

# The science-backed strategy to conquering arthritis in your very own kitchen

*Distinguishing between bizarre myths and eye-opening truths—everything you need to know about effectively controlling inflammation and easing joint pain*

When it comes to arthritis, the statistics are shocking.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), more than 54 million Americans have some form of arthritis—which works out to nearly 25 percent of the entire adult population!<sup>1</sup>

About half of these people report that their condition limits their daily activities. And over 25 percent suffer from severe pain as a result. So it's no surprise that big pharma has jumped on board the arthritis train—full steam ahead.

But the drugs they've developed to supposedly "treat" arthritis pain have life-threatening side effects. I'm sure you've heard the disclaimers in the ubiquitous TV ads about how arthritis drugs can lead to "serious infections like tuberculosis, and infections from bacteria, viruses, and fungi."

Not to mention that it's questionable how well these drugs really work. Sure, they try to temporarily alleviate the inflammation that causes arthritis. But to *truly* tackle the underlying cause of inflammation and arthritis, you need a long-term approach—not a quick drug fix.

Fortunately, study after study shows the solution is simple.

The best way to stop inflammation is to eat a healthy, balanced diet—and to add the right key dietary supplements, when needed.

Of course, for years, there have been some common myths in circulation about which foods either contribute to or help prevent arthritis.

So, this month, let's do some myth busting—and some truth telling—all based on the latest science...

## **The top 6 myths about food and arthritis**

Over the years, stories about how certain foods can impact arthritis have transitioned from folklore to accepted fact. But there's actually no scientific basis for the following six myths...

### **Myth #1: Nix the nightshades**

When it comes to arthritis, one of the most common myths is that eating foods from the nightshade family (eggplant, peppers, potatoes, and tomatoes) can worsen symptoms.

(This may date back to a superstition

since these plants are distantly related to the "deadly nightshade" in Europe. When peppers, potatoes, and tomatoes were first introduced to Europe from the Americas in the 1500s, there was an initial reluctance to consume them.)

In recent years, people with rheumatoid arthritis (RA) have been sharing anecdotes about how cutting out nightshades helps improve their symptoms. But there's actually no real scientific evidence for this belief.

The truth is, the brightly colored members of the nightshade family are high in inflammation-fighting nutrients like vitamin C and carotenoids. They're also good sources of dietary fiber. Consequently, people with arthritis

### **In this issue:**

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**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 available in a 6th edition and continuously in print since 1995.

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Author: Marc S. Micozzi, M.D., Ph.D.  
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should consider eating *more*—not less—of these vegetables as part of a healthy, balanced diet.

**Myth #2: Cut out citrus**

Many people with RA believe that cutting out citrus fruits from their diet will help reduce joint pain. But again, there's no scientific evidence behind this myth.

In fact, citrus fruits are high in beneficial nutrients like B and C vitamins, which are important for healthy joints.

Plus, new research suggests that consuming just five servings of fruit and vegetables each day offers optimal health benefits and protection against disease (as I discussed in the June issue). And it inevitably becomes more difficult to reach this goal if you eliminate all citrus fruits from your diet.

**Myth #3: Ditch the dairy**

People with arthritis are frequently told to cut out milk, cheese, yogurt, and other dairy foods. But just as with nightshades and citrus fruits, there's no scientific evidence that dairy products worsen or cause arthritis.

The fact is, if you *don't* eat full-fat dairy, you're missing out on key nutrients that have been shown in studies to support a healthy, balanced immune system—which, in turn, helps lower inflammation. Like calcium (which needs to come from dietary sources, not supplements), essential fatty acids (which should ideally come from the diet), and vitamin D (which can come from dietary sources and smart supplementation).

And, of course, full-fat dairy also supports good bone and cartilage health, which is critical for healthy joints.

**Myth #4: Reach for raw foods**

Decades-old research found that people who followed a raw, vegan diet, with some probiotics added, had temporary relief from RA symptoms. But the diet didn't slow progression of the disease.

Not to mention, raw or vegan diets are highly restrictive—and, frankly, not reasonably palatable or digestible for most people. And, as I often report, any food plan that cuts out whole categories of foods (like dairy, citrus, or nightshade plants) works *against* consuming a healthy, balanced diet—which is what really counts for fighting inflammation and arthritis.

**Myth #5: Add apple cider vinegar**

Drinking apple cider vinegar has some popular support as a remedy for joint pain. Some say it's because vinegar is high in beta-carotene. But there's no evidence that beta-carotene alone works for joint pain and arthritis, and there's only a small amount in apple cider vinegar, anyway.

So, rather than overindulging in vinegar, you can get healthy amounts of beta-carotene as well as *other* needed carotenoids by adding more yellow, orange, and red fruits and vegetables to your diet.

**Myth #6: Dine on “drunken raisins”**

I've saved the most bizarre myth for last. Turns out, some people believe that gin-soaked raisins can treat arthritis. Supposedly, the sulfur used to preserve raisins can reduce joint damage, and the juniper berries infused in gin are anti-inflammatory.

And while this folk remedy probably won't hurt you, there's no scientific evidence it will stop (or help prevent) arthritis. So I don't recommend it as part of a regular regimen.

## The top 6 truths about food and arthritis

Now that we've discussed (and debunked, based on the science) the top six myths surrounding what foods to cut or add to your diet to help alleviate inflammation and joint pain—let's focus on some truths.

There's plenty of science showing simple changes to your diet and nutrition can help arthritis, and joint health, in general. Here are my top six recommendations, based on the latest research...

### Truth #1: There's nothing fishy about omega-3s for healthy joints

On the top of my list (as always) is to eat more fish. In fact, you can't go wrong with wild-caught fish like mackerel (the smaller varieties; not the large sport fish), salmon, sardines, and tuna (preferably skipjack, or "chunk light," not "white" tuna).

All of these fatty fish are high in omega-3 essential fatty acids like DHA and EPA. In addition to being beneficial for the brain and heart, they also help with stiff and tender joints.

That's why I recommend five servings of fish a week. But if you can't manage that goal—and let's be honest, many people don't—try to work your way up to just two servings a week (as I reported in June's issue), plus 4 to 5 grams a day of a high-quality fish oil supplement that contains both EPA and DHA. Then, the more fish you eat in your diet, the less is required as a dietary supplement, as I also explained in June's newsletter.

### Truth #2: Fight inflammation with fiber

There's plenty of research showing dietary fiber helps lower a biochemical called C-reactive protein (CRP—which I also discuss on page

8). CRP is a sign of the inflammation that lurks behind chronic diseases like RA and heart disease.

Rather than taking dietary fiber supplements (which can be dangerous), a simple solution is to fill half your plate with fruit and vegetables at each and every meal. Since produce is an excellent source of fiber, you'll get all you need—along with a healthy, balanced diet that naturally fights inflammation.

### Truth #3: Boost muscles, joints, and immunity with beans

Beans—particularly kidney and pinto—are another healthy, nutritious food that helps reduce inflammation. Not only are beans high in dietary fiber, but they're also good sources of protein, which supports muscles and joints.

Beans also contain nutrients that support a healthy immune system (and help alleviate chronic, low-grade inflammation)—including iron (which, like calcium, should always come from dietary sources and not from supplements) folic acid, magnesium, potassium, and zinc.

### Truth #4: Pass on processed foods

If you're concerned about joint pain—and for your health in general—you need to cut processed foods from your diet (if you haven't already). They're the exact opposite of the natural, whole foods that reduce inflammation.

In particular, processed foods can be higher in omega-6 fats (which counterbalance the healthy omega-3s that help alleviate joint pain). These unhealthy fats are found in vegetable oils like corn, peanut, and safflower, along with packaged snack foods like chips and crackers. Instead, choose healthy oils—like olive oil, the only oil I cook with—and make healthier choices for snacks—like

raw vegetables, popcorn, nuts, or hummus (which is made from chickpeas, or garbanzo beans).

Packaged baked goods are also loaded with sugar and refined carbohydrates, which are top culprits behind inflammation. If you have a sweet tooth, try making your own desserts with whole-grain flour and natural sweeteners like honey or agave. Or, better yet, substitute fresh fruit (including citrus) for dessert—perhaps with some dark chocolate (made with 70 to 85 percent cocoa)!

### Truth #5: Beat back inflammation all day long with this breakfast beverage

Some evidence shows that green tea may slow joint damage since it contains nutrients (like antioxidants) that help reduce inflammation and pain. But I don't usually recommend green tea—because studies show you need to consume a whopping 8 to 16 cups per day to get "therapeutic" amounts.

Instead, I like the science on the health benefits of drinking coffee. A variety of studies show that three to four cups of coffee a day can lower inflammation. Plus, coffee has many other benefits for the brain and body.

### Truth #6: Soothe aching joints with this spice rack staple

I always recommend that you consume curcumin (from turmeric, a popular spice in Indian foods like curry) to help reduce inflammation. In fact, it's one of my ABCs—along with ashwaganda and boswellia—for joint health.

I also recommend not taking Tylenol (acetaminophen, paracetamol) for anything, ever—including arthritis or joint pain. Tylenol may provide some temporary pain relief, but there's no clear clinical benefits for prevention or reversal of joint disease. Plus,

research shows that ongoing use is associated with significant side effects for the liver, gastrointestinal (GI) system, heart, and kidneys.

The good news is, a new study shows that turmeric can be *as effective as* Tylenol-like paracetamol drugs at reducing joint pain and stiffness.<sup>2</sup>

Researchers gathered 193 adults with knee osteoarthritis. Each participant took either a specially formulated extract of turmeric (500 mg twice daily), or 650 mg of paracetamol, three times daily, for six weeks.

At the end of the study, the researchers found significant improvements in joint pain and stiffness in the turmeric group compared with the paracetamol group. In fact, nearly a quarter of the people who took turmeric had more than 50 percent improvement in their joint pain and stiffness!

Plus, markers of inflammation were significantly reduced in the turmeric group versus the paracetamol group—indicating that turmeric performs as well as Tylenol. This is a key finding because it shows that turmeric and curcumin actually counter the *cause* of joint inflammation and pain—while drugs like Tylenol just temporarily reduce symptoms (while also causing serious side effects).

That's why I recommend cooking with turmeric as often as you can. And for optimum joint health, I also recommend taking 400 to 500 mg each of ashwaganda, boswellia, and curcumin daily, as dietary supplements (taking all three together creates synergistic benefits that go well beyond how each nutrient works individually).

### Other strategies for fighting inflammation and arthritis

There's no doubt that the right diet

can certainly help with arthritis and joint pain. Especially when it's combined with moderate physical activity that doesn't put joints in danger, like swimming and aquatic exercise and non-drug therapies like acupuncture, bodywork, massage, meditation, and yoga.

To learn more about many other effective, natural approaches for combatting arthritis pain *without* dangerous drugs or surgeries—and without turning to folklore—check out my *Arthritis Relief and Reversal Protocol*.

To learn more about this innovative, online learning tool, or to enroll, [click here](#) or call 1-866-747-9421 and ask for order code EO3X700.

### How to make your kitchen arthritis-friendly

One of the best ways to make sure you're eating the right foods (and cutting out the wrong foods and ingredients) for inflammation and arthritis is to do your own cooking. But meal preparation can be physically demanding—especially if you have joint pain.

Fortunately, there are steps you can take to make cooking easier and more enjoyable. So, go ahead and turn on some music, pour yourself a drink, and whip up a classic, homecooked meal using these simple tips to keep you comfortable while you cook...

**Take a seat.** You don't need to stand up for long stretches of time while cooking. Instead, find a sturdy stool that's the right height for you to perch in front of your counter or range. Then, sit when cutting, chopping, and doing other prep work. This arrangement takes stress off your hips, knees, and ankles.

When you do need to stand, try using a soft, anti-slip kitchen

mat (for example, in front of the sink and/or stove) to help protect vulnerable joints.

**Rethink and reorganize.** Your kitchen doesn't need to look like a "Better Homes & Gardens" photoshoot. Organize it so you can readily access appliances and commonly used tools

Heavy, less frequently used items can be stored on lower shelves and cabinets, and lighter items can be placed higher up—where you can use a reaching tool to safely get them down.

And remember, water is one of the heaviest items you use in the kitchen. Don't stress your wrist joints by carrying big pots of water from the sink to the range—instead, put the pot on the range and fill it with water, one cup at a time. Likewise, after cooking or steaming foods, don't bring the heavy, hot pot to a colander in the sink. Use a slotted spoon or spaghetti server to transfer the food directly from the pot into a plate or bowl.

**Hang it up.** Many pots and pans have slots or hooks at the ends of their handles, which makes it easy to suspend them from a hanging rack. These racks are affordable, can be attractive, and allow you to easily see and select the right pot or pan without stooping or bending to sort through cabinets.

**Get a grip.** Many common kitchen utensils are now made with large, soft handles for easy gripping. Or you can make your own with your old favorites by slipping spongy plumber's pipe insulation onto their handles.

In addition, a damp kitchen towel placed underneath bowls used for prepping will keep them from slipping on smooth countertops. You

can also use flat rubber grips—or metal grips with handles for more leverage—to open jars. You can even use big, wide rubber bands from the U.S. Post Office... simply place the band around the lid for added grip support (after washing them off).

**Go shopping.** It's worth going out and taking a look at the new, specialized kitchen tools that are good for people with joint pain.


One that caught my eye is a rocking knife, with two handles on either end, that helps you gain leverage

while cutting. I also like mandolines, which slice, grate, and julienne fruits and vegetables (you use the same wrist motion as a mandolin player—hence the name). With this trick, you'll be making your own music in your kitchen!

**Get creative.** Just because arthritis-friendly kitchen tools are available, that doesn't mean you need to buy all new utensils. You can modify, adjust, and adapt your old ones.

For example, hard-boiled egg slicers can also be used for cutting small,

firm foods like mushrooms. Apple corers and slicers can cut small veggies. And those nice kitchen scissors or shears that often come with knife sets can be used to cut meat.

Rolling pizza cutters can be used for sandwiches and flat foods. And those funny little pronged, skewered corncob holders can be used to pin down items onto cutting boards. (I always recommend wooden cutting boards because they're more hygienic, and now here's another reason—try pinning down a food to a plastic board!) 

## Research reveals a novel secret for adding years to your life (So simple you can do it anytime, anywhere!)

There are few activities that recall halcyon summer days more than stretching out under a shady tree or on a sandy beach, and “leafing” through a good book.

But sadly, fewer and fewer people are doing that these days. In fact, according to the World Culture Index, when it comes to cracking open a book, Americans barely make it into the top 25 countries.<sup>1</sup>

The average resident of India devotes nearly *11 hours* a week to reading books. The Thais are the second most prolific readers, followed by the Chinese. But the U.S. is tied with Germany for the 22<sup>nd</sup> spot—spending less than six hours a week reading, per person.

Meanwhile, the Pew Research Center reported that in 2019, a shocking 27 percent of Americans said they hadn't read a single book in the last year. Which turned out

to be an 8 percent increase in non-readers in just eight years!<sup>2</sup>

This is disappointing news not only for our collective knowledge and imagination, but also for our longevity. Let me explain...

### The hidden health benefits of books

A recent study shows that book readers live almost *two years longer* than non-readers. More specifically, researchers found that people who read a book for as little as 30 minutes a day had a 23 percent lower risk of dying over a 12-year period compared to people who didn't read at all.

In other words...reading books may very well improve your lifespan just as much as eating a healthy diet or getting regular, moderate exercise!

Of course, this finding may seem counterintuitive. After all, book

reading is a sedentary activity. And as I've written in past issues, research shows that sitting for long periods of time is definitely not a good way to improve longevity.

But when it comes to reading, you can take a book outside, on the porch or deck, or even by a babbling brook. These are all arguably healthier environments and activities than being a couch potato glued to a TV or computer screen—even if it's not keeping you physically active.

Of course, it's worth noting that while your body may remain stationary, reading keeps your *brain* active. And plenty of research shows that staying mentally active helps to prevent and even control Alzheimer's disease and dementia.

Plus, new research shows that reading novels appears to boost both brain connectivity, empathy, and language skills—all of which have been linked to longer, healthier lives.

## A chapter a day keeps the grim reaper away

Yale researchers looked at data from 3,635 men and women, ages 50 years and older.<sup>3</sup> They divided the participants into three groups:

- 1.) Those who didn't read books
- 2.) Those who read up to 3.5 hours per week
- 3.) Those who read more than 3.5 hours a week.

The researchers followed each study participant for 12 years, tracking their survival rates. At the end of the study, they discovered that the group that read up to 3.5 hours a week lived 17 percent longer than the non-readers. And the group that read *more* than 3.5 hours a week lived an impressive 23 percent longer.

Overall, the readers lived an average of 23 months longer than the non-readers.

This study was not influenced by the well-known effect of higher education levels, which are typically associated with lower death rates. People with more education might indeed be expected to read more. But the researchers found that education status didn't have any effect on the link between reading and longevity. Nor did the subjects' sex, age, wealth, or—surprisingly—health status.

The researchers concluded that books appear to offer a “significant survival advantage”—perhaps because of reading's cognitive benefits. Which leads me to another interesting new study...

## Why losing yourself in a book can help you live longer

In an effort to discover why fiction can have such a big impact on some people, researchers studied the brains of 19 self-described

aficionados of the “Game of Thrones” books and TV series.<sup>4</sup>

The researchers asked the participants to think about themselves, nine of their friends, and nine Game of Thrones characters. Using a questionnaire and brain scans, the researchers discovered that people use the same part of the brain to think about a character in a book as they use to think about themselves. (Literary types view this phenomenon as getting immersed in a book and identifying with the character.)

One region of the brain that the researchers observed is part of the prefrontal cortex, which shows increased acuity when people think about themselves, and to a lesser extent, when they think about close friends. (Interestingly, during the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, in cases of mental illness, prefrontal lobotomies were performed to cut off these connections from the rest of the brain.)

The prefrontal cortex was also more active in the people who, according to the questionnaire, were more likely to become immersed in a story. Their brain activity was greatest when thinking about a character they liked and identified with the most.

The researchers also noted that these people appeared to respond to fictional characters as they would to a real-life friend. And like friends, these characters can alleviate loneliness—which has been linked in other studies to shortened lifespans.

In addition, a study author also said, “For some people, fiction is a chance to take on new identities, to see worlds through others' eyes, and return from those experiences changed.”<sup>5</sup>

This could also be called escapism. But according to these brain scans, what we're *really* escaping from is

thinking about *ourselves*. And that actually appears to be a good thing. I've written before about studies showing that thinking about and doing things for others is associated with better health and longevity—as is taking time to reflect, and expressing gratitude. (In fact, on page 8, I discuss another new study on personality and longevity that suggests that people who are more conscientious tend to live longer.)

## Another way reading can lengthen your lifespan

Along with boosting your empathy for others, reading can also increase your language skills, according to another new study. And plenty of prior research shows that enhanced verbal and language abilities are important for brain health—and longer lives.

Researchers gave 200 undergraduate college students a questionnaire that assessed their reading behaviors—including their attitudes, interests, motivations, and obstacles.<sup>6</sup> The researchers noted that this is the age when people tend to develop their own reading habits, rather than simply reading what they've been directed to by teachers or parents.

The participants were then administered language tests. After evaluating the tests and questionnaire, the researchers concluded that the students who enjoyed reading the most were more likely to have better language skills and verbal abilities. Interestingly, these benefits were more strongly associated with reading fiction rather than nonfiction.

In addition to better language skills, research shows that long-term readers have more understanding of others, more empathy, and less prejudice. They attain higher socioeconomic status, and of course enjoy longer, healthier lives.

Ultimately, the researchers recommended that parents and teachers nurture a lifelong love of reading by simply letting young people read what they want, and emphasizing the fun aspects of reading. This is especially important in light of the data I mentioned earlier, showing the rapid decline of reading in the U.S.—and its potential detrimental effects.

### The relaxing aspects of reading

I once shared these study findings with Janice Stern, my former senior

editor (now retired) at Springer Publishers, which publishes some of my medical textbooks and employs editors who are real book lovers.

She was quick to respond: “I’m not surprised by the results of the studies. When one is reading a book (well, most books), one is not worrying about other things, or trying to achieve or prove something.”

And there it is: Book reading is a beneficial form of relaxation and stress reduction—and it stimulates the brain at the same time. You can’t

find a better combination for a long and healthy (and entertaining) life.

So why not pick up a book this summer and improve your mind, body, and soul. You can get started with my Summer Reading List in the sidebar below. Then, I hope you’ll do as I do and make your summer reading a lasting, year-long habit.

(Of course, if you’re looking for practical, non-fiction books that can help you live longer, and reduce your risk of chronic diseases, there are several under the “books” tab of my website, [www.DrMicozzi.com](http://www.DrMicozzi.com).)

## My summer reading list

As a lifelong reader, I typically find myself turning to the classics, like an old friend, when I reach for a book. No matter how many times I read them, I lose myself in the following tales—and always find something new to appreciate.

### ***Moby Dick* by Herman Melville**

Although not popular when it was first published in 1851, *Moby Dick* came into fame in the 20<sup>th</sup> century as a “great American novel.” It’s about a whaling voyage...and so much more. Or as a dear, departed family member (who was also a lifetime reader) once described it: “He keeps talking about water, water, water...”

(It’s said that Melville got some of his inspiration for *Moby Dick* after attending a lecture by Ralph Waldo Emerson in Massachusetts while waiting to ship out on a whaling voyage. Emerson spoke on his signature topic of self-reliance and used the example of a true story of the whale ship *Essex*, which was rammed and sunk by a white whale in the South Pacific in 1820.)

Melville dedicated *Moby Dick* to his great friend, Nathaniel Hawthorne, “in token of my admiration for his genius.” Which leads me to another favorite book of mine...

### ***The House of the Seven Gables* by Nathaniel Hawthorne**

This American gothic writer is best known for this book, also published in 1851, and for the *Scarlet Letter* (the original example of American “cancel culture”).

*The House of the Seven Gables* is a somber study in hereditary sin, based

on a legendary curse by a woman who was condemned to death during the infamous Salem Witch Trials. Hawthorne was a direct descendant of Judge John Hathorne, who presided at the trials. (Nathaniel changed his name’s spelling to distance himself from the judge.)

Hawthorne also has a personal connection to the seven-gabled house, which was owned by his cousin. Built in 1668 in Salem, Massachusetts, it’s still standing today—and yes, you can visit.

### ***The Sound and the Fury* by William Faulkner**

Not exactly a light read, the title comes from a line in Shakespeare’s *Macbeth*: “Full of sound and fury, signifying nothing...”

This quintessential Southern novel deals with the dissolution of an aristocratic family. Each character tells a different version of the same story, creating a masterful tapestry of writing.

### ***Far From the Madding Crowd* by Thomas Hardy**

A rural Yorkshire heroine called Bathsheba Everdene attracts three very different suitors: Gabriel Oak, a sheep farmer; Frank Troy, a reckless Royal Army sergeant; and William Boldwood, a prosperous landowner. Who wins? (Hint: nobody.)

### ***The Quiet American*, *The Comedians*, and *Ministry of Fear* by Graham Greene**

*The Quiet American* is set in Vietnam during the French Indochina War of the 1950s. It’s amazingly prescient regarding the later U.S. interference there—a direct

result of the French actions after World War II.

*The Comedians* is a similar tale of clandestine American intervention in Haiti under a pseudo-Papa Doc Duvalier.

And *Ministry of Fear* is a Hitchcock-type spy thriller, made into the classic 1944 film by Fritz Lang.

### ***Word of Honor* and *Up Country* by Nelson DeMille**

Both of these novels offer a more contemporary take on the Vietnam War—but with all of the masterful intrigue, double-crosses, and storytelling of the Greene books.

### ***The Turn of the Screw* and *Daisy Miller* by Henry James**

These short novels are often paired together. The first is narrated by a governess who, caring for two children at a remote estate, becomes convinced that the grounds are haunted. But through the deft use of ambiguity, the reader is left wondering whether she imagined the whole thing? Meanwhile, *Daisy Miller* is a clever study in American versus European mores, told through the story of a complicated, romantic courtship.

Henry James was the brother of William James, the founder of American social psychology, and you can see that influence in his works. In fact, to some extent, *The Turn of the Screw* was the basis for the spooky 1980 film *The Changeling* with George C. Scott, as well as more recent films, produced both in the U.S. and in the U.K.

# This personality trait is linked to a 40 percent reduced risk of death

People's personality types are well known to be associated with both risk of death and longer lifespans. And that certainly makes sense from a mental and emotional standpoint. If you're a risk taker, for example, that can certainly affect how long you live (and your chances of winning a "Darwin Award," for example).

But now, a new study shows there's also a *physical* connection between your personality and longevity. And, like so many other aspects of health, it has to do with your immune system.

Researchers from the U.K., U.S., and Germany analyzed data on 957 adults over a 14-year period. Specifically, they looked at two immune system biological markers: C-reactive protein (CRP) and interleukin-6 (IL-6). These are two clear indicators of chronic inflammation, which is lurking behind many chronic diseases—as I often report. (See the sidebar for more.)

The researchers also gathered data on personality traits, including conscientiousness—which they defined as being organized, responsible, and capable of self-control. Prior studies showed that people with high levels of conscientiousness can have as much as a *40 percent reduced risk of death*.

In the new study, people who scored higher on the trait of conscientiousness also had lower levels of IL-6. And the researchers concluded that being more conscientious lead to less chronic inflammation—and therefore, a longer lifespan.

This link may be a common denominator in the mind-

body connection demonstrated by the new science of psychoneuroimmunology—which shows that emotional states, feelings, and thoughts influence hormonal and immune processes throughout the body, including inflammation.

In general, researchers want to understand the mechanisms behind *why* and *how* certain things work in the body—and understanding influences on the immune system is key to that discovery. Fortunately, this study opens up the opportunity for more research on personality types and health outcomes—as well as which kinds of mind-body treatments work best for certain personality types.

My own research on this topic was published as a chapter in my basic medical textbook, *Fundamentals of Complementary, Alternative, and Integrative Medicine*, 6<sup>th</sup> edition, and in two other consumer books, *Your Emotional Type* and *Overcoming Acute and Chronic Pain: Keys to Treatment Based on Your Emotional Type*. (All of which can be found under the "books" tab of my website, [www.DrMicozzi.com](http://www.DrMicozzi.com).)

These books tell you all you need to know about how your personality impacts your health, and all of the popular mind-body approaches that may work best for you. **TC**

*Citations for all articles available online at [www.DrMicozzi.com](http://www.DrMicozzi.com)*

## Natural ways to thwart the No. 1 cause of disease and aging

Of course, this new research is great news for those of us who are naturally conscientious. But what else can you do to combat inflammation and protect yourself from its potentially lethal consequences?

First and foremost, as always, your diet makes all the difference. Foods high in artificial fats, preservatives, processed carbs, and sugars promote chronic inflammation. That's why I recommend cutting them from your diet, and enjoying all of the delicious, healthy, wholesome foods in a Mediterranean-type diet—like full-fat dairy (milk, eggs, cheese, and yogurt), grass-fed and -finished meat (including lamb), wild-caught fish and seafood, fresh produce, seeds, nuts, beans, and olive oil.

Next, you should find natural ways to help reduce your stress. After all, stress hormones, including adrenaline and cortisol, also promote chronic inflammation.

So in addition to learning more about which mind-body treatments may work best for your personality type,

I also recommend: meditation or acupuncture, practicing mindfulness meditation (including "forest bathing", where you soak in all the benefits of Nature around you), and/or consuming alcohol and wine in moderation, as part of your healthy, balanced diet. (I recommend just one to three glasses, depending on your body size and other circumstances.)

Last but not least, since chronic inflammation is often very subtle, without many clear-cut, telltale symptoms, be sure to ask your doctor to start regularly measuring your levels of:

- CRP
- Homocysteine
- B-12 vitamin
- Vitamin D

For more remarkably fast and easy ways to reverse the No. 1 cause of disease and aging, check out my innovative, online learning tool, my *Protocol for Eliminating Deadly Inflammation*. To learn more, or to enroll, [click here](#) or call 1-866-747-9421 and ask for order code EOVSX701.