

Featured Topic: Herbal Cleansing (5 slides)

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Constipation: a Common Problem

- 16% of Americans and at least **1/3 of people over age 60** experience chronic constipation
 - Constipation (as defined by the National Institutes of Health) = having three or fewer bowel movements a week **OR** bowel movements that are dry, hard, and very difficult to pass
- Constipation can also lead to other health problems
 - Hemorrhoids: pressure from accumulated stool in the bowels causes distended veins
 - Anal fissures: trying to pass large, dry, hard bowel movements can tear the skin around the anus
 - Colon and rectal cancer: studies have found that chronic constipation is associated with a **2-3 times increased risk of colon/rectal cancer**

Cleanse the colon and cure constipation

- Many GI problems (including constipation, diarrhea, IBS, and others) are associated with altered intestinal microflora [too many harmful bacteria and not enough beneficial bacteria]
 - One study found that 50% of people with chronic constipation had significantly higher levels of harmful gut bacteria such as E. coli
- Goal: cleanse the intestines of harmful bacteria while boosting levels of beneficial bacteria, reduce inflammation, and restore normal bowel movements

Solution: Ayurveda

- Traditional Ayurvedic herbal blend including andrographis, gotu kola, licorice, and long pepper has been used for hundreds of years to restore and maintain normal bowel function
- NOT a laxative!
 - Many laxatives artificially stimulate intestinal contractions creating urgency, and dependence (no laxative, no bowel movement!)
- Ayurvedic herbs restore normal function by
 - increasing beneficial bacterial levels in the gut
 - reducing inflammation
 - promoting normal digestive activity

Research results

- 50 people with bowel issues (especially constipation) took a combination of traditional Ayurvedic herbs or a placebo for 28 days
- Participants kept a diary on their bowel movements (including frequency and whether bowel movements were easy or painful) as well as any gastrointestinal symptoms
- Results
 - At baseline, 12% of participants had 3 or more bowel movements a week, which increased to 72% at study end for the herbal group; no change in the placebo group
 - At baseline, no participants in the herbal group had normal bowel movements, this increased to 76% of participants at study end; there was no change in the number of participants who had normal bowel movements (4% at study beginning and 4% at study end) in the placebo group
 - Additionally, abdominal pain decreased 70%, constipation 49%, diarrhea 45%, indigestion 64%, and reflux 72% in the herbal group while there was no change in GI symptoms in the placebo group
 - No significant adverse events

Incorporating a daily herbal cleanse

- Safe for daily use
 - No artificial intestinal stimulation
- Combination of traditional Ayurvedic herbs: Turmeric, Greater Galangal, Andrographis, Boerhavia, Indian Laburnum, Gotu Kola, Cyperus, Licorice, East Indian Sarsaparilla, Long Pepper, Chebulic Myrobalan, Indian Tinospora, Ginger, Curry Tree
- Take 800 mg of this combination with a glass of water (8 oz) at bedtime

**A Closer Look at: PSA
(prostate specific antigen)
(2 slides)**

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PSA = Prostate Specific Antigen

- PSA is a marker for increased prostate cancer activity **in men with prostate cancer**
 - Men with prostate cancer whose PSA levels double in less than 10 months have a 12 times increased risk of cancer spread into bone, and a 4 times increased risk of death, than men with prostate cancer whose PSA levels are increasing more slowly
- **PSA is not necessarily a useful screening test** to find prostate cancer itself – often gives a false-positive, leading to unnecessary biopsies and treatment

Reducing PSA and treating prostate cancer

- A 2012 study found that curcumin **blocked the ability of prostate cancer cells to release inflammatory compounds**, and therefore there was less spread of the prostate cancer (called metastasis)
 - In men being treated for prostate cancer, curcumin (1,000 mg, 3 times daily) protected against the most common adverse effect experienced with radiotherapy – urinary problems, including a 50% reduction in numbers of men with daytime urinary frequency problems
- **Pomegranate** – shown to kill prostate cancer cells and slow the spread of prostate cancer
- **Grape seed** – like curcumin, grape seed blocks inflammatory compounds associated with cancer's spread
- Aggressive prostate cancer has also been linked to **vitamin D** deficiency
- **Silybin** and other compounds from milk thistle was associated with up to an 85% reduction in prostate cancer cell death
- Dosage: 1500 IU of vitamin D 3, plus 750 mg of curcumin, grape seed, pomegranate and silybin daily

Low Vitamin D and Metabolic Syndrome (2 slides)

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Quick review: what is metabolic syndrome?

- Metabolic Syndrome is a name for a group of conditions including:
 - Abdominal obesity (apple shape)
 - High blood pressure
 - High triglycerides
 - Low HDL cholesterol
 - High blood sugar levels (insulin resistance)
- **Almost 1/3 of US adults** have metabolic syndrome
- Rate of metabolic syndrome increases dramatically with age – **50% of people 60 and older** have metabolic syndrome

Vitamin D/Metabolic Syndrome connection

- Researchers measured vitamin D levels in 463 postmenopausal women between the ages of 45-75 years old, who were not taking vitamin D supplements
- They also measured the women's HDL, triglyceride, glucose, and insulin levels
- Results
 - 32% of the women had sufficient vitamin D levels
 - **68% were vitamin D insufficient or deficient**
 - Women deficient in vitamin d had
 - double the risk of metabolic syndrome
 - 55% higher odds of high triglycerides
 - 60% higher odds of low HDL
 - Increased levels of insulin resistance
- DOSAGE: Most experts suggest 5,000 IU (or more) of Vitamin D daily