



Key Points

- Addictions can ruin marriages and destroy families
- Recent studies of the brain and nervous system show how addictions occur
- Curing addictive behaviors begins with diet and nutrition
- There is a strong link between bad diets and compulsive behaviors

PLUS

- Pycnogenol: an amazing supplement
- Pharmaceutical companies, government attack supplements
- The link between drugs and rise in crime rates

ASK DR. BLAYLOCK

- Water purification; help for those with plantar warts; dangers of Lyme disease

Addiction: Diet's Hidden Role in Obsessive Disorders

America is plagued by addiction. Almost everyone knows someone whose family is disrupted by addiction in some form. And it seems next to impossible to hear the word Hollywood without hearing the word rehab lately.

Unfortunately, the problem is not confined to headlines: Millions of people are hooked on drugs, alcohol, gambling, tobacco, sex, and even food. And although much of the public and even many medical professionals are unaware of the connection, our diet — the foods we put in our mouths every day — can make us more susceptible to addictions of all types.

For many years, we have had only a primitive understanding of how food affects the brain, and this is important to understanding how addiction works.

Our efforts to understand the brain were held back because our methods of studying the brain also were primitive.

We learned mainly by observing the behavioral effects of severe brain injuries. In one famous Harvard study, researchers documented a complete personality change in a man whose brain had been penetrated by a metal rod.

In recent decades, however, neuroscience (the study of the brain and nervous system) has made advances that help us comprehend how addictions occur, what drives them, and the effects our daily activities have on our risk of becoming addicted. Much of our increase in knowledge comes from sophisticated technological advances, such as functional MRIs and PET scanners that allow us to watch the brain working.

As we explore the connection between food and addiction, keep in mind that addictions are big business, and that if many people were suddenly cured of their addictions, many other people would lose their incomes.

In my own state, for instance, as soon as casino gambling was legalized in the 1990s, billboards advertising treatments for gambling addictions sprang up seemingly overnight.

We're all familiar with articles and news specials that have detailed how Internet sex addictions have ruined marriages and destroyed families. And most of us are aware of the devastating



effects illicit drugs have had on our nation in terms of crime, gang violence, disease, and wasted lives.

Less well-known are the effects that diet and nutrition have on addictive behavior and on suicide rates. Despite extensive research on this subject, few parents or grandparents are aware that the foods they feed their children can have such a devastating effect on their health.

Worse still is the finding that Ritalin, a drug doctors commonly give children to treat attention deficit disorders, can dramatically increase their risk of addiction and even cause a recurrence of previously cured addictions.

What Causes Addiction?

Neuroscientists have tracked down a number of brain mechanisms and neurotransmitters that play a critical role in addictive behavior. There are three major players: glutamate, dopamine, and serotonin.

Glutamate. Glutamate regulates all of the other neurotransmitters, controlling the amounts and timing of their release.

It is the most abundant neurotransmitter in the brain and makes up 90 percent of the neurotransmitters in the cortex as well.

Dopamine. Dopamine elevates our mood and motivates us. A lack of dopamine causes us to feel gloomy and depressed.

Serotonin. Serotonin plays a role similar to dopamine. Low amounts of this critical neurotransmitter can cause us to feel depressed and even suicidal.

The SSRI (selective serotonin reuptake inhibitor) medications, such as Prozac, work by increasing brain serotonin levels. Unfortunately, they can also

have the opposite effect. Instead of boosting mood, SSRI medications can drive a person to suicide and even acts of homicide.

We'll discuss this more in-depth later.

Interaction between several parts of the brain creates our sense of well-being. The "limbic system," or the "emotional" part of the brain includes special areas of the brain that regulate all of your emotions:

- Love
- Hate
- Fear
- Jealously
- Empathy
- Anxiety
- Compassion
- Wonder
- Excitement

The areas of the brain that control addiction, meanwhile, have strange names, such as the nucleus accumbens, orbitofrontal cortex, prefrontal cortex, ventral tegmental area, and locus ceruleus.

Each of these areas plays a major role in addictive behavior and cravings. They also have high levels of the three neurotransmitters.

Addictive drugs, such as cocaine, morphine, nicotine, and methamphetamine, significantly activate these areas of the brain and raise the concentration of dopamine and glutamate to very high levels. If these neurotransmitters are blocked, much of the

cravings associated with drugs disappear and people can avoid withdrawal reactions, even those who are strongly addicted.

Cocaine causes a dramatic elevation in dopamine and glutamate levels in the brain. Thus, blocking glutamate receptors can prevent cocaine addiction and its accompanying cravings. Likewise, studies have shown that giving an animal glutamate, or

Change Your Diet to Reduce Addiction

As I always emphasize, diet is central to good health, not supplements alone. A good diet includes:

- Five to 10 servings of high-nutrient vegetables per day
- Organically raised meats (modest amounts of red meat)
- Whole grains
- Purified drinking water

The following should be avoided:

- Large amounts of sugar
 - High glycemic foods (white breads, processed carbohydrates, potatoes, and corn)
 - Omega-6 oils (vegetable oils including corn, soybean safflower)
- Omega-6 oils increase brain inflammation. Extra-virgin olive oil and extra-virgin coconut oils are better. High-meat diets, especially beef, raise blood glutamate levels and could increase cravings and addictive behavior.

Glutamate additives (such as MSG and aspartame) increase cravings for more than just foods, as we have seen. The only way to avoid these harmful additives is to prepare fresh foods.

injecting glutamate into the limbic or prefrontal brain — even in very small quantities — can dramatically increase cravings and addiction.

Good nutrition and a few supplements can correct many imbalances in brain chemistry and allow us to live happier, better-adjusted lives. **However, alterations in brain chemistry can increase dangerous, risk-taking behaviors.**

The Link Between Bad Diets, Impulsive Behavior, and Suicide

A number of large studies have shown that diets filled with junk foods, food dyes, sugar, and glutamate additives can significantly alter behavior. In addition, an equal amount of studies have shown that even mild deficiencies of vitamins and minerals can cause delinquent, disruptive, even criminal behavior. (See my DVD on nutrition and behavior at www.russellblaylockmd.com.)

All of us have known or lived with children who were rambunctious, angry, disobedient, impulsive, and constantly in trouble. What people often fail to notice is what their kids eat.

I always found it strange that people, and especially doctors, thought that people could eat junk all day long and still function normally. They should know better.

Nutrition is the biochemistry of life. What an organism eats allows cells and organs to utilize basic food components to maintain life's functions.

If you feed your cells things that increase inflammation, impair cell function and damage DNA, why would you be surprised that you get sick and that your brain would function poorly? Where else are cells going to get the nutrition they need? Not from a diet loaded with glazed donuts and potato chips dusted with monosodium glutamate (MSG).

Not only is this common sense, it is backed up by a great deal of hard science and clinical studies. When I was practicing neurosurgery, I tried to convince my patients, not always successfully, that what they ate played a major role in their ability to heal and in the progression of their diseases. I had even greater difficulty convincing my colleagues.

Several years ago, I had the distinct pleasure of meeting Mrs. Barbara Reed Stitt, who was chief probation officer with the Municipal Court of Ohio for some 20 years. Her book, "Food &

Behavior: A Natural Connection," tells the story of her experiences using a nutritional approach to change the criminal and addictive behavior of her clients.

Stitt told of a 23-year-old young man who attempted to kill his girlfriend with a gun. He was arrested, and Stitt intervened in his case after studying his history.

She discovered that his diet had been extremely high in sugar since the age of 4, when he began having problems.

His parents noticed that he frequently had spells of severe weakness that would improve when he ate. As he grew older, his diet consisted of caffeine, processed sugar, and empty calories.

His weakening spells worsened. By age 13 he was experiencing wild mood swings and the older he got, the worse things became. He also attempted suicide three times before he was arrested.

Stitt cleaned up his diet, and the troubled young man underwent a radical change in personality. His mood swings disappeared, he became bright and cheery, and he has had no additional scrapes with the law.

Over 80 percent of the approximately 5,000 probationers treated by Stitt underwent a similar change in behavior. (It is interesting to note that John Hinckley, the man who attempted to assassinate President Reagan, is reported to be a junk-food addict.)

One of the most consistent findings of a number of researchers concerns alcohol-induced hypoglycemia, a drastic fall in blood sugar associated with alcohol. Stitt and Dr. Steve Haltiwanger, who has an alcoholic detoxification program, as well as many other researchers, have noted the link.

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(Please remember to use lowercase letters.)

While alcohol is associated with about 40 percent of homicides, accidents, and suicides, a large number of criminal acts are committed by people who haven't drunk a drop.

Yet a meal laden with sugars and simple carbohydrates can flood the body with insulin, drop blood sugar, and cause a condition called dietary hypoglycemia or reactive hypoglycemia.

Alcohol, Hypoglycemia, and High-Glycemic Foods

It has been estimated that half of Americans suffer from varying degrees of reactive hypoglycemia, that is, a drop in blood sugar within minutes to hours of eating or drinking high-glycemic foods.

Processed sugar, many amino acids, potatoes, white breads, and alcohol can all trigger hypoglycemia. In some people the reaction is so severe that they lapse into a coma and may suffer a seizure, stroke, or even a heart arrhythmia.

Other symptoms of hypoglycemia include shakiness, anxiety, sudden outbursts of anger, confusion, trembling, muscle spasms, sweating, and hallucinations. This condition often begins during childhood and is frequently overlooked by pediatricians.

Diet can affect behavior in a number of ways:

- Foods in our diets can trigger allergies or intolerances.
- Foods can contain dyes that can have toxic effects.
- Vitamin and mineral deficiencies can affect brain function.

A growing number of studies, too, show that nutritional deficiencies during pregnancy, even if subclinical, can cause children to have psychiatric problems later in life.

For example, corn-based diets contain very little tryptophan, the amino acid used by the brain to make the neurotransmitter serotonin. Low serotonin levels are linked to depression,

anxiety, violent and aggressive behavior, and drug addiction.

Cocaine addicts have very low serotonin levels in their brains, and studies have shown that boosting the amount of tryptophan in their diets can reduce withdrawal symptoms.

Alcohol addictions have a strong connection to hypoglycemia. Several clinical studies have shown that 90 percent to 100 percent of alcoholics suffering from reactive hypoglycemia have multiple vitamin and mineral deficiencies.

Some studies have shown that correcting the hypoglycemia cures 70 percent of alcoholics. Correcting the vitamin and mineral deficiencies also reduces the craving for alcohol.

Early in my practice, I treated two of my severely alcoholic patients with high-dose vitamin and mineral supplementation, and they

completely overcame their addiction. They were as amazed as I was.

Studies have shown that most alcoholics suffer from nutrient deficiencies, especially vitamin C, the B vitamins, and magnesium. All of these deficiencies increase overactivity in areas of the brain known to control addiction and cravings. Alcoholics eat very poor diets and frequently skip meals, which lead not only to vitamin and mineral deficiencies but also to protein deficiencies.

Our brain uses amino acids from proteins in our diet to make the neurotransmitters dopamine, serotonin, and glutamate. When properly balanced, these chemicals keep us happy, well adjusted, and under control.

Cocaine and methamphetamine (the street drug "crystal meth"), meanwhile, cause a massive increase in glutamate and dopamine in the brain, which not only causes drug cravings but also causes a slow degeneration of the brain itself.

Alcohol binges, because they cause the glutamate receptors to be overactive, lead to memory loss and dementia in a substantial number of alcoholics.

Excitotoxins' Damaging Effects on the Brain

Anytime you hear someone try to defend the safety of excitotoxin additives in foods, it's important to know that humans are five times more sensitive to their toxic effects than the next most sensitive animal in the world: the rat. We are 20 times more sensitive than monkeys. That means one-twentieth the dose of MSG used to cause obvious brain injury in a monkey will do the same to you.

Humans regularly eat doses of excitotoxins that damage animal brains.

Fortunately, much of this damage can be reversed with proper nutrition and special supplements.

Foods that are high in sugar or high glycemic foods that are easily converted to sugar (the typical American diet), can result in reactive hypoglycemia that gets progressively worse with time, especially if they are eaten in large amounts. Unfortunately, most doctors fail to diagnose this condition.

One patient of mine had been to six different specialists and had spent tens of thousands of dollars on tests with no relief. I listened to her describe her symptoms for five minutes and knew that she was suffering from hypoglycemia. Tests confirmed the diagnosis.

A hypoglycemic diet completely relieved her symptoms. She was absolutely astounded that her cure was so easy and inexpensive, and that six separate physicians had not even suggested she change her eating habits.

People who have an addiction, whether it is drugs, pornography, gambling, foods or smoking, have a tendency to be hypoglycemic. Hypoglycemia causes the brain to release large amounts of glutamate, which is a major culprit in addictive behavior. Remember — glutamate receptors also control dopamine and serotonin receptors.

We also know that alcohol, as well as illicit drugs, is associated with higher suicide rates.

A greater problem is the association between prescription drugs and suicide, depression, and anxiety. Many drugs, such as several of the antibiotics, SSRI and other psychiatric medications, and antifungal medications contain fluoride within their molecular makeup.

These drugs have been shown to dramatically increase suicides as well as homicides.

In addition, many prescription drugs severely deplete vitamins and minerals, including magnesium and CoQ10 — this can dramatically increase excitotoxicity.

Excitotoxicity is strongly connected with psychiatric and behavioral problems. In essence, the drugs used to treat disease may be creating a nation of psychotics and sociopaths. In addition, vaccines can worsen the effects of many neurotoxins, such as mercury and pesticides. Remember that when flu season comes around.

Glutamate in Food Linked to Depression and Addiction

Since glutamate is so important to brain function and to the regulation of other brain systems, God constructed a special barrier to prevent glutamate's easy entry from food into the brain.

We call this the blood-brain barrier (BBB). Unfortunately, it is not perfect, and if we eat foods loaded with glutamate, some will seep into the brain. In fact, some areas of the brain do not have this barrier.

The brain is designed in such a way that a normal healthy diet would never produce enough glutamate to raise levels in the brain high enough to cause damage.

The problem is that processed foods contain

large amounts of concentrated glutamate additives. The only purpose of the additives is to enhance taste. They have no other function.

Studies have shown that eating glutamate-laced foods can increase blood glutamate levels 20 to 50 times

higher than normal and allows glutamate to enter the brain through areas that don't have this barrier for protection.

Diets high in meat also increase blood and brain glutamate levels (as well as aspartate levels, another excitotoxin).

The average person is exposed to a great number of additional, dangerous food additives. MSG is a common additive, but there are many others, often disguised with innocent-sounding names:

- Hydrolyzed proteins
- Enzymes
- Autolyzed yeast
- Natural flavoring
- Soy protein concentrate
- Soy isolate

The sweetener aspartame contains not only the excitotoxic amino acid aspartate but also toxic methanol. Studies have shown that combining aspartame and MSG greatly magnifies brain toxicity.

Newer studies have shown that elevations of glutamate in the brain will dramatically increase cravings and addictive behavior.

Likewise, drugs that block glutamate receptors can significantly reduce addictions and cravings.

Diets high in meats increase blood and brain glutamate levels.

It makes sense that eating foods high in glutamate will increase addictions and make them harder to overcome. This is made worse by hypoglycemia or a deficiency in magnesium, since both conditions magnify glutamate's action in the "addiction" parts of the brain.

Depression is a major cause of drug addiction and even food and gambling addictions. Recent studies have shown conclusively that elevated brain glutamate plays a central role in major depression and anxiety.

Many drugs that successfully fight depression also lower brain glutamate levels.

In my own practice, I have noticed that when people switch to a healthy diet free of excitotoxins and pro-inflammatory foods, they feel better, their depression lifts, and they feel energetic.

It's as if a brighter world suddenly appears from the gloom and darkness.

A number of large studies involving both prison populations and schools linked correcting bad diets with dramatic, almost miraculous decreases in suicide rates and drug addiction.

In one such study, 47 percent of people who were on probation and had a diet high in junk-food abused narcotics. That rate fell to 13 percent when they ate a healthy diet.

Other studies found the same dramatic results. What a tragedy to think that a child or adult would commit suicide or live a life of drug dependence because of something as simple as a bad diet, something that is so easy to correct.

The medical profession and the media deserve the

blame for many of these failed lives because they have ignored this important issue.

I recently wrote a paper called "Vaccines, Depression, and Neurodegeneration After Age 50 Years: Another Reason to Avoid the Recommended Vaccines," in which I outlined how vaccinating

adults can increase inflammation in brain areas associated with depression and anxiety. (View the paper at www.russellblaylockmd.com.)

Since vaccines can increase brain glutamate levels, they also can increase the risk of addiction.

Ritalin's Impact on Drug Cravings and Addictive Behavior

Tens of thousands of children take the drug Ritalin (methylphenidate) for attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) and attention deficit disorder (ADD), mainly at the insistence of school nurses and government agencies. Compelling studies show that methylphenidate significantly increases cravings for other drugs and compulsions.

This is because it increases the activity of the orbitofrontal lobe of the brain, an area critical to addiction and cravings.

Putting thousands of children on this drug for decades has greatly increased their risk of becoming addicted to drugs.

In addition, if they become addicted, they will face greater difficulty in becoming drug-free.

Drug relapses also increase dramatically in those on Ritalin.

In addition, increased glutamate levels in the

Case Study: Addiction and Criminal Behavior

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orbitofrontal lobes of the brain will gradually cause this vital area of the brain to degenerate. These lobes play an important role in judgment, control of impulses, and moral awareness.

Many illegal drugs damage the brain by triggering excitotoxicity, which increases brain levels of free radicals and lipid-peroxidation products.

For this reason it is important to take a mixture of antioxidants, such as vitamins C and E, the carotenoids, the B vitamins, magnesium, iodine, and flavonoids.

All of these protect the brain and some, such as pyrodoxal-5 phosphate, can lower blood and brain glutamate levels.

Stress also increases the production of free radicals in the brain, which leads to inflammation. Inflammation, in turn, increases the risk of depression and anxiety.

Regular exercise is critical since it increases the levels of natural opiates in the brain as well as the levels of protective chemicals called neurotrophins. This is why people who exercise regularly feel good. Exercise also increases antioxidant enzymes throughout the body and brain.

While many of the flavonoids, which include curcumin, quercetin, and resveratrol, protect the brain and reduce excitotoxicity, they also cause hypoglycemia. For this reason flavonoids should always be taken with a meal. Resveratrol is particularly important.

The herb silymarin (milk thistle) reduces brain inflammation and also protects neurons and neuron connections.

While I generally do not recommend single amino acids, some are very helpful. For example, tyrosine has been tested by the military and found to be effective in improving resistance to stress.

Tyrosine is the precursor building block for the neurotransmitters dopamine and norepinephrine. Dopamine keeps us happy and motivated, among many other functions, and norepinephrine improves our attention and focus. These should be taken on an empty stomach, at least one hour before a meal to improve absorption.

The advantage of taking amino-acid precursors is that they keep the neurotransmitters in balance and

lessen the likelihood of overdoses, a major problem with prescription drugs.

Drugs like SSRI medications prevent the removal of serotonin from the synapse (the point where two nerve cells connect).

There are several problems with this approach:

- **First, SSRI drugs can eventually deplete serotonin, which then makes the depression and addiction much worse.**
- Second, if too much serotonin builds up in the brain, it is converted to a powerful brain toxin (excitotoxin) called quinolinic acid. The precursor for serotonin is tryptophan, which was outlawed in the United States. The supplement called 5-HTP is available and will raise levels of serotonin in the brain. High doses of 5-HTP (above 100 milligrams a day) can produce the same problems as the SSRI drugs. This supplement should never be taken with SSRI medications. One can be tested for levels of these neurotransmitters, using either blood levels or urine levels.
- Finally, the omega-3 oils, especially the DHA component, improve dopamine levels in the brain, reduce excitotoxicity, and help the brain heal. Omega-3 oils also reduce brain inflammation and the risk of Alzheimer's disease.

Reducing one's susceptibility to addictions also depends on a proper mental attitude.

Victims must truly want to be cured. Linked to this desire is willpower, something rarely ingrained in today's children.

It is critical we learn to avoid the things that tempt us. It's hard to give up a sugar addiction while drooling in a doughnut shop.

Pycnogenol: An Amazing Supplement

Sometimes a product flashes onto the radar screen and causes a great uproar only to disappear among seemingly more interesting blips. These early shining stars often return, and sometimes, as with pycnogenol, pique our interest even further.

Such is the case with pycnogenol, which is a derivative of the French maritime pine, and weak veins. Veins carry blood from tissues back to our

heart to be recirculated. Unfortunately, especially as we age, the walls of the veins can become weak and allow fluid to leak out into the tissues, a condition called edema.

Edema can lead to swollen feet, ankles, and legs. If not corrected, ulcers can form, which results in legs that appear purplish-red and feel heavy and painful. The name of this condition is chronic venous insufficiency.

Several products have been developed to make veins stronger and to prevent them from leaking. One such product is Daflon, a mixture of the plant extracts hesperidin and diosmin and it has had some success.

A number of recent studies have shown that a daily dose of 150 milligrams to 200 milligrams of pycnogenol can dramatically reduce the symptoms of venous insufficiency as well as promote healing of the leg ulcers.

In one study involving 86 patients with severe chronic venous insufficiency, pycnogenol was superior to Daflon in reducing leg and ankle swelling, preventing vessel leakage, and relieving all the symptoms associated with this incapacitating condition.¹ Most remarkable, the improvements occurred rapidly, usually by four weeks.

In another study, researchers found that 200 milligrams of pycnogenol a day dramatically reduced muscle cramps and muscle pains, not only in athletes but also in ordinary people. Going further, they found the pine-bark extract significantly improved symptoms in people whose leg arteries had severe blockages, known as intermittent claudication.²

Pycnogenol helps diabetics. Diabetics are prone to develop severe atherosclerosis of arteries throughout the body, especially of the smaller arteries (called arterioles). Disease of these smaller vessels is called microangiopathy. It can result in leg ulcerations and organ failure (kidneys), and may eventually lead to amputations of limbs and even death.

Several studies have shown that pycnogenol produced dramatic improvements in this condition at a dose of 150 milligrams a day for four weeks.³

Another study, which compared the effectiveness of pycnogenol in healing diabetic leg ulcers, found that if pycnogenol is applied directly to the

ulcers and also taken by mouth, the ulcers heal completely in 89 percent of patients.⁴

Using pycnogenol, either only topically or only by mouth, had slightly less success (84 percent and 85 percent, respectively). Traditional medical treatments were successful only 61 percent of the time and those treatments were more involved and more expensive.

Despite the success of pycnogenol in healing these expensive and debilitating disorders, traditional medical doctors rarely use it. Yet the solution is so simple.

Pycnogenol's effect on erectile dysfunction and sterility. Men will love this next pycnogenol discovery. In a randomized, double-blind, placebo-controlled study using 50 men with mild to moderate erectile dysfunction, researchers found that using a combination of the amino acid L-arginine and pycnogenol for one month restored normal erectile function in all men.

The frequency of intercourse doubled and testosterone levels in the blood also increased. Both of these supplements increase nitric oxide in the walls of blood vessels, which is the mechanism for an erection.

It is a poor man's Viagra without the terrifying side effects of blindness and heart attack.

The next study will interest women. In a non-randomized clinical study using 19 men with sperm counts too low to induce pregnancy, researchers found that 200 milligrams of pycnogenol a day for 90 days dramatically improved the health of the sperm of all participants. They noted that this simple treatment may negate the need for artificial insemination with donor sperm.⁵

Pycnogenol and vascular diseases of the retina. A growing number of people are losing their sight to diseases of the eye that affect mostly the retina. The main cause is progressive blockage of the tiny blood vessel within the retina. Like the microangiopathy we saw with diabetics, the blood vessels slowly become blocked off, depriving the retina of its blood supply.

In a double-blind, placebo-controlled randomized study using 40 patients with vascular retinopathies, researchers found that those given 150 milligrams per day of pycnogenol had no deterioration of

their condition and a significant improvement in visual acuity. Those getting the placebo experienced progressive deterioration of their condition.

Special studies of the vessels showed dramatic improvement in those taking pycnogenol when tested by sophisticated testing methods (fluorangiography and electroretinogram).

Pycnogenol and brain protection. Pycnogenol has been shown to be a very powerful antioxidant, helping protect the brain against injury, stroke damage, and neurodegenerative diseases. A recent study found that it significantly reduced the free radical damage caused by beta amyloid, the toxic crud found in Alzheimer's brains. Pycnogenol also protected the DNA, which reduces cancer risk as well.⁶

Another study found that pycnogenol protected neurons against glutamate-induced excitotoxicity, mainly by increasing glutathione levels in these brain cells. When used in combination with ginkgo bilboa and vitamin E, the results were even better.⁷

In a double-blind, placebo-controlled matched

study of elderly people aged 60 to 85, scientists found that supplementing with 150 milligrams of pycnogenol a day significantly improved everyday memory and reduced lipid peroxidation products.⁸

Pycnogenol and travel blood clots. One of the real dangers of long trips, especially flying, is blood clots (thrombosis) in the leg veins, which increases the risk of pulmonary embolism and of sudden death. Several studies examined the legs of passengers of prolonged flights. They found that those who took 150 milligrams to 200 milligrams of pycnogenol before the flight had significantly less swelling of the legs and improved vein function. In short, it dramatically reduced the risk of a fatal embolism.⁹

Pycnogenol also reduces platelet clumping (blood-clot formation), especially in those at greatest risk of blood clots, such as smokers.

If that is not enough, pycnogenol has also been shown to reduce fat accumulation in cells, lower histamine release (good news for allergy sufferers), and lower elevated blood pressure.

Health and Nutrition Updates

The Link Between Illegal Drugs and Rise in Serious Crimes

Social observers, as well as anyone with a grain of sense, have noticed that our youth are engaged in more bizarre behavior and serious crimes than ever before. Many of the perpetrators have no remorse and even repeat such acts without any fear of the law or for personal safety — the “no fear” mentality.

Many reasons for this have been given, including watching violent movies and playing violent video games, and even listening to rock music, all of which, I think, have some validity. Yet, I think it goes beyond that.

Our youth are exposed to a greater number of powerful drugs, both legal and illegal, and neurotoxins, than ever before, and their exposure starts at a younger age.

Many studies show that these drugs have a

profound effect on complex neural systems in the brain and can cause abnormal development and functioning of the brain, mainly in areas that cause behavioral aberrations. It should be appreciated that the brain does not undergo full maturation until around age 27, especially the prefrontal cortex, the most important area for social judgment and impulse control.

Many of these drugs, such as methamphetamines, cocaine, and designer drugs, can cause long-lasting damage to critical areas of the brain used in reasoning, impulse control, memory, learning, planning, and other mental functions essential to holding a job, being a parent, and abiding by the rule of law. When you combine this with exposure to excitotoxins in foods, fluoride, poor diets and lead exposure, the damage can be extensive and even permanent.

One can see why the Russians exploited the drug trade to, in their own words, destroy the minds

of American youth. Now they are getting a lot of help from the pharmaceutical industry and the psychiatric profession.

Government and Pharmaceutical Companies Continue Attacks on Supplements

You may not be aware of it, but we are in a battle for our very lives. There are individuals in our government who are in collusion with pharmaceutical manufacturing giants determined to take away one of our most basic freedoms — a right to life itself. This is no exaggeration.

I would urge my readers to get a copy of Richard Jaffe's book "Galileo's Lawyer" and read it very carefully.

It is extremely well-written and filled with humor, but it discusses a very serious and critical subject, our health freedom. No one could have told this story better, not just because it was first-hand, but because of the writer's integrity, compassion, determination and skill.

Here's a quote from the book:

"But these battles were not esoteric and gentlemanly. They were brutal and fought in the trenches of life. Real patients were involved and their lives were at stake. These Burzynski NCI trials showed me up close how dirty, unscientific, and immoral medical science can be. It was a far cry from what I had learned in my philosophy of science classes two decades earlier."

— Richard A. Jaffe

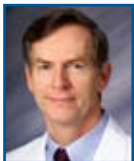
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About Dr. Blaylock

Dr. Russell Blaylock edits Newsmax.com's **Blaylock Wellness Report**. He is a nationally recognized board-certified neurosurgeon, health practitioner, author, and lecturer.

He attended the Louisiana State University School of Medicine in New Orleans and completed his internship and neurosurgical residency at the Medical University of South Carolina in Charleston, S.C.



For the past 26 years, he has practiced neurosurgery in addition to having a nutritional practice.

He recently retired from his neurosurgical duties to devote his full attention to nutritional studies and research. Dr. Blaylock has authored three books on nutrition and wellness, including "Excitotoxins: The Taste That Kills," "Health and Nutrition Secrets That Can Save Your Life," and his most recent work, "Natural Strategies for The Cancer Patient." An in-demand guest for radio and television programs, he lectures extensively to both lay and professional medical audiences on a variety of nutrition-related subjects.

Also, Dr. Blaylock has been appointed to serve on the Scientific Advisory Board of the Life Extension Foundation. He is the 2004 recipient of the Integrity in Science Award granted by the Weston A. Price Foundation.

Dr. Blaylock serves on the editorial staff of the Journal of the American Nutraceutical Association and on the editorial staff of the Journal of American Physicians and Surgeons, official publication of the Association of American Physicians and Surgeons.

He previously served as clinical assistant professor of neurosurgery at the University of Mississippi Medical Center in Jackson, Miss., and is currently a visiting professor of biology at the Belhaven College, also in Jackson.

PLEASE NOTE: All information presented in The Blaylock Wellness Report is for informational purposes only. It is not specific medical advice for any individual. All answers to reader questions are provided for informational purposes only. All information presented in The Blaylock Wellness Report should not be construed as medical consultation or instruction. You should take no action solely on the basis of this publication's contents. Readers are advised to consult a health professional about any issue regarding their health and well-being. While the information found in The Blaylock Wellness Report is believed to be sensible and accurate based on the author's best judgment, readers who fail to seek counsel from appropriate health professionals assume risk of any potential ill effects. The opinions expressed in The Blaylock Wellness Report do not necessarily reflect those of Newsmax Media.



Ask Dr. Blaylock

Attention Blaylock Readers:

Dr. Blaylock welcomes any questions or comments you would like to share.

Each month, he will select a few to be published and answered in the newsletter.

Please remember that he cannot answer every question.

When submitting a question or comment, please include full name, city, and state.

Please e-mail the doctor at: askblaylock@newsmax.com.

Q: What do you think of reverse osmosis for water purification?

— Barbara C., The Villages, Fla.

A: Reverse osmosis is a good filtering system, but it has some flaws.

Fluoride is removed from water by this method, but the fluoride will erode the filters, making it useless in about two to three months.

I prefer distilling my water. The company Waterwise sells one of the best distillers, which has a built-in carbon filter, which is essential. It is also one of the best-run companies I have ever dealt with. After distilling the water, you can add a small amount of magnesium to the water to supply necessary minerals.

Add about a half of a capsule of magnesium powder to a gallon of water.

Q: What do you suggest for plantar warts?

— Kathryn S., Germantown, Tenn.

A: I have found that a capsaicin-containing ointment works very well. It will burn a bit, but the warts should not return.

Also, the burning is tolerable. It needs to be applied as an occlusive dressing, which means you apply the ointment by rubbing it in well and then cover the area with a small dressing. Two to three days' treatment should take care of the problem.

Q: Are there supplements that can fight Lyme disease?

— Carole B., Bowmanstown, Pa.

A: Yes, there are a number of them. Treatment depends on the stage of the disease.

Acute disease, that is within the first week up to two weeks of the infection, can be treated with

antibiotics. Chronic Lyme disease can lead to a number of serious problems and in my opinion requires treatment with antibiotics as well as a number of supplements.

The neurological disorders associated with Lyme disease are caused by microglial-triggered immunoexcitotoxicity and require a special regime of treatment for a lifetime.

Free radicals generated by the organism, and the immune reaction to it, cause the generation of enormous amounts of free radicals, meaning that a entire complex of antioxidants are needed chronically.

One of the problems with the spirochetal infection is that the organism can enter cells and hide from the immune system.

Many have used immune stimulation, but one must be careful since many of the problems associated with chronic Lyme are immune related (autoimmune). Beta-glucan is one of the best and safest to use.

Dietary changes are essential (as outlined in most of my newsletters). The treatment is of a complexity beyond this newsletter. Look for more on Lyme disease in a future newsletter.

Q: What can be done to alleviate the pain from or improve conditions of sciatica?

— Tina D., Chantilly, Va.

A: Sciatica is caused by several things, the most common being viral infections, compression by ligamentous bands in the buttocks, and of course the most common — ruptured disc.

Studies have shown that in all these instances, the cause of the pain is inflammation of the nerve root and not merely compression of the nerve.

Compression of an uninflamed sciatic nerve does not cause pain. In my neurosurgical practice,

many patients were cured simply by removing the inflammation from the nerve.

One way to do that is to use powerful anti-inflammatory nutraceuticals—such as vitamin C (buffered), vitamin E (unique-E), and especially the anti-inflammatory flavonoids, such as curcumin and quercetin.

When mixed with extra virgin olive oil, they are better absorbed and work much better.

A dose of 500 milligrams of all of these mixed with one tablespoon of the oil taken three times a day works best.

It is important to avoid the inflammatory oils (omega-6-oils) and glutamate food additives (MSG, hydrolyzed proteins, caseinate, etc.).

Next, it is important to heal the damaged nerve. This is done by taking B vitamins, such as vitamin B-1, riboflavin, vitamin B-6, niacinamide, folate, biotin, etc. Methylcobalamin plays a significant role in nerve healing — in a dose of 5,000 micrograms a day.

Q: Can taking selenium increase your risk of acquiring diabetes mellitus?

— Lois Z., New Haven, Ind.

A: This implication with diabetes comes from an epidemiological study (as always) in which those taking 200 micrograms of selenium had a higher incidence of diabetes over a 7.7-year span.

The problem with this study is that other studies did not find a link, and a number of animal studies

even found that selenium could act like insulin; that is, selenium could be used to treat diabetics.

One study found that the risk of gestational diabetes is strongly associated with a deficiency in selenium. Like most metals used by the body, there is a safe range, and a dose that can cause harm.

This is true of iron, manganese and even magnesium, but these doses are usually massive or use special types of metal that are harmful.

The selenium in supplements at a dose of 200 micrograms is considered safe by most studies.

Selenium (as selenomethionine) has a great number of benefits, including suppressing cancer development, protecting the brain from excitotoxicity, preventing depression and other mood disorders and acting as a powerful and essential antioxidant. At 100 micrograms, it is entirely safe for all adults.

The safe level of supplements depends on one's other sources of selenium, most of which come from vegetables.

Many veggies grown in the U.S. are from selenium-deficient soils. Because we do not know an individual's total intake, I would limit selenium supplements to 100 micrograms for healthy adults.

In this study, the participants did not take any other supplements.

I emphasize that antioxidants should always be taken in combination (vitamins, minerals, and flavonoids) so as to prevent oxidation of the supplement.

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