



Sunburn, insects, and sweat hijacking your summer fun?

Solve these common problems—naturally AND effectively

Summer is typically a time of fun and frolicking.

Whether you're at the beach, by the lake, in the woods, or simply strolling through your neighborhood park, now is a perfect time to get out in Nature to celebrate the sunshine and warmth.

But along with these simple pleasures come a few hazards—both indoors and out.

Some of them exist year-round, yet worsen in the summer.

For example, noise pollution is a constant problem. But typically it becomes more widespread during the summer months.

(On page 4, I discuss the simple steps you can take to combat the noise from lawnmowers and blowers—and keep your hearing sound.)

There's also more exposure to chemical pollutants used to maintain gardens, lawns, and golf courses during the summer season.

(Of course, you already know to never use toxic chemicals on your own yard or garden. Natural fertilizers and weed killers are widely available commercially, and are just as effective as their artificial counterparts.)

But what about other common summer woes like sunburn, pesky

insects, and sweat (overheating)?

You may think protecting yourself has to involve at least *some* toxins... through nasty chemical sunscreens or insect repellants and unhealthy air-conditioning systems.

This is NOT the case.

In fact, you can avoid sunburn, keep insects away, and stay cool *completely naturally AND effectively*. Here's how.

My top three natural sunscreens

I've written before about the chemicals in commercial sunscreens.

Plenty of research links them to cancer, reproductive problems, allergies, and other serious health concerns.

(To learn more about how sunscreen ingredients affect your health, check out the nonprofit Environmental Working Group's Sunscreen Guide at ewg.org/skindeep).

Of course, there are mineral sunscreens made from titanium dioxide and zinc oxide that are also widely available.

These ingredients *are* natural, but they have to be broken down into small particles, known as nanoparticles, to be effective in sunscreens.

Some studies show nanoparticles to be dangerous for your lungs if they're inhaled. So, be sure to always stay

away from mineral sunscreens in spray form.

Meanwhile, mineral sunscreen creams that you spread onto your body are *relatively* safe...but you can still do better.

In fact, there are some **plant oils** that are naturally sun protective and *completely* safe. My top three favorites include:

Carrot seed oil. This oil filters the sun's rays while allowing your skin to naturally build its own tanning protection from melanin. Plus, it has plenty of alpha- and beta-carotenes, which are natural antioxidants that help your body produce the vitamin A that nourishes and protects your skin.

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Red raspberry oil. This oil has all the protection of a chemical sunscreen, *without* the toxins. It's high in vitamin E, which is healing *and* protective for the skin.

Wheat germ oil. This oil is inexpensive and does not have a scent. It's lighter and less oily than carrot seed or red raspberry oil, yet offers similar protection against the sun. It contains vitamin E and antioxidants, both of which are nourishing to the skin.

(All three of these oils offer a sun protection factor [SPF] of 20.)

Because these essential oils can be strong when applied directly on your skin, I recommend diluting them in a carrier oil like coconut, olive, jojoba, sweet almond, or avocado oil. (These carrier oils hold an SPF between 2 to 15.)

You can even combine different essential and carrier oils to your liking. Experiment until you find a texture, scent, and protection level that's right for you.

You can find these oils at your local natural foods store or farmer's market. Remember to always look for organic versions, as they don't contain pesticides or other toxins.

Why insects no longer bug me

Insects can be another pesky summertime problem.

But just like commercial sunscreens, commercial insect repellants are loaded with toxic chemicals that can cause a whole host of health issues.

That's why I take a two-pronged approach to natural bug control during the summer months.

I start by making my own **natural insect repellant** from eucalyptus oil and citronella oil—two of the most powerful natural mosquito and bug

repellants you can find.

Just combine about 20 drops of either plant oil with two tablespoons of olive oil. (Other “cooking” oils work too, such as sunflower oil. I just don't recommend actually cooking with them!)

You can rub this mixture directly onto your skin. Or you can put it in a spray bottle to use both inside and outside. Not only will it naturally repel bugs, but you and your environment will smell great!

Speaking about your environment, my second natural insect-repelling approach is to include **plants that bugs don't like** around your patio and other outdoor seating areas.

There are certain plants that have developed natural compounds to keep bugs away from them. And these compounds work just as well as—or *better* than—chemical pesticides, insecticides, and repellants.

Even better? These plants are attractive to the eye...and can even be used in your favorite recipes.

My favorite botanical insect repellants include:

Basil. This popular Mediterranean herb will help keep away houseflies and mosquitos. Plus, during the summer months, you can pick fresh basil sprigs and add them to your favorite dishes. You can even harvest and dry the leaves to keep in your kitchen year-round.

Chrysanthemums. These perennial fall flowers contain a special chemical called pyrethrum, which naturally repels fleas, roaches, and ticks. In addition, the potent properties of this iconic Asian flower make it a key medicinal plant in Chinese medicine—particularly when the flower is dried and used in teas. (In traditional Chinese medicine,

they're used to help with respiratory problems, anxiety, and more.)

Lavender. Planting this pretty purple perennial herb in your house or garden will help keep away fleas, house flies, mosquitos, and moths. You can also freshen your closets and dresser drawers with a few aromatic sprigs of dried lavender. In addition, it has potent essential oils that have shown in numerous studies to help promote relaxation and sleep.

Lemongrass. This ornamental relative of citronella naturally repels mosquitos. It's also edible and commonly used in Thai dishes—especially soups.

Mint. Like its botanical cousins, basil and lavender, this herb repels mosquitos. But because it's so hardy and tenacious, mint can spread like a weed in the ground. That's why I recommend planting it in a pot. Then, you can pluck a sprig to muddle in your favorite cocktail. The alcohol will extract the flavor and potent plant oils for added health benefits.

Rosemary. Popular in cooking and useful medicinally, rosemary also

repels mosquitos. You can plant it in a pot or the ground around your outdoor sitting area. Then, when you feel it getting especially buggy, rub a few rosemary sprigs directly on your skin.

You can also make an insect repellent by boiling 1 cup of dried rosemary leaves in a quart of water. Let the water cool and pour it into a spray bottle. Then, you can spritz yourself (and your pets) whenever you're outside.

Surprising supplement protects you from the heat

Now, let's talk about that summertime heat. Research shows that the **B vitamin folic acid** may be a natural, inexpensive way to help you keep your cool. (It can even help reduce your risk of heart attack and stroke.)

How can a simple vitamin serve as an internal air conditioner?

Well, it all has to do with our blood vessels.

As I've reported before, B vitamins have been shown in studies to prevent blood vessel damage and

inflammation—which reduces your risk of cardiovascular disease. (Indeed, raising your B vitamin levels and managing your blood pressure are two of the most important steps to dramatically reduce your risk of a heart attack or stroke.)

But there's yet another beneficial effect...

One way our bodies stay cool is to shift blood flow closer to the skin, where the heat can be released with the help of nitric oxide (NO). But older adults can have difficulty producing NO.

Fortunately, researchers have discovered that a substance called tetrahydrobiopterin (BH4) helps our bodies produce NO. And folic acid helps produce BH4.

So, it makes sense that, in a recent study, older people who were given folic acid had improved blood flow and better ability to fight heat-related strokes and heart attacks.¹

The study involved one group of 11 people with an average age of 71, and another group of 11 people with

This tasty, nutritional sauce pairs well with any grilled favorite

This summer, I plan to soak up some sun and make good use of the season's fresh produce with some delicious, homemade foods and sauces.

In fact, I love grilling a good steak, rack of lamb, chicken, or fresh fish to enjoy with my friends and family.

And one of my favorite sauces to use as a marinade is **Chimichurri**.

Chimichurri sauce is an Argentinean condiment, similar in some ways to pesto. It's popular throughout South America to serve with grilled *parillada* (Latin American mixed grill).

You can even use it on your pasta, salads, grilled veggies, and more!

It packs a ton of flavor and a BIG

nutritional punch.

So, without further ado, here are the ingredients to my basic chimichurri sauce:

- 1 cup firmly packed fresh flat-leaf parsley, trimmed of thick stems
- 3-4 garlic cloves
- 2 tablespoons fresh oregano leaves
- 1/3 cup olive oil
- 2 tablespoons red wine vinegar
- 1/2 teaspoon sea salt
- 1/8 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
- 1/4 teaspoon dried red chili pepper flakes

Then, preparing it couldn't be easier. All

it takes is three simple steps!

First, finely chop the **parsley, oregano, and garlic**. (For lamb, add 4 tablespoons of fresh mint as well. For chicken or fish, add 2 tablespoons of fresh cilantro to your taste.)

Second, place the fresh herbs in a bowl and stir in the **olive oil, vinegar, salt, pepper, and red pepper flakes**. You can adjust the spices to taste.

Third, serve immediately or refrigerate. If chilled, return to room temperature before serving. It keeps in the fridge for a week or two.

Enjoy! This simple sauce will add flavor and flair to your summertime cookouts...and some excellent nutritional value.

an average age of 22. Each group member was given either a placebo or 5 mg of folic acid daily for six weeks.

Results showed that in the older group, the folic acid increased blood vessel dilation.

In fact, folic acid had the *same effect* on nitric oxide production as an expensive pharmaceutical drug.

Which goes to show that we can count on natural approaches (like B vitamin supplementation) for safe, simple, and affordable solutions to staying healthy (and cool).

I suggest you help beat the heat of summer by taking a high-quality B-complex that contains 400 mcg of folic acid. And don't stop taking it when the temperature drops... a lifelong regimen of B supplementation can do wonders for your circulation, heart, and blood vessels.

There you have it! Now you know how to naturally, effectively (and inexpensively) protect yourself from common summertime issues—including sunburn, insects, and heat.

Before I go, there's just one more summer hazard I'd like to prepare you (or a loved one) for...

Stay out of the hospital this summer

You already do whatever you can to stay out of hospitals.

But if you *do* need to visit a doctor or schedule a non-emergency surgery, by all means, try not to do it in July.

Why?

First of all, July is when new interns and residents join hospital staffs, and others depart. That wreaks havoc with staffing coverage, consistency, and scheduling.

In addition, many seasoned, senior doctors and nurses take their vacations during summer (like most everyone else)—creating staffing challenges.

This phenomenon is so consistent it even has a name: *the July Effect*. And numerous studies show that the July Effect results in more hospital mistakes, accidents, and deaths throughout the month, and into August.

But despite these well-documented problems, neither hospital nor medical school schedules change—even though their mechanisms are outdated...not to mention unsafe.

Sadly, my family and I have experienced this effect ourselves. It happened to my paternal grandfather in 1970 and my mother in 2016. It almost happened to me just a few years ago, too!

In my own case, I began suffering from significant gastrointestinal (GI) bleeding right in the middle of the July 4th holiday weekend. Since I didn't want to go to the hospital, I decided I could safely monitor myself at home.

I decided to stop all medications (but continued taking my dietary supplements) since prescription and over-the-counter drugs may often be causes of GI bleeding.

Thankfully, my blood pressure and blood sugar remained normal all weekend...and lab values remain so today (more on that in next month's newsletter). Plus, my GI bleeding stopped!

So, while I urge you to take preventive, *natural* measures for good health year-round, be extra careful in the summer. And if it turns out you can't SAFELY avoid a summertime hospital visit, consider asking family members or friends to be extra vigilant in helping to oversee your care.

Silence can protect your health?

Excess noise wreaks havoc on hearing, cognition, and more

Noise pollution—classified as any undesirable, disturbing, constant, or excessive sound—is an invisible threat to our health.

It can range from your spouse clinking dishes in the kitchen...all the way to construction or cars honking on the street. (Not to mention all those nasty gas-powered blowers and mowers that appear to surround us all

summer long—and in some places, all year.)

If it seems like noise is increasing all around you...and becoming more of an annoyance...that's because it *is*. At least, for many.

A new survey reports that after pandemic lockdowns, more people are struggling with the distractions of loud noises in daily life.

Some of this is due to *an actual increase* in the types of noises around us. But it's also in part to us coming out of quieter lockdown environments—and then being re-exposed to those “pre-pandemic” sounds, making them feel excessive.

Either can lead to some serious, chronic health issues.

For instance, studies found an

association between noise pollution from transportation sources and a heightened risk of diabetes, heart disease, and obesity.

And a new study shows that exposure to traffic and train noise may increase the risk of Alzheimer's disease by a shocking *27 percent*.

The message behind these findings is clear: It's more important now than ever to protect yourself from excess noise.

Of course, you could channel your inner Thoreau and move into the woods to "live deliberately." But if the silence of Walden Pond isn't in your future, there are other steps you can take to add some quiet to your life.

Plus, these steps will help protect your health—including your *hearing*—no matter how noisy your environment.

So, in a moment, I'll share my top tips to reduce noise pollution and boost your health for years to come.

But first, let's take a closer look at some of the shocking health risks of excess, unwanted noise...

The link between COVID-19 and noise

In a new survey conducted earlier this year, involving just over two thousand adult Americans, researchers analyzed the link between COVID-19 and noise.¹

Results showed that about four in 10 people have become more sensitive to loud music and conversations since early 2020, when pandemic lockdowns began. That sensitivity can lead to health issues.

In fact, more than *half* of the survey respondents (54 percent) said loud noises give them a headache. And not just occasional pain either—we're talking about a whopping *six*

headaches a week.

So what does the pandemic have to do with all of this? Well, scientists think that people became used to quieter environments during lockdowns. We weren't out and about in crowded, noisy offices, restaurants, or other gathering places.

Living in relative silence can cause the brain to readjust to quiet. So, when people *did* finally venture outside their homes, they had heightened sensitivity to loud noises.

Fortunately, that sensitivity seems to be temporary for most. And 75 percent of survey respondents said that overall, they have a strong sense of hearing and took good care of their ears.

That's good news in light of the new study I mentioned earlier...

The link between noise and dementia

Between 2014 and 2017, Danish researchers analyzed data on noise and dementia involving nearly 2 million people ages 60 and older.²

(Denmark has an almost unique situation in terms of their population's health data. Everybody in the country has a health registration number that tracks them throughout their lifetimes. The practice was started back in 1940—meaning almost the entire population participates in the health database.)

The researchers found that during the study period, over 100,000 people were diagnosed with dementia—including Alzheimer's disease, vascular dementia, and Parkinson's disease.

The researchers then tracked the participants' exposure to road traffic and railway noise. After accounting for other factors related to the residents and their neighborhoods,

the researchers found that a 10-year average exposure to these particular noises resulted in a *27 percent higher risk* of Alzheimer's.

The researchers cited several possible reasons for this increased risk.

First, noise can cause stress. That means more stress hormones like cortisol coursing through the body. This can create more oxidative stress, inflammation, and alterations to the immune system—boosting the risk of disease and affecting cognition in the brain.

Not to mention, exposure to noise during the night can interrupt sleep. And it's been well documented that sleep disturbances can lead to chronic disease, including dementia.

Earplugs and noise-cancelling headphones can help

What can you do about all of this noise pollution?

Well, you can start with earplugs or noise-cancelling headphones.

The survey found that 60 percent of respondents were in favor of wearing earplugs to help with their increased sensitivity to noises. (Some just didn't feel entirely comfortable wearing them if the earplugs were noticeable.)

Nonetheless, 70 percent of those surveyed said they use earplugs to help them fall asleep at night, and about 50 percent said they use them once per day.

Plus, finding headphones that are specifically designed to reduce background noises can help you limit noise pollution without being completely cut off from what's going on around you.

I also recommend paying close attention to the noises that bother you, especially damaging and

disturbing noises. Then you can wear earplugs or noise-cancelling headphones in those specific circumstances.

And if gas-powered lawnmowers or blowers are disrupting your quiet time, we discussed some solutions in the March 2020 issue of *Insiders' Cures*.

In general, though, I suggest leading by example. Use a push mower or electric mower and an old-fashioned rake instead. Then, encourage your neighbors to do the same.

If you belong to a homeowners' association, see if there's anything that can be done about switching your neighborhood's lawn and garden practices to more sustainable methods. For instance, encourage a "leave the leaves" policy.

Of course, there are also personal lifestyle changes you can make to protect your hearing in a noisy world...

Three ways to preserve your hearing

There's plenty of evidence showing that just three simple lifestyle changes can improve hearing—no matter how much noise pollution you have to deal with.

Here's what I recommend.

1.) Eat a Mediterranean-type diet.

Recently, researchers analyzed data from the huge Nurses' Health Study II Conservation of Hearing Study (CHEARS). The median age of the women who participated in the study was 59.³

Among the women who ate a Mediterranean or other type of healthy diet—full of fresh, whole foods like organic produce, full-fat dairy, grass-fed and -finished meat, wild-caught fish and seafood, and more—the researchers found:

- Mid-range hearing loss was almost *30 percent less* frequent compared with women who ate less-healthy diets
- High-frequency hearing loss was up to *25 percent less* prevalent

The researchers also noted that prior studies found higher intake of the following nutrients was particularly beneficial for hearing:

- **Carotenoids**, found in carrots, squash, citrus, and other yellow-orange fruits and vegetables
- **Folate** (B vitamin), found in leafy green vegetables, legumes, and meats
- **Omega-3 fatty acids**, found in fish and other seafood

Of course, all of these foods and nutrients are a part of the Mediterranean diet.

2.) Ditch the pain pills. Research shows certain pain relievers can increase your risk of hearing loss. In fact, a recent study showed that even supposedly innocuous over-the-counter pain relievers like acetaminophen (Tylenol®), ibuprofen, and aspirin can affect hearing.⁴

The study involved data from nearly 56,000 women, ages 44 to 69, who were participating in the Nurses' Health Study. Researchers found that women who took ibuprofen twice daily for at least six years were 10 percent more likely to have hearing loss than women who took the same amount of ibuprofen for one year or less. And women who took Tylenol® had a 9 percent decrease in hearing.

Overall, researchers determined that *16 percent* of the study participants' hearing loss could be attributed to regular painkiller usage. They also noted that these results are similar to a study they did in men—which linked Tylenol®, ibuprofen, *and*

aspirin to hearing loss.

All in all, researchers think painkillers can affect hearing by interfering with blood supply to the inner ear and damaging the tiny hairs of the inner ear.

Just imagine how much you could preserve your hearing if you rarely—or *never*—took drug painkillers and turned to natural solutions instead!

3.) Get on the move. I mentioned earlier that researchers are analyzing how hearing (as well as vision and other sensory losses) affects dementia, cognitive decline, and other disorders of the brain. But I haven't yet mentioned that some

Three nutrients that can improve your hearing

Studies show that free radicals in the inner ear are a key factor in hearing loss. So, antioxidant vitamins like A and C can play an important role in prevention and treatment.

It's also thought that magnesium helps restore blood flow to the hearing apparatus of the ear following damage by excessive noise. So it makes sense that a recent study found you can get the best effects by supplementing with these three nutrients.⁵

Researchers analyzed nutrient intakes and hearing loss in nearly 2,600 men and women, ages 20 to 69. They found that those who consumed more A, C, and magnesium had better hearing levels at both normal speech ranges and high-frequency ranges of sound.

Plus, the impact of all three nutrients acting together was stronger than the individual effects of each of the nutrients acting alone.

I recommend taking 250 mg of vitamin C twice a day, along with 400 mg of magnesium citrate once a day, together with a balanced diet.

I DON'T recommend supplementing with vitamin A, though. Instead, eat plenty of yellow and orange fruits and vegetables, which contain high amounts of carotenoids. Your body naturally and safely converts the carotenoids into vitamin A.

of these studies are done while participants are sitting or lying down (for example, while performing brain imaging using MRI).

And that's important, because the way the brain processes sensory input differs depending on whether your head and body are unnaturally still, or whether you're walking around.

In animal studies, more body movement leads to more sensory input into the brain. So it may very well be that, in humans, movement is associated with better sensory output

like vision and hearing.

Plus, as I often report, moderate daily exercise is vital for your health. I always recommend 20 minutes a day of moderate physical activity like walking, hiking, gardening, or simple housework, for a total of 140 to 150 minutes per week.

So, getting out and enjoying the sounds of Nature, especially during the summer months (see page 1), may very well help preserve your hearing—naturally.

For more information on how to keep your hearing sharp well into your golden years, check out my *Insider's Ultimate Guide to Outsmarting "Old Age."*

This comprehensive online learning protocol offers dozens of simple, common-sense strategies for staying vibrant, youthful, and HEALTHY well into your 70s, 80s—and beyond.

You can learn more about it or enroll today by [clicking here](#) or calling 1-866-747-9421 and asking for code EOY3Y600.

Baobab: The “tree of life” can also be the “drink” of life

Baobab trees grow primarily in East and South Africa and can live for hundreds of years. In fact, they date back at least 200 million years.

The fruit from these gnarled, venerable trees has historically had an important role supporting the nutrition and health of people in Africa.

To Africans, baobab is known as the “tree of life.”

It's a powerful symbol of viability because baobab thrives in a landscape where few plants can survive. Plus, it produces nutrient-dense fruits during the long, dry seasons.

Now, the science is finally catching up and shining a light on baobab's *extensive* health benefits.

The fruit has a ton to offer nutritionally—and, as new research reveals, it could even be considered the “drink” of life.

Let me explain...

The bountiful baobab fruit

Baobab fruits are gathered after

they've fallen from the trees. (Entire African communities center around this natural harvest.)

The fruit grows inside a hard shell, like a coconut, and has a citrus-like flavor. It travels well while still in the shell and is traded among traditional peoples in Africa.

Baobab fruit is a good source of vitamins A, B, C, D, and E—and its seeds are rich in essential fats and antioxidants.

The fruit also contains both soluble *and* insoluble fiber, which is important for gastrointestinal (GI) health and function.

(Some fiber supplements are even made with baobab. These products remain usable for long periods of time. They don't firm up into a gel like psyllium, for example).

This is important because the U.S. Institute of Medicine estimates that a whopping *95 percent* of Americans don't get enough fiber in their diets¹—making baobab a vital nutrient.

Research shows the fruit pulp also supports the GI microbiome. In fact, baobab can be considered a prebiotic food because it nourishes the beneficial probiotics in the GI tract.

Baobab has also been shown to effect satiety, creating a feeling of fullness after eating and satisfying hunger (while providing essential nutrients).

In addition, research shows health benefits specific to supporting healthy blood sugar and digestion.

A good addition to a balanced diet

Taking all of this into account, is it any wonder that baobab fruit, and the dietary supplement ingredients derived from it, are now being marketed as a trendy “super fruit”?

Of course, the idea of a “super food” has never made sense to me. Healthy foods and dietary supplements should be part of a balanced diet, and their use should be based on the science—not on a marketing campaign.

Not to mention, Africans don't

consume baobab because they think they're eating a trendy product. Their traditional use dovetails with the new science showing the many health aspects of this nutritional fruit.

For example, research performed in Kenya shows 25 percent of children have low blood counts (anemia) and need more iron from their diet. So—scientists looked to see if baobab could help.

It's thought that vitamin C can increase the ability of iron from the diet to travel into red blood cells. And, among its many nourishing attributes, the pulp of the baobab fruit has a much higher C content than most other fruits and vegetables.

Researchers gathered 58 Kenyan children, ages 6 to 12, and divided them into two groups.² Every day for 12 weeks, one group drank a beverage with baobab powder. The other group consumed a drink without baobab.

After just five weeks, the children who consumed the baobab drink had higher intakes of dietary vitamin C, as well as calcium, compared to the placebo group. The baobab group also had healthier red blood cell counts and iron levels than the placebo group.

How to add baobab to your diet

If you don't live in Africa, you'll likely have trouble finding baobab fruit.

That's another reason why the fruit is increasingly being dried and made into dietary supplement powders.

These powders contain all of the nutrients of the fresh, whole fruit—and can be combined with other healthy ingredients for extra nutrition.

I suggest adding a high-quality baobab powder (from a brand you trust) to water for a daily treat. You'll end up with a citrus-flavored beverage that not only tastes good—but is good for you. You can find baobab powder together with other healthy water-soluble powders such as blueberry, rose hips and rooibos (red bush tea).

Citations for all articles available online at www.DrMicozzi.com

Prescription of the month: A healthy dose of Nature (The simplest and safest medicine there is)

There's a new non-drug "prescription" making its rounds.

While some doctors are using it for their stressed-out patients, I've always prescribed it to you for countless health benefits. Since it truly works wonders for ultimate health and longevity.

In fact, I routinely report on the connection between health and **getting outdoors in Nature** (our non-drug "prescription").

Studies show that being in Nature has significant positive influences on mental and physical health. There's quite a bit of research revealing how it can lower your heart rate, blood pressure, and cortisol (the stress and "aging" hormone).

Some researchers believe there's a link between lack of time spent in Nature and mental health conditions like depression, anxiety, and attention deficit disorders.

In fact, even small natural elements—such as a water feature on your balcony or a sitting area in your garden—can help improve mental and spiritual health.

In a study of older adults, ages 65 to 86, researchers found access to blue and green spaces, no matter the size, encouraged men and women to simply get out the door.¹

"This in turn motivates them to be

active physically, spiritually, and socially, which can offset chronic illness, disability, and isolation," said lead study author Jessica Findlay.²

Not to mention, research shows that simply planting more trees on urban streets can improve the mental and physical health of people living in the neighborhood.³ (Food for thought if you're lacking ample green space at home.)

Of course, according to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), most people fail to explore the great outdoors, regardless of where they live.

The EPA reports that Americans spend about 90 percent of their time indoors, with an additional 6 percent in enclosed vehicles. That means the average American spends just 4 percent of their lives outside, in Nature.⁴

Is it any wonder that chronic health problems are on the rise?

That's why some enlightened doctors are fighting back. They're actually writing prescriptions for "one hour of time in the park a week" or "a mile walk along the beach or in the woods every Saturday."

The best part? Patients tend to take this message more seriously because it actually *is* a prescription...and easy to fill—rather than non-specific advice to simply "go outside."

Of course, there's nothing really groundbreaking about a Nature prescription. I've written before about how, as the U.S. became more urbanized during the late 1800s, doctors began prescribing a "Nature cure" (or a rest cure, or even a "west cure," as the nation expanded) from common illnesses.

In fact, Theodore Roosevelt suffered from childhood ailments and took the advice to "go west" as a young man, which famously restored his vigor.

Meanwhile, in New York City, Central Park was created largely as a response to the growing health problems of the crowded, unhealthy conditions of urbanization.

In recent years, a "new" trend called forest bathing—which actually extends further back in Japan (as I wrote in the March 2020 issue of *Insiders' Cures*)—has come on scene as a way to fully immerse oneself in Nature.

So, especially now, let's revive these cures.

This month, I offer the following "Nature prescription": Aim to spend at least 20 minutes outside in Nature daily (without toxic sunscreen, see page 1).

And please write in (feedback@drmicozzi.com), telling me your favorite ways to get out in Nature and soak in some summertime sun (and fun!).