

Contents

- 4 **Dr. Mehmet Oz and Dr. Michael Roizen**
Type 3 diabetes
- 5 **Diet & Fitness**
Are genes making you fat?
- 6 **Natural Health**
Benefits of flotation therapy
- 7 **Medical Technology**
Chemowave app a game-changer
- 9 **Heart Health**
Eat your way to lower blood pressure
- 10 **Anti-Aging**
HRT warning reversed
- 11 **Latest FDA Approvals**
Hemophilia, cancer, opioid addiction
- 12 **Breaking News**
Can coffee stop diabetes?
- 14 **Dr. Maxfield**
Oxygen therapy for cancer
- 15 **Diabetes**
Curcumin: Nature's blood sugar therapy
- 16 **Breakthroughs**
Poliovirus fights cancer

Thyroid Cancer Hitting Epidemic Proportions: Are You at Risk?

By Lynn Allison

What's the top selling prescription drug in the country? It's not a statin. It's the thyroid medication Synthroid (also known as levothyroxine). The reason: Thyroid disorders, including cancer, have been skyrocketing for decades.

It is estimated that more than 27 million Americans suffer from thyroid disease, and at least half don't know it. The American Cancer Society estimates 56,460 new cases of thyroid cancer are diagnosed each year. That's twice as many as in 1990, and three times the rate from 1970.

Dr. Jacob Teitelbaum, author of "From Fatigued to Fantastic!" tells *Health Radar* that hypothyroidism — underactive thyroid — is out of control, largely due to a drop in iodine intake and increased fluoride intake in the United States.

"This combination, along with environmental chemicals, causes the thyroid gland to block production of hormones that affect metabolism and energy levels," he says.

1 in 5 Are at Risk

Dr. Richard Shames, a leading expert and author of "Thyroid Mind

Power," tells *Health Radar* that thyroid conditions have become among the most common health disorders in the U.S.

"[There's an] alarmingly greater number of thyroid patients than there has been in past years," he says.

If all Americans took the gold standard thyroid-stimulating hormone (TSH) blood test — with an upper limit at 3.0 as recommended by the American Association of Clinical Endocrinologists — Shames projects the number of people affected by thyroid disease could be as high as 20 percent of the population.

"High and low thyroid disease, as well as thyroid cancer, are autoimmune diseases," he explains. "The underlying cause of the increase in autoimmune disorders is the increasing pollution of our air, food, and water with thousands of hormone and immune disrupting synthetic chemicals."

Dr. Alan Christianson, author of "The Complete Idiot's Guide to Thyroid Disease," adds that the thyroid concentrates all the chemicals found in the body.

"The toxic levels of chemicals in the thyroid gland can be 100 times

higher than in the brain, for example,” he notes. “The thyroid is the only part of the body that needs iodine, so it has a built-in pump that pulls this mineral from the blood. But in doing so, it also pulls in toxic chemicals that lead to malfunction.”

Stress can trigger thyroid disorders, the most common of which are Graves’ disease (hyper or overactive thyroid) and Hashimoto’s thyroiditis (hypo or underactive thyroid.)

“When your immune system is strong, it can ward off attackers and keep dangerous bacteria, viruses, and fungi from getting into your body,” Christianson tells *Health Radar*.“ Stressors that are either physical or psychological can disrupt the immune response that protects the thyroid.

Women are eight times more likely to get thyroid disease due to the fluctuation of hormones.

Symptoms, Treatment, and Prevention

Symptoms of thyroid disorders can vary, but usually include unexplained fatigue, weight gain,

and hair loss. Treatment typically includes replacing hormones with medication such as Synthroid for hypoactive thyroid disease or using radioactive ablation for hyperactive conditions. Sometimes a hyperactive thyroid will reset itself. In cancerous cases, the gland is removed, then radioactive ablation administered.

Experts say your best defense against thyroid conditions is to be vigilant for potential signs and symptoms. But key prevention strategies can also be effective. These include:

A monthly neck check. You can check your thyroid by placing your right hand against the front of your neck and moving it downward. Aside from muscle tissue, if you feel anything unusual, check with your doctor. Next, swallow a glass of water. That moves the trachea and the esophagus in such a way that the thyroid is extruded, which would expose any lumps or bumps.

Consider an ultrasound. If you see or feel anything unusual, ask your doctor for an ultrasound. If you have thyroid disease, your

risk of getting cancer is higher, so schedule regular ultrasounds.

Minimize mercury exposure.

Limit your consumption of high-mercury seafood. The worst thing is eating tuna daily. New fillings? Go for porcelain or ceramic.

Avoid perchlorate. This is a toxic byproduct from rocket and jet fuels. It usually ends up in our water supply and is absorbed through our skin and intestines. Once in our bodies, it prevents our thyroid gland from absorbing iodine. Drink purified water only, not tap water. Ideally, use a filter for your shower, too. We can also get this toxic product from dry cleaning, so when you bring your clothes home, take them out of the bag ASAP. Ideally, let them off-gas in the sunshine before wearing.

Get tested. If you or someone you love has possible thyroid symptoms, have a complete panel of tests done including TSH, thyroid antibodies, free T3, and free T4. Look for your TSH to be in the optimal range of 0.3-1.5. In the case of suspected thyroid disease or any other symptoms, never assume you need to suffer.



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Editor

Nick Tate

Art/Production Director

Phil Aron

For Subscription/Customer Service inquiries, call 1-800-485-4350 or e-mail healthradar@newsmax.com. Send email address changes to healthradar@newsmax.com

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Boost Your Thyroid Function Naturally

Do you feel sluggish even after a good night's sleep or have trouble losing weight even when you eat healthily? If so, you may be one of the millions of Americans with an underactive thyroid gland.

Incredibly, some experts believe that half the people who have this condition, called hypothyroidism, don't even know it.

"Actually, detection has gotten a lot better in recent years because a lot more thyroid bloodwork is being ordered," Dr. Ajay Rao, an endocrinologist at the Lewis Katz School of Medicine at Temple University in Philadelphia, tells Health Radar. "But a lot of people still don't know they have a problem because the symptoms are nonspecific."

The symptoms, which are common to many other health problems, include fatigue, weight gain, brittle nails, cold hands and feet, abnormal menstruation, dry skin, hair loss, constipation, depression, sore muscles and joints, high cholesterol, and low sex drive.

But one telltale sign is written on your face.

"If the outer third of the eyebrow is missing, it's a very good clue to hypothyroidism," notes Dr. Mark Hyman, a functional medicine physician and author of the book "Ultra-Metabolism."

The symptoms of hypothyroidism are so varied because the hormones involved control metabolism, which is how your body produces and uses energy, and they affect every cell in the body. So when supply is short, trouble is sure to follow.

Once the condition is diagnosed, doctors typically prescribe a synthetic thyroid hormone. Although the drugs are widely considered to be safe and effective, the dosage can be hard to get right, they can interact with other drugs including statins, and they never address the underlying causes of the problem, some of which may be treatable without drugs.

Educate yourself and see your doctor so you can feel your best.

Natural Remedies

Here are six ways to boost your thyroid naturally:

Treat underlying causes. Some seemingly unrelated conditions can inhibit thyroid production. "Inflammatory issues like chronic infections, autoimmunity, food allergies, gluten sensitivity . . . are things that trigger a chronic systemic inflammation and block thyroid function," explains Hyman. "Dealing with the cause will help your thyroid function better."

Change your diet. "The foundations of health are also the foundations of a healthy thyroid," Hyman declares. "You want a whole food, plant-based, low-glycemic load, phytonutrient-rich diet." Thyroid boosting foods include seaweed and sea vegetables for their iodine; fatty fish for its omega-3 oils and vitamin D; dark leafy greens for vitamin A; and

Brazil nuts, scallops, and smelt for selenium. Avoid processed soy products and gluten, which can interfere with thyroid function.

Take supplements. The thyroid needs some very specific nutrients to function properly. Iodine is the most important, which is why it's added to table salt and typically not a problem for most Americans. But selenium, zinc, calcium, magnesium, omega-3 oils and vitamins A and D are also needed for peak performance. Many people lack some or all of these nutrients in their diets.

Detox. The thyroid gland readily absorbs environmental toxins such as heavy metals and pesticides because they are chemically similar to iodine. Limit your exposure to toxins by drinking purified water and eating organic produce. Some herbs and foods, such as cilantro and the algae chlorella, can help purge your body of toxins. You can also sweat them out in a sauna.

Exercise. Research shows that moderate aerobic exercise increases levels of thyroid stimulating hormone (TSH), which the pituitary gland secretes to control the thyroid. Exercise also enhances sensitivity to the thyroid hormones throughout the body. A good workout also boosts metabolism and releases some "feel-good" hormones that can help fight the depression that often accompanies hypothyroidism.

Relax. Stress causes the release of the "fight-or-flee" hormone cortisol, and that can disrupt thyroid function in several ways. Hyman recommends practicing regular stress-reducing activities such as yoga, meditation, controlled breathing, and biofeedback. "You need to find your own individual connection to something that helps you to deeply relax," says Hyman. Do things that make you feel good, he adds, such as going for a walk in nature or taking a hot bath. □



Making **YOU** Live Healthier

with Mehmet Oz, M.D. & Michael Roizen, M.D.

Alzheimer's-Diabetes Connection

Alzheimer's disease is both common and mysterious, both well-documented and often hidden. Though it affects an estimated 5.4 million Americans today (5.3 million are 65 or older), by 2050 almost 14 million people in the United States are expected to have this grave condition.

Although there are medications available to deal with the symptoms, none slow the progress of the disease and not one has come close to a cure.

In fact, several major drug trials aimed at tackling Alzheimer's have shut down prematurely because of colossal failures in the early stages.

But there is now hope for Alzheimer's treatment due to new clues about diet.

Research published in *JAMA Neurology* best explains what goes on in the brain when Alzheimer's develops. In that study, the two known "bad actors" associated with loss of cognitive function are amyloid plaques and tau tangles.

We don't know that they're the direct cause of the loss of brain functioning, but one hypothesis holds that the formation of plaques may trigger conversion of tau into a toxic version of itself; the toxic tau then makes the plaques even worse, and those two scramble transmissions of info and disrupt memory, emotions and more.

Another hypothesis holds that it is inflammation, often worsened by excess sugar, that is causing Alzheimer's.

But how does this all get started? That's the trillion dollar question. (Literally: Yearly cost of payments for health care, long-term and hospice care for people with Alzheimer's are projected to hit over \$1.1 trillion in 2050.)

Introducing Type 3 Diabetes

New research indicates that inflammation is worsened by dysfunction of glucose metabolism in the brain. That's what's behind the new theory that

Alzheimer's disease is actually as "Type 3 diabetes." Here's a rundown on the current research concerning glucose levels and brain health.

Increases in blood glucose levels are related to higher brain glucose levels, especially in the last decades of a person's life.

Higher brain levels of glucose — overwhelming levels — are a precursor to changes in neurological functions. Those changes happen before symptoms of Alzheimer's appear and seem to be associated with formation of plaques and dysregulation of tau.

A study in a recent issue of the journal *Neurology* reports that researchers tested more than 1,600 people for five biomarkers of inflammation (fibrinogen, albumin, white blood cell count, von Willebrand factor, and Factor VIII) when they were around 55 years old. Then, 24 years later, researchers gave the same participants a brain scan and memory test.

Those who previously had elevated levels of three or more biomarkers ended up with an average of 5 percent lower volume of their hippocampus and other areas of the brain associated with Alzheimer's disease.

They also had lower scores on a memory test.

Then there's the obstructive sleep apnea (OSA) connection. A new study shows that older folks with OSA are at increased risk for Alzheimer's.

It turns out that OSA is associated with glucose intolerance and insulin resistance, whether or not a person is obese. Glucose intolerance and insulin resistance cause elevated glucose levels in the blood and eventually in the brain.

That then leads to neuron function disruption and formation of plaques and toxic tau protein.

And that's what we call Type 3 diabetes. □

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Dr. Mehmet Oz is host of *The Dr. Oz Show* and a professor in the Department of Surgery at Columbia University. **Dr. Mike Roizen** is chief medical officer at the Cleveland Clinic Wellness Institute. Dr. Oz and Dr. Roizen are co-authors of the best-selling *You* book series.

Key to Successful Weight Loss: Your Genes and DNA ‘Markers’

By Nick Tate

If you can't seem to lose weight, your genes might be the real culprit.

That's the upshot of a new study involving 46 people who took part in an eight-week program that involved dietary changes, exercise, and other healthy behaviors at a Veterans Affairs facility.

Researchers found that some people who participated in the program shed pounds, but others did not. The difference?

It turns out that variations in participants' genes may have accounted for who lost weight, and who didn't.

For the study, first reported by the Live Science website, researchers tracked participants who submitted a DNA sample for a test called PathwayFIT, made by the company Pathway Genomics, which funded the study.

Pathway, one of the nation's most respected genetic testing companies, analyzed 75 genetic markers linked with certain health conditions or with the body's responses to diet and exercise.

When researchers compared the DNA of those individuals who had lost 5 percent or more of their body weight with those who lost less than 1 percent (or gained weight), they found five genetic markers linked with weight loss. They concluded the markers could predict who would lose weight with 75 percent accuracy.

“Patient weight loss following behavioral modification therapy really varies,” said study author Cecilia Dalle Ore, a medical student at the University of California, San Diego.

The findings — presented at Digestive Disease Week, a scientific meeting focused on digestive diseases — suggest that people's genes could potentially be used to predict their response to behavioral modification programs.

Researchers noted that because the study was small, involving fewer than four dozen people, future research is necessary to confirm the findings.

Dr. Amir Zarrinpar, a gastroenterologist at UCSD and a senior author of the study, says such tests may be a key way for helping patients lose weight.

“By validating these types of genetic tests and showing that they apply to a general population, we can try to improve patient weight loss treatments. For example, instead of waiting three months to see whether a patient is going to respond or not, you could use this kind of information to say, ‘OK, we know this patient's likelihood of succeeding is going to be low. Let's do something else instead,’” Zarrinpar said. “That's what we're going towards.”

Pathway Genomics markets a genetic test called PathwayFIT that not only helps you set diet guidelines for weight loss, but gives you genetic details of your

food allergies as well as what type of exercises work best for your body.

Find out more info on Pathway at Pathway.com (<https://www.pathway.com/fit-products>) □

“FIT AFTER 50” FACT

What's the best strategy for sticking with an exercise routine and losing weight? Find a workout buddy or two. That's the upshot of new research that shows working out in a group lowers stress and significantly improves quality of life more than working out alone. That can increase the odds of staying with a regular exercise routine, say sports scientists from the University of New England College of Osteopathic Medicine. To take advantage of the findings, published in *The Journal of the American Osteopathic Association*, experts recommend:

- Take group classes like aerobics or spinning that involve others.
- Join a team sport such as tennis, golf, or basketball.
- Join a health club and ask a trainer for introductions to others.
- Make it a family affair — take nature walks, go biking, or join a gym with your spouse, partner, and or children.

Feel-Good Benefits of Flotation Therapy

By Stacey Colino

People often describe the experience as feeling like they're floating in space, returning to the womb, or entering an altered consciousness. But no travel or drugs are involved. It's called flotation therapy, and involves climbing into a tank filled with warm water and nearly 1,000 pounds of Epsom salt — and floating in darkness and silence. With that much salt concentration, it's impossible not to float, experts say. All sensory stimulation is shut out or minimized, which is why the practice is often referred to as sensory deprivation or "restricted environmental stimulation technique" (REST, for short).

Created in the 1950s by John C. Lilly, a physician and neuroscientist, flotation therapy has moved from niche to the mainstream, as research has shown bona fide health benefits. It can reduce stress, anxiety, and post-traumatic stress syndrome (PTSD), ease muscle tension and the pain of osteoarthritis and fibromyalgia, and promote well-being.

"When you're free of sensory stimulation, the mind calms down and the body calms down," explains psychologist Howard Weissman, clinical director and founder of The Chicago Stress Relief Center, which offers flotation therapy.

Sensory Deprivation Calms Nerves

Because the flotation therapy blocks out external stimuli, a person undergoing it doesn't

see, hear, smell or feel anything. The water in the flotation tank is heated to replicate skin temperature, decreasing activity in the nervous system.

"You lose awareness of your body in space — you can't differentiate between where your skin is and where the water is," Weissman says. "Your mind goes silent and anxiety dissipates, which leads to a reduction in pain."

The water's buoyancy provides a sense of weightlessness, so there's no pressure on any muscles or tendons, which reduces pain.

A study from Karlstad University in Sweden found that when people suffering from chronic pain in the neck or back had nine sessions of flotation therapy over a three-week period, their most severe pain was significantly reduced, as were levels of anxiety and depression.

In another study from Karlstad University, when people with stress-related muscle pain did flotation therapy for six weeks, their pain levels and blood pressure dropped, and their anxiety and depression decreased; meanwhile, their optimism, energy, and positivity increased.

In addition, a 2013 study from Northern Illinois University found that a one-hour session of flotation therapy helped reduce perceived pain and blood lactate levels in men who had done intense strength-training exercises.

The theory is that, with REST, "the lack of sensory stimulation decreases activity of the nervous system, which allows the body to return to homeostasis where the individual

can recover from the intense bout of exercise," explains lead researcher Paul Morgan, an instructor and research associate in the Neuromuscular Research Laboratory at the University of Pittsburgh.

Combating Depression

Studies have also suggested that flotation therapy can be beneficial for improving sleep quality and depression, which can in turn promote better health and well-being. The relaxing properties of floating are so profound that "it's not uncommon for people to actually fall asleep while in the float tank," notes Morgan, who is an avid floater. After a flotation session, "many people experience a euphoric feeling, something [akin] to the runner's high."

In recent years, a variety of tanks, float pods, and float rooms have made their way into stress management centers, spas, and other specialized studios around the U.S.; the cost of a one-hour session typically ranges from \$60 to \$80.

As long as you have the muscle strength to get into and out of the floating environment safely, you can do it, Weissman says. The only true contraindications are if you have uncontrolled seizures, a psychotic condition, or open wounds (the high salt content would cause them to burn).

Otherwise, says Weissman: "Everybody benefits from quieting their physiology. Floating is a unique way to unplug, gain mindfulness and self-awareness, and relieve stress and pain." □

New Chemowave Phone App: Game-Changer for Cancer Patients

By John Bachman and Nick Tate

Cancer will strike half of all American men and one in three women in their lifetimes, federal statistics show. If you're among them, your first reaction to a cancer diagnosis is likely to be shock, followed by some difficult questions:

- What do I do now?
- How do I find the right treatment?
- Where can I get the best advice to beat the disease?

Well now there's an app for that. It's called chemoWave and its inventor, Matt Lashey, says it's the 23andMe of cancer treatment.

Lashey and his partner Ric Grenell tell *Health Radar* the free smartphone app uses your own personal health information, compares it to other patients who've had chemo for the type of cancer you have, then provides advice on your best options to beat it. It can be used to record specific information such as symptoms, how you're feeling, drug schedules, and your medical records. It can then share that information with your doctor, family, friends, and caregivers, without risk of privacy violations.

Lashey came up with idea while Grenell was undergoing treatment for non-Hodgkin's lymphoma in 2013.

"When you see someone you love being so overwhelmed you sort of gravitate to what you know. My background is in data analysis," Lashey explains.

"So I started tracking how he was feeling along with his activities and started to see the relationship between the ups and downs that he was having and certain medications that he was taking or how much exercise he was or wasn't doing."

Grenell, a former U.S. spokesman at the United Nations who is also President Donald Trump's nominee for U.S. ambassador to Germany, says the app documented and chronicled his experiences in ways that helped boost his recovery.

Now the two are investigating the app's potential for helping people with other health conditions.

"We've spoken to a lot of people in the research community and there certainly is application for chronic conditions or people on HIV medication or dialysis," Lashey notes.

Learn more at www.chemoWave.com □

Can Exercise Help Prevent — and Even Treat — Cancer?

By Lynn Allison

If you didn't already need a good reason to ramp up your fitness program, several prominent organizations have just included exercise as a primary factor in cancer prevention and treatment. The American College of Sports Medicine, the American Society of Clinical Oncology, the National Comprehensive Cancer Network, the American Cancer Society, the Oncology Nursing Society, the Commission

on Cancer, and the Cancer Foundation for Life all recommend exercise as part of a cancer prevention program.

"Numerous studies show that exercise can treat various types of cancer," says Dr. Gabe Mirkin, a noted medical authority on sports medicine and its benefits.

Extensive studies on the risk of 26 types of cancer — involving nearly 1.5 million adults followed for 11 years — have shown that exercise is associated with reduced risks of cancer, regardless of body size or smoking.

So far, research has shown that physical activity can reduce the risk of cancers of the colon, breasts, esophagus, liver, stomach, kidneys, prostate, and lungs.

Research shows that exercise also combats cancer by:

- Helping cancer patients better tolerate and complete full-dose chemotherapy
- Increasing tumor cells' susceptibility to cancer therapies
- Reducing heart damage from chemotherapy
- Reducing the side effects of cancer-drug treatments □

Fibromyalgia: Causes and Remedies

By Lynn Allison

Q: What is fibromyalgia?

A: Fibromyalgia is a disorder characterized by widespread musculoskeletal pain. It can be extremely debilitating, and until recently was dismissed as a phantom disorder, or part of a patient's imagination. An estimated 2-4 percent of the population suffers from this little-understood condition, the vast majority female — which is the case with most autoimmune disorders like lupus or multiple sclerosis. The degree of pain and disability from fibromyalgia can range from mild to severe.

Q: What are the classic symptoms?

A: Besides widespread pain, patients with fibromyalgia often suffer from severe insomnia that results in exhaustion. Other symptoms include loss of libido, brain fog, nasal congestion, irritable bowel syndrome, and weight gain. In addition, the pain can be transient or persistent. Because the muscles also need sleep and good nutrition, they stay knotted and painful.

Q: What causes fibromyalgia?

A: We believe that the disorder is caused by an energy crisis in the body. When a person suffers overwhelming stress caused by a physical injury, infection, other trauma, or emotional crisis, the hypothalamus acts like a circuit breaker, decreasing its function to protect him or her. It's like blowing a fuse. The hypothalamus is the energy center that controls sleep, hormones, temperature, blood flow, and blood pressure. When you don't sleep properly, your immune system also stops working properly and you'll be in pain.

Q: How is it diagnosed?

A: That's the \$1 million question. Unfortunately, although the American College of Rheumatology initially defined fibromyalgia in 1990, the main problem of diagnosing this disorder is lack of physician awareness. Because there are no simple lab tests or scans that can pinpoint fibromyalgia, it takes a skilled and patient physician to screen for

this very complex disorder. I have a helpful quiz on my website, www.vitality101.com, that contains the ACR diagnostic criteria. When a doctor throws up his hands and says there's nothing wrong with you, that it's all in your head, I consider that to be abusive and no longer acceptable. Never give up searching for the solution.

Q: Can you explain the S.H.I.N.E. protocol?

A: Our research has shown that a comprehensive treatment called the S.H.I.N.E protocol results in 91 percent of patients showing vast improvement with the condition and in quality of life.

Sleep. It's important to get at least eight hours of sleep nightly. Make your bedroom a haven free of electronic devices and take a hot bath with Epsom salts before retiring to help you relax. Ask your doctor about safe sleep aids.

Hormonal support. Have your healthcare practitioner check for low thyroid, adrenal, estrogen, and testosterone levels, all of which can contribute to fatigue.

Inflammation and infection. Both of these conditions can impair your immune system and cause pain. Try natural products such as boswellia and fish oil to reduce inflammation and infection.

Nutritional support. Several studies have shown that low levels of vitamin D can contribute to fibromyalgia, so it's a good idea to take a multivitamin supplement that includes vitamin D. Eliminate "toxic" foods such as sugar and processed foods from your diet.

Exercise. Daily exercise, especially outdoors, can help restore vitality — even if it's just a 20-minute walk twice daily. Exercise only if you are able and don't overdo it. Ten weeks after the first four steps, you can gradually increase the exercise. □

Dr. Jacob Teitelbaum is one of the most frequently quoted experts on fibromyalgia in the world. He is the author of the bestselling books, "From Fatigued to Fantastic!" and "The Fatigue and Fibromyalgia Solution."



7 Foods to Eat — or Avoid — to Combat High Blood Pressure

By Chris Pritchard

What you eat or don't eat can determine whether you'll fall victim to the so-called "silent killer" — symptomless, but deadly high blood pressure — that strikes one in three Americans.

Fortunately, the danger can be minimized by including some foods (or food categories) in your diet and avoiding (or going easy on) others, experts say.

Three groups belong firmly in "good" baskets: oats, fruit, and vegetables — particularly, beetroot. But these four are in the "bad" baskets: salt, licorice, caffeine, and alcohol.

"There's good news: High blood pressure can be treated or prevented," observes Dr. Clare Collins, nutrition and dietetics professor at Australia's University of Newcastle. She adds that lowering blood pressure has "a big impact on reducing heart disease and stroke risk."

Collins and her team have examined dozens of studies on the relationship between diet and blood pressure. Her colleague, research associate Dr. Tracy Schumacher, notes that not all hypertension is diet-related.

"[But] foods you eat impact blood pressure," Schumacher adds. "Some, such as salty foods, are best avoided by people with high blood pressure, while fruit and vegetables are beneficial and help reduce it."

Schumacher and Collins tell *Health Radar* the following

foods can help you manage blood pressure.

Oats. Studies show that fibers in oats produce bioactive products when fermented in the large bowel that work "directly" to lower blood pressure.

"To improve blood pressure, eat rolled oats or oat bran for breakfast," she says. "Add to meat patties or mix with bread crumbs in recipes calling for crumbing."

Beetroot. Beetroot is rich in inorganic nitrate. During digestion, it's converted to nitric oxide, causing arteries to dilate and lowering pressure, Collins explains.

Her team's review of 16 different studies "found drinking beetroot juice was associated with a . . . reduction in systolic blood pressure," Collins notes.

Another trial of 68 adults with high blood pressure found that beetroot juice reduced both systolic and diastolic blood pressure.

Collins recommends "wrapping whole fresh beetroot in foil and baking until soft — or grate and stir-fry with red onion and curry paste to eat as a relish."

Fruits and vegetables. Nearly 30 studies found vitamin C supplements can help lower blood pressure, but Collins suggests eating fruits and veggies rich in this nutrient as the best option.

"One advantage of getting more vitamin C from eating fruit and vegetables is that you boost your potassium intake, helping

counter the effects of sodium contained in salt."

Schumacher and Collins tell *Health Radar* the following foods should be limited or avoided because they can raise blood pressure.

Salt. "High salt intake is associated with high blood pressure," Collins points out. "Avoid foods high in sodium, don't add salt, and choose lower-salt versions of processed foods."

Licorice. Most licorice candy sold has little true licorice root, and therefore little glycyrrhizic acid (GZA), which can cause hypertension. But, Collins warns, "occasionally, licorice candy contains GZA in large amounts. It causes sodium retention and potassium loss, contributing to high blood pressure."

Caffeinated foods and beverages. Although caffeine is most commonly consumed in coffee, tea, cola, and energy drinks, it is also found in a variety of foods. Collins explains that high caffeine intake can increase blood pressure, as many studies show. Results vary, so she urges monitoring "your individual response to caffeine."

Alcohol. Research shows blood pressure is typically higher in drinkers than nondrinkers. Collins recommends keeping alcohol consumption modest because "larger amounts of alcohol increase your risk of high blood pressure, especially in men, but also to a lesser extent in women." □

Landmark Study Reverses Warnings About Hormones, Breast Cancer

By Frances Chamberlain

Hormone replacement therapy (HRT), limited decades ago because of cancer fears, has been found to be an effective and safe treatment for postmenopausal women in a new study that suggests earlier warnings were overblown. Since 2002, most women were advised to stop HRT because research suggested it could increase the risk of breast cancer, heart attack, and stroke. As a result, women were left to deal with hot flashes, night sweats, weight gain, diabetes, arthritis, and other conditions triggered by menopause.

But Dr. Erika Schwartz, a New York-based specialist in hormone replacement therapy and author of “The New Hormone Solution,” notes a follow-up study recently reported in the *Journal of the*

American Medical Association found no significant rise in the risk of premature deaths in 27,000 women who took HRT, compared to those who took placebos.

“There was never a link to breast cancer,” Schwartz tells *Health Radar*. “Although there was no correlation between HRT and breast cancer, the medical establishment has been touting a connection since 2002.”

The Women’s Health Initiative study was flawed from the beginning, Schwartz says, and it deprived women of hormones that could have helped them.

“Seven million women went without hormones,” she notes. “That sped up the aging process and they suffered with the symptoms of menopause. All of this leads to increased risk of heart disease and Alzheimer’s. There

never was any data to support that hormones were bad for you.”

Schwartz’s first book, “The Hormone Solution,” came out in 2002 and explained how hormone imbalances affect women. Her latest book, “The New Hormone Solution,” was published in June 2017 and covers the last 14 years.

Through her research, Schwartz reached the conclusion that HRT is better for most women than not taking hormones, but bioidentical hormones are the best option for boosting health.

“Bioidentical hormones molecularly look exactly like the hormones our bodies make, but non human-identical hormones have different side effects,” she says. “They come in different ways — pills, patches, and creams — but they all have the same active ingredient.” □

Six Simple Ways to Strengthen Your Bones

By Mary Martin

As men and women age, they lose bone mass and strength due to the slowdown in the body’s bone-rebuilding process. Women can lose up to 5 percent of their bone mass in the first six years following menopause — adding up to a 20 percent bone density loss in a decade. Complications of bone density loss range from osteoporosis to fractures and falls. Luckily, there are things you can do to

strengthen your bones. Here are five ways to increase bone density.

1. Soak up the sun. Vitamin D plays a critical role in bone health. It improves absorption of calcium, increases bone density, and enhances muscle function.

2. Exercise. Dr. Andrea Singer, clinical director of the National Osteoporosis Foundation, tells *Health Radar* that getting regular exercise is the best way to strengthen bones.

3. Drink up. People who drink alcohol in moderation actually

have higher bone density.

4. Eat prunes. They’re not just good for digestion; studies have shown that prunes are also good for your bones.

5. Limit grains. Researchers suggest that sulfur compounds in grains can trigger bone loss and increase the body’s acidity.

6. Think green. Dark leafy greens, including collards, kale, spinach, and bok choy are great sources of calcium and filled with potassium, magnesium, and vitamin K. □

FDA Approvals: Hemophilia, Cancer, Opioid Addiction, Type 2 Diabetes

Compiled exclusively by Health Radar, here are the most significant new drugs and medical devices approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration.

New Hemophilia Treatment

Hemlibra (emicizumab-kxwh) was approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration to prevent or reduce the number of bleeding episodes among certain people with hemophilia A. The injected drug was approved for patients with antibodies called Factor VIII inhibitors. People with hemophilia A are missing a gene that produces Factor VIII, a blood-clotting protein.

Hemophilia affects about one of 5,000 babies born in the United States, some 80 percent of whom have hemophilia A. Most babies born with the genetic disease are male. Hemophilia A can trigger episodes of bleeding into the joints, leading to severe damage. Some people with the disease develop antibodies that interfere with standard treatments.

Common side effects of the drug, given preventively every week, include injection site reaction, headache, and joint pain. The drug's label includes a boxed warning of possible blood clots among recipients who also are given anti-bleeding medication.

Biosimilar for Breast, Stomach Cancers

Ogivri (trastuzumab-dkst) was approved as the nation's first biosimilar drug to treat certain breast and stomach cancers. Biosimilars, derived from living organisms, must demonstrate that the new product is "highly similar" to an already approved medication, and that it has no clinically significant difference in terms of its potency, safety, and purity.

Ogivri is approved to treat breast or stomach cancers attributed to a problematic HER2+ gene. Its manufacturer, Mylan, provided sufficient evidence that the drug is biosimilar to the Genentech drug Herceptin.

Expected side effects include headache, diarrhea, nausea, chills, fever, infection, congestive heart failure, insomnia, cough, and rash. Like Herceptin, Ogivri's label will include a boxed warning

about an increased risk of heart disease, serious allergic-like reactions, lung damage, and harm to a developing fetus.

Injection for Opioid Addiction

Sublocade, a once-monthly injection of buprenorphine to treat opioid use disorder was approved by the FDA. The drug buprenorphine has been shown to reduce opioid withdrawal symptoms and the desire to use opioids, "without causing the cycle of highs and lows associated with opioid misuse or abuse," the agency said.

Sublocade was evaluated in clinical studies involving nearly 850 adults who were diagnosed with moderate-to-severe cases of the disorder. The most common side effects included constipation, nausea, vomiting, headache, drowsiness, and injection-site pain. Sublocade's safety and effectiveness were not evaluated in people under age 17.

Ozempic for Type 2 Diabetes

Ozempic (semaglutide) was approved as a weekly injection to treat Type 2 diabetes in adults. More than 28 million people in the United States have Type 2 diabetes, which occurs when the body can no longer produce the sugar-regulating hormone insulin, or the body can't use insulin properly. People with Type 2 diabetes are two to four times more likely to develop heart disease.

In clinical trials involving more than 8,000 adults with Type 2 diabetes, Ozempic was shown to help users lower A1c, a test that measures the amount of glucose in a person's blood. The drug, when combined with proper diet and exercise, also was shown to help users lose weight.

The drug's most common side effects include nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, abdominal pain, and constipation. Less common but more serious adverse reactions could include thyroid tumors, pancreatitis, changes in vision, kidney failure, and serious allergic reactions.

As a condition of approval, the FDA is requiring further studies of the drug's safety and effectiveness for people under 18. □

CROSSWORDS HELP KEEP BRAINS SHARP

People who regularly report doing word puzzles maintain their mental age better as they age, according to scientists at the U.K.'s University of Exeter Medical School and King's College London. They analyzed data from more than 17,000 healthy people ages 50 and over and found that the more often participants worked word puzzles, the better they performed on tasks assessing attention, reasoning, and memory. In fact, on tests of grammatical reasoning speed and short-term memory accuracy, their brains function as if they were 10 years younger.



COFFEE COULD STOP DIABETES

Drinking coffee could help stop diabetes, but only if you don't use a filter. A Danish study found that an untested compound found in coffee called cafestol appeared to increase insulin sensitivity, but paper filters trap most of the cafestol. Mice genetically predisposed to develop Type 2 diabetes were given three different doses of cafestol. After 10 weeks, fasting glucose levels improved 28 to 30 percent, and insulin sensitivity increased by 42 percent in those given the highest dose.

CAN WEARING MAKEUP BOOST IQ?

Wearing makeup can boost women's confidence and self-esteem — a phenomenon known as the "lipstick effect." But a study from Harvard Medical School and Italy's University of Chieti-Pescara found that wearing makeup also improves academic performance. Volunteers were asked to listen to music, apply makeup, or color a drawing of a human face before completing a series of mental tests. The scores of those who applied makeup were significantly higher than the other two groups, leading researchers to suggest that increasing physical self-esteem interacts with cognition.

FATTY DIET HIKES CANCER FOR GENERATIONS

A study published in *Breast Cancer Research* found that feeding female mice a diet high in fat derived from corn oil substantially increased the risk of breast cancer for three generations. Earlier studies found that mice fed a high-fat diet when pregnant have female offspring that are at increased risk of breast cancer. But the new study found if pregnant mice were switched to a high-fat diet during their second trimester — the period of time when the fetus forms the mechanism that transmits genetic information from one generation to another — breast cancer risk is also raised in "great-granddaughters."

CEREAL ADDITIVE CAUSES WEIGHT GAIN

Scientists at Cedars-Sinai have discovered how a chemical called butylhydroxytoluene (BHT) contributes to weight gain. BHT is an antioxidant commonly added

"FIT AFTER 50" FACT

Sometimes it's hard to fit 30 minutes of exercise into your day. But did you know you can break up daily workouts into shorter segments? Exercising for just 10 minutes at a time, three times a day, counts toward the recommended 150 minutes of moderate exercise a week. Here are some ideas to get you started:

- If you use mass transit to commute to work, get off the bus or train a stop or two early and briskly walk the rest of the way to your workplace.
- Take a 10-minute brisk walk 10 or 15 minutes before or after you eat lunch.
- When you get home from work, go for a quick walk or bike ride around the neighborhood before dinner.
- For a bigger calorie burn, choose 10-minute blocks of higher-intensity activities like swimming, jogging, or playing a game of basketball with your kids.

to breakfast cereals and other foods to protect nutrients and keep fats from turning rancid. The scientists found that BHT interferes with the hormones that send signals from the digestive system to the brain to let people know when they've eaten enough. When this signaling system fails, people may continue to eat.

SOME ANTIBIOTICS INCREASE BIRTH DEFECTS

A study published in the *British Journal of Clinical Pharmacology*

found that taking certain antibiotics during pregnancy increases the risk of birth defects. Clindamycin, doxycycline, quinolones, macrolides, and phenoxymethylpenicillin were linked to major congenital malformations in newborns. Amoxicillin, cephalosporins, and nitrofurantoin were not associated with birth defects. Three to four percent of American babies have congenital abnormalities like Down syndrome, cystic fibrosis, spina bifida, and fetal alcohol syndrome.

INSOMNIA AS BAD AS BINGE-DRINKING

Getting less than six hours of sleep nightly is worse than previously thought, says a Canadian study. And staying awake for 18 hours at a stretch is as bad for your brain as binge-drinking; it could impair your ability to drive as much as drinking. The lack of sleep can also reduce the ability to stay on task by reducing attention span and ability to focus.

POT TRIPLES BLOOD PRESSURE RISK

Smoking marijuana triples the risk of dying from high blood pressure, says a study from Georgia State University. Compared to nonusers, marijuana users were nearly 3.5 times more likely to die from hypertension and the risk rose each year of use. “We found higher estimated cardiovascular risks associated with marijuana use than cigarette smoking,” said researcher Barbara Yankey. “This indicates that marijuana use may carry even heavier consequences on the cardiovascular system than that already established for cigarette smoking.”



WALNUTS DECREASE HUNGER

Not only are walnuts loaded with heart- and brain-healthy nutrients, they also help control appetite by promoting satiety — the feeling of fullness. Researchers at Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center demonstrated for the first time that eating walnuts activates an area in the brain associated with regulating hunger. In a two-week study, participants reported feeling less hungry during the week they consumed walnut-containing smoothies than during the week they were given the placebo smoothies. Tests administered on the fifth day of each week found that the area of the brain called the insula showed they felt more satisfied after consuming the drink containing walnuts.

CHEAP SUPPLEMENT SAVES SIGHT

A combination pill containing inexpensive antioxidants may save the vision of seniors, according to a study published in the *British Journal of Ophthalmology*. The supplement called AREDS is named after the “Age-Related Eye Disease Study” that found it lowered the risk of developing age-related macular degeneration and slowed its progression. Two variations of the pill were used in the study and both were found to be effective. One pill contained vitamins C and

E, beta carotene, zinc, and copper. The second pill contained vitamins C and E, lutein, zeaxanthin, zinc, and copper.

RUSH HOUR POLLUTION TWICE AS DANGEROUS

A new study that measured with improved accuracy commuters’ exposure to rush hour pollutants found that the levels of some harmful particles were twice as high as previously believed. The study, which was published in the journal *Atmospheric Environment*, found higher levels of chemicals that cause oxidative stress, which is thought to be involved in the development of many diseases including respiratory and heart diseases, cancer, and some types of neurodegenerative diseases. “If these chemicals are as bad for people as many researchers believe, then commuters should rethink their driving habits,” said Michael Bergin of Duke University.

BASKETBALL CHANGES YOUNG ATHLETES’ BRAINS

Studies show that collision sports such as football affect the brains of players, but research at Canada’s St. Michael’s Hospital shows that contact sports such as soccer and basketball can also damage brains. Scans found that the brains of athletes who participated in both collision and contact sports showed changes to structure and function when compared to those who played noncontact sports such as volleyball. Differences included changes in the brain’s white matter — the fibers that connect different parts of the brain and allow them to communicate with one another — and chemical markers typically associated with brain injury. □

Oxygen Therapy Enhances Cancer Treatments

By William S. Maxfield, M.D.

Although hyperbaric oxygen therapy (HBOT) is by no means a cure for cancer, many clinical studies have shown it to be extremely effective with patients receiving cancer treatments.

A 2010 Ohio State University study published in the *Journal of Cancer Biology and Therapy* found that HBOT could shrink ovarian tumors. Ninety-minute sessions for 21 days corrected the hypoxic tumor and apparently made chemo more effective.

In an earlier study conducted in Norway, hyperbaric treatments alone were found to be twice as effective as chemotherapy for controlling breast cancer. One explanation for this is when oxygen-deprived cells are brought back to normal, cancer cells start dying off by apoptosis, the process of eliminating unhealthy cells without damaging the rest of the body.

Aggressive chemotherapy can sometimes kill off the good cells as well as the bad.

Another study conducted at a Japanese university found a potential role for HBOT in the treatment of malignant tumors and radiation injury of the brain. Clinical trials using chemotherapy combined with HBOT showed a significant increase in survival rates for patients with recurrent malignant gliomas.

Scientists also say there is promising potential for the treatment and possible prevention of radiation injury to the brain after radiosurgery for brain lesions.

The authors of one study wrote, “The possibilities

with HBOT to enhance the therapeutic effect of irradiation and to even increase the radiation dose if there are ways to combat the side effects, should boost new scientific interest into the whole field of oncology looking for new medicines, equipment, and techniques [for fighting cancer.]”

Healing Radiation Lesions

Radiation necrosis is a postoperative condition in which a lesion forms at the site where a malignant tumor was removed. It can be a long-term central nervous system risk for patients who have undergone radiotherapy or radiosurgery.

Fortunately, this is one of the approved conditions for HBOT in the U.S., and is gaining acceptance among traditional physicians who once believed that hyperbaric oxygen would increase the growth of cancer cells. (The opposite is true.) In fact, use of HBOT has lowered the incidence of cancer recurrence in several animal studies.

A 2015 *Medscape* article by Dr. Michael J. Schneck, professor of neurology and neurosurgery at Loyola University, Chicago, says treating radiation necrosis with anticancer drugs is not the answer.

Dr. Schneck wrote, “For patients with signs and symptoms of mass effect, increased intracranial pressure, or neurologic disability, consider . . . surgical evaluation, steroids, anticoagulation, or hyperbaric oxygen therapy separately or in combination.”

Dr. Schneck also wrote that there are benefits of hyperbaric oxygen in treating this condition with 20 to 30 sessions for approximately 90 to 120 minutes with caveats, including the fact that HBOT is not readily available at many medical centers.

He added, however, that some case studies found patients receiving steroid therapy along with HBOT “showed a resolution of a lesion on MRIs.”

There are also excellent data that show hyperbaric oxygen can decrease the effects of radiation and chemotherapy, including mucositis (a common side effect of chemotherapy and radiotherapy that involves the digestive tract) and colitis (inflammation of the inner lining of the colon) in patients in both acute and chronic stages. □

Dr. William S. Maxfield, M.D., is a board-certified physician in hyperbaric medicine, radiology, and nuclear medicine. He is one of the nation’s foremost experts in hyperbaric medicine. He has served on the faculties of the Johns Hopkins School of Medicine, Tulane University School of Medicine, and LSU Medical School. He also has served as the chief of the Radioisotope Laboratory at the U.S. Naval Hospital in Bethesda, Md. He currently is in private practice in the Tampa Bay, Fla., area.



Curcumin Beats Diabetes Drug for Lowering Blood Sugar

By Lynn Allison

Curcumin, a component of the popular East Asian spice turmeric, is 400 times more powerful than the diabetes drug Metformin for improving insulin sensitivity and helping to reverse Type 2 diabetes.

That's the upshot of a new study published in *Biochemistry and Biophysical Research Communications* that is the latest to find that the spice has extraordinary health benefits.

To date, more than 6,000 peer-reviewed studies have cited the benefits of turmeric and curcumin. One of the most interesting findings is that the benefits are often equal or better without dangerous side effects.

"This simply builds upon

the growing awareness and enthusiasm around turmeric and its healing properties," says Dr. Ajay Goel, Ph.D., director of the Baylor Center for Gastrointestinal Research at Baylor University Medical Center in Dallas, Texas.

It is well-known that both turmeric and curcumin have potent anti-inflammatory, antimicrobial, antioxidant, and anticancer properties.

"But the recognition that it is superior to modern medications is icing on the cake," Goel adds. "Diabetes is such a common ailment in many parts of the world, and having a potential natural solution to this indication is definitely very exciting."

The study found that the spice also helped lower blood sugar levels and was able to reverse

many of the issues related to decreased insulin sensitivity, including loss of sight due to damaged blood vessels.

"The diabetes epidemic, if left unabated, will eventually affect one-third of Americans," says Dr. Jacob Teitelbaum, author of "Real Cause, Real Cure" and one of the world's most frequently quoted integrative medical authorities.

In addition to its diabetes-fighting properties, turmeric is an effective anti-inflammatory and even holds promise in fighting skin cancer, breast cancer, bowel and stomach cancers.

Teitelbaum recommends a highly absorbable form of curcumin called CuraMed 750.

"Natural medicine is coming to the rescue where standard medicine has failed," he says. □

5 Natural Remedies to Lower Your Blood Sugar Naturally

By Gary Greenberg

Americans have a big problem with blood sugar: Nearly half of us are in the diabetic or pre-diabetic category, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

"One problem is that diabetes is an asymptomatic disease, so a lot of people don't even know they have it," says Dr. Ajay Rao, an endocrinologist and diabetes specialist at the Lewis Katz School of Medicine at Temple University.

A lot of people just take

medications that lower blood sugar levels, but also have potential side effects. Studies show the best way to control blood sugar and manage diabetes is to eat a low-carb, low-sugar diet and increase your exercise. Rao adds that herbal remedies have proven effective through scientific studies. Among them:

1. Berberine. A compound found in several plants, including goldenseal, Oregon grape, philodendron, and tree turmeric.

2. Gymnema. A climbing plant that grows in India and has been

used to treat diabetes for more than 2,000 years.

3. Malabar gourd. A member of the melon family that can boost insulin-production in the pancreas.

4. Neem leaf. A traditional medicinal herb shown to lower blood glucose in several studies.

5. Fenugreek. A plant with seeds that have been used as both a spice and medicine since ancient Egypt, it slows the body's absorption of carbohydrates and sugar, and promotes insulin production. □

Poliovirus Attacks Cancer Tumors

Researchers at the Duke Cancer Institute are using modified poliovirus to unleash the body's ability to fight cancer, not only by attacking cancer cells, but also by cancelling their ability to evade the immune system. The CD155 protein is known for its involvement in the development of polio, but research has found that many types of tumors produce a lot of it. The poliovirus attacks the tumor cells containing increased amounts of CD155, and kills many, but not all of them. At the same time, the poliovirus triggers an alarm in the immune system which alerts the body's defenses and spurs tumor-killing T-cells into action. Once the immune system is activated against the poliovirus-infected tumor, cancer cells are vulnerable to attack. "The poliovirus stimulates an innate inflammatory response," said immunologist Smita Nair.

Stem Cells Ease Chronic Back Pain

A single injection of stem cells could bring relief to people who suffer chronic lower back pain. The treatment injects stem cells called mesenchymal precursor cells into damaged discs between vertebrae. The cells reduce inflammation and help rebuild damaged tissue. An Australian research team first used the technique on sheep, and were able to completely rebuild injured discs. In the latest study, stem cells were removed from the marrow of donors and grown in a lab. They were then injected into 100 people with degenerative disc disease, a condition in which the spaces between vertebrae shrink and lose their capacity to absorb shock, thus causing pain. After one injection, half of the volunteers experienced no back pain for two years, and some of the patients remained pain-free for three years. MRI scans showed that the stem cells had rebuilt damaged discs. Lower back pain

affects about 28 million Americans, and accounts for approximately half of all opioid prescriptions. The treatment could help curb the opioid epidemic.

Fingerprinting to Detect Cocaine Users

Determining whether or not a person has used cocaine may soon be as simple as taking his or her fingerprint. The fingerprint test, which was studied in cocaine users, is noninvasive, fast, and accurate, and uses chromatography paper. Fingerprints are collected on the chromatography paper and then developed using chemicals. People who have used cocaine excrete traces of benzoylecgonine and methylecgonine as they metabolize the drug. These chemical indicators are present in fingerprint residue, even after handwashing. "The technique was 99 percent effective in detecting cocaine use," said Dr. Melanie Bailey. "This could bring a real-time drug-testing method to the market that will provide a definitive result in a matter of minutes." The new screening, developed by scientists at the U.K.'s University of Surrey, could be expanded to other dangerous drugs such as heroin and ecstasy.

Keychain Detector Spots Allergens

Eating out can be a perilous experience for those who have food allergies, because unknown ingredients and cross-contamination with allergens can trigger dangerous, even life-threatening reactions. Conventional methods to detect hidden allergens in food either require bulky laboratory equipment, or are slow and don't pick up on low concentrations. Harvard University researchers have developed a more practical allergen-detection system that's small enough to put on a keychain. The system, called integrated exogenous antigen testing, is a handheld device that extracts allergens from food and an electronic keychain reader for sensing allergens that wirelessly communicates the results to a smartphone. In less than 10 minutes, the prototype can detect five allergens, one each from wheat, peanuts, hazelnuts, milk and egg whites, at levels even lower than the gold-standard laboratory assay. The researchers say the device could be expanded to test for additional compounds, including other allergens and non-food contaminants such as pesticides. The study results were published in the journal *ACS Nano*. □

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