



Vol. 1, No. 9

June 2000

Dr. John A. McDougall's

TO YOUR HEALTH

Sexual vitality at any age—the natural way

We need to talk...about SEX. Do I have your attention? You may still be a bit uncomfortable talking about it, but you know that a satisfying sexual relationship is an important part of a healthy life. And finally it's becoming more acceptable to actually bring it up. For many years, men watched their potency wane as they aged, assuming it was a common and unavoidable drawback to growing old—and *common* it is.

Experts estimate that 20 to 30 million American men suffer from some degree of impotence, and project that the number will rise to 47 million by the year 2020. Doctors used to think that psychological factors were usually to blame, but now we know that up to 90 percent of impotence is physical. At age 40, 5 percent of men have erectile dysfunction—by age 65, the numbers rise to 15 to 25 percent. Yet this does not have to be your fate.

There is no reason that men and their partners cannot enjoy satisfying sex lives well into their golden years. True, things won't be the way they were when you were 25. But there are many steps you can take to preserve or recapture your virility. New drugs like Viagra have brought the problem of impotence "out of the closet" to some extent, yet many men—and their partners—still suffer in silence. If you have this problem, you need to first figure out what's causing it (you may not even *need* to take drugs)—then it's time to find the best treatment. There are many more than Viagra to choose from.

Viagra doesn't work for everyone— natural alternatives may be safer and more affordable

Viagra has enjoyed amazing success, but it isn't for everyone. Its active ingredient, sildenafil citrate, works in a specific way to help with a certain kind of impotence, but it's not a cure-all. Viagra works by suppressing an enzyme that naturally occurs in penile tissue. This enzyme, known as PDE5, breaks down cyclic GMP, another naturally occurring enzyme that is secreted during arousal and causes muscular and vascu-

lar changes. If PDE5 levels are too high, or cyclic GMP levels are too low, it can be difficult to achieve an erection. Viagra helps regulate the secretion of PDE5.

But not all impotence is caused by an enzyme imbalance. And not everyone reacts well to Viagra. Side effects include a decrease in blood pressure, which can form a dangerous combination with antihypertensive drugs. Viagra has even been linked to heart attacks in several reported cases. The drug should not be taken by men using nitrate drugs to control angina or those with a history of heart problems. Also, not all insurance plans cover Viagra, and it can be quite expensive—up to \$7 per dose. If you shouldn't or don't want to take Viagra, there are several other therapies you can try.

An extract from African tree bark regulates blood flow

Before the FDA approved Viagra, *yohimbine* (derived from the bark of the yohimbe tree found in Africa) was one of the most common treatments for impotence. The natural bark, which is referred to as yohimbe, is unregulated and can be found in health-food stores in various forms. A concentrated extract of the bark is available by prescription under the trade names Aphrodyne, Erex, Testomar, and Yocon, for example, as well as in generic formulations. Its cost (about 50 cents per day for the generic form) makes it an economical alternative to Viagra.

Yohimbine works by regulating blood flow to and from the penis.¹ As an alpha-2 adrenoreceptor antagonist, it blocks receptor sites for the neurotransmitter norepinephrine, opening the gates for more blood flow to the extremities. In clinical studies, it has been found effective at various concentrations. In one double-blind, placebo-controlled study, 86 patients with erectile dysfunction were given either 30 mg of yohimbine daily or a placebo, for eight weeks. Both subjective and objective measurements showed that yohimbine improved sexual desire, sexual satisfaction, and the quality of erections in 71 percent of the participants, with no serious side effects.² A 10-week, double-blind

¹ *Journal of Urology*, 137:1168, 1987

² *Int J Impot Res*, 9:155-161, 1997

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For questions regarding your subscription, please call reader services at (410)223-2611 (9 a.m.-6 p.m. EST Mon.-Thurs., 8 a.m.-5 p.m. EST Fri.). Send cancellations to P.O. Box 206, Baltimore, MD 21203.

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Our mission: For over 27 years, Dr. John McDougall has been fighting to bring nutrition to the forefront of mainstream medicine. Frustrated by the establishment's resistance to logic, and years of evidence from his clinic, he set out to educate health-conscious people about the medicinal qualities of food for the treatment and prevention of many of today's most threatening diseases. He is dedicated to teaching you how to transform your life and to achieve optimum health and appearance by using the life-giving foods that were designed for your body. In addition, each month he will bring you news of his latest healing and weight-loss discoveries.

Sexual vitality at any age*Continued from page 1*

crossover trial of 48 subjects with impotence found that 46 percent of the participants, who took 18 mg daily, reported similar positive results from yohimbine.³

While yohimbine has been used in its native lands for centuries, and is generally quite safe, clinical studies have uncovered a few potential side effects. It can interact with medications for depression and high blood pressure, and, uncommonly, some people experience nervousness, sweating, and increased salivation.

Yohimbine is available in capsules, tablets, or liquid form, but it is available only by prescription. Talk to your doctor about whether it is a good match for your needs.

Ancient Peruvian plant root boosts libido and regulates hormones

Maca, an all-natural alternative for treating impotence, is derived from the tuber of a plant found in Peru's Andean mountains. While it has been a staple of the Andean Indians' diet for centuries, it has also been revered by the natives for its libido-boosting and fertility-enhancing powers. Recently, it received attention in the United States, as the first clinical trial of its efficacy was published in a recognized peer-reviewed journal.⁴ In several studies examining maca's effects on laboratory mice and rats, the researchers found that it significantly increased the number of times they had sexual intercourse and improved the erections of those with erectile dysfunction.⁴

More research is required to fully understand how maca affects libido and erectile function. But the study suggests that the presence of two unique long-chain fatty amides called macaenes and macamides are responsible. In one trial reported in the study, laboratory rats were given differing concentrations of these compounds. The formula containing more macaenes and macamides produced much more dramatic results in mating behavior. Maca also contains isothiocyanates, which are thought to play a role in regulating hormone secretion and enhancing libido. Similar hormonal effects in women can help counteract the effects of menopause and work as a fertility aid.

Since maca has been used as a food for centuries, it is considered very safe. Toxicity studies at Product Safety Labs in East Brunswick, New Jersey, showed that it has had no toxicity and no negative pharmacological effects.⁵ It is readily available in health-food stores, both in concentrated extract tablets and as a powder, which can be made into a beverage. Dosage recommendations vary widely depending on the formulation, but most experts suggest alternating periods on and off of maca to maximize results. Costs range from 6 cents to 22 cents per capsule or \$4 per ounce for the powder, with wide variations depending on the formulation. Be aware, however, that the maca studies I cited involved MacaPure,[™] a purified maca extract distributed by Pure World Botanicals. To order this product, call Nature's Way at (800)962-8873 or (801)489-1500 and ask for "maca extract." Other maca products may contain varying amounts of the active ingredients

*Continued on page 6*³Lancet, 2:421-423, 1987⁴Urology, 55:598-602, 2000⁵Natural Foods Merchandiser, pg. 46, February 2000

Behavioral drug prescriptions are skyrocketing —and children are taking the extra doses

A new study has confirmed that the use of prescription behavioral drugs among our nation's children is increasing at an alarming rate.¹ These powerful drugs are being used routinely to "correct behavior" in children as young as 2 years old, without suitable research or knowledge as to their potential long-term effects or efficacy. And, what's worse, many of these problems could be controlled without drugs.

Researchers from the University of Maryland and Johns Hopkins University analyzed the prescription records of two state Medicaid programs and one group-model HMO, each in a different part of the country. The analysis focused on 2-year-old to 4-year-old children (more than 200,000 of them in all) and compared data from 1991, 1993, and 1995. What they found is almost unbelievable—stimulant and antidepressant prescriptions nearly *doubled* in almost every group between 1991 and 1995—and in some cases it *tripled*.

Beware of "off-label" prescriptions

The diagnosis of attention deficit disorder (ADD) or attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) became common in the 1980s and has quickly become commonplace among school-aged children, particularly boys.

Theoretically, the problem is caused by a chemical imbalance in the brain, which often corrects itself after puberty. Stimulants, particularly methylphenidate (most commonly known by the brand name Ritalin), supposedly make up for the chemical imbalance and allow children to focus and concentrate.

According to this recent study, the use of Ritalin, in particular, among 2- to 4-year-old children more than doubled in the smallest group and more than tripled in the largest. But the most startling rise was for a drug called clonidine, known by the brand name Catapres. Its use in these groups increased as much as 28 times in a four-year span. And if that isn't frightening enough, consider that *clonidine was never intended to treat behavioral conditions—and certainly not in children*. Yes, the FDA approved it—but it was approved for use by adults, as an antihypertensive drug used to treat high blood pressure.

That leads us to a little-known fact about the U.S. drug-approval system. While the FDA closely monitors prescription medications in this country, sometimes to the point of impeding medical progress, it does not prohibit prescribing approved drugs for purposes other than those specified in the approval. The practice is known as prescribing "off-label," and most physicians commonly do it. It's perfectly legal—and may be lethally dangerous.

The clonidine rush started when a psychologist at Yale led a small study of 10 children with ADHD.² From this study, the doctor concluded that it was as effective as Ritalin, and when taken in combination with Ritalin, both drugs could be taken in smaller doses. Based on this one, scientifically insignificant study, clonidine's use for ADHD spread by word-of-mouth, and prescriptions started flying off of doctors' notepads. Since that initial "study," over 10 years ago, *no significant clinical studies have been done to assess the effects of clonidine on children*.

The long-term effects on their growth and development, or possible reactions with other drugs, such as Ritalin, are unknown.

Prescribing dizziness, fatigue, and a decreased appetite for our kids

Clonidine works by suppressing the production of adrenaline. But it can produce some scary side effects, even for adults, including a very slow heart rate and unusually high or low blood pressure. Less serious but equally troublesome effects include fatigue, dizziness, headache, dry mouth, and intestinal disorders.

Although Ritalin was specifically approved by the FDA for use by children with ADHD, it comes with its share of side effects as well.³ Insomnia, joint pain, and a decreased appetite are among the most common. Hallucinations and stuttering are rare but possible side effects. And despite its "on-label" use, *the effects of Ritalin have not been studied in preschool-aged children*—the very age group that more than doubled its Ritalin use in the study's four-year span.

One real cause of aggressive behavior and hyperactivity

The reality is that children's behavior is often not what we would like it to be even under the best of circumstances. And in most cases, we need only look as far as our refrigerators and cupboards for an explanation. These kids don't need drugs—they need healthy, natural food and exercise. The rich American diet that is giving their parents and grandparents cancer and heart disease is making them sick as well, and the drugs that are prescribed to treat their illness may

¹ JAMA, 283:1025-1030, 2000

² Doctors 'doing things they can't back up,' www.usatoday.com, 2000

³ Ritalin, <http://new.healthcenter.com>

Continued from page 3

just be making them sicker. One drug dampens the appetite, while the other causes fatigue. That combination certainly won't encourage good health.

There are many ways that diet affects behavior and mood. One of these is through the essential amino acid tryptophan. In the brain, tryptophan is converted into serotonin, which regulates many brain functions, including sleep patterns, aggressiveness, mood, and social relationships. A high-protein diet, full of meat and dairy products, contains many other amino acids that compete with tryptophan for entry into the brain. The result: less tryptophan enters the brain; thus, less serotonin is produced. Switching to a high-carbohydrate, plant-based diet allows more tryptophan into the brain, regulating serotonin synthesis and decreasing aggressive behavior, hyperactivity, and depression.

Aggressive, agitated behavior can also result from the large

amounts of caffeine that are commonly consumed by children in soft drinks, candy bars, and sometimes coffee.⁴ Exercise produces natural narcotics known as endorphins that calm the nervous system and relieve anxiety and depression.⁵ Some people believe that behavioral problems are also caused by sugar, chemical additives, and food allergies. Although these theories are more controversial, switching to a healthy diet and lifestyle covers all the bases.^{6,7,8}

No more drugs—just a healthy family

If, therefore, you have a child with hyperactivity or attention deficit disorder, reach for the oatmeal, not the pill bottle, for a solution. There are many foods your child will easily learn to like.

For breakfast, serve pancakes and waffles with wholesome ingredients, hash browns with salsa, or a hot or cold cereal with little or no sweetener sprinkled over the top.

For lunch, there are hundreds of

vegetable soups: bean soup, pea soup, tortilla soup—I could go on forever. Sandwiches made from wholesome peanut butter and a no-sugar-added jam will be an instant hit. Many children will also go for veggie burgers and submarine sandwiches made with tomatoes, lettuce, onions, avocado, and mustard.

For dinner, your whole family will devour bean burritos, spaghetti with marinara sauce, and bean chili over rice. There are over 1,500 recipes in the McDougall books. All you have to do is find a half-dozen your children enjoy.

And this weekend, instead of spending "quality time" in front of the television, plan a more physical activity with your children like a hike in the country or a long bike trek. You could turn your child's drug dependency into better health for the whole family.

⁴ *Exp Clin Psychopharmacol*, 6:87-95, 1998

⁵ *Sports Med*, 24:8-16, 1997

⁶ *JAMA*, 274:1617-21, 1995

⁷ *Ann Allergy*, 72:462-8, 1994

⁸ *Lancet*, 339:1150-3, 1992

Medical Myths Overturned

Fruits and vegetables: better for your bones than calcium

A new study reports that potassium and magnesium, key nutrients found in high concentrations in many fruits and vegetables, may be more important to bone health than calcium.¹ Though this won't be announced with a campaign to rival the dairy industry's, it's important reinforcement for you, as someone who supports a plant-based diet.

In a cross-sectional study of 62 randomly selected, healthy women age 45 to 55, researchers assessed bone health (described below) and the participants' nutrient intakes. A food questionnaire specifically asked about the consumption of milk and other dairy products, as well as fruits and vegetables. Other lifestyle factors, such as physical activity and smoking, were also assessed.

Potassium and magnesium may help prevent bone turnover

Bone resorption (the process of losing bone mass) was one of the bone-health markers assessed in this

study. This process is most easily assessed through a simple urinalysis. The researchers found that the intake of foods rich in potassium, magnesium, beta-carotene, phosphorus, and fiber had positive effects on bone resorption.

Another measurement for bone health is bone mineral density, or BMD. This is calculated through an X-ray type procedure, used on various parts of the body. In this study, researchers found no significant differences in BMD between women who consumed low amounts of dairy products during crucial growth periods and those who consumed medium or high amounts. Dairy products were NOT linked to strong BMD readings. But there was a significant correlation between high consumption of fruit and positive BMD readings on the neck. And, again, potassium, fiber, and magnesium were positively linked with strong BMD readings, particularly in forearm tests.

This study supports that a plant-based diet with little or no dairy products is the best way to advance bone

Garbanzo beans— delicious, nutritious, versatile

Garbanzo beans are among my favorite foods. I always have several cans in my pantry ready for a quick snack. Just open the can, drain and rinse the beans, pour them into a bowl, and eat them! Spruce them up by pouring salsa or fat-free salad dressing over them. Garbanzo beans are also great in many recipes; my family loves them too!

HUMMUS

Preparation time: 5 minutes

Servings: 2 cups

2-15 ounce cans garbanzo beans, drained and rinsed
1/3 cup fresh chopped parsley
1/8 cup water
1 tablespoon fresh lemon juice
1 teaspoon fresh minced garlic
1/2 teaspoon ground cumin

Place all ingredients into a food processor and process until smooth. Serve with pita bread or use as a sandwich spread.

Variations: Add a 7-ounce jar of roasted red peppers and a dash of Tabasco sauce. Eliminate the cumin. Or try adding 1/4 to 1/3 cup of kalamata olives to the recipe above. A bit more water may be required in each variation.

TURKISH DELIGHT

Preparation time: 10 minutes

Cooking time: 30 minutes

Servings: 4-6

1 onion, chopped
2 1/2 cups water
2 cups vegetable broth
1 15-ounce can chopped tomatoes
1 15-ounce can garbanzo beans, drained and rinsed
3/4 teaspoon ground cumin
1/3 teaspoon ground cinnamon
1/4 teaspoon ground coriander
1/8 to 1/4 teaspoon crushed red pepper (Adjust according to your taste.)
2/3 cup acini de pepe pasta or Israeli couscous
1 1/2 cups baby spinach leaves
1/4 cup chopped fresh parsley

Place the onion in a medium pot with 1/2 cup of the water. Cook, stirring occasionally for 5 min. Add the rest of the water, the vegetable broth, tomatoes, garbanzos, cumin, cinnamon, coriander, and crushed red pepper. Bring to a boil, reduce heat, cover, and cook for 5 min. Add pasta or couscous, stir well, and cook for 18 min., or until pasta is tender. Stir in spinach and parsley. Cook for 2 more min.

Hint: Israeli couscous is larger in size than the commonly found couscous. It will take less time to cook than the pasta. Test after 10 min.

Mary's Corner

Recipe OF THE MONTH

By Mary McDougall



GARBANZO BEAN SALAD

Preparation time: 15 minutes

Chilling time: 1-2 hours

Servings: 4-6

3 15-ounce cans garbanzo beans, drained and rinsed
1/2 cup finely chopped red bell pepper
1/2 cup finely chopped green bell pepper
1/4 cup finely chopped red onion
1/4 cup shredded carrots
2 cups loosely packed finely chopped fresh spinach
1/2 to 3/4 cup oil-free salad dressing
several twists freshly ground black pepper

Combine all ingredients in a bowl and toss well to mix. Refrigerate before serving for best flavor.

Variations: Substitute some finely chopped celery and chopped fresh parsley or cilantro for the spinach.

MOROCCAN GARBANZOS

This may be served warm or cold.

Preparation time: 20 minutes

Cooking time: 20 minutes

Servings: 6-8

8 cups chopped Swiss chard, washed and slightly shaken dry
1 onion, chopped
1/2 cup water
2 15-ounce cans garbanzo beans, undrained
2-4 tablespoons tomato paste
2 teaspoons ground coriander
1 teaspoon crushed fresh garlic
1/2 teaspoon ground cumin
1/4 teaspoon crushed red pepper

Place the chard, with some of the wash water still clinging to it, in a large pot and steam until tender, about 5 min. Drain and set aside.

Place the onion and water in a large nonstick frying pan. Cook, stirring occasionally, for 5 min. Add the garbanzo beans with their liquid, 2 tablespoons of the tomato paste, and the remaining ingredients; mix well. Add the cooked chard, mix again, and cook over low heat, stirring occasionally, for about 10 min. Taste and add more tomato paste if desired.

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and may yield different results. Check the labels and know what you're getting before you buy.

Extract from the puncture vine raises testosterone levels

Tribulus terrestris is another natural product reported to boost libido. Extracted from the puncture vine, a plant native to Africa and India, it has been used for centuries as a diuretic and an aphrodisiac. It has been found to boost testosterone levels by as much as 30 percent, which makes it a favorite of body-builders.⁶ But the hormone can boost sexual performance as well, and it has even been shown to improve mood and energy levels.

Some studies suggest that the herb acts by encouraging the secretion of luteinizing hormone (LH), which stimulates testosterone production.⁷ In a study of men with various reproductive disorders, a daily dose of 750 to 1,500 mg of *Tribulus* for 30 to 60 days increased testosterone and improved libido without noticeable side effects.⁸ The plant also contains steroidal sapogenins, which may be partially responsible for its aphrodisiac properties.

Tribulus is available in a variety of formulations from health-food stores and suppliers. The cost averages about 10 cents per tablet, and dosage recommendations vary depending on the manufacturer. One recommended formulation is called Trilovin. To order, call (800)851-7100 and ask for order code 1313; outside the United States call (410)783-8440 and ask for order code 2629. In Canada ask for code 2628.

Diet and lifestyle choices can cause impotence—and the cure is free of charge

We've talked about several products that may enhance sexual performance. But to truly cure impotence, we must first understand the cause. In many cases, the problem is not in the bedroom but in the kitchen, where the rich American diet is clogging our arteries and killing our libidos.

The most common cause of physical impotence is atherosclerosis, or hardening of the arteries. Blood-flow control is critical to both achieve and maintain an erection. If the arteries are clogged with fat and cholesterol, the blood flow is reduced and impotence is the result.

Obesity can cause impotence as well. The excess weight injures the nerves that stimulate an erection. Also, the high fat content in the typical American diet can overstimulate the production of the hormone prolactin, which can suppress the production of other important sexual hormones.

Other lifestyle choices, like cigarette smoking, alco-

Beware: certain drugs have BAD effects on your sex life

The following is a list of some common prescription drugs that list sexual dysfunction as a possible side effect. This does not mean you'll suffer from these negative symptoms (low sex drive, prolonged erection, problems obtaining erection), but it is possible. If you do suffer from these problems, talk to your doctor about changing medications or altering the dose you take. There are ways to overcome unpleasant side effects.

Antidepressants:

- Paxil
- Prozac
- Zoloft
- Luvox

Prostate treatments:

- Flomax
- Cardura

Male hair-loss treatments:

- Propecia™

Antihypertensives:

- Cozaar
- Cardura
- Norvasc

Mental disorder medications:

- Risperidone

hol, and marijuana, can also dampen libido and lead to impotence. Many prescription drugs, particularly antihypertensives and antidepressants, list erectile dysfunction as a possible side effect. (See above.)

Nearly all the health problems mentioned can be eliminated by adopting a plant-based diet and a moderate exercise program. Eliminating fat and cholesterol from your diet will reduce atherosclerosis, lower your blood pressure, and help you lose weight. A healthy diet and exercise plan may also eliminate the need for libido-destroying medications. And, best of all, this impotence cure is available free of charge, with nothing but positive side effects!

If you suffer from impotence, don't accept it as fate. Take stock of your emotional and physical health and seek help where you need it. Adopt a healthy diet and exercise program, abandon unhealthy lifestyle choices, and evaluate the side effects of your regular medications. If you need an extra boost, consider one of the supplements discussed in this article. But don't give up—impotence is common and nothing to be ashamed of. It may be hard to discuss, but the benefits of resuming a satisfying sex life far outweigh the risks.

⁶ *Muscle & Fitness*, 140-142, 224, 1996

⁷ *ibid.*

⁸ *ibid.*

Correction from May 2000 *To Your Health*

References on page 6 should have read as follows:

⁵ *Am J Clin Nutr* 69:231-236, 1999

⁶ *Clin Pharmacol Ther*, 63:397-402, 1998

Keeping up with Dr. McDougall

Recommended Books:

(Half-price Sale on Books!)

We would like to help you or a friend get started on the McDougall program. *The McDougall Program-12 Days to Dynamic Health* (regularly \$14.95, now \$7.50); learn how to do the world-renowned hospital-based McDougall program at home. *The New McDougall Cookbook* (regularly \$13.95, now \$7.00); over 300 of our favorite, healthy recipes. Tel. (800)570-1654 or (707)576-1654, Website: drmcDougall@drmcDougall.com. \$4 S&H for first book and \$2 for each additional book in the US (outside US \$7/\$3); 7.5% sales tax in California.

Instant healthy meals

Dr. McDougall's Right Foods offers 16 delicious meals. Try Oatmeal & Barley w/ Peaches & Raspberries, Mashed Potatoes—Country Garden Style, or Chili w/ Beans & Corn Chips. Available through grocery and natural food stores. Ask about Dr. McDougall's Maximum Weight Loss Kit. Look and feel great this summer! Call (800)367-3844, fax (650)635-6010 or Website: www.rightfoods.com.

Because of an overwhelming response we've scheduled another 10-day program

Sept. 8, 2000, begins a special 10-day program that saves you time (only one week off work!) and money. Transform your life for good in California's beautiful Napa Valley. Look and feel better in just 10 days. The McDougall program will change your life forever and put you on the road to dynamic health.

- Reach toward your ideal weight
- Watch your cholesterol and blood-sugar levels fall
- Decrease your dependence on medications
- Manage stress
- Increase endurance for work and play
- Control serious health problems, such as diabetes and high blood pressure
- Reduce risk for cancer, arthritis, and heart disease

The McDougall Program at the St. Helena Center for Health was rated the No.1 weight-loss and health-enhancing program in the country by the Physicians Committee for Responsible Medicine.

Take charge of your health. Experience the program that has enabled thousands to change their diet and improve their health and quality of life. Join Dr. John McDougall and his team of professionals in the Napa Valley—the residential program begins on Sept. 8, 2000. For reservations and information, please call us or visit our Web site:

www.sthelenahospital.org

McDougall Program at St. Helena Center for Health
(800)358-9195

12-day programs begin July 9, Aug. 13, Oct. 8.

McDougall Costa Rica Adventure

July 31-Aug. 8, 2000

"We want to thank you and your lovely family for all your hard work in giving us the nicest, most organized trip we ever experienced. We now truly know the meaning of adventure. We especially liked the food, and that was the main reason I wanted Wesley to go on this trip."

Jeannine Uffelman, Napa, CA.



Join us in El Ocotol, a paradise on the northwest coast of Costa Rica

Our first night will be spent in San Jose and then we depart for the El Ocotol Hotel, a first-class luxury ocean-side resort with views that will take your breath away. Each room has its own terrace overlooking the blue Pacific. The lobby and restaurant, perched atop a knoll surrounded by water on three sides and with El Ocotol's third swimming pool below, is regarded as one of Costa Rica's most picturesque spots. In addition, John and Mary McDougall will be providing education on the McDougall program. All meals are pure-vegetarian, low-fat, and delicious. The bar offers tropical cocktails, a varied wine list, and both local and imported spirits...and yes, the tap water is safe to drink.

Our own naturalists will guide us to the national parks, wildlife reserves, nearby towns, and other points of interest. We have five daylong excursions planned for you, including horseback riding or a wagon ride through the rain forest, Class 1 to 2 (not rough) white-water rafting, swinging through the canopy of the forest, and boating up an estuary. The animal and plant life are exotic. You can spend as much time as you want relaxing, swimming, snorkeling, scuba diving, or on land excursions.

The total cost of the trip is \$1,450 per person (singles \$1,850) and is all-inclusive except for airfare and transportation to and from San Jose. **This means all activities, adventures, boat trips, scuba diving, and snorkeling trips, meals, alcoholic and nonalcoholic beverages (local spirits, wines, and beers), and transfers are included.**

We have arranged special low-cost, group-based airfares and have other money-saving tips and discounts to offer. Please call us for details today at (800)570-1654.

For more information or reservations, call (800)570-1654 or (707)576-1654 today!

Vegetarian diet relieves painful periods

A new study conducted at Georgetown University found that a low-fat, vegetarian diet significantly relieved women's physical and emotional symptoms during menstruation.¹ The diet consisted of grains, vegetables, legumes, and fruits, with no quantity restrictions. Animal products, added oils, fried foods, and fatty vegetables and nuts were forbidden. Thirty-three fertile women with histories of dysmenorrhea (painful periods) were randomly assigned to two groups in a crossover trial. Each group followed the intervention diet for two menstrual cycles and took a placebo supplement for two menstrual cycles while eating their regular diet.

Researchers found that in both groups, self-reported severity and duration of menstrual pain declined during the vegetarian diet phase, as did self-reported measurements of premenstrual symptoms, such as water retention, behavioral changes, and concentration problems. In addition, average body weight after the diet phase dropped almost 6 pounds. No significant differences in body weight or pain severity were found between baseline measurements and those taken during the placebo phase.

Fat and dairy intake make menstruation difficult

Painful periods are a result of uterine contractions and inadequate oxygen flow to the uterus, caused by an excess of prostaglandins. These hormone-like substances are produced in the endometrial tissues, and their synthesis is spurred on by excess estrogen and progesterone.

Here's how the vegetarian diet provides relief: A plant-based, vegetarian diet increases serum concentrations of sex-hormone-binding globulin, a type of protein

that binds and stores inactive estrogens. This effectively prevents them from increasing prostaglandin production. Researchers found that during the vegetarian diet phase, participants' concentrations of sex-hormone-binding globulin were 19 percent higher than during the non-diet phase.

Many vegetarians still consume substantial quantities of fat and take excess hormones into their bodies each day through their consumption of dairy products. Both substances can increase the quantity of endometrial tissue that is produced each month, which makes menstruation more difficult and painful. Most women that I've treated report significant improvement in menstrual symptoms after cutting meat, fat, and dairy products from their diets.

¹*Obstetrics and Gynecology*, 95:245-250, 2000

Fruits and vegetables

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health. For years, studies have demonstrated a link between high-protein diets and osteoporosis. Cigarettes, salt, caffeine, and a sedentary lifestyle are also related to poor bone health. And, for years, I've been pointing out that osteoporosis is actually *more* prevalent in the countries with the highest milk consumption.

If you're concerned about osteoporosis (and both men and women should be), begin by limiting your animal-protein intake, including red meat, chicken, fish, eggs, and hard cheeses. These foods are very acidic and, when eaten, cause the bones to dissolve in order to buffer the acid. Stock your kitchen with fruits and vegetables which are loaded with bone-friendly nutrients. Boost your intake of potassium by eating more bananas, prunes, raisins, spinach, and white potatoes; for magnesium, eat more dark-green leafy vegetables, brown rice, and black beans. Moderate physical activity (especially training with light weights) is also important for maintaining healthy bones.

Issue wrap-up

When I was younger—long before I understood the importance of plant-based nutrition and exercise—I believed growing older meant getting fatter, losing function, and becoming ill. At 53-years-old, I'm living proof that this is far from the truth. Even if you're just discovering these secrets, after years of deterioration, you can regain lost health and appearance.

John A. McDougall, M.D.

P.S. Next month, you'll learn about a new food cure that can help lower your cholesterol and how your diet could be causing your lower back pain.

John A. McDougall, M.D., graduated from Michigan State University Medical School and completed his residency training in internal medicine at the University of Hawaii. He is a board-certified specialist in internal medicine and one of the world's leading experts on health and nutrition. As medical director of a revolutionary program at St. Helena Hospital in Napa Valley, California, he has attracted national acclaim for helping people of virtually all ages to overcome chronic illnesses and reverse life-threatening conditions.

Dr. McDougall is the author of several nationally best-selling books, including *The McDougall Plan*, *McDougall's Medicine: A Challenging Second Opinion*, *The McDougall Program: 12 Days to Dynamic Health*, and *The McDougall Program for Maximum Weight Loss*.

Dr. McDougall's face will be familiar to many from his television appearances on CNN, *The Phil Donahue Show*, and other programs. He also hosts his own nationally syndicated television program, *McDougall, M.D.*, shown throughout the country.