

# The McDougall Newsletter

THE NEWSLETTER WITH JOHN & MARY McDOUGALL



MARY & JOHN McDOUGALL

## HERBAL TREATMENTS FOR MENOPAUSE

Many distressing symptoms appear at the time of menopause. The most commonly reported are hot flashes, and problems caused by atrophy (thinning) of the genital tissues. Hot flashes are experienced by over 75% of menopausal women following the Western diet. Other common complaints associated with menopause include nervousness, anxiety, depression, fatigue, irritability, insomnia, night sweats, forgetfulness, pain with intercourse, and weight gain, especially in the lower abdomen.

These signs and symptoms of menopause are often relieved with estrogen and progesterone; in other words, by hormone replacement therapy (HRT). However, no more than 20-30% of eligible women ever start HRT and about 50% of those who do start, stop shortly thereafter. Common reasons for stopping include fear of cancer and a lack of perceived benefits from hormones for improved general health or soundness of vaginal tissues.

So what can be done for women who fear taking HRT, but still suffer? Herbal preparations are commonly recommended for a "natural treatment" of menopause. Unfortunately, there are currently no government standards on the quality of herbal products in the United States, and little is known about them scientifically. While most have few adverse effects, some can be unsafe.

How do you tell if the herbal medication is worthwhile? You will be the best judge based upon how it makes you feel. This is no different than how you determine the value of HRT. Guidance for the proper dosage is obtained with the package instruc-

tions. These preparations should not be taken by women who are pregnant or nursing or by anyone known to have adverse reactions to any of these herbal preparations.

There are those herbs that are said to effect the female hormones and those that relieve mental and emotional distresses associated with menopause. The following are some of the commonly self-administered herbs used by women for menopause symptoms:

### HORMONALLY ACTIVE HERBS:

The estrogen and progestin bioactivity of foods, herbs, and spices was recently reported on over 150 herbs traditionally used by herbalists for treating a variety of health problems (*Proc Soc Exp Biol Med* 217:369, 1998). They were tested for their relative capacity to compete with estradiol and progesterone binding to intracellular receptors for progesterone (PR) and estradiol (ER) in intact human breast cancer cells. (This does not mean they cause breast cancer.) The six highest ER-binding herbs that are commonly consumed were soy, licorice, red clover, thyme, turmeric, hops, and verbena. The six highest PR-

binding herbs and spices commonly consumed were oregano, verbena, turmeric, thyme, red clover and damiana. However, modifying estrogen and progesterone activity is probably only one role herbs play in helping women with menopausal symptoms.

### Black Cohosh

**Other Names:** (Cimicifuga racemosa), baneberry, squawroot (from treating women's disorders), bugbane, black snake root (treating snake bites by Native

### HERBAL TREATMENT FOR MENOPAUSE

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*Cruise Panama with the Mc Dougalls!*

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Americans), rattle weed.

#### **General Description:**

Black cohosh is a flowering plant that grows to 8 feet tall in the northern hemisphere. It is the best-studied herb for relieving menopausal symptoms. The herb is obtained from the rhizome (a creeping stem with scales, leaves, and roots lying horizontally at or under the surface of the soil).

#### **Medical Background:**

Traditionally, it has been recommended for female problems, indigestion, and arthritis. Benefits for women during menopause are supposed to come from its estrogen-simulating effects. Black cohosh has been studied mostly in Germany, where it is used to treat hot flashes. Experiments have shown that the herb has substances that bind to estrogen receptors in animal models and lower pituitary hormones in both animals and humans. However, a recent study from Denmark found no sign of estrogen activity on the uterus and vagina of rats (*Maturitas* 25:149, 1996). The authors conclude this herb's benefits for menopausal symptoms cannot be explained as a traditional estrogen effect as measured in biological experiments. Therefore, the herb may work by other means, such as influencing pituitary hormones.

Elevated levels of a pituitary hormone, known as luteinizing hormone, is thought to contribute to hot flashes, insomnia, and depression in menopause. When 110 women took black cohosh or placebo for two months, luteinizing hormone was decreased by 20 percent for those taking the herb (*Planta Medica* 57:420, 1991). Two studies compared black cohosh to conjugated estrogens, and diazepam (Valium). Women in the black cohosh group had greater relief of menopausal symptoms and greater reduction in anxiety and depression than those taking the prescription drugs. (*Med Welt* 36:871, 1985; *Therapeuticon* 1:23, 1987). Vaginal atrophy also improved. Other research has found significant relief of menopausal symptoms such as hot flashes, profuse perspiration, headache, dizziness, heart palpitations, ringing in the ears, nervousness, depression, and sleep disturbances (*Zentralblatt Gynakol* 110:611, 1988; *Gyne* 1:14, 1982).

#### **Side Effects:**

Few side effects are seen with recommended doses. Ingestion of large doses of leaves may result in nausea, vomiting and may induce miscarriage (*Lawrence Review of Natural Products* Sept. 1992). This herb may have additive blood pressure lowering effects so people taking blood pressure pills should be cautious.

### **Chaste Berry**

**Other Names:** (Agnus castus) Vitex, Chaste Tree

#### **General Description:**

As its name suggests, chaste berries were once believed to suppress the libido. The chaste berry is the fruit of a small Eurasian tree. The berries and leaves are used in the herb preparation. The chaste berry was well known to many of the ancients, "If blood flows from the womb, let the woman drink dark wine in which the leaves of the Vitex have been steeped." Hippocrates (460-377 B.C.).

**Medical Background:** Chaste berry extracts inhibit prolactin secretion of rat pituitary cells (*Horm Metab Res* 25:253, 1993). A randomized, placebo-controlled, double-blind study of 52 women with elevated prolactin production (hyperprolactinemia) using a daily dose of one capsule (20 mg) of a chaste berry preparation found after 3 months of therapy that prolactin release was reduced and estrogen (17 beta-estradiol) production increased (*Arzneimittelforschung* 43:752, 1993). Side effects were not seen. Therefore, this herb has effects on female pituitary and ovarian hormones and has some scientific support for use in menopause. In addition, it is an alternative treatment for elevated prolactin production in women in their reproductive years.

#### **Side Effects:**

May cause itching, rash, or nausea. Not recommended for use in pregnancy.

### **Licorice**

**Other Names:** (Glycyrrhiza glabra)

#### **General Description:**

Say "licorice" and most people think of a candy, but it is also a powerful herb. Licorice is from a perennial plant native to southern Europe, Asia and the Mediterranean; distinguished by tiny violet flowers. It is one of the most popular and widely consumed herbs in the world. It is said to be 50 times sweeter than sugar.

#### **Medical Background:**

The main constituent found in the root is glycyrrhizin, which stimulates the secretion of the adrenal cortex hormone aldosterone. The root extract produces mild estrogenic effects, and it has proven useful in treating symptoms of menopause. Licorice is found to bind to estrogen receptors in the cells of the uterus of experimental animals (*Acta Obstet Gynecol Scand* 65:839, 1986).

#### **Side Effects:**

Headaches, diarrhea, lethargy, fluid retention, weakness, or shortness of breath. Heavy use of licorice can affect the production of adrenal hormones (aldosterone) causing electrolyte



Chaste Tree

imbalance with sodium retention and loss of potassium. This in turn can lead to high blood pressure and edema.

### **Ginseng**

**Other Names:** (Panax ginseng), Ren Shen, Chinese Ginseng, Korean Ginseng

#### **General Description:**

Ginseng is native to China, Russia, North Korea, Japan, and some areas of North America. Ginseng is the most famous Chinese herb and its use dates back 7,000 years. The name panax is derived from the Greek word panacea meaning, "all healing." It was first cultivated in the United States in the late 1800's and it takes 4-6 years to become mature enough to harvest. The root provides the herb.

#### **Medical Background:**

Ginseng is known to have estrogenic activity (*Br Med J* 281:1110, 1980). Ginseng face cream has been reported to cause vaginal bleeding in a postmenopausal woman; demonstrating its potential for powerful estrogenic activity (*Am J Obstet Gynecol* 159:1121, 1988).

**Side Effects:** Very rare.

### **Hops**

**Other Names:** (Humulus lupulus)

#### **General Description:**

The female flowers of the climbing shrub are used to make the herb. Historically hops have been used as a sleeping aid and to flavor beer.

#### **Medical Background:**

Hops appear to have an estrogen effect and bind to estrogen receptors of human cells (*Proc Soc Exp Biol Med* 217:369, 1998).

**Side Effects:** Nontoxic

### Dong Quai

**Other Names:** (Angelica sinensis), Chinese Angelica, Dong Guai, tang-kuei, Dang-gui, Umbelliferae, toki, Japanese angelica, tanggwi

#### General Description:

The Chinese have been using this herb for more than 2,000 years to treat gynecological problems. The rhizome is the source of the herb.

#### Medical Background:

Stimulation of uterine tissue has been observed (*J Chinese Materia Medica* 20:173, 1995). Dong quai does not act like an estrogen, but may have some direct action on the reproductive organs (uterus) and possibly on other hormones. A recent double-blind, placebo-controlled study examined the effects of dong quai on the vaginal cells and endometrial thickness in 71 postmenopausal women, and found no statistically significant differences between the endometrial thickness, vaginal cells, or the number of hot flashes between the herb and a placebo. (*Fertil Steril* 68:981, 1997). The authors concluded dong quai is no more helpful than placebo in relieving menopausal symptoms.

#### Side Effects:

Components of this herb may interact with sunlight to cause rashes. There is also concern that some of the chemical components may cause cancer. *The Laurence Review of Natural Products* reports, "...the potential toxicity posed by the coumarins and safrole in the essential oil outweigh the benefits of ingesting this plant, and its use cannot be recommended."

## MOOD ALTERING DRUGS

### St. John's Wort

**Other Names:** (hypericum perforatum), Goat weed.

#### General Description:

St. John's wort is a bushy perennial plant with numerous yellow flowers. It is native to many parts of the world including Europe and the United States, growing wild in northern California, southern Oregon, and Colorado. The herb comes from the flowering plant.

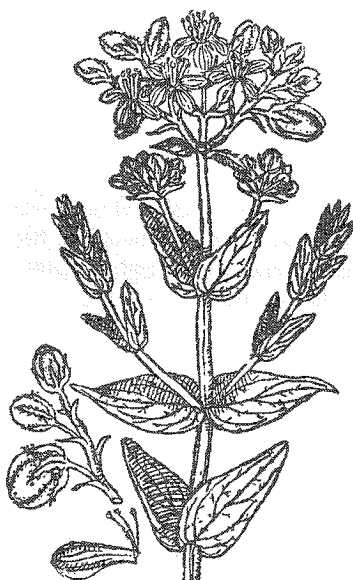
#### Medical Background:

St John's Wort is licensed in Germany for treatment of anxiety, depression, and insomnia. There are at least 10 compounds that may provide effects, but hypericum appears to be the most active ingredient. This compound changes the neurotransmitters in the brain resulting in emotional benefits. There have been 23 randomized trials done on a total of

1757 outpatients with mild to moderate depression. Hypericum extracts, after 2 to 4 weeks were found to be more effective than placebo, and about as effective as standard antidepressants (*Med Lettr* 39:107, 1997). Two to four weeks are required to develop mood elevating effects.

#### Side Effects:

Some patients report dry mouth, dizziness, constipation, gastrointestinal upset, and confusion. In trials, fewer than 2% stopped their herb because of side effects. One patient reported photosensitivity (reaction with sunlight). Depression is a serious illness and should be treated by a doctor. Do not combine this herb with other antidepressant medication.



St. John's Wort

### Ginkgo Biloba

**Other Names:** (Ginkgo biloba) Maidenhair Tree, Bai Guo (EGb 761).

#### General Description:

Ginkgo biloba is extracted from the leaves of cultivated maidenhair trees.

#### Medical Background:

It is a traditional Chinese medicine used to treat asthma and bronchitis. Ginkgo is licensed in Germany to treat cerebral dysfunction with, for example, memory loss, dizziness, ringing in the ears, hearing loss, headaches, emotional instability with anxiety, and for intermittent claudication. Benefits have been reported for poor circulation to the brain, hands, legs (intermittent claudication), and feet (*Lancet* 340:1136, 1992). Ginkgo has been shown to improve memory and to slow the progress of dementia (*JAMA* 278:1327, 1997). Four to 12 weeks of treatment are usually required to see results.

#### Side Effects:

There are no serious side-effects. In rare cases there have been reported mild stomach upset, headache, and allergic skin reactions.

### Kava

**Other Names:** (Piper methysticum), Kava kava, Kawa.

#### General Description:

More than 20 varieties have been identified. Kava is prepared from the rhizome of a sprawling evergreen shrub found in Polynesia, Melanesia, and Micronesia. It has traditionally been used as a beverage to induce relaxation. Kava produces mild euphoric changes characterized by feelings of happiness, more fluent and lively speech, and increased sensitivity to sounds. Chewed, it can cause numbness of the mouth.

#### Medical Background:

A study of women with menopausal complaints found reduced symptoms after only 1-week with improvements in feelings of well-being and less depression (*Fortschr Med* 109:119, 1991). A multicentered, randomized, placebo-controlled 25-week outpatient trial of the active ingredient of kava compared to commonly prescribed antidepressants and tranquilizers, found kava to have superior benefits over the drugs, with rare adverse effects (*Pharmacopsychiatry* 30:1, 1997). The authors suggested kava as a treatment alternative with proven long-term benefits and none of the tolerance problems associated with antidepressants (tricyclics) and tranquilizers (benzodiazepines). Other research has shown similar benefits (*Arzeimittelforschung* 41:584, 1991). Use for treating alcohol abuse and some forms of psychosis also have been suggested (*Aust NZJ Psychiatry* 20:70, 1986).

#### Side Effects:

Even when administered within its prescribed dosages, this herb may adversely affect motor reflexes and judgment for driving. May potentiate effects of alcohol. Chronic ingestion causes dry, flaky, discolored skin and reddened eyes. Heavy kava users are more likely to complain of poor health and a "puffy" face, and about 20% are underweight (*Med J Aust* 148:548, 1988).

## OTHER HERBS FOR MENOPAUSE:

Other herbs commonly recommended to treat some of the symptoms of menopause include: bilberry, black currant, bitter melon, chamomile, damiana, echinacea, feverfew, flax seed, goldenseal, hawthorn, horsetail, motherwort, oat straw, pasque flower, passion flower, sage, saw palmetto, uva ursi, valerian root, and wild yam. Their benefits

and risks have not been sufficiently tested.

## WHAT TO DO?

Your first and best efforts to have a happy and healthy life around the time of menopause should be focused on a healthy starch-based diet, exercise, stress reduction, and quitting bad habits, like daily use of coffee, tobacco, and alcohol (*Ann Pharmacother* 31:915, 1997). Next you may want to try herbal treatments and/or HRT. (I recommend the use of estradiol and progesterone cream applied to the skin. See November/December 1995 *McDougall Newsletter*.)

The herb that is most likely to give you relief from menopausal symptoms, like hot flashes, is black cohosh. Chaste berry would be your second choice. Ginseng is relatively safe and has many positive effects on a person's state of well-being. The additional estrogen effects may be particularly helpful for post-menopausal women. Licorice has definite hormonal effects, but sometimes undesirable and serious side effects. This herb should be used with caution. Hops hasn't been studied enough, so its actual effects are still to be determined. Because of lack of effectiveness and potential toxicity you should not use dong quai.

There are four alternatives to doctor-prescribed drugs to relieve depression. Exercise relieves mild depression and anxiety by producing endorphins in the nervous system. A healthy, low-animal-protein diet, allows the production of neurochemicals, like serotonin, that elevate mood. Avoiding too much sleep is one of the most powerful antidepressants, because for many people too much sleep produces depressogenic substances.

Herbs can also provide effective mood-altering therapy. Three such herbs have proven effective and relatively safe: St. John's Wort for depression, ginkgo biloba to help with memory and confusion, and kava for a relaxant. Use all of these herbal preparations for their desired effects, but be observant of side effects and discontinue if they occur.

## RESEARCH

### PROTEIN AND CALCIUM LOSS

Dietary protein intake and urinary excretion of calcium: a cross-sectional study in a healthy Japanese population by Roichi Itoh

in the March 1998 issue of the *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition* found, "excess protein, especially that rich in sulfur-containing amino acids, in habitual diets may augment calcium excretion in the urine, at least in the elderly" (67:438). They observed a significant correlation of calcium excretion with animal protein in both sexes (349 males and 406 females) and in each age group (20 to 49 and 50 to 79 years), where as plant protein was not.

COMMENT: Animal foods are high in proteins which are made up of amino acids. Animal proteins are also rich in sulfur-containing amino acids which breakdown in the body into powerful sulfuric acids (*Calcif Tissue Int* 44:335, 1989). The net result is meat, which includes all muscle foods (beef, chicken, fish, lobster, etc.) and eggs are acidic (*J Clin Endocrinol Metab* 66:140, 1988). They provide an acid load to the body which must be buffered. The body maintains a precise acid base balance (pH) which is slightly on the alkaline side. The primary buffering system of the body is the bones. The acid load from animal foods must be buffered by breaking down bone and releasing phosphates which neutralize the acid. This is the first step in causing the body to lose calcium and eventually significant bone loss, a condition known as osteoporosis. The second step takes place in the kidneys. Animal protein increases the filtration and decreases reabsorption of calcium by the kidneys.

Many other investigations have found people with higher intakes of animal protein have greater loss of calcium into their urine and/or thinner bones (lower BMD). In a study of 38 white women between the ages of 24 and 28 years, protein intake was found to be negatively associated with radial (wrist) bone mineral content and bone density (*Am J Clin Nutr* 58:537, 1993). In five districts of China where residents had markedly different diets and lifestyles, 764 middle aged and elderly women were studied. Calcium loss in the urine was found to be associated with animal protein consumption, but not plant protein (*Am J Clin Nutr* 58:398, 1993). A study of 886 men and women found the more protein consumed the more calcium lost in the urine (*Am J Clin Nutr* 63:735, 1996). The Nurse's Health Study recently found women who consumed 95 grams of protein a day compared with those who consumed less than 68 grams a day had a 22% greater risk of forearm fractures (*Am J Epidemiol* 143:472, 1996).

### POTASSIUM FOR BLOOD PRESSURE

Effects of oral potassium on blood pressure.

**Meta-analysis of randomized controlled clinical trials** by Paul Whelton in the May 28, 1997 issue of the *Journal of the American Medical Association* found "...low potassium intake may play an important role in the genesis of high blood pressure. Increased potassium intake should be considered as a recommendation for prevention and treatment of hypertension, especially in those who are unable to reduce their intake of sodium (*JAMA* 277:1624). Since 1928 almost 60 studies have reported on the blood pressure-lowering effects of potassium. This study pooled the results of 62 reports. Some of the studies used high potassium diets and others used potassium chloride supplements. The amount of potassium chloride taken was between 48 and 120 mmol daily. The overall change was an average of -3.11 mm Hg systolic (top number) and -1.97 diastolic (bottom number) for all the studies, and -4.85 systolic and -2.71 diastolic in trials in which no blood pressure medication was used. People with higher levels of sodium intake (as reflected by urinary sodium) had greater reductions with an increase in potassium intake. Studies which involved blacks showed larger reductions in blood pressure. The authors conclude, "Potassium supplementation may be especially useful for blacks and those with difficulty in reducing their dietary intake of sodium."

COMMENT: At the McDougall Program, the average decrease in blood pressure caused by a change in diet and lifestyle (stress reduction, exercise, and quitting coffee) is 7 mm Hg systolic and 5 mm Hg diastolic in less than 11 days (When blood pressure was initially over 150/90 mm Hg then the reduction was 23/14 mm Hg on the average). Research has shown that dietary advice to increase the consumption of foods high in potassium, such as fresh fruits and vegetables has reduced the need for blood pressure pills in a sample of 54 Italians with high blood pressure (*Ann Intern Med* 115:753, 1991)

There are many qualities of a vegetable based-diet that help lower the blood pressure:

- \* Low sodium reduces blood volume and production of adrenal pressor hormones.
- \* Low total fat reduces blood sludging, and as a result, peripheral resistance.
- \* Low animal fat reduces spasms of blood vessel muscles and, as a result, peripheral resistance.
- \* Low calorie/low fat causes weight loss.
- \* No caffeine reduces pressor effect from this stimulant.
- \* High potassium reduces blood volume and production of adrenal pressor hormones.

Vegetables and fruits are high in potassium and low in sodium (1 cup)

Food	mg of potassium	mg of sodium
Blackberries	211	2
Broccoli	456	40
Corn	408	28
Peas	690	7
Lentils	731	4
Pineapple	265	3
Pinto beans	800	3
Potato	512	5

Whereas typical foods on the American diet are comparatively high in sodium and low in potassium:

Cheese	38	468
Hamburger	267	474
Chicken sandwich	180	1289

In general the rich American diet has about 2000 mg of potassium and 5000 mg of sodium and a healthy starch-based diet has 5000 mg of potassium and 1000 mg of sodium. An additional small amount of potassium is added to the diet of some people by the use of potassium-based salt substitutes found in the grocery store.

If you have high blood pressure, should you add potassium supplements to your diet in hopes of bringing the pressure down further, rather than take prescription antihypertensive medications? It might be worth a try, but only under a doctor's supervision. In most studies, the amount of potassium chloride taken was between 48 and 100 mmol daily. This would amount to an additional 3000 mg to 7000 mg of potassium added to the diet daily. Potassium supplements bought in a health food store provide only about 100 mg per capsule, and therefore, would make it difficult and expensive for you to get sufficient extra potassium. The easiest and most effective way to take extra potassium is through prescription supplements.

Liquids are much safer than tablets because tablets are more likely to cause irritation of the gastrointestinal tract. However, liquids taste bad, but you can mask the taste with cold juices. It is important to dilute the liquid potassium chloride. A pint of liquid potassium chloride would cost about \$10 and would last about 2 weeks. The dose is one tablespoon (20 mmol) 2 to 3 times a day. There can be serious side effects when concentrated potassium is taken in the wrong way, especially by people with certain diseases (kidney and heart). The most common side effects are nausea, vomiting, abdominal pain, and diarrhea. Talk to your doctor about taking potassi-

um supplements if you have already done everything you can with diet and exercise, and the next treatment you face is blood pressure pills. Remember, potassium is by prescription only.

## BACTERIA AND STOMACH TROUBLE

**Relation of Smoking and Alcohol and Coffee Consumption to Active Helicobacter Pylori Infection: Cross Sectional Study**, by Hermann Brenner in the December 1997 issue of the *British Medical Journal* found a protective effect of alcohol against active infection and an opposite effect with coffee (315:1489). The more coffee consumed, the more likely this ulcer-causing bacteria was found in a person's stomach. Those people who drank more than 2 cups of coffee a day had 4.6 times greater chance of infection than non-coffee drinkers. There was a moderate increase in infection seen with smoking. Alcohol may protect against infection by strengthening the stomach mucosal barriers, and by its antibacterial activity.

**COMMENT:** In 1983 Drs. Barry Marshall and Robin Warren discovered the first bacteria living in the stomach that caused disease. *Helicobacter pylori*, also known as *H. pylori*, is the most common chronic human bacterial infection, and causes inflammation of the stomach lining, known as gastritis, in all infected individuals, but most have no symptoms despite harboring the infection. There is a lifetime risk of 15% for peptic ulcer disease and a 1% risk of stomach cancer (lymphoma and adenocarcinoma) for infected persons. The earlier the infection occurs in life the greater the chance of cancer.

*H. pylori* infects humans, monkeys and cats, however only humans appear to be carriers of the infectious agent. There have been no reports of infection from monkeys or cats. The fact that members of the same family often carry the same strain suggests they acquire the infection from one another. Fecal-oral spread is likely, but oral-oral is also possible. The common housefly is another likely source of infection because of its predilection for food and feces. This theory is consistent with the drop in infection with *H. pylori* seen with improved sanitation (*Intern Med News*, Feb, 15, 1997, page 9).

Approximately 30% of people in the United States are infected, as opposed to 80% of people in most developing countries (like African and Asian nations). In the United States a 30-year-old has a 25% chance of being infected, while a 60-year-old person has a 50% chance of infection. Low income people are more commonly infected. Most infections are thought to occur in childhood. On the aver-

age, 92% of children with duodenal ulcers and 25% with stomach ulcers are infected.

Chronic infection is determined by tests of the blood for the presence of antibodies to *H. pylori* and by a breath test using carbon-labeled urea. With this test, radioactively-labeled urea is fed to the individual. The bacteria digest the urea and release radioactively-labeled carbon, which eventually is eliminated by the lungs, and measured in the breath.

The only clear indications for treatment are *H. pylori* related duodenal and stomach ulcers, and a precancerous condition known as MALT lymphoma. Indigestion (dyspepsia) is presently not an indication for treatment. Reasons to avoid treatment when not clearly indicated are the expense, side effects from the antibiotics, and the risk of widespread antibiotic resistance. The standard treatment is with a "triple antibiotic therapy" of bismuth subsalicylate, tetracycline, and metronidazole, which when given for 2 weeks eradicates the infection in 90% of people. All patients with stomach or duodenal ulcers should be treated. Properly treated, the risk of recurrence of ulcers decreases from 89% to 15%.

Diet and lifestyle play a major role, not only in the risk of harboring this infection, but also in whether or not the *H. pylori* will eventually cause ulcers or stomach cancer. Obviously, the contents of the stomach and the health of the individual would be crucial in determining infection risk. Not surprisingly, the consumption of fresh fruits and vegetables has been associated with less risk of infection and less risk of stomach disease. As the above paper points out, coffee, and to a lesser extent smoking, increase the risk of infection. Traditionally, alcohol has been considered a causative factor in ulcer disease and advice has been given to eliminate all 3 of these habits. However, a recent study of 47,806 men found no increased risk of duodenal ulcer associated with coffee, smoking, or alcohol; also vitamin A and dietary fiber, both components of plant foods, were associated with less ulcer disease (*Am J Epidemiol* 145:42, 1997).

My experience has been that almost all people with indigestion (gastritis) quickly resolve their stomach distress when they change to a starch-based diet and avoid irritating foods, like raw vegetables (especially onion, green peppers, cucumbers, and radishes), fruit juices, and hot sauces (including tomato sauce for some people). Raising the head of the bed 4 to 6 inches also helps keep the acid out of the esophagus and relieves indigestion and reflux. Your first action for treating common stomach distress is to examine the things you can change easily, like diet and lifestyle, then to reserve treatment of *H. pylori* bacteria with antibiotics for a last resort.

## HERBED RICE CASSEROLE

Preparation Time: 15 minutes (cooked rice needed)

Cooking Time: 45 minutes

Servings: 4-6

- ½ cup water*
- 1 onion, chopped*
- 1 green bell pepper, chopped*
- 2 stalks celery, chopped*
- ½ pound sliced fresh mushrooms*
- 2 tablespoons soy sauce*
- ¼ teaspoon sage*
- ¼ teaspoon marjoram*
- ¼ teaspoon thyme*
- ¼ teaspoon rosemary*
- ¼ teaspoon poultry seasoning*
- 3 cups cooked brown rice*
- ½ cup chopped green onions*
- 1 15 ounce can kidney beans, drained and rinsed*
- 1 2.5 ounce can sliced black olives, drained*
- ¼ cup grated fat-free soy cheese*

Preheat oven to 350 degrees.

Place the water, onion, bell pepper and celery in a large pot. Cook, stirring frequently, for 5 minutes. Add mushrooms and seasonings. Cook for 10 more minutes. Stir in rice, green onions, kidney beans and black olives. Mix well. Transfer to a covered casserole dish, sprinkle with the grated cheese and bake for 30 minutes.

## ALL WRAPPED-UP POTATOES

Servings: 4-6

Preparation Time: 10 minutes

Cooking Time: 1½ hours

- 8 medium thin skinned white potatoes, thinly sliced*
- 1 onion, sliced and separated into rings*
- 3 tablespoons soy sauce*
- ½ teaspoon paprika*
- several twists fresh ground pepper*

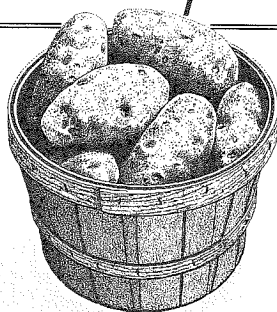
Preheat oven to 350 degrees.

Place a large sheet of heavy-duty aluminum foil over a 15 x 10 inch baking tray.

Place an identical layer of parchment paper over the foil. Layer the potatoes and onion rings on the parchment paper in the center of the baking tray. Drizzle the soy sauce over the potatoes and onions, then sprinkle with paprika and pepper. Fold over the parchment paper to enclose the vegetables, then wrap securely in the foil. Bake on the baking tray for 1½ hours.

Hint: This is an easy, delicious way to cook potatoes and there is no pan to clean up afterwards. These may also be cooked on a grill without the baking tray. Just put the foil on

## Recipes



the grill rack and cook until potatoes are done. If you use less potatoes, you will have fewer layers and this will shorten the cooking time to about 1 hour.

## WILD HASH

Servings: 6

Preparation Time: 20 minutes

Cooking Time: 45 minutes

Resting Time: 10 minutes

- 1 cup Lundberg Wild Blend*
- 2 ⅓ cups water*
- 1 onion, chopped*
- 1 red bell pepper, chopped*
- ½ pound mushrooms, sliced*
- 1 stalk celery, chopped*
- 1 ¾ cups vegetable broth*
- 2 tablespoons cornstarch*
- 2 tablespoons soy sauce*
- 1 tablespoon parsley flakes*
- 1 teaspoon basil*
- 1 teaspoon oregano*
- ½ teaspoon sage*
- ½ teaspoon marjoram*
- ¼ teaspoon rosemary*
- several twists fresh ground pepper*
- 1 12 ounce package Yves Veggie Ground Round*

Place the rice blend in a saucepan with 2 cups of the water. Bring to a boil, reduce heat, cover and cook for 45 minutes. Let rest for 10 minutes.

Meanwhile, place the remaining water in a large non-stick frying pan. Add the onion, bell pepper, mushrooms and celery. Cook, stirring occasionally, for 5 minutes.

Mix the vegetable broth, cornstarch, soy sauce and the seasonings in a separate bowl. Add to vegetable mixture while stirring. Cook and stir until mixture boils and thickens. Add Ground Round and cooked rice mixture. Cook, stirring occasionally, for 5 minutes.

Hint: To cut down on cooking time, use leftover cooked rice, preferably a combination of wild rice and brown rice. Yves Veggie

Ground Round is a meatless burger substitute found in natural food stores and some supermarkets.

## SAVORY BEAN TOPPING

Preparation Time: 10 minutes

Cooking Time: 20 minutes

Servings: 6-8

- ¼ cup water*
- 1 onion, chopped*
- 1 15 ounce can stewed tomatoes (Italian, Mexican or Cajun)*
- 2 15 ounce cans vegetarian baked beans*
- 1 15 ounce can small red beans, drained and rinsed*
- ⅓ cup barbecue sauce*
- ¼ cup packed brown sugar*
- 2 tablespoons prepared mustard*
- several twists of fresh ground pepper*

Place water and onion in a medium pot. Cook, stirring occasionally, for 5 minutes. Add remaining ingredients and cook for 15 minutes.

Serve over baked potatoes, whole grains, whole wheat toast or muffins.

## CARIBBEAN RICE SURPRISE

Preparation Time: 15 minutes

Cooking Time: 57 minutes

Rest Time: 10 minutes

Servings: 6-8

- ⅓ cup water*
- 1 onion, chopped*
- 1 teaspoon minced fresh garlic*
- 1 4 ounce can chopped green chilies*
- 3 cups peeled, chopped butternut squash*
- 2 teaspoons curry powder*
- 1 teaspoon ground coriander*
- ½ teaspoon ground cumin*
- several twists fresh ground pepper*
- 3½ cups water*
- 1 cup long grain brown rice*
- ½ cup wild rice*
- 1 15 ounce can kidney beans, drained and rinsed*
- 1 cup chopped Swiss chard*
- ¾ cup chopped green onions*

Place the water in a large pot with the onion, garlic and chilies. Cook, stirring occasionally, for 5 minutes. Add squash, curry powder, coriander, cumin and pepper. Mix well and cook for 2 minutes. Add water and both kinds of rice. Bring to a boil, cover, reduce heat to low and cook for 45 minutes. Add beans and heat through, about 5 minutes. Stir in chard and green onions, remove from heat and let rest for 10 minutes.

# BULLETIN BOARD

## Help Keep the TV Show!

McDougall, M.D. is still playing well across the country and part of the reason is your support. If you are watching us, then please write or call your station manager and thank them for carrying us. One of our biggest opportunities is Primestar Satellite - we air at 8 a.m. EST and 5 a.m. PST every Saturday morning. Please write to support us: Program Director, KTVU, 2 Jack London Square, Oakland, CA 94607.

## Health Shows

There will be three free health shows this year that offer an opportunity to see some of the leaders in the field. Because of schedule conflicts, I will not be at the Las Vegas show. However, you are invited to all of them. Call (800) 226-0323 for free tickets. Tell them you are my patient or a McDougall Newsletter subscriber.

Las Vegas April 14 - 16

Austin August 14 - 16

Orlando November 12 - 14

## Foods at Northwest Costco

Look for Dr. McDougall's Right Foods in the Costco Warehouse stores in the Pacific Northwest. They are in a 9-pack for about \$7. Ask your supermarket, warehouse store, and natural foods store to carry our foods.

## McDougall's Right Foods

Dr. McDougall's tasty instant vegetarian cuisine is now available in food stores and supermarkets in many locations throughout the country. They also may be ordered by mail and sent factory direct to you - call the toll-free line at 1-800-367-3844 to order or to receive the new Dr. McDougall's Right Foods Color catalog. Also look for them in your favorite store or ask your store manager to carry these healthy vegetarian instant meals.

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South San Francisco, CA 94080

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On the Web: <http://www.rightfoods.com>

Most Seven-Eleven stores across the country have begun to stock Dr.

McDougall's instant meals - if not, ask them to order.

## '98 Cruise to

After taking the cruise to Panama ourselves over Christmas we have decided not to try to add Costa Rica onto the trip as we mentioned previously. There are just too many wonderful sites in Panama to give up any of them, plus this would add a lot of ship and bus traveling to the cruise. In Panama we will visit rain forests, national parks, native villages, Spanish forts, and a trip through the canal before the US turns over possession of the canal to Panama in 1999.

There will be water activities including snorkeling (and scuba diving if you are certified), kayaking, swimming, and dinghy rides. We are able to offer the trip for \$2795 (per person double occupancy). The cost is slightly higher than Belize because we will be traveling further and there is at least a \$9000 charge to take the boat through the canal. This price includes airfare (within the Continental US), ground transportation, and all activities (except special add-ons).

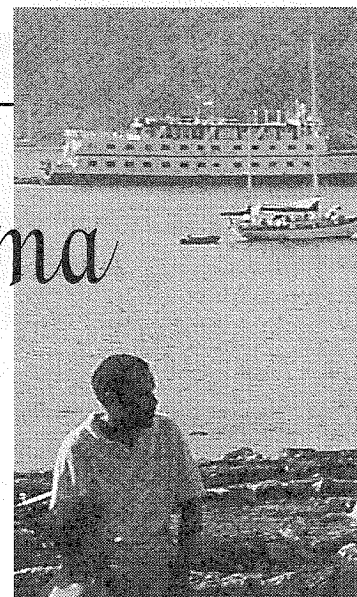
Call 1-800-570-1654 or visit our website for more information. Our website also has stunning pictures of this cruise! [www.drismcdougall.com](http://www.drismcdougall.com)

## The McDougall Quick and Easy Cookbook

You will find our new *McDougall Quick and Easy Cookbook* on your bookstore shelves now, and you're going to love it. Mary has been able to put together in less than 15 minutes, some of the tastiest recipes you'll ever eat. In addition to great recipes, the book is laid out with snapshots of information on a single page. This format attracts people to read valuable nutritional, health, and cooking information while preparing recipes.

If you would like an autographed copy of our book, please send \$25.95 for each copy (plus \$4.00 postage for the first book and \$2.00 for each additional book to same address), to: **The McDougall Quick & Easy Cookbook**, P.O. Box 14039, Santa Rosa, CA 95402. Please specify to whom you would like the books autographed.

# Panama



## McDougall TV Show on Satellite

"McDougall" the TV show airs across the country on 150 stations and on Primestar satellite at 5 a.m. (PST) Saturdays and on DishNetwork 4:30 p.m. (PST) on Sundays. Consult your local directory. Call (805) 373-7681 and ask for Chauncey, for more information.

## On the Website

Contact Dr. McDougall at [www.drismcdougall.com](http://www.drismcdougall.com). You'll find all kinds of interesting updates on this site:

- A message board to share with others about good health
- The Great Debate about high protein diets and debate with Barry Sears (Zone Diet)
- An updated stock list of canned and packaged products
- Holiday recipes from creamy pumpkin soup to pumpkin pie
- Pictures of the Costa Rica & Panama trips with information about upcoming cruises
- Dr. McDougall's appearances nationwide
- Information on the cause and cure of common diseases
- An introduction to each current newsletter
- Information about St. Helena Hospital Programs and Right Foods

## Upcoming McDougall Programs at St. Helena Hospital

Call 1-800-358-9195 for information and reservations.

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classes, trips, as well as McDougall educational materials.