

Sideline

HEALTH STUDY

Lending spice to joint relief?

There might be more to a plate of curry than just a tasty dinner.

Turmeric, a traditional Indian remedy and the spice that gives curry its distinctive yellow color, might prevent rheumatoid arthritis.

In a study published recently in the journal *Arthritis & Rheumatism*, Barbara Timmermann of the University of Kansas and Janet Funk of the University of Arizona report that an extract of turmeric prevented joint inflammation in rats.

Clinical trials on people will be needed to show whether the dietary supplements are truly effective, Timmermann said.

Turmeric root has been used in traditional Indian and Chinese medicine for centuries to treat such maladies as fevers, bronchitis, diarrhea and kidney inflammations.

More recently, scientists have explored turmeric's antioxidant properties. Animal studies have found that curcumin, one of the active ingredients in turmeric, inhibits the growth of cancers, slowed the development of plaques in the brain associated with Alzheimer's disease and inhibited the destruction of joint cartilage and bone.

Turmeric works by keeping a certain kind of protein called a transcription factor from being activated in joints. That factor controls genes that switch on or off to produce inflammatory proteins that destroy joints.

Pharmaceutical companies have been working on drugs that control the same transcription factor.

—McClatchy-Tribune

PHARMACY Q&A

Ditch older flu drugs

Q: How do you tell whether you have the flu or a cold?

A: The flu has a sudden onset with symptoms that include high fever and chills, cough, runny or congested nose, sore throat, intense fatigue, severe muscle aches and headache.

When the flu knocks you down, a prime danger is that you become more susceptible to bacterial infections such as pneumonia.

So it's important to dodge the flu if you can. The best way to do that is to get a flu vaccination.

If you do get the flu, there's still an option: a prescription antiviral drug. The drug can cut the illness short if started within 48 hours after symptoms begin.

Antiviral drugs include the older agents amantadine (Symmetrel) and rimantadine (Flumadine) and the newer agents Tamiflu and Relenza. They prevent flu viruses from replicating once they get inside the body.

Doctors who prescribe an antiviral drug probably should choose Tamiflu or Relenza. The CDC recommends the older agents not be used this season. Testing in the United States and Canada indicates that flu virus strains have become too resistant to them.

—Richard Harkness
McClatchy-Tribune

GET FIT

New twist on an old plank



A few years ago I wrote about the plank, a great static exercise. Many readers told me they loved it so much that they added it to their exercise routine. So, here we go again, but with a ball to make things interesting.

This version of the plank not only builds endurance and works your core isometrically, it challenges the deepest layer of abdominal muscle that wraps around your entire midsection, as well as your lower back.

To do: Start by kneeling on your hands and feet with your wrists shoulder width apart and directly below your chest. Then, position your feet with your toes down on a small Swiss ball. To begin, push up off the floor by raising your hips and extending your legs until your body forms a straight line from head to heels with just your feet and toes balancing on the ball. Contract your abdominals and breathe normally for 30 to 60 seconds. Make sure to maintain head and spine alignment during the exercise. Pause for about 10 seconds between the sets. Complete three sets.

—Nancy Cole
McClatchy-Tribune

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PULSE

Your path to fitness and health

SECTION D

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Natural healing

HEALTH CONSUMERS
COMPLEMENT CARE
WITH ALTERNATIVE
TREATMENTS



By Catherine W. Idzerda
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“Natural” medicine used to bring to mind visions of beaded, co-op-shopping types.

Not anymore.

Naturopathic medicine, while still not an all-together welcome part of the mainstream medical establishment, is gaining in popularity. Some traditional medical clinics even have added a naturopathic doctor to their staffs.

More than 80 million Americans turn to complementary and alternative medicine every year, according to the Association of Accredited Naturopathic Medical Colleges. Many health care consumers use naturopathic medicine in addition to traditional medical treatment.

As trends go, it has a lot to do with word of mouth. Friends hear from friends that they feel so much better, finally found “someone to listen to them” or are living pain free for the first time, all because of the intervention of a naturopathic doctor.

“We have just begun to do traditional advertising,” said Jill Evenson, a naturopathic medical doctor with

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Dan Lassiter photos/dlassiter@gazetteextra.com

Above: Dr. Allison Becker, a naturopath, uses cupping to increase circulation in the back of a patient at Janesville's Naturopathic Family Clinic.

At left: Dr. Jill Evenson, a naturopath, treats Patrick Ryan of Janesville with myofascial release body work at the clinic.

CAN'T GET TO A NATUROPATH?

Jill Evenson, naturopath at the Naturopathic Family Clinic in Janesville, offered her top five tips to a healthier you.

1. Drink at least half your body weight in ounces of water every day.
2. Get some sleep. Eight hours a night is tied to healthy mental functioning and weight loss. “We think we've evolved beyond sleep, but we haven't,” Evenson said.
3. Keep moving. That can mean exercising, or dancing in the living room, or yoga or taking a ballroom dance class. “So many chronic diseases are tied to sedentary lifestyles,” Evenson said.
4. Eat at least one green vegetable a day. A teacher at Evenson's college challenged her students to eat one green vegetable a day for three weeks in a row. It took Evenson four months to do it.
5. Breathe. Try to notice your breathing at different points throughout the day. Take a deep breath in and fill your lungs. You'll feel re-energized.

Acupuncture gets points as alternative therapy



McClatchy-Tribune

Dr. Harsha Jayatilake performs an acupuncture procedure on Kay Jewett, 61, of Royal Oak, Mich.

Insurance sometimes covers pain treatment

By Patricia Anstett
McClatchy-Tribune

Water cascades in a tabletop fountain. Flute music plays softly. Oriental paintings hug the walls.

Acupuncturist Renee Hubbs aims to please, soothe and alleviate the problems of a growing number of converts who seek out the ancient art.

For 22 years, she's offered acupuncture for pain relief, smoking cessation, stress reduction, infertility, hormonal balance for postmenopausal women and, more recently, face-lifts. To plump

up the skin and iron wrinkles away, Hubbs uses two pencil-like tools that emit a low-frequency current applied to acupuncture points on the face.

“My whole body is relaxed; I've become one with the table,” Jane Handy, 52, of Imlay City, Mich., tells Hubbs after a recent acupuncture face-lift. “When you think of the trauma of a face-lift, this is heaven by comparison.”

A new Michigan law gives consumers a way to find the best-trained acupuncturists. Wisconsin and all but seven states have such laws. To be registered, acupuncturists need several thousand hours of training, usually through a four-year program, and they must pass a national exam.

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McClatchy-Tribune

Kim Kemper prepares a stir-fry with tofu and broccoli at her home in Doylestown, Pa., as part of a detox program.

Detox is a waste—or worse—some warn

■ Experts are divided on fasting, enemas, etc.

By Dawn Fallik
McClatchy-Tribune

PHILADELPHIA—Are you living? Breathing? Eating? Then clearly, you need to be detoxed. Cleansed from the inside out, like a loofah to the liver.

From magazine covers to pop-up ads to spa brochures, detoxification programs are all the rage. With a few pills, a mix of lemon, cayenne pepper and maple syrup, or a week of fasting and enemas, programs promise to wash away toxins.

“All of us have picked up numerous toxins from the campfire, fireworks, BBQs, intensified smog on our busy highways,” says one sales pitch. “And being outdoors more often, we tend to pick up more free radicals which make our immune system weaker and leave us feeling very fatigued.”

Those who believe have no doubt the fasts, the cleansing pills and the spa programs work. They feel lighter, more energized, more aware, and they don't need mainstream medicine's stamp of approval.

Doctors raise red flags

But as the practice booms, with \$27 million being spent last year alone in purging products, both traditional and alternative medical experts are raising red flags, saying people can become sick from trying to come clean.

“In my opinion, it's difficult to say what value these liver and colon cleansings have,” said Scott Greenberg, a family medicine doctor at the Magaziner Center for Wellness & Anti-Aging Medicine in Cherry Hill, N.J. As part of his practice, Greenberg is overseeing a federally funded trial on chelation therapy, in which heavy metals are believed to be removed from the body using an amino acid.

“I've had plenty of patients who have done it and say they feel better,” he says, “but if they've gone from eating junk food or processed food to a diet with more vegetables and juices, whether they're using coffee enemas or teas, there's just not as much junk going through their system.”

The word “detox” can mean something as simple as a drink of water after a massage, to the weeklong \$4,623 “Detox and Colon Cleanse” program at The Raj spa in Iowa (where the coffee enemas are included, but the “enhanced oils from India” at a cost of \$350 a day are not).

The Food and Drug Administration does not require herbs and vitamins to undergo the rigorous tests required of pharmaceuticals. Many traditional doctors are skeptical of the detox claims, but they recognize that many of today's medicines are derived from natural products—they're just waiting for proof.

“The best thing that could happen is if these companies making products would allow them to be tested,” says Keith Lindor, a gastroenterologist who specializes in liver problems at the Mayo Clinic College

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