to relax the muscles in the prostate and bladder neck to allow urine to flow more freely. But these drugs have some serious side effects including erectile dysfunction, low blood pressure, nausea, weakness, and weight gain.
- **Alpha-reductase inhibitors** (like Proscar® and Avodart®): These are supposed to stop the prostate from growing, and can even shrink it. Like alpha blockers, these drugs can also cause erectile dysfunction, along with low sex drive and depression.

As in mainstream fashion, doctors will often prescribe even *more* drugs to lessen the side effects associated with these medications. Meanwhile, many continue to ignore the mounds of science-backed evidence demonstrating how easy lifestyle changes and natural substances can help relieve symptoms of prostatitis—with minimal or no side effects.

### My simple, natural plan for preventing and reversing prostatitis

If you want to avoid the side effects of prescription drugs, know there are a variety of effective, safe, and natural ways to protect yourself from prostatitis—and BPH.

Of course, many of my prostatitis recommendations are similar to those I included in the November 2018 issue for BPH. And I'm only touching on them again because keeping your prostate healthy is *just that important*.

The first steps involve making some easy lifestyle changes. You should:

- **Avoid prolonged sitting.** This can irritate your prostate.
- **Drink more water and stay hydrated**

(**with rooibos, or aspal**). This will help flush bacteria out of your urinary tract. I recommend 75 ounces for women and 100 ounces for men.

- **Limit eating acidic foods.** These may irritate your bladder.
- **Practice mind-body therapies like biofeedback and acupuncture.** These have been found to help relax the bladder muscles.


There are also dietary supplements that have been shown in clinical trials to be effective for both prostatitis and BPH. You can find these supplements in your local pharmacy, grocery store, health supplement retailer, or online:

- **Quercetin** - 1,000 mg per day
- **Rye grass pollen extract** - 500 mg per day
- **Saw palmetto berry extract** - 900 mg doses per day. **NOTE:** Choose a supplement that contains 100 mg of beta-sitosterol (the plant's main active ingredient).

It's not surprising that these recommendations can also help prevent virtually *every* chronic disease. In that way, your prostate is no different than any other gland, organ, or tissue in your body or brain.

That said, your prostate has unique conditions and challenges, and an integrative approach is absolutely necessary for complete protection.

In fact, I'm outlining this exact approach in my latest project: a comprehensive, science-backed prostate protocol that will address *all* aspects of prostate health. Specifically, it will tell you how to recognize, rein in, and even reverse prostate conditions we traditionally don't hear too much about—but are increasingly prevalent in men over age 50.

As always, you'll be the first to know when this new prostate protocol is available. Stay tuned right here for the latest updates. 

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