

Featured Topic: Low Back Pain (4 slides)

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What Doesn't Work for Back Pain: Surgery

- What doctors most often recommend for back pain:
 - Decreased physical activity and rest
 - Surgery and/or injections [steroids]
- What doesn't work for back pain: rest and surgery
 - Researchers compared medical records for 1400 people with diagnoses of disc degeneration or disc herniation
 - Half received surgery to fuse vertebra; half had no surgery
 - Results: after two years, only 26% of the surgical group had returned to work, versus 67% of the non-surgical group
 - The surgical group also had a 41% increase in the use of opiate painkillers
- There are **8 times as many spinal fusion surgeries** today as there were 15 years ago

White Willow – effectively relieves back pain

- As effective at relieving back pain as a prescription NSAID (Vioxx) - 60% of patients in each group (white willow or Vioxx) saw significant reductions in pain - but white willow is less expensive and has significantly fewer adverse effects
- In a study of white willow versus other conventional drugs or treatments, **40% of the white willow group was pain free in 4 weeks**, while only 18% of the conventional treatment group was pain free
- 191 patients received low or high dose white willow extract, or placebo, for back pain; **60% of the patients getting white willow were pain free in a month while 6% of the placebo group became pain free**; pain reduction for the white willow group was noticed in the first week

More Natural Medicines to Stop Back Pain

- **Devil's Claw:** 88 patients with low back pain received Devil's claw or the prescription NSAID (Vioxx)
 - 30% more patients in the Devil's claw group reported greater than 50% reduction in pain versus the drug group after 6 weeks
- **Devil's Claw:** 118 patients with low back pain received Devil's claw or placebo
 - number of patients pain free after four weeks: 9 of 51 in the Devil's claw group and only 1 of 54 patients in the placebo group
- **Curcumin:** Up to a 70% reduction in pain sensitivity (animal model of arthritis)
- **Boswellia :** increase of 12% in pain tolerance 2 hours after boswellia use in healthy human volunteers
- **DLPA** prevents the breakdown of the brain's natural pain-killing compounds

Ligaments and Tendons

Very poor blood supply; healing from injury can take months



Discs

No blood supply and low cell density; area around the disc can heal but process takes months

Recovering from a back injury can be a long, slow process; Be patient and allow time to heal

A Closer Look at: Shingles (4 slides)

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Shingles – what is it?

- Shingles is caused by the same virus that causes chicken pox
- This virus can hide in nerve cells for **years** after the initial chicken pox infection has passed
- If your immune system weakens the virus reactivates
 - Red, painful rash and blisters that often occurs on the head and upper body
- Shingles is more common with age
 - people over 60 are **10 times more likely** to experience an outbreak than young people
 - **50% of Americans** will have experienced a shingles outbreak by age 80
 - About 20% of people will continue to experience nerve pain after the initial shingles outbreak is over – for some the pain lasts for years

The Shingles Vaccine

- Original vaccine approved in 2006 – this is a live virus vaccine and is not recommended for those with weak immune systems (cancer patients, for example); not effective for more than 5 years
- Vaccine approved in 2017 is a not a live virus vaccine, but:
 - No long-term safety data – trials lasted 3 years
 - Contains polysorbate 80 (Tween 80) a synthetic compound linked to infertility and cancer
 - Tested in a limited number of people

Fight shingles with propolis and elderberry

- **Propolis**, a natural compound from bees, has strong anti-viral activity
 - When the virus that causes shingles (*Varicella zoster*) was exposed to a special propolis extract, viral activity was **reduced by 94%**
- **Elderberry** acts against viruses in two ways:
 - PRIMARY: neutralizes virus particles
 - SECONDARY: activates your immune system, which can help control the spread of a viral infection

How to use propolis and elderberry

- Clinical studies used a purified propolis – removing wax, resin and impurities yields a more powerful concentrated extract
 - 100 – 200 mg daily
- Elderberry
 - 200 mg daily, up to 1200 mg (when needed)
 - Blend with other immune nutrients:
 - Vitamins A, C and D
 - Zinc, Calcium, Magnesium
 - Mixed bioflavonoids from citrus

Get Relief for Restless Legs (2 slides)

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Do you suffer from restless legs?

- Restless leg syndrome refers to an uncontrollable urge to move the legs, especially at night when you are relaxing and trying to sleep
- Restless leg syndrome can occur at any age, but more commonly in middle age
- Women are twice as likely as men to experience restless leg syndrome
- Drugs used to treat restless leg syndrome can cause dizziness, nausea, lightheadedness, sleepiness, and even make symptoms **worse** instead of better!

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Calm Your Restless Legs with Minerals – No Drugs Needed!

- An **iron** supplement may be the answer!
 - Low iron levels are linked to greater risk of restless leg, and increased severity of the symptoms
 - In a clinical trial, supplemental iron (given intravenously) improved symptoms in 68% of the participants, and 56% were able to go off drug treatment – benefits were noticeable within one to six weeks of treatment
- Low levels of **magnesium** can trigger muscle cramping and twitching
 - In a study of supplemental magnesium in patients with restless leg given additional magnesium **reduced awakening at night by 58%** and improved sleep quality an additional 10%
 - Try 50 mg of magnesium with 250 mg of calcium lactate and 6 mg of zinc daily!