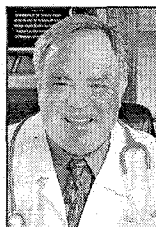


Health & Healing®

Your Definitive Guide to Wellness Medicine

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NOTABLE QUOTE

*Never let the fear of striking out
get in your way.*

— Babe Ruth

Dear Reader,

I want to share an inspiring letter I received from Barbara Blankenship about her friend Millie Kelly, who was about to celebrate her 90th birthday. She wrote, "You would not believe how young Millie looks and how well she gets around. She's still driving, and she thinks as clearly as any 50-year-old. She went for a checkup just this week, and the nurse could not believe she was 90. When asked what she attributes her good health, youthful looks, and longevity to, she goes into a sales talk about your vitamins, which she has taken for years."

Barbara asked me to send Millie a birthday card. Of course, I was happy to participate in this momentous celebration, and I sent Millie a note congratulating her. I was also honored to have been given some credit for helping Millie maintain her health and vitality.

Letters like this make it all worthwhile. My mission with *Health & Healing* is twofold. First, I aim to give you safe and effective solutions that will improve your health and enhance your quality of life. Based on Millie's story, I'm having some success in this regard. Second, I want to help you navigate the treacherous waters of conventional medicine. In this issue, I hope to do both.

NEURODEGENERATIVE DISORDERS

A Breakthrough in Alzheimer's Disease

Six years ago, Steve Newport, a 59-year-old accountant and bookkeeper, began having problems at work. As the months went by, he became increasingly disorganized, error prone, frustrated, and depressed. He eventually consulted a neurologist and was told he had early dementia.

Over the next few years, Steve's dementia rapidly progressed. He was diagnosed with probable Alzheimer's disease and was started on Aricept, the first of several drugs he would eventually take. By the time an MRI revealed evidence of brain atrophy and confirmed that he had Alzheimer's, he was unable to do simple math, type, or use a calculator. He even had to be reminded to eat and take his medications. Well aware of Steve's dire prognosis, his wife, Mary Newport, MD, was constantly on the lookout for new therapies that might help.

Last spring, she came across a recruitment notice for a clinical trial evaluating a new Alzheimer's drug. She learned that about half of the patients who had taken the medication in a 90-day pilot study had remarkable improvements, and the other half held steady compared to a placebo group that continued to decline. Intrigued, she searched the Internet and discovered that the drug's active ingredient was medium chain triglycerides (MCTs), natural fatty acids that are abundant in coconut oil.

A Remarkable Turnaround

Steve didn't qualify for the clinical trial, but Dr. Newport was undeterred. She went to her health food store, purchased some coconut oil, and began giving it to her husband. After the very first dose, "a light switch came on." As Steve continued to take the oil over the next two months, he became more alert and talkative, and his sense of humor slowly returned. His attention and ability to stay on task improved, and at a family reunion, he remembered the names of relatives he couldn't recognize the year before.

Today, a year and a half after beginning treatment, Steve volunteers in a hospital warehouse and enjoys his job and coworkers. His previously impaired gait has normalized, and he is able to run—something he couldn't do for well over a year. He can read again, with decent comprehension, and his short-term memory is gradually getting better. His conversational skills continue to improve, and he's no longer depressed. In short, he feels as if he "got his life back."

MCTs Create Ketones...

How in the world could an inexpensive oil facilitate such a turnaround? It's all about ketones. Medium chain triglycerides don't behave like the more common long chain fats. Thanks to their shorter chemical structure, they are easily absorbed and rapidly metabolized in the liver. And rather than being stored as fat, they are converted into ketones.

Ketones are your body's alternative energy source. When glucose stores are exhausted, ketones are synthesized from fats and delivered to the cells, where they're burned for energy. But because glucose is the preferred fuel, ketones are produced only as a backup—when you're fasting, for example, or eating a very low-carbohydrate diet. (This is the principle behind the Atkins' weight loss program.)

Unfortunately, in Alzheimer's and other neurodegenerative diseases, neurons lose their ability to properly use glucose. Inefficient glucose metabolism in specific areas of the brain is an early feature of

these disorders, present long before symptoms appear. Many experts believe this is due to insulin resistance—Alzheimer's is sometimes referred to as "type 3 diabetes." Neurons deprived of energy obviously cannot function normally and they eventually die, contributing to the degenerative process.

...And Ketones Nourish Brain Cells

Affected neurons can, however, use ketones for energy, and when they're made available, starving brain cells perk right up. When this fuel source is supplied on a consistent basis, remarkable things can happen—as evidenced by Steve's initial and ongoing progress.

Actually, the therapeutic effects of ketones for the brain are old news. Ketogenic diets have been used since the 1920s to effectively prevent or reduce seizures in patients with epilepsy, and a handful of studies suggest that such a diet would also improve other neurodegenerative conditions. The ketogenic diet, however, is hard to swallow. It requires eating lots of fat and almost no carbohydrates, and it's difficult to stick with over the long term.

That's the beauty of MCTs and coconut oil. When you supplement with these oils, they are converted into ketones, even if you don't change your diet. In other words, you can have your carbs and ketones, too.

The Coconut Connection

When Dr. Newport first began giving Steve this therapy, she didn't realize that refined MCT oil was available, so she gave him non-hydrogenated coconut oil instead. Coconut oil is about 60 percent MCTs by weight, so she figured that to get the dose of MCTs used in the drug trials (20 g), he'd have to take 35 g of coconut oil (7 teaspoons).

She's since learned that ketone blood levels peak about three hours after taking coconut oil and are out of the system within eight hours. She also discovered that MCT oil is available and it produces a peak blood level at 90 minutes that clears within three hours. Now, Steve takes 4 teaspoons of MCT oil and 3 teaspoons of coconut oil three times a day

Julian Whitaker, MD, has practiced medicine for over 30 years, after receiving degrees from Dartmouth College and Emory University. Dr. Whitaker has long been an advocate of living a healthy life. Dr. Whitaker is compensated on the sales of the supplements he formulates for Forward Nutrition, a division of Doctors' Preferred, LLC. He is not compensated for other companies' products that he recommends in this newsletter. He is the author of 13 health books including: *The Whitaker Wellness Weight Loss Program*, *Reversing Hypertension*, *The Memory Solution*, *Shed 10 Years in 10 Weeks*, *The Pain Relief Breakthrough*, *Reversing Heart Disease*, *Reversing Diabetes*, and *Dr. Whitaker's Guide to Natural Healing*.

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with meals to ensure that his brain has access to a more or less constant source of energy. When he misses a dose, he may develop a transient tremor or feel temporarily “dazed and confused.” But once he makes it up, he’s back to “normal.”

Normal is relative. Steve, who has the APOE4+ genotype that predisposes people to early Alzheimer’s, has significant brain atrophy. It is highly unlikely that he will return to his previous accounting/bookkeeping job. He’s relearning to type, but he’ll never be the computer whiz he once was. But to his wife and daughters, today’s definition of normal is good enough.

A Solution Hiding in Plain Sight

Folks, this is one of the most remarkable stories I’ve come across in a long time. I’ve known about MCTs for years and first wrote about them in *Health & Healing* in 1993. MCT oil, which is obtained from coconut oil, is used in conventional medicine to provide energy for premature infants and patients recovering from surgery, and those with malnutrition and absorption problems. It’s used by athletes to improve performance and endurance and by dieters to control appetite and stimulate fat burning. Studies suggest that it also enhances heart and immune health.

Unrefined coconut oil has numerous benefits as well. Contrary to popular belief, it does not—I repeat, it does not—raise cholesterol or in any other way increase risk of heart disease. In fact, it is cardioprotective and contains compounds that support the liver, improve immune function, and have antimicrobial properties.

However, I was unaware of the incredible potential of these ketone precursors. This powerful natural therapy and possible cure for some of our most devastating diseases has been hiding in plain sight for years, recognized by nobody except a drug company and a handful of researchers. Now, thanks to Dr. Newport, it’s finally getting the attention it deserves.

The Nuts and Bolts of Ketone Therapy

I’m now recommending ketone therapy for all of my patients with Alzheimer’s disease, Parkinson’s disease, dementia, multiple sclerosis, ALS (Lou Gehrig’s disease), and other neurodegenerative disorders. There is evidence to suggest that it may also be beneficial for individuals with Down syndrome, autism, and diabetes.

The most practical and economical way of raising ketone levels is with the MCT/coconut oil combo. It can be taken by the spoonful, but a far more pleasant way to get it down is to add it to food. In the Newport household, they mix the two oils in a jar and measure

out the desired amount for each meal. They cook with the oil, put it in oatmeal, and use it in salad dressings and as a spread. They also use other sources such as coconut flakes, milk, ice cream, macarons, etc., and adjust the amount of additional oil accordingly.

Another—in my opinion, inferior—option is the drug that first turned Dr. Newport on to MCTs. Axona has been available for a few months now as a medical food. It’s essentially MCT oil in 20 g servings, with a suggested dose of once per day. Dr. Newport feels this isn’t enough—MCT ketone levels peak at 90 minutes and are gone within three hours. Of course, you could take it three times a day, but that would cost upwards of \$300 per month. It also requires a prescription, and so far, few insurance companies are reimbursing for it.

Finally, Dr. Richard Veech of the National Institutes of Health is doing research with actual ketones, which he makes in his lab from MCT oil. Taken orally, they increase levels to a greater degree than is possible with the oils and, presumably, add more benefits. Oral ketones are not yet available, but I’ll keep you posted on future developments.

Could Ketones Prevent Disease?

I believe that ketone therapy also has a promising role in prevention. As I mentioned, poor glucose tolerance precedes symptoms of neurodegenerative disorders and contributes to their progression. Why shouldn’t healthy people—especially if they’re older or have a family history of any of these diseases—take a few spoonfuls of these oils every day to help stave off future problems? I’ve been doing this myself, and I urge you to consider doing the same.

In closing, I want to commend Dr. Newport for her diligence and creativity in finding help for her husband, and for her advocacy in sharing her family’s personal experiences so others may benefit. Let’s help her get the word out.

Recommendations:

- The recommended dose of MCTs for neurodegenerative disorders is 20 g per meal (7 teaspoons or a scant 2½ tablespoons). Dr. Newport’s recipe is to combine 16 ounces of MCT oil plus 12 ounces of coconut oil, store at room temperature (it gets hard when refrigerated), and use as needed. To avoid diarrhea, start with 1–2 teaspoons per meal and build up gradually—and be aware that some people will only be able to tolerate lower amounts. Because coconut oil contains no omega-3 essential fatty acids, a minimum of 2 g of fish oil should also be taken daily.

- Non-hydrogenated coconut oil is widely available in health food and grocery stores, but MCT oil can be a little harder to find. To order, call (800) 810-6655.
- To learn more, visit coconutketones.com, Dr. Newport's Web site. You'll find a wealth of information on ketone therapy, as well as guidelines for incorporating coconut oil into your daily diet.

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STROKE RECOVERY

Stroke: Oxygen to the Rescue

More than three-quarters of a million Americans suffer a stroke each year. If it happens to you or a loved one, the most important action you can take is to call 911 and get to a hospital as soon as possible. Immediate treatment can make all the difference in the world. Unfortunately, fewer than 25 percent of patients arrive at the hospital in a timely manner, which is one reason

why stroke is our third-leading cause of death and number-one cause of disability.

That's why I want to tell you about the second most important action: Get treatment with hyperbaric oxygen therapy (HBOT). It's your best hope for regaining function and avoiding a lifetime of disability.

Oxygen Revives the Brain

The reason strokes cause so much damage is because they reduce oxygen supply to the brain. If blocked blood vessels aren't opened right away with clot-busting drugs or other therapies, neurons in the affected area die. That damage cannot be undone.

However, there's a surrounding network of neurons that, although they don't die outright, take a hit. Called the penumbra, this is the target of HBOT. Breathing 100 percent oxygen in a pressurized hyperbaric chamber dramatically increases oxygen concentrations in the penumbra and in cells throughout the body. In fact, HBOT is far and away the best known method of delivering oxygen to tissues with a poor blood supply.

This welcomed infusion of oxygen revives damaged brain cells and prevents further neuronal

Continued on page 6

Dear Dr. Whitaker

? *I have a question about eggs. I always thought we were not supposed to eat them because of their cholesterol content, but I have heard that now they are okay. I just started reading your newsletter and I believe this would interest many people. — MK, via e-mail*

For years, people were told to avoid eating egg yolks because they contain cholesterol and increase risk of heart disease. Today, however, they're given a cautious thumbs-up. In a 2008 study, Harvard researchers found no association between eating up to six whole eggs a week and increased risk of heart attack, stroke, or death. But there was a modest increase in risk among those who ate seven or more eggs per week.

Individuals who had diabetes didn't fare as well—the more eggs they ate, the greater their risk. Furthermore, other studies have suggested a high egg intake may actually increase the likelihood of developing diabetes.

Eggs do contain a fair amount of cholesterol and some saturated fat, but they're also a good source of protein. In addition, they are rich in choline, which enhances brain function, as well as lutein and zeaxanthin, two carotenoids that protect the eyes. Bottom line, feel free to eat eggs, but if you consume more than six a week, chuck the yolks or use egg-white products such as Egg Beaters. If you have diabetes, I recommend sticking with egg whites and avoiding the yolks altogether. — JW

Works for me...

I've found an easy way to improve digestion. Once a week, my wife and I have movie night. We pop our own popcorn in an air popper and sit back and enjoy the show. I've noticed that the next day, I have much better movements and things seem to run a bit smoother. I hope this tip helps others "get things moving." — Carvel Mills, Midland, TX

While most snacks aren't billed as health foods, popcorn may be an exception. It is low in fat, high in fiber (hence the benefits Carvel mentioned), and new research shows that it's packed with a class of antioxidants called polyphenols for an extra free-radical fighting boost. One caveat: Avoid the microwavable varieties that are loaded with fat and chemical additives. Purchase your own air popper, look for old-fashioned popcorn kernels at your grocery store, and use Nu-Salt, Morton's Salt Substitute, or other salt-free seasonings to add a little flavor. — JW

Got a question for Dr. Whitaker? Send it to *Health & Healing*, 7811 Montrose Road, Potomac, MD 20854 or drwhitakerquestions@drwhitaker.com. For health tips, use the same address or worksforme@drwhitaker.com.