

Flourish

A woman with long brown hair, wearing a white t-shirt and a dark green apron, is kneeling in a garden. She is focused on tending to a plant in a pot. The background is a soft-focus garden scene with various plants and flowers, bathed in the warm, golden light of a sunset or sunrise. The overall mood is peaceful and nurturing.

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Editor's Letter



Spring is the season of splendour and rebirth. It brings the promise of sunny days and green grass, and allows us to get back to our favourite outdoor activities. Whether you choose to pick up a racquet, jump on a bike, find a nice trail to hike, or just sit on your balcony with a cup of tea, getting outside in the first days of spring truly is a breath of fresh air. I have always felt an unexplained need to clean up the yard and start planting.

Whether it was strawberries and cherry tomatoes that my children would pick before I could, or the lettuce that ended up feeding rabbits rather than my family, it always felt great to see the seeds I planted emerge from the earth. But in all these years, I never dreamed this could be good for my health. I discovered it is, thanks to Dr. Brunel's latest article on Green Social Prescribing.

We have much more for you to discover in this issue. Our expert contributors have provided guidance on antioxidants, recommendations to help recover from respiratory illnesses, and an introduction to a new technology that can provide visibility on liver health. We've included an article specific to male rejuvenation, practical tips and delicious recipes to stay healthy today and well into the future, and some scientific advice on choosing medicinal mushrooms to ensure you get the therapeutic benefits you expect.

Whatever advice you choose incorporate into your routine this spring, we hope it will help you for many seasons to come, and *Flourish* into happier and healthier future.

Sophia Golanowski, BCom, MBA
Editor-in-Chief

Happy reading.

Flourish

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Editor-in-Chief

Sophia Golanowski

Assistant Editor

Mélissa Thibodeau

Scientific Content Editor

Annick Moffatt

Graphic Designer

Cédric Primeau

Translation/Revision

Pierre Paquette • Cédric Primeau

Advertising Sales

Sophia Golanowski, BCom, MBA

1 800 268-9486 ext. 266

golanowskis@flourishbodyandmind.com

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Ask Gord

Gordon Raza

Article Contributors



Dale Drewery

Coauthor of *BioDiet: The Scientifically Proven, Ketogenic Way to Lose Weight and Improve Your Health*.



Wendy Present, RHNC, CFMP

A former nurse, retired naturopathic doctor, and recent author, she is passionate about helping people optimize their journey through life.



Colleen Hartwick, ND

A licensed naturopathic physician practising on North Vancouver Island, BC, with a special interest in trauma.



Odessa Gill, ND

She has been in practice for 20 years with a focus on stress management, fertility, and hormonal health.



Felicia Assenza, HBSc, ND

A Hamilton-based naturopathic doctor whose goal in every patient visit is to share the knowledge and experiences that she gained on her own journey



Kim Abog, ND

Dr. Kim Abog helps people thrive navigating their reproductive-health journey: periods, transitions, fertility, pregnancy, postpartum, and beyond.



Ludovic Brunel, ND

Practicing in Calgary, his approach has always been to improve health outcomes by relying on the best research available.



Serge Philibert Kuate, PhD

Serge is a scientist with extensive experience in analytical testing. His peer-reviewed research has been published internationally.



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The Cellular Battle for Your Health

by Kim Abog, ND

With the rise of holistic health awareness and easier access to evidence-based wellness information, antioxidants have become a mainstream wellness staple. No longer limited to research papers, they now appear in skincare products, specialized foods, dietary supplements, and everyday health conversations online.

What Are Antioxidants Anyway?

To better understand what antioxidants are and how they are beneficial to our health, we must first understand what free radicals (sometimes called oxidants) are. In chemistry and cellular biology, free radicals are molecules that have unpaired electrons, which naturally makes them highly unstable and reactive. Free radicals are produced in your body via a variety of normal biological processes such as aerobic metabolism (i.e., breathing, digesting, exercising) and pathogenic defense mechanisms. They can also come from external exposures such as pollution, cigarette smoking, alcohol, processed foods, radiation, and excessive sun exposure.

Free radicals play essential roles in immune defence, cellular signalling, and physiological adaptation, and are not inherently harmful. Produced naturally during metabolism, they help the body respond to challenges such as infection, exercise, and environmental stress. In these contexts, free radicals are necessary and beneficial—it's the balance between them and antioxidant defenses that matters. The instability of free radicals can sometimes start affecting the integrity and structures of nearby cells (think membranes, lipids, proteins, DNA). Free radicals are missing an electron and so they tend to “steal” from structures that have other electrons to stabilize themselves. In excess, free radicals (or oxidants) give rise to a phenomenon called oxidative stress.

Oxidative stress happens when there is an imbalance between the presence of free radicals and how capable your body is in clearing them. When there is chronic oxidative stress, it can damage tissues long-term and contribute to inflammation, chronic and degenerative diseases like heart disease, hypertension, preeclampsia, diabetes, Alzheimer's dementia, and cancer, as well as speed up aging processes and acute pathologies (e.g., stroke, kidney failure).

Now, here is where antioxidants come in. Do note that natural antioxidants are derived from almost all plant sources (fruits, vegetables, grains, beans, nuts, and seeds) and some animal tissues. Antioxidants' abilities to exert antioxidant, anti-inflammatory, or health-promoting activity depends on plant species, diversity, extraction method, and growing conditions. Antioxidants in red, orange, and purple-coloured fruits and vegetables exert a high antioxidant activity.

Antioxidant	Solubility	Stored or Excreted?	Foods Rich in This Antioxidant
<i>alpha</i> -Lipoic Acid (ALA)	Both water- and fat-soluble	Not significantly stored; requires regular intake	Spinach, broccoli, tomatoes, Brussels sprouts, organ meats (especially liver)
Astaxanthin	Fat-soluble	Stored in fatty tissues; released over time	Wild salmon, sockeye salmon, trout, shrimp, krill, lobster
Glutathione	Water-soluble	Used quickly and excreted; needs frequent replenishment	Avocado, asparagus, spinach, okra, broccoli, garlic
Vitamin C	Water-soluble	Excess excreted in urine; daily intake required	Citrus fruits, bell peppers, kiwi, strawberries, broccoli
Vitamin E	Fat-soluble	Stored in liver and fat tissue	Almonds, sunflower seeds, hazelnuts, spinach, avocado

Essentially, antioxidants are compounds that help protect your cells from damage caused by free radicals. Antioxidants can do this because they donate some of their own electrons to neutralize the free radicals without becoming unstable themselves. Antioxidants have been shown to slow down, manage, or block processes involved in the progression of oxidative stress. Ultimately, this makes utilizing antioxidants so promising in improving one's health.

Why We Need Antioxidants

Our bodies are incredibly resilient, partly owing to our own internal antioxidant and detoxification systems such as reduced glutathione (GSH). However, with increasing physiological and environmental stressors and lifestyle challenges, our bodies may require additional antioxidant support. Extensive studies have been shown to demonstrate the effects of antioxidant nutritional supplements on the development and risks of chronic diseases associated with premature aging, cancer, cataracts, brain fog, fatigue, immune suppression, illness and exercise recovery, and more. Such studies suggest that having a healthy antioxidant balance is:

1. protective of cognitive health and immune function;
2. helpful in supporting skin, energy, and metabolism;
3. important in reducing inflammation; and
4. vital in preventing and mitigating chronic disease.



All Antioxidants Are Not the Same

Indeed, not all antioxidants work the same way, in the same parts of your body, or provide the same benefits. Below are some antioxidants that prove how unique and potent they can be when used in appropriate cases.

alpha-Lipoic Acid (ALA)

alpha-Lipoic acid is a water- and fat-soluble antioxidant, which plays a role in its versatility in supporting cellular and tissue damage (recall oxidative stress). ALA is naturally found in animal tissues with high metabolic activity, such as organ meats like heart, liver, and kidneys, as well as in some vegetable sources like broccoli, tomatoes, peas, Brussels sprouts, and rice. ALA exerts significant actions in slowing the onset of metabolic syndrome and neurodegenerative diseases, as well as chronic disease like diabetes and diabetic neuropathy.

Astaxanthin

Astaxanthin is a carotenoid (precursor of vitamin A) and a natural pink or red pigment found in microalgae and seafood such as



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salmon and krill. It is a potent natural antioxidant that interestingly may be up to 6,000 times stronger than vitamin C. Astaxanthin is becoming more widely available in antiaging and skin-health supplements for its abilities to protect skin from UV radiation, modulating inflammation, and optimizing endurance.

Glutathione

Glutathione (GSH) is an essential molecule produced inside almost every cell in your body, but it's made in especially high amounts in organs that play a big role in detoxification and antioxidant defense such as the liver, lungs, intestines, and immune cells. It is also known as the "Master Antioxidant." It also plays key roles in energy production (mitochondrial health), immune function, skin health, delaying aging processes, and chronic illness, among many others. Glutathione stores are depleted by stress, alcohol consumption, poor diet, pollution, aging, infections, and chronic illness. Glutathione stores can be replenished with enough sleep and the consumption of sulphur-rich vegetables like garlic, broccoli, onions, and whey protein, which is rich in cysteine; phytonutrients such as turmeric and milk thistle; and selenium, vitamin C, and *N*-acetylcysteine (NAC), which is a precursor of GSH.

Vitamin C

Vitamin C (ascorbic acid) is a potent water-soluble antioxidant that is a cofactor for enzymes involved in biosynthesis and gene regulation, and it contributes to the body's immune defences. Vitamin C supports skin-barrier function and collagen production, enhances innate and adaptive immune system function (including eradicating microbial infections), improves adrenal function (think stress response), and synergizes with other antioxidants like vitamin E.

Vitamin E (*alpha*- or α -tocopherol)

Vitamin E is the collective name for a group of fat-soluble compounds (*alpha*-, *beta*-, *gamma*-, and *delta*-tocopherol; and *alpha*-, *beta*-, *gamma*-, and *delta*-tocotrienol) with varying levels of antioxidant activities. *alpha*-Tocopherol is the main form of vitamin E the body maintains, thanks to a

special liver protein. Other forms, like *gamma*-tocopherol and tocotrienols, are also absorbed and offer unique benefits, though they are not stored as long. Overall, vitamin E is primarily known for its impact in preventing and delaying heart disease, cancer, eye disorders, and cognitive decline—presumably for its roles in anti-inflammatory processes, inhibition of platelet aggregation, and immune enhancement.

Caution with Antioxidants

Do note that antioxidant supplements are never meant to replace a healthy diet or conventional medical care, and are not a reason to postpone seeing a health-care practitioner about a medical problem. Antioxidant supplements can also potentially interact with medications or other supplements, or even exacerbate existing conditions. For example, high-dose *beta*-carotene supplements have been linked to an increased risk of lung cancer in smokers and asbestos workers. As well, high-dose vitamin E supplements may increase the risk of prostate cancer and the risk of bleeding by interfering with blood clotting (for those taking anticoagulant or antiplatelet medications).



The Bottom Line Is That Antioxidants Are Fundamental

Antioxidants are rightfully getting more traction in terms of awareness and getting these important compounds more accessible (as in implementing them in everyday routine, food, and supplementation). They are fundamentally necessary as they protect our bodies on a deeper cellular level and extend benefits from our immune system to our skin—quite literally from the inside out!



Dr. Kim Abog, ND

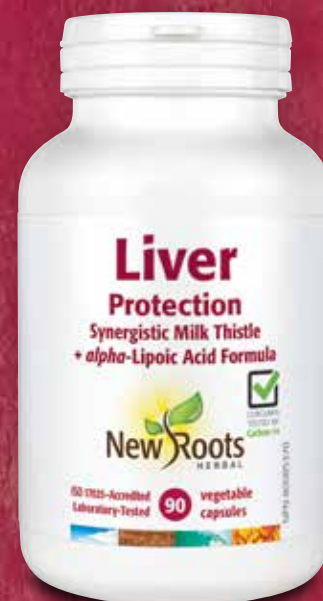
Dr. Kim Abog is a registered naturopathic doctor and doula based in Toronto, Ontario. She has a special interest in fertility and reproductive health. She helps people by facilitating health-management plans with them, connecting them to evidence-informed integrative health solutions, and helping them thrive.

kimabog.com

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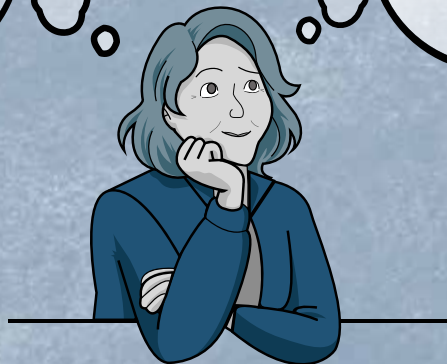


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Just Breathe

by Felicia Assenza, HBSc, ND

Breathing is a basic life function taken for granted until it becomes difficult. In the last five years or so, many of us have developed a newfound appreciation for our lungs and breathing. Respiratory illness can really take its toll and remind us just how important lung function is.

Getting Familiar with the Respiratory System

The respiratory system includes the nose and sinuses, throat (pharynx), voice box (larynx), trachea, bronchi, bronchioles, alveoli, lungs, and diaphragm. When we inhale, these structures all work together to filter and bring oxygen into our lungs, where it can then be carried through the blood and used by our cells. They also work together to expel carbon dioxide and metabolic byproducts when we exhale.

One of the most common ways that the respiratory system becomes impaired is through viral infections that often lead to colds, flus, or—as we’ve all become too familiar with—the coronavirus. Bacterial or fungal infections are also possible and can lead to conditions like strep throat, sinusitis, or pneumonia. Infections can impact the upper respiratory tract (nose, sinuses, pharynx) or lower respiratory tract (bronchus, bronchioles, and lung tissue), making it harder to get fresh oxygenated air for our cells and organs to function at their best. Upper respiratory-tract infections tend to be less severe than lower respiratory tract infections.

How to Prevent Respiratory Infections

Keeping a strong immune system, especially as the seasons change, is a great way to prevent respiratory infections and help recover from them too. Being outside in nature is a great way to get fresh air into the lungs. Daily movement and exercise to get the heart pumping and blood

flowing helps support the lymphatic system in clearing out pathogens or toxins. Spending time gardening or enjoying fermented foods introduces beneficial probiotics that help strengthen your immune system by crowding out harmful microbes. Optimizing nutrition helps keep your energy up and body strong. Getting lots of sunshine and vitamin D is another great way to support the immune system.





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Did you know that chronic stress can suppress the immune system? Stress-management tools can benefit your immune system as well. Many of the supportive strategies I previously mentioned help cope with stress. If you are feeling overwhelmed, run down, or are anticipating a situation where you will be exposed to illness, echinacea can be a great support. Research supports its efficacy in reducing the duration and frequency of the common cold, and it has been investigated for its use in lower respiratory-tract infections as well.

How to Recover Efficiently

Optimal recovery support depends on many factors, and it is recommended to consult with your health-care practitioner to determine the best approach. Generally, many of the strategies for preventing respiratory infections can also help in recovering from them. For example, incorporating nutrient-dense, easy-to-digest foods with lots of fluids, like soup or bone broth, can help the body clear mucus buildup and support recovery. Gentle movement—like stretching, yoga, or *qi gong*—can be helpful for circulation. Movements that involve stretching or opening the chest, deep breathing that actively engages the diaphragm, and tapping or massaging the chest and back can help clear things out too.

For herbal support, plants like mullein, lobelia, or colt’s foot are traditionally used to benefit the respiratory system; however, these are potent botanicals best used at appropriate doses and for short durations under the supervision of a health-care practitioner to ensure safety and avoid interactions. In comparison, herbs like oregano, goldenseal, barberry, and mugwort are generally well tolerated and traditionally valued for their antimicrobial properties, though informed use regarding dose, duration, and individual considerations remains important.



Optimal vitamin D levels also help support the respiratory system. Vitamin D deficiency has been linked to lower lung function, so if you are someone who frequently gets respiratory infections or if you are having difficulty recovering from one, it may be a good idea to look at your vitamin D levels, spend some time in the sun, and supplement as necessary.

Another supplement worth discussing with your naturopathic doctor is *N*-acetylcysteine (NAC). NAC is a precursor to glutathione, which is a strong antioxidant that can help with inflammation and detoxification. In my practice, I have found NAC to be quite helpful in making breathing a little easier, especially when there is chest congestion involved.



Making Space for Acupuncture

Acupuncture is a modality I have seen to be quite effective in supporting recovery, especially for the long-haulers who have chronic symptoms like decreased endurance, brain fog, loss of taste or smell, or mood changes. Research supports its efficacy in treating neurological and neuropsychiatric symptoms of long COVID like headache, cognitive impairment, fatigue, insomnia, and depression. If you are experiencing long-lasting symptoms that don't seem to be improving, this is treatment worth exploring with your naturopathic doctor, acupuncturist, or traditional Chinese medicine practitioner.

Wishing you and your respiratory system optimal breathing this spring!



Dr. Felicia Assenza, HBSc, ND

A Hamilton-based naturopathic doctor whose goal in every patient visit is to share the knowledge and experiences that she gained on her own journey.
drfeliciaassenzand.com

Respiratory Recovery Checklist

✓ Hydration and Nutrition

- Warm fluids, soups, and broths to support mucus clearance
- Nutrient-dense, easy-to-digest foods

✓ Gentle Movement and Breathing

- Light stretching, yoga, or *qi gong*
- Chest-opening movements and slow, diaphragmatic breathing
- Gentle chest or back tapping to help loosen congestion

✓ Targeted Nutrient Support

- Maintain healthy vitamin D levels
- Support antioxidant status through diet or supplementation
- Discuss NAC with a health-care practitioner for chest congestion support

✓ Herbal and Lifestyle Support

- Use respiratory-supportive herbs thoughtfully and short-term
- Prioritize rest, sleep, and stress regulation
- Spend time outdoors for fresh air when tolerated

✓ Additional Support

- Consider acupuncture for lingering or postviral symptoms
- Seek professional care if recovery stalls or symptoms worsen

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Revitalize Your *Drive*

Libido Boosters for Men

by Colleen Hartwick ND

Let's face it: when it comes to libido, most guys would rather crank up the heat than cool things down. But life happens. Stress, lack of sleep, exposure to endocrine disruptors, too many fast-food runs, or just the natural effects of aging can all put the brakes on your bedroom mojo. The good news? Nature's got your back.

From ancient herbal tonics to modern-day supplements, natural health products have long been used to boost male libido, energy, and performance. In fact, across cultures and traditions, plant-based remedies have been passed down for generations to help men maintain vitality, stamina, and reproductive health. Whether you want to reignite the spark, amp up your endurance, or simply feel like your former self again, there's a whole world of natural solutions worth exploring.

Let's break down the four best natural boosters for male libido, what science says about them, and how to choose the right ones for your needs. Ready to bring the fire back? Let's dive in.

Ashwagandha

Ashwagandha (*Withania somnifera*), also called "Indian Ginseng," is one of the most important herbs in Ayurveda. It is considered an adaptogen, which means it helps the body adapt to stress while restoring balance and resilience. Traditionally, ashwagandha is used to boost energy, improve sleep, support fertility, and enhance vitality.

Modern research now connects ashwagandha with improvements in male sexual health. In an eight-week randomized, double-blind, placebo-controlled trial involving healthy men aged 30–50, participants who took 300 mg of ashwagandha root extract twice daily showed significant improvements in orgasm and sexual desire compared to placebo.

Another study followed 43 overweight men between the ages of 40 and 70. After eight weeks of supplementation, compared to placebo, men taking ashwagandha extract demonstrated a 14.7% increase in testosterone and an 18% increase in dehydroepiandrosterone (DHEA). DHEA is a hormone made by the adrenal glands that helps the body produce key hormones involved in energy, resilience, and healthy aging. These men also reported improvements in markers of sexual vigour, energy, and overall wellbeing. Together, these findings suggest that ashwagandha supports not only sexual health but also hormone balance and resilience to stress.



Fenugreek

Fenugreek (*Trigonella foenum-graecum*, from the Fabaceae family) is a leguminous plant with a long history of use as both food and medicine. It grows widely in Argentina, China, Egypt, France, India, Iran, Morocco, Spain, and Turkey, with India leading production. For centuries, fenugreek has been prized in Ayurvedic and Unani medicine for its wide-ranging benefits, from aiding digestion and blood-sugar balance to acting as an anti-inflammatory and aphrodisiac.

Modern science backs up many of these traditional uses. In a six-week double-blind, placebo-controlled trial, healthy men who took 600 mg per day of a standardized fenugreek extract / mineral blend (Testofen®) experienced significant improvements in libido, sexual arousal, and orgasm compared to placebo.

Another study tested a patented fenugreek seed extract (Furosap™) in men ages 35–65 over a 12-week period. Results showed increases in free and total testosterone, sperm count, mood, and libido. The evidence suggests that fenugreek not only enhances testosterone but also supports reproductive health and emotional wellbeing—two factors closely linked to a satisfying sex life.



Puncturevine

For centuries, puncturevine (*Tribulus terrestris*) has been valued in traditional medicine systems such as Ayurveda and Chinese medicine. Known as a tonic for vitality, it has been used to support strength, energy, and male reproductive health.

In modern trials, puncturevine also shows promise. A 12-week randomized, double-blind, placebo-controlled trial in 86 men with mild to moderate erectile dysfunction found that *Tribulus terrestris* extract significantly improves scores on the International Index of Erectile Function (IIEF). Participants reported greater intercourse satisfaction ($p = 0.0005$), improved orgasmic function ($p = 0.0325$), and stronger sexual desire compared to placebo.

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A study further investigated the herb's effects. Seventy men with erectile dysfunction were divided into two groups: 35 received *Tribulus terrestris* three times daily for three months, while the other 35 received placebo. The *Tribulus* group showed significant increases in testosterone, improved erectile function scores, and higher values on the validated Arabic index of erectile function. They also demonstrated mild increases in prostate-specific antigen and liver enzyme levels, which highlighted the importance of professional supervision when using herbal supplements.



Maca

Maca (*Lepidium meyenii*), also known as Peruvian ginseng, grows high in the Andes and has been used for thousands of years as a food and a medicine. Traditionally, it serves as a fertility enhancer for humans and livestock, as well as a remedy for conditions like rheumatism, respiratory illness, and anaemia. Over the past two decades, maca has become one of the most popular natural supplements for supporting energy, fertility, and libido.

In a pilot study, eight men took maca extract for 14 days and reported significant improvements in self-rated sexual desire compared to both baseline and placebo.

A larger, 12-week randomized, double-blind, placebo-controlled trial further explored maca's effects in more detail. Men aged 21–56 received either 1,500 mg or 3,000 mg of maca daily, or placebo. By week eight, participants taking maca reported significantly higher sexual desire. Interestingly, these improvements occurred independently of changes in mood or testosterone levels, suggesting that maca works through unique mechanisms that may directly influence sexual function and desire.

Final Thoughts

When things cool off in the bedroom, it's hard to ignore it. Low libido doesn't just affect intimacy—it can ripple into mood, confidence, and even overall health. But nature has your back. From ashwagandha's stress-fighting power to fenugreek's testosterone support, plus the performance perks of *Tribulus* and maca, these plant-based allies aren't just hype: they're supported by both tradition and science.

Of course, no single herb is a magic bullet. A healthy lifestyle that includes good nutrition, regular exercise, quality sleep, and stress management creates the foundation for sexual vitality. But adding natural boosters, under the guidance of a qualified health-care practitioner, can provide the extra edge you need to feel more energized, more confident, and more connected.

If you're ready to turn up the heat, these natural libido boosters are worth exploring with the guidance of a trained health-care practitioner. So, if your spark's been flickering, you now have some science-backed, time-tested ways to fire it back up!



Dr. Colleen Hartwick, ND

Dr. Colleen Hartwick is a licensed naturopathic physician practising on North Vancouver Island, BC, with a special interest in trauma as it plays a role in disease. campbellrivernaturopathic.com

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LOOKING FOR REAL MEDICINAL BENEFITS IN MUSHROOMS? YOU NEED A HOT-WATER EXTRACT OR SPORES



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Stand Up for Healthy Aging

by Wendy Present, RHNC, CFMP

“Help! I’ve fallen and I can’t get up!” Do you remember that 1990s TV commercial for a medical alert device? It was a great ad because it was so relatable. Although we do our best to avoid falling in our older years, 1 in 2 people over the age of 80 will fall. Furthermore, almost half of these people who fall are uninjured but despite this, they’re not able to stand up on their own again. The longer they remain on the ground waiting for help, the worse their outcome will be.

There can be a number of health reasons why an uninjured senior can’t get back up. Two common and preventable causes are due to muscle loss and weak joints. This is something we can all work on—keeping ourselves strong and fit so that we enter our golden years in good shape.

So, Where Should We Start?

One of the most effective starting points is surprisingly simple: practicing the sit-to-stand movement. Repeatedly sitting and standing is commonly used to help evaluate fall risk and is also an accessible exercise that supports strength, balance, and fall prevention.

To take the sit-to-stand test, find a chair with a 17-inch-high seat. Set a timer for 30 seconds, sit on the chair, hands on opposite shoulders, and stand. In my age group—women 60 to 65 years old—scoring less than 12 stands in 30 seconds means an increased risk of falling. Thankfully, I scored 17. When I’m 80 years old, I’ll need to be able to stand up at least nine times during the same interval, so, I better keep practicing.

From Lying on the Floor to Standing

The next test involves lying down on the floor and then simply standing up. The gold standard is standing without using a knee, hand, or something to pull yourself up with. The test starts at 5 points, and you lose a point every time you need more than your feet to get up. I scored 4 because I used my knee. The lowest scores in this test were associated with the highest overall mortality. In other words, the people who needed to use the highest number of body parts to haul themselves to their feet had the greatest risk of death.

These tests may not be possible if you have a knee or hip injury. Some medical conditions may also make it hazardous for you to try this test. If you have been told not to get down on the floor by a health-care practitioner, then please don’t try it.



Stronger Muscles for a Longer Life

A higher muscle mass in older people is associated with longevity. It's imperative that we stay physically strong. In fact, a lack of muscle mass seems to be a more significant factor for mortality than obesity. This means that being sedentary is more likely to shorten your life than being overweight. Walk with a friend. Dance. Play pickleball. Join a hiking group or exercise class. Take "movement snacks" throughout the day. You can find several easy exercise suggestions at the University of Calgary's website *Just One Move* at justonemove.ca. There are plenty of videos showing the exercises performed by real people with arthritis. The message here is that staying strong will prolong your life.

Managing Pain and Inflammation

What happens if it hurts to move? Inactivity due to pain can limit many people from moving. I have inflammatory arthritis. I don't like to use anti-inflammatory over-the-counter medication because regular use of these medications can cause side effects such as stomach and liver issues.

Instead, I put a couple of scoops of collagen in my coffee every day, which helps with the pain and joint function. Collagen is a protein found naturally in the body that keeps joints healthy, and it has been well-studied both for osteoarthritis and inflammatory arthritis. It dissolves instantly and has no flavour. In fact, I use it as a creamer in my coffee!



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Another supplement you might wish to try is methylsulfonylmethane (MSM), which has been researched for its benefits in joint-pain management. As a beneficial side effect, it may also reduce wrinkles on your face.

I also supplement with omega-3 fatty acids, daily. These are derived from fish or plant sources, and they have many functions in the body, including reducing inflammation. The main food sources for omega-3s are flax, hemp seeds, cold-water fatty fish, and leafy greens; however, I find that supplements offer an easier, more convenient way to support intake. Omega-3s are also great for skin health and combating hair dryness.



Cooking with turmeric and eating pineapples are two more natural anti-inflammatories to consider. A more pronounced effect can be found by taking curcumin or bromelain supplements, which are derived from these foods.

Another favourite of mine, for muscle soreness, is ginger. I use the raw root in smoothies, but I like to keep the powdered capsules around for quick pain relief too. They're convenient because they can be opened up and made into instant ginger tea. Add a little honey and the drink becomes one of the best things to help deal with cold symptoms too.

As always, before adding a new supplement to your diet, check with your health-care practitioner to be sure it isn't contraindicated by your medical issue or medications.

With the pain under control, and a plan in mind, we can keep those muscles and joints strong and healthy. If I fall down at 85 and my medical alert device asks: "Do you need help?" I want to reply, confidently: "No, thanks, I'm up now and I'm fine." Wouldn't you want to do the same?



Wendy Presant, RHNC, CFMP

A former registered nurse and a retired naturopathic doctor with credentials in health and life coaching, Wendy is passionate about helping people over the age of 40 optimize their continuing journey through life. She enjoys writing and is the recent author of *Dry—A Holistic Guide to Sjögren's Disease*.

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The New Front Line in Liver Health Monitoring

by Odessa Gill, ND

Every day, your liver works tirelessly behind the scenes to keep your body in balance. It neutralizes toxins from medications, alcohol, and environmental exposures, helping to protect your overall health. It produces bile, which is essential for proper digestion and the absorption of healthy fats and fat-soluble vitamins. The liver also serves as a storage hub for key nutrients, including iron and vitamins A, B₁₂, D, E, and K, releasing them when your body needs them most. In addition, it regulates the metabolism of fats, proteins, and carbohydrates to support steady energy levels, and it produces vital proteins such as albumin and clotting factors that are essential for healing and maintaining internal stability.

Given the breadth of responsibilities your liver manages every single day, protecting its function is not just important: it's essential. Despite this, liver disease remains one of the most overlooked health concerns in Canada. A 2025 survey revealed Canadians consider liver health a low priority regarding their

overall health. It is estimated that 1 in 4 Canadians are affected by liver disease, with projections suggesting a significant health crisis between 2030 and 2040.

There is an urgent need for early detection and awareness about metabolic factors that may play a role with the disease's progression. This is key, as some of the 400 types of liver disease can be treatable with lifestyle and dietary changes.

Some conditions are common, while others rare, and some are genetic-related diseases. These include the recently renamed metabolic dysfunction-associated steatotic liver disease or MASLD (you may know it from its previous name, nonalcoholic fatty liver disease or NAFLD), viral hepatitis, and alcohol-associated liver disease. It is often believed that liver conditions are a result of excessive alcohol intake, but this is a myth: there are many other causes for liver disease. These conditions can lead to serious complications, like cirrhosis or liver cancer, if left untreated. Early detection is essential.

Liver disease symptoms can include:

- Confusion
- Dark urine
- Fatigue
- Itchy skin
- Nausea
- Pale stools
- Unexplained weight loss
- Upper right abdominal pain
- Yellow skin/eyes (jaundice)

Evaluation of the liver can be performed in many ways. It starts with a conversation with your family doctor or naturopathic doctor about bloodwork to measure liver enzymes. If these enzymes are elevated, this can be a sign of inflammation or liver damage. This may prompt further investigation.



Methods used to assess liver health include:

- Blood tests: Liver panel
- Scans: Ultrasound, CT or MRI
- FibroScan®: A specialized liver ultrasound

In my practice, if blood tests show borderline-to-high values for liver enzymes, I routinely recommend a FibroScan®. This test gives detailed information about the health of the liver. It quantifies the amount of fat present in the liver and can assess the degree of scarring, if present. This test can be accessed through a physician's referral or by booking directly with a private clinic. In Ontario, it's not typically covered by the Ontario Health Insurance Plan (OHIP), so most of my patients opt to pay out of pocket. In some cases, partial reimbursement may be available through extended health-care plans. Be sure to check the coverage in your province.

What Is a FibroScan®?

A FibroScan® is a quick, noninvasive scan that helps assess liver health. Using advanced ultrasound technology, it measures two important markers: fibrosis (liver scarring) and steatosis (fat accumulation).

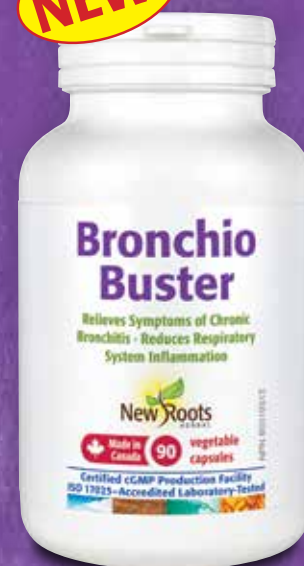
Think of it as a wellness snapshot for your liver. The test takes just 5–10 minutes, is painless, and can help detect early changes of diseases, often before noticeable symptoms appear. Because liver concerns can develop quietly over time, tools like a FibroScan® allow health-care practitioners to monitor liver health in a simple and accessible way.



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Why Consider This Test?

For individuals with risk factors (metabolic concerns, alcohol use, viral hepatitis, or abnormal liver enzymes), a FibroScan® supports monitoring and treatment decisions. It can also serve as a useful baseline assessment for those who want a proactive check of their liver health. In some cases, it may be used as a noninvasive alternative to a liver biopsy.



Understanding Your Results

FibroScan® results are interpreted by a medical doctor and reviewed in the context of your medical history and overall health.

The test provides information about:

- Fibrosis: How much scarring is present in the liver
- Steatosis: The degree of fat accumulation

Results are categorized along a spectrum: from little to no scarring, to more advanced changes. If significant fibrosis or cirrhosis is detected, your health-care practitioner will discuss next steps, monitoring, and potential treatment options.

FibroScan® is not recommended for certain individuals. It should not be used during pregnancy, in individuals with ascites (fluid accumulation in the abdomen), or in those with active implantable medical devices such as pacemakers, defibrillators, or infusion pumps.

If you have any concerns about your liver health, consult with your family doctor or naturopathic doctor. They can help to determine if a FibroScan® test is appropriate for you.

As liver disease is on the rise in Canada, maintaining liver health is crucial for overall optimal health.



Dr. Odessa Gill, ND

Dr. Gill has been in practice for 20 years and is the co-owner of a naturopathic clinic in Bloor West Village, Toronto. She has a focus on stress management, fertility, and hormonal health.

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Green Social Prescribing

Where Healing Meets the Outdoors

by Ludovic Brunel, ND

Across Canada, family doctors are writing a curious new kind of prescription—and it doesn't come in a blister pack. Instead, the “dose” might be an allotment in a community garden, a volunteer shift planting trees, or a weekly walk in a local urban forest. This movement, known as “green social prescribing,” reframes how we approach mental health and wellbeing by reconnecting people to the natural environment around them.

In an era when so many Canadians spend more than 90% of their lives indoors, this return to nature feels both revolutionary and refreshingly simple. If this sounds poetic and likely ineffective, the notions of fresh air and sunlight are gaining mainstream attention with a wave of new science—most notably a study from the University of York—showing that prescribed interaction with nature can be clinically effective, rivalling traditional psychotherapies like cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT).

Nature Joins the Treatment Plan

Green social prescribing directs patients toward community services and nonmedical interventions when facing issues like loneliness, mild depression, or chronic stress. The model has been formally integrated into primary-care systems such as the National Health Service. Rather than reaching immediately for pharmaceuticals or therapy referrals, practitioners might suggest structured nature-based activities such as gardening groups, conservation projects, or “care-farming” programs where clients work alongside others to grow vegetables and care for animals.

Connecting patients with green spaces is complementary health—we're treating the root causes of poor mental health, not just the symptoms.

Science Behind the Soil

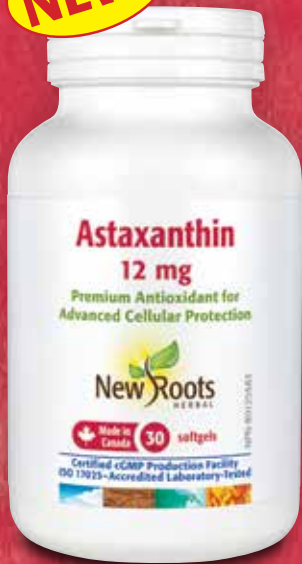
Until recently, the therapeutic benefits of time spent outdoors were largely anecdotal, but the study from the University of York, led by psychologist Paul Coventry, provides robust scientific validation that nature-based activity is not simply a pleasant pastime: it can be clinically as effective as short-term CBT for anxiety and depression.

Participants who engaged in structured green activities, specifically horticultural therapy and care farming, reported comparable improvements in mood, anxiety reduction, and life satisfaction after 12 weeks as those enrolled in conventional CBT programs. Follow-ups showed enduring benefits months after participants completed their programs, suggesting that cultivating a relationship with nature provides a lasting protective factor against relapse.



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10 Green Prescriptions

- Guided nature walks
- Forest bathing (mindful immersion in nature)
- Community gardening or food-growing projects
- Therapeutic horticulture programs
- Outdoor yoga or tai chi
- Cycling or outdoor movement groups
- Open-water or waterfront activities (swimming, kayaking, paddleboarding)
- Tree planting and conservation volunteering
- Birdwatching or nature observation groups
- Nature photography or outdoor art sessions

These findings build on earlier landmark research. A meta-analysis demonstrated that exposure to natural environments significantly improves mood and working memory. Similarly, another analysis found that a 90-minute walk in a natural setting reduced rumination and neural activity in the prefrontal cortex, a brain region associated with depression. Ulrich’s stress recovery theory and Kaplan & Kaplan’s attention restoration theory further explain how natural environments lower physiological stress and replenish depleted cognitive resources.

Physiologically, exposure to green space has been associated with reduced cortisol levels, improved immune functioning, and decreased sympathetic nervous system activation. As Coventry’s team observed, “the act of nurturing living things reintroduces purpose and mindfulness in a disconnected modern psyche.”

Canada's Growing Nature Divide

Environmentalist David Suzuki once described modern urban life as “a grand experiment.” This research on the value of spending time in nature carries profound implications for Canada’s increasingly urban population. Over 80% of Canadians now live in urban centres according to Statistics Canada, where access to meaningful green space is often limited. Many urban dwellers experience what some researchers describe as “nature deprivation,” associated with stress, cognitive fatigue, and emotional disengagement. Every hour spent under LED lights rather than natural sky subtly erodes our biological alignment with natural rhythms.





Epidemiological studies suggest that people living in greener neighbourhoods report lower levels of depression and anxiety.

Green social prescribing doesn't aim to whisk people away to pristine wilderness; instead, it helps them reclaim the nature already around them. A single raised bed in a community garden, a lunchtime gardening club, or a park restoration initiative can provide that missing link.

In Vancouver's Downtown Eastside, pilot garden programs have shown promising improvements in participant wellbeing and social cohesion. Similar initiatives across Canada are aligning with international findings that community-based green programs enhance social connectedness while reducing depressive symptoms.

Connection through Nature

One of the subtle strengths of green social prescribing is its social dimension. Unlike solitary exercise or digital mindfulness apps, most ecotherapy activities unfold communally. Shared labour, whether planting bulbs or composting, generates what sociologists call collective efficacy.

For individuals dealing with depression or anxiety, these gentle, low-pressure interactions can counteract isolation. A study found that strong social relationships increase survival odds by 50%, underscoring the profound health impact of social belonging. Green prescribing uniquely combines ecological exposure with relational engagement, a potent dual intervention.

Planting the Framework

The infrastructure for green social prescribing in Canada is quietly taking shape. Canadian municipalities in Vancouver, Calgary, Montreal, and Halifax are exploring partnerships between primary-care networks and parks departments.

Still, challenges remain. Sustainable funding, standardized referral pathways, and consistent outcome measurement protocols must be established before green prescribing can scale nationally. Importantly, nature prescriptions should complement—not replace—professional therapy or medication when clinically indicated.

The Power of Place

If we strip the jargon away, green social prescribing is about reconnection. It invites us to view the environment we inhabit not as passive backdrops, but as active contributors to wellbeing. The garden plot becomes a metaphor for the therapeutic process itself: growth rooted in care, attention, and patience.

In reintroducing patients to soil, seasons, and sensory abundance, health-care practitioners may be planting the seeds of a cultural shift—from consumers of health to cocreators of it.

So, the next time your doctor asks how you're managing your mood or stress, don't be surprised if you leave the clinic not with a prescription slip, but with a packet of seeds and directions to the nearest community garden.

After all, your next refill might just bloom in a garden plot.



Dr. Ludovic Brunel, ND

Dr. Brunel has 15+ years of experience as a naturopathic doctor and practices in Calgary. His approach has always been to improve health outcomes by relying on the best research available.

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Healthy Aging

Oxymoron or Opportunity?

Part 3

by Dale Drewery

In “Healthy Aging,” Parts I and II (*Flourish*, Fall 2025 and Winter 2026), we explored the impact of aging on our muscular, skeletal, cardiovascular, digestive, endocrine, and immune systems and our metabolism. We also looked at how getting older affects cognition, a major function of the central nervous system.

In this edition, we’ll delve into the effects of getting old on our peripheral nervous system, and the special senses that are our link to the world around us.

Let’s face it: unless you’re under the age of about 50, you probably don’t see, hear, smell, or taste as well as you used to. While the impact of aging on vision and hearing gets a lot of press, I’d like to begin with our sense of smell. This is in part because it’s considered to be the oldest of our senses, but also because it’s the one sense that, quite literally, eludes me.

You see, as a kid, I was certain that smell was something my brothers made up to torment me

(a psychologist would have a field day with that one, I know). To get at the truth, I regularly took each of my siblings aside and asked them to describe for me what something smelled like. Their answers were remarkably alike. That’s when I came to understand that sense of smell was a real thing! And apparently, I didn’t have one, a condition I later learned is called anosmia.

Smell

It was long thought humans could detect 10,000 different scents, but in fact, the average person—excluding us anosmics—can distinguish at least a trillion scents (1,000,000,000,000). We detect them by inhaling air that contains odour molecules that then bind to receptors in the nose, which send messages to the brain. This important process allows us to find food, stay safe, and helps us to establish and maintain social relationships and emotional bonding.

This is why a significant reduction in smell can have big implications for more than 50% of people aged 65 and older who experience it. Those with loss of smell are not only more likely to develop anxiety and depression: they’re also less able to identify dangerous odours including noxious chemicals, leaking gas, smoke, and spoiled food.



Age-related loss of smell, known as presbyosmia, appears to result from several factors, including gradual decline of olfactory receptor neurons, changes in the nasal lining, alterations in mucus that helps transport odour molecules, and reduced neural processing of smell signals in the brain. What’s certain is that some medications—including antibiotics; cholesterol-lowering drugs; and heart, thyroid, and blood-pressure medications—can also dampen this valuable sense.

So, how can you lend your nose a hand? Talk to your health-care practitioner about your medications; if you smoke, do your best to quit; and protect yourself at home by buying smoke and gas detectors and applying the “when in doubt, throw it out” rule of cleaning out the refrigerator.

When Do Our Senses Begin to Change?

Aging doesn’t switch off our senses overnight. Most begin to shift gradually—often decades before we notice.

Sense	Approximate Age Changes Begin	What Typically Happens First
Smell	60–65+	Reduced ability to detect subtle odours; difficulty identifying specific scents
Taste	60+	Decreased sensitivity to sweet and salty flavours
Sight	Around 40–50	Trouble focusing on close objects (presbyopia)
Hearing	50–60+	Difficulty hearing high-frequency sounds (children’s voices, birdsong)
Touch/ Balance	60+	Reduced vibration sensitivity; slower balance reflexes

Taste

Adults have roughly 10,000 taste buds, most of them on the tongue. Each tiny bump is home to specialized cells that help detect the various flavours in the foods we eat—sweet, sour, salty, bitter, and savoury, which is sometimes called umami. Much of what we think of as taste is actually smell, so it’s no surprise that, like our sense of smell, our sense of taste also takes a beating as we age. Over time, taste sensitivity may decline as taste receptor cells renew more slowly, saliva production decreases, and nerve signalling becomes less efficient. Plus, many of those same prescription medications that affect our sense of smell also impact taste.

For many seniors, the first tastes to go south are sweet and salty, and the natural inclination is to add more sugar and salt to foods. While that may make foods taste more palatable, it can also contribute to long-term health problems by raising blood sugar, increasing blood pressure, and contributing to weight gain. Instead, add flavour to your food with hot pepper or mustard, onions, garlic, ginger, lemon or lime juices, and fresh herbs.

While a gradual decline of sense of smell and taste is natural as we age, the loss can also be related to deficiencies in some key micronutrients including zinc and vitamin B, which play important roles in nerve and sensory function. These can be found in seafood and fish, meats and poultry, dairy products, beans, and some fortified foods. If you experience a sudden loss of sense of smell or taste, this may occur with viral infections, including COVID-19; or, in some cases, it may signal an underlying medical or neurological condition. Anyone experiencing abrupt changes should consult a health-care practitioner.



Sight

They say that failing eyesight in old age is nature’s way of protecting you from shock as you pass a mirror. Loss of vision is, in fact, a change to the eye structures. Beginning around the age of 50, most of us will find our eyes focus more slowly, particularly when reading or looking at close objects. This common change, known as presbyopia, occurs mainly because the lens gradually becomes stiffer and less able to adjust its shape for near vision.

By the time we’re 60, our pupils may have decreased to about a third of the size they were in our 20s, and our field of vision shrinks. Our eyes may become cloudier and more tinged with yellow, signalling a breakdown in the lens’

proteins and the onset of cataracts. Floaters, small collagen fibres from the gel that fills the eye, may obscure our field of vision, and dry eye disease, which is common in aging eyes, can cause inflammation and scarring of the cornea if unaddressed.

If all this sounds a bit dark, there is light at the end of the tunnel. Caught early, many serious eye diseases—such as glaucoma, macular degeneration, diabetic retinopathy, and a detached retina—can be effectively treated.

You can also keep minor eye problems at bay by scheduling regular checkups with your optometrist and touching base with your health-care practitioner to ensure your diet contains sufficient vitamins A, C, and E and lutein.



Hearing

Impaired hearing affects more seniors than any other chronic condition. In fact, nearly a third to a half of older adults suffer a hearing loss serious enough to negatively impact their ability to communicate and maintain relationships with others.

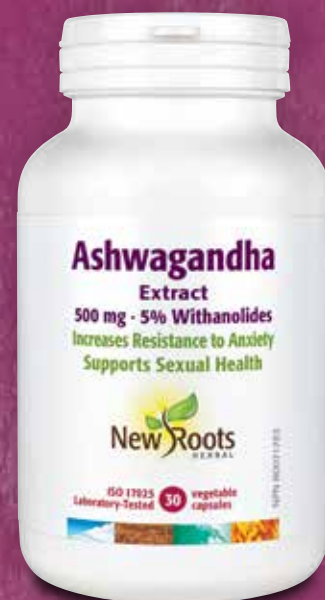
The causes of age-related hearing impairment (called *presbycusis*) can include normal wear and tear on the tiny hairs and nerve cells in the inner ear, a decrease in the elasticity of the eardrum, a history of exposure to loud noises, or a blow to the head or ear. High-frequency sounds—such as children’s voices and bird’s singing—are often the first to disappear. Over time, consonants such as s, z, t, f, and g become harder to distinguish, and words begin to sound muffled. Conversation can become increasingly difficult, particularly when there is background noise.

Untreated hearing loss can force the brain to work harder and ultimately overwhelm the networks normally tasked with thinking and memory. This is called cognitive overload, and it may contribute to overall cognitive decline and a higher chance of developing dementia. Difficulty in hearing and understanding conversations can also result in social isolation, which in turn leads to less sensory stimulation and shrinkage of the sound processing areas of the brain.

While age-related hearing loss is often irreversible, hearing aids have come a long way since the invention of the ear trumpet in the seventeenth century, so consider getting fitted for one. If you suffer from tinnitus, which is often associated with hearing loss and marked by a loud and persistent sound in the ears, talk to your health-care practitioner about how to best manage the condition.

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Touch

So, where does touch fit within our sensory journey? Unlike vision or hearing, it's not confined to a single organ. Specialized nerve endings in the skin, muscles, joints, and connective tissue detect pressure, vibration, temperature, pain, and movement, continuously informing the brain about our environment and body position.

With age, this system becomes less sensitive. The density of skin receptors declines, nerve conduction slows, and circulation to peripheral nerves may decrease. Light touch, temperature changes, and vibration, especially in the feet, can become harder to detect. At the same time, proprioception, our internal sense of body position, grows less precise. Together, these shifts can affect coordination and balance, helping explain why falls become more common in older adulthood.

Touch also plays an important emotional role. Physical contact, like a handshake, a hug, a reassuring hand, activates pathways linked to bonding and stress regulation. Reduced sensory input and social touch may contribute to feelings of isolation. The encouraging news is that this system responds to use. Regular physical activity, balance training, supportive footwear, and meaningful human connection all help maintain sensory awareness and stability. Touch may not grab headlines, but it quietly keeps us grounded—both physically and emotionally.

Our senses may shift with time, but they rarely disappear. They evolve. And so do we. By paying attention, staying proactive, and embracing support where needed, we preserve not just function but also connection. To people, to memories, to the world itself.

Healthy aging isn't an oxymoron. It's an invitation to stay curious, adaptable, and fully alive.



Dale Drewery

Dale Drewery is coauthor of *BioDiet: The Scientifically Proven, Ketogenic Way to Lose Weight and Improve Your Health*. She is an award-winning journalist and writer with a keen interest in science and human health.

biodiet.org



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The Mushroom Marketing Mirage

by Serge Philibert Kuate, PhD

As a Director of Quality Assurance and Quality Control, my days are spent analyzing data, scrutinizing laboratory results, and ensuring the absolute purity of natural health products. Recently, it has been incredibly exciting to witness the rising consumer demand for medicinal mushrooms. People around the world are realizing the true therapeutic benefits these incredible fungi offer, seeking out natural ways to support their immune systems, enhance their energy, and improve their overall wellbeing.

This modern surge in popularity is firmly backed by decades of rigorous scientific research. We now have a deeper understanding of exactly how these fungi interact with the human body. For instance, a comprehensive review published in *Nutrients* clearly documented how mushroom-derived *beta*-glucans exert powerful immunomodulatory and anti-inflammatory effects, while also showing immense potential for protecting cardiometabolic health. We are even seeing their life-changing applications in oncology; a recent landmark review highlighted how specific fungal *beta*-glucans can engage directly with our immune receptors to actively enhance antitumour immunity. These foundational health benefits extend across all ages as we saw in the data from a review paper which confirmed their safety and efficacy in stimulating robust immune responses, even in children.

However, this excitement is heavily shadowed by a rapidly growing problem in the supplement industry. Every single day, I see marketing materials and claims from various brands that leave me perplexed. As a scientist, it saddens me to see well-intentioned consumers falling for misleading marketing. People are spending their hard-earned money on products that simply cannot deliver what they promise. The purpose of this article is to contribute to the education of retailers and consumers alike so they can recognize genuine quality, bypass the deceptive marketing, and identify the true active compounds that actually heal.

The Polysaccharide Loophole

To understand how consumers are being tricked, we have to look at the chemistry of medicinal mushrooms. These fungi owe their powerful therapeutic properties to specific active compounds known as *beta*-glucans. These complex molecules interact directly with our immune receptors to trigger a cascade of health benefits. They are vastly different from *alpha*-glucans (mostly inactive), which are essentially the simple starches found in everyday dietary foods like potatoes, rice, or other cereals.

The current problem arises from a deceptive loophole in industry testing standards. Some brands intentionally and artificially inflate their product numbers by testing for “total polysaccharides” rather than isolating the specific medicinal *beta*-glucans. To be clear, the term polysaccharide is just an umbrella category. It includes *both* the highly beneficial therapeutic *beta*-glucans, the nontherapeutic *alpha*-glucans, and other types of sugars.



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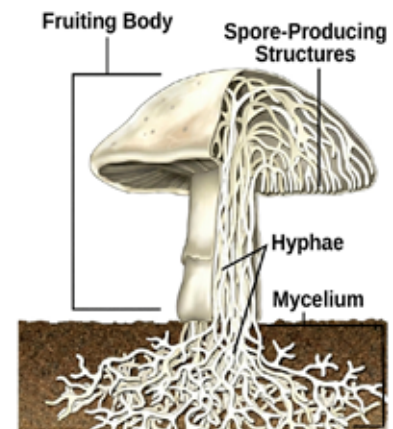


To ensure these products are right for you, always read and follow label directions.

This questionable practice and the critical need for accurate testing was thoroughly exposed in a study published in the *Journal of AOAC International*. This pivotal research demonstrated that many commercial products boasting high polysaccharide numbers are actually composed primarily of *alpha*-glucans from starch, entirely devoid of the medicinal *beta*-glucans consumers are supposed to be paying for.

To make matters worse, many manufacturers cut corners by growing their mushroom mycelium on grain substrates. Instead of allowing the mushroom to fully develop into a fruiting body (the part of the mushroom used traditionally for thousands of years), they harvest the vegetative mycelium along with the grain it grows on.

When this grain-heavy material is processed, the final extract contains a substantial amount of residual starch. As the AOAC study confirmed, by testing for total polysaccharides, these companies count that nonbeneficial rice starch toward their final active compound numbers. When a brand boasts a significant polysaccharide count, they are very often just selling you expensive grain powder. It is a deliberate distortion of the numbers that completely disregards the science of natural medicine.



What Nature Provides

As a scientist, I look to nature for the truth. Genuine mushroom fruiting bodies have strict, natural biological limits regarding their *beta*-glucan content. Nature simply does not produce the high percentages you often see on certain brands' labels, websites, and promotional materials.

These inflated figures do not exist in nature without unnatural chemical manipulation or, much more commonly, measuring the wrong compounds entirely. It's designed exclusively to boost sales and gain a competitive edge, at the expense of the consumer's health—and wallet.

In concert with the laboratory we utilize, we flatly refuse to play this game. We rely on extremely rigorous quality assurance and quality-control testing protocols. We utilize advanced, highly specific analytical assays designed to isolate and measure only the true active *beta*-glucan compounds, explicitly excluding any background starches. By holding ourselves to this strict scientific standard, we ensure that the numbers we report are a reflection of what is actually in the products we offer.

Demanding True Transparency

Consumers and retailers deserve the unvarnished truth. You have the power to change this industry by demanding transparency from the manufacturers you choose to trust. Ask the hard questions and carefully review what you are purchasing.



Reading Supplement Labels

- The label should clearly state the exact percentage of *beta*-glucans. If it doesn't, or they only state the total polysaccharides, be weary of what's in the bottle.
- The ingredients list should specify 100% fruiting body instead of mycelium or grain spawn. If nothing is mentioned, be weary of what's in the bottle.
- The product should not boast an unusually high and biologically impossible active compound number. If it does, be weary of what's in the bottle.
- The packaging should include a reference to independent third-party laboratory testing. Extra points if it's an ISO 17025-accredited one.

My team's commitment to rigorous quality control and honest labeling is unwavering. We will never artificially inflate our numbers or manipulate testing methods just to compete with a marketing diversion. We believe in the power of nature and the necessity of scientific accuracy.

Preserving the therapeutic integrity of natural medicine is not just my daily responsibility as a Quality Control Director; it is a shared global responsibility. Together, through education and demanding better standards, we can dispel this mushroom marketing mirage. We can ensure that when someone reaches for a medicinal mushroom supplement to improve their health, they receive the genuine, uncompromised healing benefits they truly deserve.



Serge Philibert Kuate, PhD

Serge directs the Quality Assurance and Quality Control department at New Roots Herbal. A native of Cameroon, his body of work at international research institutions includes pharmaceutical biology, insect ecology, microbiology, mycology, chemistry, and enzymology.

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To ensure these products are right for you,
always read and follow label directions.



Rainbow Chickpea Salad

These colourful ingredients deliver a full spectrum of nutrition and taste.

Salad Ingredients

- 1 can (796 ml) chickpeas, rinsed
- 1 can (340 ml) corn kernels
- 1 yellow pepper, diced
- 1 orange pepper, diced
- 1 red pepper, diced
- 1 small red onion, finely diced
- 1 green apple, skin on, diced
- ½ English cucumber, diced
- ¾ cup mini carrots, sliced to rounds
- ¾ cup celery, diced
- ¼ cup sliced Kalamata olives

Dressing Ingredients

- ½ cup olive oil
- 3 tbsp. lemon juice
- 1 tbsp. mustard
- ¼ tsp. each herbes de Provence, parsley, salt

Salt is limited due to Kalamata olives, but you may add more to taste, if preferred.

Instructions

Chop all ingredients and mix with chickpeas and corn. Add dressing and mix. Salad can be stored in the fridge for 3-4 days.

Yields 4-6 meal portions.

Bon appétit!

Optional: For an impressive presentation, you can layer each colourful ingredient in a glass bowl. Combine corn with yellow peppers, carrot with orange peppers, celery with green apples. Olives decorate the top. Drizzle dressing slowly, allowing it to coat all areas of the salad. Display layered salad and mix before serving.

For extra protein: Add in your favourite; we really enjoy shredded cooked chicken or canned tuna.

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newrootsherbal.com/en/blog

Flourish Original Recipe



Barese Focaccia

Focaccia is a crossover between bread and pizza. Soft and fluffy, you can serve it with a meal to soak up delicious sauces, slice horizontally and stuff with prosciutto and mozzarella to create hearty sandwich, or slice up to enjoy as part of a charcuterie board or a yummy snack. This recipe is simple, but the results will be amazing, providing you weigh your ingredients and don't rush the process.

Dough Ingredients

- 560 g all-purpose flour
- 550 g lukewarm water
- 6–8 tbsp. olive oil, divided
- 7 g (~2 tsp.) traditional active dry yeast
- 3 tsp. sugar
- 2 tsp. salt

Topping Ingredients

- 4–5 canned tomatoes, cut into 6–8 pieces, liquid drained
- ¼ cup Mediterranean black olives, pitted and halved
- 1 tbsp. each of oregano and coarse salt

Instructions

Combine sugar, water, and yeast, and let stand 10–15 minutes or longer, until it creates foam on top—similar to the top of a beer.

Combine flour and salt.

Add the dry ingredients to the yeast mixture in three additions, adding 2 tbsp olive oil with the first addition. Mix by hand or wooden spoon, about 5 minutes.

Line bottom of a 9" × 13" pan (2" deep) with parchment and fully coat bottom with 2–3 tbsp. olive oil.

Pour dough into pan, drizzle with 2–3 tbsp. olive oil, cover and place in the fridge for 1 hour.

Remove from fridge and let stand covered on counter for 1 hour.

Add desired toppings. Some prefer to squish the tomato and olive pieces down into the dough, others like to decorate the top. Both options are fine.

Bake at 425 °F (218 °C) for 15 minutes, rotate pan and bake another 10 minutes.

Let cool, and Buon appetito!

Notes on Olives

Traditionally, Bella di Cerignola or Sal Secco olives are used. If not available, you may use Kalamata or another variety.



Sangli Sweet Potato Stew

Named after the “Turmeric City” of India, this protein-packed sweet potato, carrot, and chickpea dish is a delicious departure from meat-based dining.

Ingredients

- 1 large sweet potato, peeled and shredded
- 1 large carrot, peeled and shredded
- 1 tin (540 ml) chickpeas, rinsed and drained
- 1 cup roasted and salted cashews, crushed
- ¼ cup onion, diced
- 1 tin (400 ml) coconut milk
- 2 tbsp. cooking oil, preferably coconut
- 1 tbsp. curry powder
- 1 tsp. New Roots Herbal’s Fermented Turmeric powder
- Sea salt and finely ground white pepper, to taste

Instructions

Sauté onions in oil for several minutes, add curry and fermented turmeric in final minute.

Add remaining ingredients and simmer about 20 minutes until desired consistency.

Sprinkle with crushed cashews and serve with basmati or jasmine rice.

Easily feeds four.

Flourish Original Recipe

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AskGord



I'm in my mid-60s and have been having more frequent "senior moments" lately. Should I be concerned?

It's important to differentiate between memory impairment and the onset of dementia. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), approximately 40% of us over 60 will experience age-related memory loss, with less than 10% living with some degree of dementia (memory and cognitive decline affecting the ability to perform everyday activities).

The colloquial expression "senior moment" references a temporary lapse in memory or forgetfulness associated with aging. In addition to good nutrition and sleep hygiene, keeping active is critical for preservation of mental acuity. Physical activity benefits memory and cognition by enhancing blood flow, which maximizes nutrient and oxygen delivery to the brain.

I have a few supplement suggestions which can also help. Start with a fish oil high in EPA and DHA, which supports brain cell membrane integrity while reducing neuro-inflammation. Medium-chain triglycerides (MCTs) featuring caprylic and capric fatty acids will further awaken parts of your brain experiencing difficulty metabolizing glucose. Look for them in liquid form; their neutral taste lends versatility such as a morning coffee or inclusion in brain-boosting vinaigrettes. Another favourite of mine is hot water-extracted lion's mane mushroom, which is excellent for supporting brain-cell maintenance and cognition. *Bacopa monnieri* is also gaining popularity as a well-researched botanical for memory enhancement and recall. Look for a supplement featuring at least 45% biologically active bacosides.

Vocabulary and accumulated knowledge, referred to as crystallized intelligence, tend to peak in your 60s. Make sure you retain your cognition to share your memories and wisdom with friends and family.

Parting Words

It's time I bid farewell and thank all of you for supporting *Flourish*. I first began writing content 17 years ago for what was then a 4-page flyer called *Natural Facts*. It has since evolved into one of our industry's most popular sources for health trends, wellness advice, and innovative recipes. Thanks are also in order to the team at *Flourish* for editing and translating my contributions over the years, and touching up the occasional photo.

Look for me paddling the lakes, rivers, and coastal waters of North America. I'm also excited for my role as a newly minted grandfather to Norah Rose, born this February.

So long and take care!

Keep your inquiries coming at facebook.com/newrootsherbal. We'll be rebranding AskGord to AskAnExpert.



Emphasis on Quality



At New Roots Herbal, all our testing is done in an ISO 17025–accredited laboratory, by a team of 16 scientists.

Each of our ingredients are tested for identity, purity, potency, and contaminants like heavy metals, pesticides, and much more. If the ingredients don't pass, they don't get used—**period!**



Our products are manufactured in Canada



Our production facility is cGMP certified by an independent third party



All finished products are tested to meet our high standards of quality and are safe from microbial contamination



Finished products go through a process of detection for unwanted metals

New Roots Herbal is proud to employ another 19 scientists in Quality Assurance and Quality Control, as well as 6 scientists in Regulatory Affairs.

We focus on safety and quality, so you don't need to.
Can other brands certify the same?

Take a tour of the lab

