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concluded that garlic is well tolerated (*Nutr Rev* 2013;71:282-99).

Garlic’s reemergence was sealed when the most comprehensive meta-analysis ever conducted on garlic and cholesterol demonstrated that garlic significantly lowers LDL cholesterol and significantly raises HDL cholesterol (*Nutr Rev* 2013;71:282-99).

**High Blood Pressure**

But garlic’s vindication wouldn’t be confined to cholesterol. The first big step back for garlic as a blood pressure herb was a meta-analysis of placebo-controlled studies of garlic and people who actually had high blood pressure. The results proved that garlic reduces both systolic and diastolic blood pressure better than a placebo. According to the reseachers, the effect is comparable to blood pressure medication (*BMC Cardiovasc Disord* 2008;8:13).

When garlic was compared to a placebo and to the beta-blocker atenolol in a single-blind study of 192 people with high blood presssure, the garlic significantly reduced systolic and diastolic blood pressure compared to the placebo. Though it was less effective than the drug, statisitcs were not provided to know if the difference was significant. The researchers report that the garlic produced a clear reduction in systolic and diastolic blood pressure (*Pak J Pharm Sci* 2013; 26:859-863).

Several studies looked at what happens when you give garlic to people whose meds are not controlling their high blood pressure. A just published double-blind study showed that when you give aged garlic extract or placebo to people with uncontrolled high blood pressure for 12 weeks, the garlic significantly reduces their blood pressure (*Integr Blood Press Control* 2016;9:9-21).

Other studies of blood pressure not being managed by meds tried adding garlic to the unsuccessful meds. A double-blind study of people on blood pressure meds added 960mg of aged garlic extract or a placebo for 12 weeks. In those whose blood pressure was not being controlled by drugs, adding garlic led to significant improvement. The researchers said that garlic’s effectiveness was similar to blood pressure drugs (*Maturitas* 2010;67:144-50). A second double-blind study of people whose blood pressure was not being adequately controlled by

drugs tried adding either 240mg, 480mg or 960mg of aged garlic extract or placebo to their meds for 12 weeks. The 480mg dose of garlic significantly reduced their systolic blood pressure (*Eur J Clin Nutr* 2013;67:64-70).

A meta-analysis of 17 studies of garlic and blood pressure showed that garlic significantly reduces systolic blood pressure compared to placebo. Garlic was also more effective at reducing diastolic blood pressure. In people who actually had high blood pressure, garlic significantly lowered systolic and probably diastolic blood pressure (*J Clin Hypertens* 2015;17:223-31).

A 2015 systematic review of 9 controlled studies concluded that garlic significantly reduces both systolic and diastolic blood pressure in people who actually have high blood pressure. Importantly, the researchers say that the results are not only statistically significant, but clinically relevant (*Am J Hypertens* 2015;28:414-23).

**Atherosclerosis**

Garlic has more to offer the heart than help with cholesterol and blood pressure. Metabolic syndrome is a cluster of 3 of abdominal obesity, high triglycerides, low HDL cholesterol, high blood pressure or elevated glucose. When people with metabolic syndrome were given 2400mg of aged garlic extract or placebo, the garlic produced significantly greater reductions in low-attenuated (or noncalcified) plaque than placebo: 1.5% reduction versus only .2%. This result is important because low-attenuatted plaque is a good predictor of acute coronary syndrome, which can lead to a heart attack due to a sudden loss of blood flow to the heart (*J Nutr* 2016;doi:10.3945/jn.114.202424).

**The Many Ways Garlic Helps Your Heart**

A meta-analysis of 27 controlled studies of garlic powder and cardiovascular disease found that garlic helps in many ways. Garlic significantly lowers total and LDL cholesterol. At higher doses, it also raises the beneficial HDL cholesterol. It significantly lowers diastolic blood pressure and may also lower systolic blood pressure. Garlic powder may



**THE NATURAL PATH**

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also lower blood glucose (*Nutr Res Pract* 2014;8:644-54).

**Diabetes**

And speaking of blood glucose. . . . Garlic also helps blood sugar control. A 24 week double-blind study of type 2 diabetics added either 300mg 3 times a day or a placebo to the drug metformin. Garlic dropped blood sugar by 3.12% compared to a 1.78% drop on placebo: a significant benefit for garlic (*Pak J Pharm Sci* 2011;24:565-70).

A recent meta-analysis of 7 controlled studies found that garlic significantly lowers fasting blood glucose (*Asia Pac J Clin Nutr* 2015;24:575-82).

**Garlic for Men: Prostate**

Preliminary research has found that an aqueous extract of garlic actually produces a 32% reduction in the size of the prostate in men with enlarged prostate (BPH) in addition to significantly decreasing urinary frequency and significantly increasing urine flow (*Nutr Res* 2003;23:199-204).

**Garlic for Women: UTI’s & Vaginal Infection**

Antibiotic resistant urinary tract infections are increasingly becoming a problem. But when researchers isolated multidrug resistant bacteria from the urine of people with UTIs, they found that 82% of them were susceptible to an aqueous extract of garlic (*Pertanika J Trop Agric Sci* 2015;38:271-8).

A study of women with bacterial vaginosis, a common infection, found that 500mg of garlic twice a day is more effective--and safer--than the drug metronidazole (*Iran Red Crescent Med J* 2014;16:e19118).

**More Good News: Cold & Flu**

Double-blind research shows that regular garlic supplementation significantly reduces the severity of colds and flus as well as the number of days of school or work missed (*Clin Nutr* 2012;31:337-344).

# THE NATURAL PATH

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## GARLIC 2.0

### GARLIC RESURGENT

Photo by Ted Snider

## THE NATURAL DENTIST

A COMPREHENSIVE LOOK AT NATURAL HEALTH CARE FOR YOUR GUMS & TEETH

Many years ago, when we started working in a health food store, garlic was a go to herb for cholesterol and heart health. Then the research pendulum swung, and garlic fell out of favour, especially for cholesterol. In the last few years, though, the pendulum has swung definitively back, and garlic is enjoying a research renaissance.

**Cholesterol**

From cholesterol royalty to pauper, garlic’s rise to royalty again began with a 2011 study that found that 300mg of garlic taken 3 times a day lowers total cholesterol by 2.82% versus .04% on placebo. It lowered the heart harmful LDL cholesterol by 2.18% versus .45% on placebo and triglycerides by 3.12% versus .68% on placebo, while raising the heart healthy HDL cholesterol by 6.7% compared to a worsening of 3.17% on placebo (*Pak J Pharm Sci* 2011;24:565-70).

But the real reclamation of garlic occurred the next year when a meta-analysis of 26 placebo-controlled studies, not just of anybody, but of people who actually had elevated levels of blood fats, found that garlic lowers total cholesterol and triglycerides. The results were greater when the garlic supplement was taken for at least 12 weeks (*J Sci Food Agric* 2012;doi:10.1002/jsfa.5557). The next year, a larger meta-analysis of 39 placebo-controlled studies concluded that garlic significantly lowers total cholesterol and the unhealthy LDL cholesterol while significantly elevating the heart healthy HDL cholesterol. It also

**ALSO INSIDE**

- Surprising Psychiatry
- Flying on a Plane? Don't Get Sick
- Improving Lung Health

You see a lot of information on natural health for all parts of your body and mind. But you see very little on natural health for your gums and teeth. But natural health has a lot to offer dentistry.

**Folic Acid**

Gingivitis refers to inflammation and bleeding of the gums. If it progresses to periodontitis, then you could experience loose teeth, pain, dental pockets, swelling and even bone destruction. By the age of 20, 38% of people have it. By 35, the number is up to 46% and by 50, 54% of us will suffer from it.

Several studies show that folic acid is beneficial (*J Clin Periodontal* 1980, 1982). One double-blind study gave 2mg of folic acid or a placebo twice a day for 30 days. Folic acid increased resistance of the gums to local irritants, leading to a reduction in inflammation (*J Periodontol* 1976;47:667-8). Perhaps even better is rinsing with a folic acid solution for 1-5 minutes. Folic acid rinses have been shown in double-blind studies to reduce gum inflammation and bleeding in people with gingivitis (*J Oral Med* 1978;33:20-2; *J Clin Periodontol* 1984;11:619-28).

**Coenzyme Q10**

CoQ10 deficiency may be involved in gingivitis (*Int J Vitam Nutr Res* 1973;43:84-92). The world’s leading coenzyme Q10 researcher is Carl Folkers. His double-blind research has shown that CoQ10 significantly improves periodontal pocket depth and tooth mobility (Folkers 1981). Folkers also conducted a review of 7 studies of periodontal disease that found that 70% of people responded

## Lifesaver: Aloe’s Proven Benefit for Diabetes

This systematic review and meta-analysis included 8 controlled studies of various preparations of aloe vera on diabetes or prediabetes. When only the 5 high quality studied were included, it found that aloe vera significantly reduced fasting glucose levels in prediabetics and significantly decreased HbA1c in diabetics. HbA1c is the most important marker of long term diabetes and blood sugar control (*J Clin Pharm Ther* 2016;41:180-188).

Photo by Ted Snider





favourably to CoQ10 (Folkers 1977). Double-blind research has shown that 50mg of CoQ10 a day for 3 weeks is significantly better than a placebo at reducing symptoms of gingivitis (*Res Commun Chem Pathol Pharmacol* 1976;14:715-9). And applying CoQ10 topically in combination with conventional treatment works better than conventional treatment alone (*Mol Aspects Med* 1994; 15:S241-8; *J Indian Soc Periodontol* 2012; 16:539-42).

Vitamin C

When people with periodontal disease who consume low amounts of vitamin C are supplemented with 70mg of vitamin C a day, periodontal disease improves in only 6 weeks (*Int J Vitam Nutr Res* 1982;52:333-41). Vitamin C only seems to help if you are deficient in it.

Vitamin D

People with the highest levels of vitamin D have 30% less incidence of gingivitis (*AJCN* 2005) and are a significant 20% less likely to bleed when their gums are probed, suggesting reduced susceptibility to gingivitis (*AJCN* 2005;82:575-80). Vitamin D helps the more advanced periodontal disease: people with the highest levels of vitamin D experience less bone loss (*J Periodontol* 2009).

Canadian research has also shown that there is an association between low levels of vitamin D and cavities (*J Dent Res* 2016;95:173-9).

Calcium

Children benefit when their mothers take calcium while pregant. 63.3% of women who supplement calcium during pregnancy have children with at least one cavity, missing or filled tooth when they are 12 comapared to 86.6% of women who did not supplement. Children whose mothers supplemented calcium had a 27% reduced risk of having a cavity, missing or filled tooth (*Acta Obstet Gynecol Scand* 2010;89:1396-402).

Green Tea

Green tea is a veritable herbal dentist. Several studies have shown green tea, or green tea flavonoids, prevent periodontal

disease (*Carries Res* 1991; *Biosci Biothechnol Biochem* 1996; *J Periodontal Res* 2002). Epidemiological studies show that green tea protects against periodontal disease and tooth loss (*Prev Med* 2010).

When 110 people rinsed their mouths for 1 minute twice a day with either a placebo mouthwash or a mouthwash containing 2% green tea, at the end of 4 weeks there was a significant reduction in plaque and gingivitis with the green tea but not the placebo mouthwash (*Oral Health Prev Dent* 2015;doi:10.3290/j.ohpd.a33447).

Regularly drinking green tea, or even just rinsing your mouth with it, has been shown to lead to fewer cavities (*Nutrition* 2002).

Flavonoids

As the results with green tea show, flavonoids are valuable for natural dentistry. The proanthocyanidin flavonoids are especially important. Pine bark extract is a rich source of proanthocyanidins. Double-blind research shows that chewing 6 pieces of gum with 5mg of pine bark extract in each lessens gum bleeding and stops plaque formation. The gums continued to bleed and plaque continued to form in people chewing a placebo gum (*Phytomed* 2002).

Xylitol

And speaking of gum. . . . Several studies show that xylitol chewing gum prevents cavities (*Acta Odontol Scand* 1994;52:116-27). Children who chew gum containing xylitol for 5 minutes 5 times a day for 2 years have large reductions in cavities compared with those not chewing the gum (*Am J Dent* 1996;9:184-90 ). And when 204 children with a high risk of cavities were given gum with or without xylitol for 6 months, the xylitol provided significant long term protection against cavities (*Clin Oral Investig* 2013;17:785–91).

Neem

Neem is a traditional herb for cleaning teeth. Modern research supports its use. Neem leaf gel is better than a placebo and as good as chlorhexidine at reducing plaque and bacteria (*Int Dent J* 2004;54:219-23). Chlorhexidine is a pharmaceutical oral rinse used for treating gingivitis. Double-blind research has found even better results for neem leaf gel. 1 gram of the herbal gel twice a day is more effective than chlorhexidine at reducing plaque and bacteria in the mouth (*J Ethnopharmacol* 2004;90:99-103).

Aloe Vera

Aloe vera can be used as an antiseptic for preventing cavities and periodontal disease (*J Oral Sci* 2012;54:15-21). Aloe is as good as chemical mouthwashes, as proven by 2 recent studies. When 345 people were given 10ml

of aloe vera juice for 30 days, it was more effective than placebo and as effective as 10ml of the antiseptic and antimicrobial mouthwash chlorhexidine in decreasing plaque and gingivitis. The researchers concluded that the results favour aloe as a safe alternative to chlorhexidine (*Oral Health Dent Manag* 2014;13:14-19).

When people swished chlorhexadine or 100% pure aloe vera juice 4 times a day for 4 days, the aloe was as effective as the chlorhexadine. Both significantly reduced plaque, but the aloe was safer (*Ethiop J Health Sci* 2014;24:139-44).

Herbal Mouthwash

Other herbal mouthwashes have been shown to work. A mouthwash made of the essential oils of sage, peppermint, clove and caraway, menthol, chamomile tincture, echinacea and myrrh has been shown to treat gingivitis. .5ml of the herbal combo is mixed into half a glass of water and rinsed and spit out 3 times a day (*J Clin Dentistry* 1988).

Probiotics

A just published study found that probiotics improve periodontitis, gum infection that damages the tissue and bones that support the teeth (*J Clin Periodontology* 2016;doi: 10.1111/jcpe.12545).

Research has also found that probiotics prevent cavities (*Curr Pharm Des* 2012;18:5522-31). A double-blind study of children found that probiotics taken for 7 months reduced cavities by 49% compared to placebo (*Caries Res* 2001;35:412-420). A second study found that supplementing probiotics during the last month of pregnancy and continuing to give them to infants for the first year results in significantly fewer children with cavities at 9 years of age (*Caries Res* 2014;48:111–7). In a double-blind study of children aged 1-6 years, supplementation with probiotics 5 days a week in milk for 7 months reduced the incidence of cavities by 49%, compared with unsupplemented milk (*Caries Res* 2001;35:412-420).

More Help

Here’s one you’ve never heard of. The herb holy basil has been shown in triple-blind research to be as effective a mouthwash as chlorhexidine at reducing plaque and gingivitis. Both significantly reduce gingival bleeding and plaque (*J Ayurveda Integr Med* 2014;5:109-16).

Other supplements that may help include zinc, vitamin E, gotu kola, peppermint, garlic, curcumin and clove oil.

SURPRISING PSYCHIATRY!

Check out these recent exciting studies on natural treatments in psychiatry.



11:doi:10.1038/pr2015.51).

Don’t Worry, Be Happy

Having a heightened reaction to sad moods is a marker of increased risk of depression. This triple-blind study gave probiotics or placebo to healthy people for 4 weeks. The probiotics significantly reduced negative thoughts associated with a sad mood compared to placebo. The positive effect was mostly because of reduced rumination and aggressive thoughts. This is the first ever evidence that probiotics can reduce negative thinking associated with sadness (*Brain Behav Immun* 2015;48:258-64).

Curcumin & Depression

This study gave either 1g of curcumin, 20mg of Prozac or both to people with major depressive disorder. The difference between the 3 groups was not significant. 62.5% of the curcumin group responded; 64.7% of the Prozac group responded. When curcumin was added to Prozac, the response rate went up to 77.8%. On the Hamilton Depression Scale, the Prozac group improved by 12.6 points, the curcumin group by a better 14 points and the combo group by 14.8 points. 70.5% of the Prozac group said their treatment was good or excellent, 75% of the curcumin group did and 83.3% of the combo group (*Phytother Res* 2014;28:579-85).

A second study on major depressive disorder showed curcumin to be more effective than

placebo and to be effective for the difficult to treat atypical depression (*J Affect Disord* 2014;167:368-75).

A meta-analysis of 6 studies of curcumin and major depressive disorder found that curcumin significantly reduces depression (*Phytother Res* 2016;30:175-83).

Saffron & Depression

Saffron is as effective as, and safer than, imipramine (*BMC Comp Alt Med* 2004;4:12). At leasts 2 studies have shown it to be as effective as Prozac for mild to moderate depression (*J Ethnopharmacol* 2005;97:281-284; *Prog Neuropsychopharmacol Biol Psychiatry* 2007;31:439-442). A meta-analysis (*J Integr Med* 2013;11:377-383) and a systematic review (*Hum Psychopharmacol* 2014;29:517-527) of the antidepressant effect of saffron both found saffron to be superior to placebo and as effective as drugs.

Green Tea & Down’s Syndrome

Down’s Syndrome causes intellectual disability. Green tea containing EGCG significantly improves visual recognition memory, inhibitory control and adaptive behaviour (*Lancet Neurology* 2016;15:801-810). EGCG has also been shown to significantly improve memory recognition and working memory (*Mol Nutr Food Res* 2014;58:278–88).

NATURAL PATH NEWSFLASH



Don’t Catch a Cold on the Plane This Year



Last month, we wrote about tips for healthy summer travel. Well, here’s another one.

Air travelers are at increased risk of catching cold and ruining their holiday. But when 312 people started taking placebo or elderberry—one of the best cold herbs—10 days before their flight until 5 days after landing, the elderberry group had significantly less number of days with a cold and significantly lower symptom scores (247 versus 583). Health scores worsened significantly on placebo but not on elderberry.

Nutrients 2016;8,182

Improve Lung Function as You Age



Anthocyanins are powerful antioxidant flavonoids. This study explored the effect of anthocyanins on lung function in 839 elderly people.

It found that anthocyanins strongly protected lung function. People who had the most dietary anthocyanins had 23.6% less decline in forced expiratory volume (FEV1) and 37.3% less decline in forced vital capacity (FVC). The protective effect held for smokers and nonsmokers.

People who ate 2 or more servings of anthocyanin rich blueberries a week had 22.5% less decline in FEV1 and 37.9% less decline in FVC than people who ate few or no blueberries.

Am J Clin Nutr 2016;103:542-50

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