

# Flourish

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Is there  
an *Alpha*  
among  
*Omegas*?

*Decoding  
Pain*

Insights  
and Solutions

*Special Feature*

**The Future of Natural Supplements  
in Canada is in Your Hands**

**Act Now to Secure Natural Health!**

Vol. 7, No. 3 · Free  
Summer 2023

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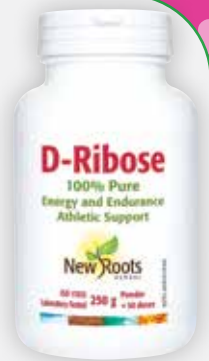
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# Editor's Letter



We often say: "Time passes so quickly," but how often do we actually stop to appreciate the time we have?

A recent event reminded me of the famous Latin saying "carpe diem," or "seize the day." It's a reminder that we really must make the most of every day. There are things we cannot recover. I believe time is the most precious of

all, for once it has passed, there is no getting it back, no matter the money or power we may have. Another is the occasion, for once it is over, there is no reliving it. Recreations are just that. Just think of a unique event you missed. The last few years have proved that there is nothing like being present for a special occasion. Words, once they've been said, are out there forever—no matter how much you may want to sometimes take them back. Just think of something you've said out of anger; apologies only go so far. Our health is one I wonder about. Some say once it's gone, there is no getting it back. I prefer to think there are always ways to improve it. That being said, we really should be doing everything we can to stay as healthy as possible.

Why not take advantage and seize the day in every sense? Take time for what is most precious to you, living a healthy life, doing what you've dreamed of, with the family and friends you cherish. We all have the ability to *Flourish*. Let's start today!

Sophia Golanowski, BCom, MBA  
Editor-in-Chief

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# The Future of Natural Supplements in Canada is in Your Hands

## Act Now to Secure Natural Health!

by Annick Moffatt, ND

The Canadian natural supplement industry is essential to helping Canadians, like you, take an active role in their health care. Your reasons for choosing natural products can be as diverse as “I trust in nature” or “I’m tired of undesirable side effects,” but either way, it’s your choice. Having access to vitamins, minerals, herbs, nutraceuticals, and probiotics of your choosing allows you to live a healthier, happier life. At least for now.

Health Canada is planning monumental changes to treat safe, natural health products like pharmaceutical drugs. These changes will affect your lifestyle and your wallet. This proposed overregulation—and associated added costs—will negatively impact how natural health-product companies operate. It will needlessly increase the cost of products with natural product number (NPN) licences, forcing a negative downstream effect on retailers that will ultimately lead to cost increases that will most likely be transferred to consumers.

Natural products sold in Canada require licences. You will recognize this by an eight-digit NPN on the front of a box or label. Health Canada grants these licences, which include details on the benefits these products provide, directions of use, cautions and warnings, as well as contraindications.

Let’s take a closer look at Health Canada’s proposed cost recovery and plain label packaging proposals.



**SAVE OUR SOS SUPPLEMENTS**

**Natural Health Products Shouldn't Cost More**

**Because Health Canada is Broken**

Health Canada is strangling natural health products in red tape, leading to **increased costs and fewer products on the shelf for Canadians.**

Tell Your MP to **#SaveOurSupplements**

**SaveOurSupplements.ca** 🇨🇦

## What does all this mean? Let's examine the various proposed fees using simple examples.

Health Canada Licence	What It Is	Cost
Class I NPN Request	<p><b>Product:</b> Vitamin C capsule—single ingredient</p> <p><b>Evidence verification required:</b> Fully follows preapproved evidence from an existing monograph. Should take at most 1 hour for a clerk to reference the monograph, review, and approve.</p>	\$1,124 per application
Class II NPN Request	<p><b>Product:</b> Vitamin C and vitamin D—two ingredients</p> <p><b>Evidence verification required:</b> Completely follows preapproved evidence from the existing monograph. Easy for a clerk to reference, verify, and approve. No new work or deliberation needed on their part.</p>	\$2,761 per application
Class III NPN Request	<p><b>Product:</b> Probiotic with enteric coating—multiple strains or ingredients</p> <p>Some ingredients are covered by monograph. Some ingredients require a minimum of two placebo-controlled studies showing efficacy, per ingredient, be supplied as evidence.</p> <p><b>Evidence verification required:</b> Studies require evaluation by Health Canada natural-product specialist.</p>	<p>Starts at <b>\$58,332</b> for novel applications.</p> <p>Once no longer “novel” (a term not yet defined by Health Canada), this decreases to <b>\$7,209</b>.</p>
Class III Novel Safety and Efficacy Amendment	<p><b>Product:</b> Probiotic with enteric coating—multiple strains</p> <p>If supply chain gets disrupted and a specific strain cannot be procured, this NPN would require an amendment.</p> <p><b>Evidence verification required:</b> Verification to see if replacement strain possesses same efficacy.</p>	Additional <b>\$23,333</b> to continue selling.
Rights to Sell (RTS) Natural Supplements	<p>Canadian license holders will be charged an annual right-to-sell fee for every single NPN they received and continue to hold, regardless of how many units are sold.</p> <p><b>Evidence verification required:</b> Not required, flat fee.</p>	<p><b>\$542</b> per licence</p> <p>10 licences = <b>\$5,420 every year</b></p> <p>100 licences = <b>\$54,200 every year</b></p>
Site Licences	<p>Canadian NHP manufacturers of nonsterile products would be required to pay Health Canada an annual site licence.</p> <p><b>Evidence verification required:</b> Done every three years for established company.</p>	<b>\$23,071</b> every year

## What This Means for You

**Increased Prices.** Canadian brands and products you love and count on will become significantly more expensive or cease to exist in Canada altogether. Suppliers of natural products will not be able to absorb these exorbitant costs. They will be forced to pass them onto retailers, who will pass them down to consumers.

**Reduction in Product Selection.** Increased unnecessary costs will force companies to reevaluate their product line and discontinue products that become more expensive to produce or totally unprofitable, resulting in much less variety for you.

**No Love for Local.** Small, local providers that cannot afford to navigate increasingly complex regulations and lengthy approval processes may be forced out of business, further limiting the product choices and innovation they could previously bring to consumers.

Many brands you use will see dramatic price increases or stop existing in Canada altogether.

**Nothing New.** Exciting new products will likely not be available in Canada, because the regulatory burden will be too severe. Imagine if a novel natural ingredient was shown in clinical studies to help maintain motor function in Parkinson’s patients: How long would Canadians have to wait to get access? Would we be forced to order unregulated international brands to find what we need? Have a look at some natural-product labels from the United States. You will often see this disclaimer: “These statements have not been approved by the FDA.”

**Penalizing Canadian Manufacturing.** Canadian-owned and -operated natural-product companies, who manufacture their products in Canada, pay new “site licences” to continue producing supplements—in addition to paying rent, equipment costs, maintenance, employee salaries, and numerous taxes, etc. Now they face additional, unfair fees.

**Site Unseen.** Canadian companies importing prepared supplements from other countries will also need to pay a site licence, albeit a slightly lower one.

**Environmental Burden.** Proposed “plain-language labelling” regulation will increase the amount of packaging on every product. Whether it’s additional layers of plasticized peel-back labels on bottles, or additional panels on boxes, this will reduce recyclability, thus adversely impacting the environment.

**Money Talks.** In 2020, the estimated market value of the natural-products industry in Canada was \$5.6 billion. Assuming an average harmonized sales tax of 13%, the amount of sales tax collected from the sale of these products would be \$728 million. Shouldn’t this be enough to compensate for work done by Health Canada to keep Canadians safe? This is Health Canada’s stated goal: “To promote access to safe, effective, and high-quality NHPs for Canadian consumers.” One has to wonder how these proposed changes will benefit Canadian consumers.



## Who Will Fill the Gap?

What will happen if smaller natural-supplement companies start to struggle? Will they get bought out by multinational conglomerates such as Clorox or P&G? Or will pharmaceutical companies step in? Dealing with Health Canada on a regular basis, they understand all the rules and regulations. Pharmaceutical companies also have very deep pockets, so they are more than able to absorb these types of costs, and over an extended period of time. Would they sell natural products at reasonable, affordable prices, or will profit win out over quality? And what about innovation? If they acquire licences for novel ingredients, who is to say that they will not try to patent them? Or refine the molecules until they are no longer natural?

From a naturopathic doctor’s perspective, the potential increase in the cost of natural supplements can have a significant impact on the treatment of patients. Natural supplements play a crucial role in naturopathic medicine, as they are often utilized to support the body’s innate healing abilities and promote overall wellbeing. However, when the cost of these supplements rises, it can limit patients access to the necessary tools for their treatment.





Some patients may be unable to afford the recommended supplements, which could potentially hinder their progress and therapeutic outcomes. Furthermore, increased costs may also lead to patients seeking cheaper alternatives or self-medicating without the professional guidance, which can pose risks to their health and safety.

When the cost of supplements increases, it often creates barriers to access for patients from diverse socioeconomic backgrounds. This limited accessibility can perpetuate health disparities, as those who cannot afford expensive supplements may be denied the potential benefits they offer.

Moreover, this financial burden imposed by escalating costs hampers the ability of naturopathic doctors to explore and recommend a wider range of supplements that may be tailored to individual patients' needs. The increase in the cost of applying for new licences and other related fees can impede supplement companies' ability to develop new formulas based on scientific data and studies. This lack of diversity and innovation in treatment options can limit the potential for optimal patient outcomes and personalized care.

It is vital to address the affordability of supplements to ensure equitable access and foster a climate of innovation that promotes a comprehensive and inclusive approach to patient care.

**Now is not the time to increase costs and reduce or limit choices for Canadians!** If you are reading this article, we know you care about natural health products, and we need your help!

Please take a moment to tell your Member of Parliament to Save Our Supplements, before it's too late! [SaveOurSupplements.ca](https://www.saveoursupplements.ca)

The deadline to act is July 25—after that, it will be in the hands of committees.



**Annick Moffatt, ND**

With more than 20 years of experience in the health domain, first in psychology, then as a naturopathic doctor, she brings a holistic approach to health problems.

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# Osteoporosis and the Aging Woman

## Can Natural Health Products Help?

by Angela Wallace, MSc, RD



Osteoporosis is a condition that affects the bones. Our bones continually regenerate through a natural process that replaces old bone with new bone. However, as we age, this natural process becomes less efficient, and we begin to lose bone tissue. With osteoporosis, this process becomes imbalanced: The body breaks down old bone tissue faster than it can replace it with new bone tissue, resulting in weak and thin bone that's more prone to fractures.

Osteoporosis is most prevalent in people 50 years and older, with 2.3 million Canadians living with osteoporosis. In Canada, 80% of all diagnosed are women, which means it will impact more than 1 in 4 women.

Bone loss is not an automatic consequence of old age, but it is a common occurrence. The good news is that healthy lifestyle factors and natural health products can help delay, manage, or even prevent its progression.

### Here Are Four Things Women Can Do to Support Their Bone Health as They Age

#### I-Ensure Adequate Levels of Vitamin D and Calcium

Calcium plays an important role in bone structure and is necessary for building and maintaining your bones. Vitamin D supports calcium absorption. Not only does calcium play a role in bone growth and regeneration, but it is also important for muscle contraction and optimal functioning of your nervous and cardiovascular system. If you don't have enough calcium in your diet to meet the needs of those bodily systems, the body will take calcium from your bones; therefore, your bones will begin to weaken.

Our bodies do not make calcium, which means you must get it through diet or supplementation. The recommended intake for women over 50 years old is 1,200 mg per day.

**If you don't have enough calcium in your diet to meet the needs of those bodily systems, the body will take calcium from your bones; therefore, your bones will begin to weaken.**

Food sources of calcium: Milk and dairy products, fish with the bones like canned salmon or sardines, calcium-fortified beverages like almond milk, dark leafy greens, legumes like chickpeas, almonds, and more.

Vitamin D is a fat-soluble vitamin that our bodies need for bone growth, regeneration, and remodelling. It works to support calcium by increasing



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intestinal calcium absorption. Our best source of vitamin D is through the sun, but in the winter, our direct skin exposure to UVB rays is reduced, and during the summer, we are advised to protect our skin from the sun's harmful rays.

Food sources of vitamin D: Egg yolks, cow's milk and plant-based milk alternatives, products fortified with vitamin D such as breakfast cereals, orange juice, and fatty fish such as salmon.

Research has found a link between older adults with osteoporosis and increased likelihood of being vitamin D-deficient. As food sources are so limited, taking at least 800–1,000 international units (IU) per day is recommended for all adults. Your health-care practitioner may advise even higher amounts, depending on your situation and needs. However, research has found that smaller, regular doses are effective as well.

Research has found a link between older adults with osteoporosis and increased likelihood of being vitamin D-deficient.



## When to Consider Taking Vitamin D and Calcium in Supplement Form?

If calcium and vitamin D needs cannot be met through your diet alone, it is important to supplement to meet your needs. In fact, vitamin D and calcium supplementation have been linked to a lower risk of hip fractures and slower rates of bone mineral density loss.

## 2- Consume Protein with Each Meal

Proteins are macronutrients, meaning they provide the body with energy. They also play an important role in our bone health. In particular, collagen, a primary protein found in bones, provides the framework for the deposition of calcium, helps with bone formation and bone healing, and adds resilience and flexibility to the bones. Having protein at each meal ensures you are consuming the building blocks for the synthesis of collagen needed to support your bone health.

Vitamin D and calcium supplementation have been linked to a lower risk of hip fractures and slower rates of bone mineral density loss.



Vitamin K also plays a role in supporting healthy bones, by facilitating calcium deposition in bone structure instead of blood-vessel walls. Low vitamin K levels are linked to an increased risk of fractures and low bone mineral density in women.

Food sources of vitamin K: Dark leafy greens; cruciferous vegetables; herbs like parsley, thyme, and basil; and soybeans in all its forms, like raw, fermented, as soy milk, or tofu. You can also choose a vitamin D supplement with K<sub>2</sub> added to it to support bone health.

### 3-Consider Taking a Magnesium Supplement

Magnesium is a mineral that is involved in hundreds of reactions in our bodies, along with being important to bone health. It is so important that up to 60% of magnesium is found in our bone tissue.

Magnesium deficiency is not uncommon and can play a role in low vitamin D levels, since it is necessary for the activation of vitamin D in the body. Research has found positive correlations with increased intake of magnesium and bone mineral density, specifically in the hip area, meaning improved levels of bone mineral density with increased intake of magnesium. In addition, a trial with 20 postmenopausal women with osteoporosis taking oral supplementation of magnesium for 30 days resulted in reduced bone turnover. The suggested daily intake of magnesium for women 50+ years of age is 310–320 mg per day, some of which can be from food sources or supplementation.

Food sources of vitamin K: Nuts and seeds such as quinoa, almonds, and pumpkin seeds; dark leafy greens like spinach and Swiss chard; black beans; dark chocolate; and salmon.

Magnesium is a mineral that is involved in hundreds of reactions in our bodies along with being important to bone health. It's so important that up to 60% of magnesium is found in our bone tissue.

### 4-Engage in Regular Resistance Training and Weight-Bearing Exercise

Exercise is good for overall health, including maintaining a healthy weight, cardiovascular health, and mental health. Weight-bearing exercises, such as walking/hiking/jogging, and resistance training (e.g., lifting weights), where your muscular system is challenged, will improve not only muscular strength but also bone strength.

#### How Does Resistance Training Help Strengthen Your Bones?

Resistance training puts stress on your bones (the good kind of stress) that activates bone-forming cells and supports calcium deposition into your bones. This leads to stronger and healthier bones.

#### How Often Do You Need Resistance Training?

Aim for at least 2–3 times a week. This will help ensure you are strengthening both your muscles and bones.

If you have osteoporosis or are a woman 50+ years of age, start taking a look at the type of exercise you engage in, the foods you eat, and the supplements you take to see if you can make any changes to better support your bone health. Your bones are supporting you daily, so it's important you are taking the steps to keep them healthy!



**Angela Wallace, MSc, RD**

A registered dietitian with the College of Dietitians of Ontario, personal trainer, and family-food expert who specializes in women and child nutrition and fitness, she loves helping families get healthy together.

[eatrightfeelright.ca](http://eatrightfeelright.ca)

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# Don't Forget *Bacopa monnieri*

## An Ancient Herb Turned Modern Nootropic

by Colleen Hartwick, ND



Nootropics, also known as “smart drugs,” are a diverse group of substances whose action improves brain function, learning, and memory. Nootropics include macronutrients like omega-3 fatty acids, caffeine, nicotine (although smoking is still not recommended), as well as herbs like *Bacopa monnieri*, also known as brahmi.

*Bacopa monnieri* (hereafter referred to as bacopa) is a perennial plant, widely used in traditional Ayurvedic medicine as a neural tonic to improve mental capacity and memory. Modern research has begun to confirm the traditional uses of this herb by uncovering its mechanisms of action on the nervous system. As a result, bacopa has proven its place in the nootropic category. The health effects of bacopa extend far beyond the confines of the cranial cavity. This adaptogen is known for its impact on anxiety and depression, while in vitro and animal studies show promising

results on protecting the liver from drug toxicity, reducing gastric ulcers, and exhibiting anticancer properties. In this article, we will focus on exploring its effects on memory.

The active constituents believed to contribute to the nootropic effect of *Bacopa monnieri* are the triterpenoid saponins known as bacosides (specifically bacosides A and B) and saponins A, B, and C. These saponins exert antioxidant and neuroprotective activities that aid in the repair of damaged neurons; promote the generation of new nerve connections (synaptogenesis); and influence neurotransmitters involved in focus and memory generation, namely acetylcholine, serotonin, and dopamine. Additionally, bacosides reduce oxidative stress and increase activity in areas of the brain responsible for memory, including the frontal cortex, hippocampus, and striatum.

A double-blind, placebo-controlled study examined the effects of bacopa on memory and cognition. It involved 46 healthy volunteers aged 18–60, who were randomly assigned into a treatment or placebo group. Subjects in the treatment group were administered 300 mg of bacopa extract daily for 12 weeks, and a series of cognitive tests were administered at baseline, week 5, and week 12. At the end of the 12-week test period, results in the treatment group indicated a significant improvement in verbal learning, memory consolidation, and speed of early information processing, compared to the placebo group.

**Results in the treatment group indicated a significant improvement in verbal learning, memory consolidation, and speed of early information processing, compared to the placebo group.**



In another randomized, double-blind, placebo-controlled study, a total of 76 adults ranging in age from 40 to 65 years were given either 300 or 450 mg of bacopa, and a battery of memory-function tests were conducted before the trial, at three months, and six weeks after the completion of the trial. Additionally, anxiety levels were measured as part of the study. The results from the subjects in the treatment group showed a significant effect of bacopa on a test for new information retention. Follow-up tests indicated that the rate of learning was unaffected, suggesting that bacopa aided in the retention of newly acquired information with observed reductions in forgetting.

**Results showed a significant effect of bacopa on a test for the retention of new information, suggesting that bacopa aided in the retention of newly acquired information with observed reductions in forgetting.**

In yet another randomized, double-blind, placebo-controlled study, 60 healthy elderly subjects received either a standardized extract of *Bacopa monnieri* (300 or 600 mg) or placebo, once daily for 12 weeks. Dopamine, serotonin, and acetylcholine activities were monitored, and working memory was assessed before treatment, every four weeks throughout the study period, and four weeks after the cessation of intervention.

The bacopa group showed improved working memory coinciding with a diminution of the enzyme responsible for the breakdown of plasma acetylcholine. Acetylcholine has a direct impact on improving attention, processing, and encoding new information to create new memories.

**Results suggest that *Bacopa monnieri* can improve attention, cognitive processing, and working memory.**

Nootropics are an important category of compounds to aid in brain function and memory. Research has indicated that *Bacopa monnieri* is a powerful herb in this category, due to its antioxidant and anti-inflammatory properties as well as its ability to modulate dopamine and acetylcholine, which have an impact on working memory. Despite the mounting evidence on the utility of bacopa for cognition and neuroprotection, don't forget that it is of paramount importance that you consult your health-care practitioner before adding this herb to your wellness routine, to ensure it is indicated and appropriate for your unique health needs.



**Dr. Colleen Hartwick, ND**

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# Decoding Pain

## Insights and Solutions

by Kaitlyn Richardson, ND, HbSc

In Canada today, approximately 8 million people are living with chronic pain. Pain can arise from various conditions and factors including but not limited to arthritis, back pain, fibromyalgia, nerve damage, musculoskeletal condition, autoimmune disease, and cancer treatment. However, it sometimes seems like there is no explanation as to why someone is experiencing pain. Pain is something that has become more apparent during the COVID-19 pandemic. With the prevalence of chronic pain and the incidence of acute pain due to injury or illness, it is important that we understand what pain is and why we experience it, and learn how to reduce it.

### *A Primer on Pain*

According to the International Association for the Study of Pain: “Pain is an unpleasant sensory and emotional experience associated with, or resembling that associated with, actual or potential tissue damage.” Basically, pain is a subjective experience that begins with the activation of sensory nerves, but how it is perceived depends on other factors in a person’s life. In most of the tissues in our body we have receptors called nociceptors, that respond to harmful stimuli. When we encounter a harmful stimulus, such as a hot stove, these receptors are activated and transmit to the spinal cord the signal that the tissues are damaged or at risk of becoming damaged. From the spinal cord, these signals are transported to the brain, where we will perceive the sensation of pain. These pathways that carry the stimulus travel through the limbic system, which is the system responsible for our emotional responses. This explains why different people respond to pain in different ways.

One of the major contributors to pain is inflammation. We know that inflammation is a normal physiological response to infection or injury,

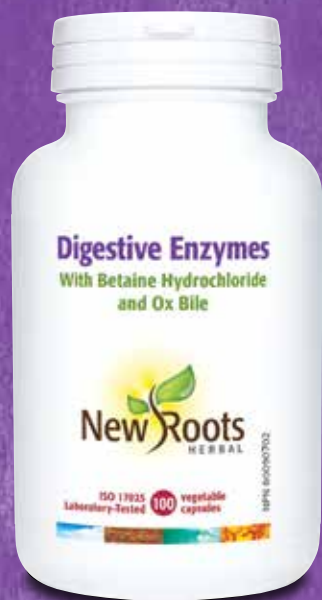
but when it becomes chronic, so does the pain. Inflammation stimulates the release of prostaglandins, proinflammatory cytokines, and chemokines to help fight the invading bacteria or to help heal from tissue damage. These chemical messengers will then activate the nociceptors and transmit the signals that lead to the perception of pain.

### *Why Is Pain so Prevalent?*

Our lifestyle may be to blame for our pain. We know that stress, obesity, smoking, and unhealthy diets have negative impacts on chronic pain. Our North-American diets are typically high in processed and refined foods and low in fruits and vegetables. As a result, the production of proinflammatory cytokines in our body rises, and this effect becomes more pronounced when we fail to consume antioxidant-rich foods,



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which would otherwise promote the production of anti-inflammatory cytokines. We also know that when our diet lacks certain vitamins or minerals such as B vitamins, omega-3 fatty acids, vitamin D, or magnesium, there is an association with increased pain sensation. Studies have shown that, when we supplement these nutrients in those who are deficient, there is a positive response for the reduction of pain. We also know that eating probiotic-rich foods or supplementing with probiotics can support a healthy gut microbiota, resulting in a reduction in abdominal pain.

Why is pain so prevalent? Our lifestyle may be to blame for our pain. We know that stress, obesity, smoking, and unhealthy diets have negative impacts on chronic pain.



We know that when our diet lacks certain vitamins or minerals such as B vitamins, omega-3 fatty acids, vitamin D, or magnesium, there is an association with increased pain sensation.

Stress can be another cause for the exacerbation of pain, as most of us know all too well. When we are in a state of stress, our bodies release cortisol, which in short bursts is a positive and adaptive response in our bodies and helps us overcome obstacles when necessary. However, when stress becomes chronic (when we are experiencing it constantly, every day) cortisol becomes proinflammatory and feeds into the pain pathway. Stress is also connected to pain through the limbic system. As mentioned earlier, the transmission of the impulse of pain travels through the limbic system, so our perception of pain is influenced by our emotional state. Stress stimulates the hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal (HPA) axis, which will act in the limbic system influencing its activity, meaning it could be responsible for altering the perception of pain, therefore increasing its perception in many people.

When we are in a state of stress, our bodies release cortisol, which in short bursts is a positive and adaptive response in our bodies and helps us overcome obstacles when necessary. However, when stress becomes chronic, cortisol becomes proinflammatory and feeds into the pain pathway.

## How Can We Reduce Pain?

The most effective way to manage pain, in my opinion, is to follow a healthy lifestyle. This means focusing on a balanced diet with plenty of omega-3-rich foods such as fish or nuts, vegetables, and fruits, and avoiding highly processed and sugary foods. It also means doing our best to keep our stress under control and to avoid activities such as smoking or excessive alcohol consumption, because we know that these practices lead to an increase in inflammation within our bodies. If the pain still feels unmanageable, then we can use supplements to help reduce inflammation throughout our body and to decrease the transmission of pain signals. Supplements containing curcumin can be especially helpful for reducing pain and have even been compared to over-the-counter nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) for their effectiveness. Curcumin has anti-inflammatory properties and works by inhibiting the signalling of pro-inflammatory cytokines. Reducing inflammation in the body can lead to a reduction in the perception of pain. Palmitoylethanolamide (PEA) is a fatty acid naturally produced in our bodies in response to injury or inflammation. It has been found that, during times of chronic or prolonged inflammation, we can exhaust the levels of PEA, leading to a reduction in our ability to manage the associated pain. Taking it in supplement form, however, can be effective for restoring its anti-inflammatory properties, therefore reducing pain.

Supplements containing curcumin can be especially helpful for reducing pain and have even been compared to over-the-counter nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) for their effectiveness.

While we can help manage pain with supplements, the best action we can take is to prevent inflammation and pain in the first place, by maintaining a generally healthy lifestyle.



**Dr. Kaitlyn Richardson, ND, HbSc**

A naturopathic doctor in Milton, Ontario, with a clinical focus in sports and performance medicine, she believes in using individualized, holistic, and evidence-based strategies to help active individuals feel and perform their best.

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# Is There an *Alpha* among *Omegas*?

by Ludovic Brunel, ND



In the realm of natural health products, omegas have emerged as industry leaders, providing numerous benefits for our wellbeing. However, with a multitude of options available, selecting the right supplement can be a daunting task. Amidst the sea of numbers and variations, it's crucial to understand the differences between omega-3, omega-6, omega-7, and omega-9, and how they impact our health.

## What Do Omega-3, -6, -7, and -9 Mean?

**Omega-3:** An essential fat, meaning your body doesn't produce any but needs it. Derived from seeds; nuts; and oily fish like sardines, anchovies, mackerel, and salmon. Helps improve heart health, fights inflammation, and supports mental health and cognitive function.

**Omega-6:** Another essential fat, derived from eggs, poultry, red meat, corn, almonds, sunflower seed, walnuts, and hemp seeds. Provides energy; however, overconsumption can lead to inflammation.

**Omega-7:** The last essential fat in this category. Derived from sea buckthorn, avocado, and macadamia nuts. Supports skin hydration, cardiovascular health, and eyesight.

**Omega-9:** A nonessential fat, meaning your body produces its own. Derived from sunflower, safflower, walnut, cashew, almond, and chia seeds. Helps with cholesterol control, insulin resistance, and immune function.

Although each omega has its own benefits, for general health, omega-3 fatty acids have been studied the most.

## EPA v. DHA v. DPA: The Differences in Omega Fatty Acids

EPA, DHA, and DPA are types of omega-3 fatty acids found in abundance in fatty fish and, in smaller amounts, in other seafood and algae.

Within the omega-3 family, we must factor EPA and DHA quantities more than DPA. Researchers have extensively explored the health benefits of EPA and DHA, while those for DPA are still an ongoing area of study. Nevertheless, DPA is believed to contribute to cardiovascular health and to have anti-inflammatory effects.

## Choosing the Optimal Ratios of EPA and DHA for Your Needs

Here are some general recommendations of ideal EPA-to-DHA ratios, based on conclusive scientific studies.

- **General Health:** For overall support for brain function, cardiovascular wellbeing, and reduction in inflammation, look for an EPA-to-DHA ratio of 2:1.
- **Cardiovascular Health:** Studies suggest that a higher intake of EPA relative to DHA, ranging from 1:1 to 2:1, may be beneficial for cardiovascular health.
- **Brain Health and Cognitive Function:** Both EPA and DHA are very important for brain health and cognitive function. In adults, ratios from 2:1 to 6:1 have been effective. In school-aged children, a 2:1 ratio of EPA to DHA improves cognitive performance, including attention, memory, and problem-solving skills. Furthermore, studies have shown that a 2:1 ratio is also effective in reducing symptoms of attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorders (ADHD).
- **Inflammation and Joint Health:** EPA, with its potent anti-inflammatory properties, is recommended for managing conditions such as rheumatoid arthritis. Studies suggest that ratios of EPA to DHA ranging from 1.5:1 to 5:1 may be more effective.
- **Mood Balance:** Studies have shown that higher levels of EPA compared to DHA, ranging from 6:1 to 10:1, are effective in managing symptoms of depression and anxiety.



## What's Better for Me? Omega-Rich Foods or Omega-3 Supplements?

Obviously, in a perfect world, we would all simply eat the omega-rich foods we need. We would then benefit from a wide range of essential nutrients in their natural form, beyond just the omega-3 fatty acids our diets require. But ask yourself the questions: Are sardines, mackerel, anchovies, or salmon in your family's favourite recipes? How do you feel about nuts and seeds? Do you have any allergies or food aversions?

The reality is that omega-rich foods are not readily available or accessible to everyone. Even when we're not going through an inflation crisis, the prices and selections of fresh omega-rich foods vary significantly by location and by season. You would also have to eat an inordinate amount of these whole foods, every day, to satisfy the EPA and DHA ratios you require. Luckily, supplements can fill the gap.

Omega-3 supplements offer an unparalleled, convenient, and consistent way to ensure you have an adequate intake. They allow you to choose the specific EPA-to-DHA ratio you need to fulfill your optimal health requirements. It's important to choose reputable brands that undergo strict testing for heavy metals, quality, purity, and potency. Unfortunately, most whole-food sources aren't tested as rigorously.

## Confused about Absorption?

When it comes to absorption, it's important not to confuse degradation by stomach acid with absorption in the intestines. Fish oils actually benefit from some degradation by stomach acid. This initial breakdown process helps the bile and digestive enzymes to emulsify the fats in the small intestine. This being said, they don't require additional protection. Studies comparing enteric-coated to non-enteric-coated fish-oil supplement capsules have shown either **no difference** in absorption, or reduced absorption in the intestines with enteric-coated capsules.





## What about Fishy Burps?

Some individuals may experience fishy burps as a side effect of taking omega-3 supplements. Ironically, these could be a warning sign for other issues. If the only fat you burp up is the fish oil, it could be the quality. However, if you burp up all fats, you could have low stomach acid (especially if you are taking antacids), or you may be lacking digestive enzymes. Whichever the case, you could try a digestive enzyme with betaine hydrochloride with your meals.

Try these tips:

Check expiry date. Softgel capsules prevent oxidation, while liquid form must be consumed within 30–40 days.

Take fish oils with food and a glass of water.

Choose a high-quality fish oil that's been tested for heavy metals, contaminants, as well as oxidation in an ISO 17025-accredited laboratory.

Choose an omega with added lemon essence.

Freeze the capsules to minimize stomach degradation. Its contents can then be released in the intestine.

**Be smart:** Strive to increase omega-rich foods in your diet, or choose the omega supplement with the appropriate EPA and DHA ratio that's been proven to support your health needs.

**Be savvy:** When choosing supplements, invest in the protection of enteric coating on supplements that actually need protection from stomach acid, like probiotics.



### Dr. Ludovic Brunel, ND

Dr. Brunel has 15+ years of experience as a naturopathic doctor and practices in Calgary. His approach has always been to improve health outcomes by relying on the best research available.

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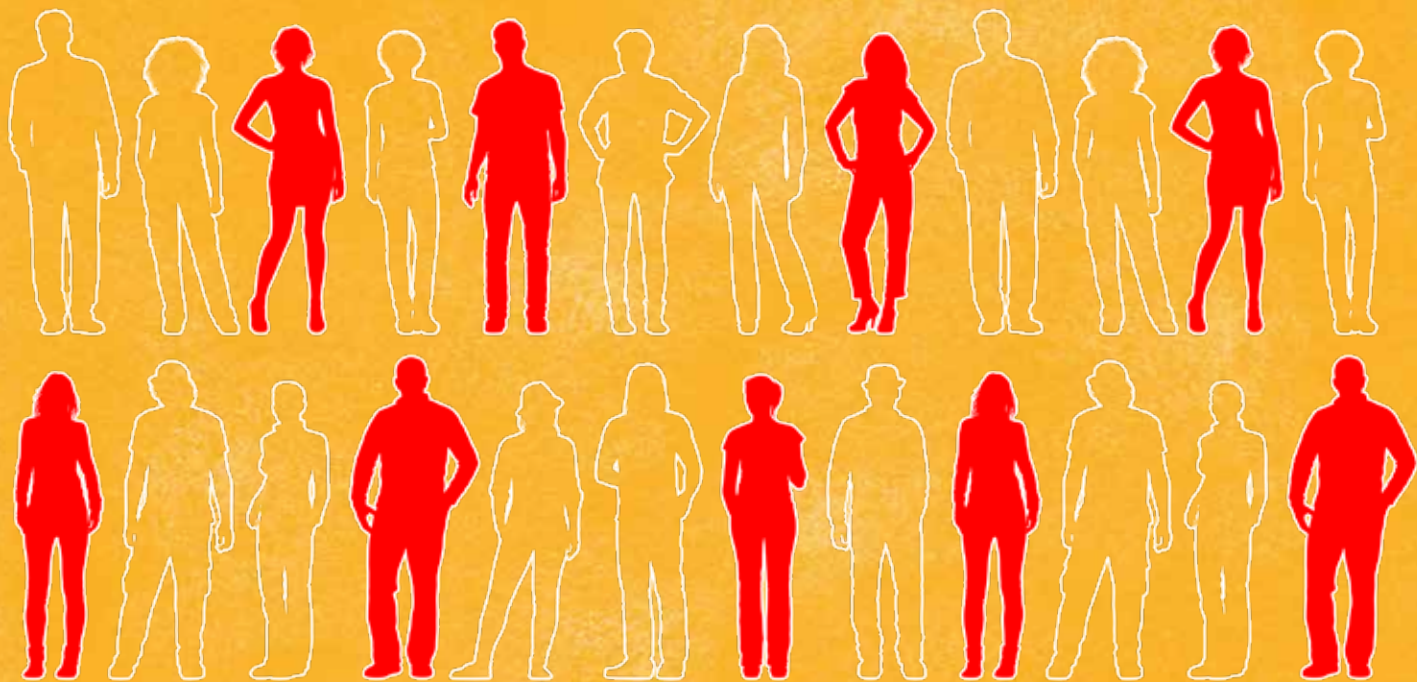


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# From Gout to Glory

## Rising Above Joint Pain

by Katie DeGroot, BSc, ND, MScN

Gout is a type of inflammatory arthritis characterized by sudden severe-onset joint pain, usually just one joint at a time. The big toe is most frequently affected, with “gout attacks” starting suddenly, often in the middle of the night. Affected joints are often red, hot, swollen, and incredibly painful. Gout flares are typically most severe for the first few hours to half-day, then subside slowly over the next few days to weeks.

Gout is considered the most common type of inflammatory arthritis in Canada, by one estimate affecting approximately 1 million Canadians; by another estimate, affecting between 2 and 4% of the population. Men are more likely to be affected than women (4% v. 1% of the population), and the frequency of gout increases with age.

Gout is associated with increased blood uric-acid level—as it increases, some uric acid migrates into joints and forms sharp, needle-like crystals. It builds up within the joints, then the immune system attempts to clear it, leading to a gout attack, which subsides with time as the immune system’s attack declines. However, these attacks are not completely successful at clearing the uric-acid crystals from the joints, so attacks often reoccur and, over time, can lead to permanent joint damage. Therefore, controlling blood uric-acid levels and preventing the formation of new crystals are the method of choice to prevent and treat gout.

**Gout attacks are not completely successful at clearing the uric-acid crystals from the joints, so attacks often reoccur and, over time, can lead to permanent joint damage.**

As with most things, many factors contribute to the development and frequency of gout attacks; some can be easily changed through diet or lifestyle choices, while others are more difficult to modify. The most significant factor is genetics: How much uric acid a person’s body creates or how much their kidneys excrete can be genetically dependent. The use of certain medications can also increase the risk of gout (especially diuretics, low-dose aspirin, and niacin taken in large amounts).

The presence of other health conditions—such as kidney disease, high blood pressure, diabetes, obesity, metabolic syndrome, and insulin resistance—can also contribute to the development of gout. Ensuring those health conditions are well-managed is thought to help reduce the risk of gout or the frequency and severity of attacks.

Diet and lifestyle factors may also predispose someone to gout, specifically dehydration, alcohol consumption, fructose consumption, and a high-purine diet. Purines are a type of nucleic acid found in some foods, especially organ meats, red meat, and certain types of seafood (anchovies, sardines, mussels, trout, and tuna). Ensuring adequate water intake and reducing consumption of alcohol (especially beer) and sugar-sweetened beverages (especially soda), and reducing dietary intake of purines may help reduce gout frequency and severity.



Maintaining an anti-inflammatory diet may also assist—indeed, anti-inflammatory diets are associated with reduced pain and improved health outcomes for many health conditions, not just gout. The key features of an anti-inflammatory diet include high intake of fruits and vegetables, fish, nuts and seeds, whole grains, and legumes, with minimal intake of sugar-rich foods, refined carbohydrates (especially baked goodies), *trans* fats, and saturated fats. Some foods thought to specifically help with gout include cherries or cherry juice (especially tart cherry juice) as well as apples, celery, and bananas.

Supplementing with certain nutrients or herbal products may also help prevent or reduce gout-attack frequency and severity. Specific nutrients currently being researched include omega-3 fatty acids, vitamin C, and vitamin B<sub>9</sub> (also known as folate), although recommended dosages for gout vary widely.

Some foods thought to specifically help with gout include cherries or cherry juice (especially tart cherry juice) as well as apples, celery, and bananas.

Anti-inflammatory herbs that may help reduce joint pain associated with gout (along with other types of arthritis) include turmeric, devil’s claw, hibiscus, and ginger. These herbs appear to inhibit or at least reduce the effectiveness of cyclooxygenase-2 (COX-2), an enzyme involved in pro-inflammatory signaling (similar to how ibuprofen and aspirin work). Bromelain is another anti-inflammatory product, but its specific mechanism of action on joint pain and inflammation is unclear. Methylsulfonylmethane (MSM) may also be worth considering, as it is often used for arthritis, especially osteoarthritis, to help reduce joint damage and inflammation.

Anti-inflammatory herbs that may help reduce joint pain associated with gout (along with other types of arthritis) include turmeric, devil’s claw, hibiscus, and ginger.

As you can see, there are many nondrug options for gout, and it is through discussion with your local health-care practitioner that a personalized plan, specific to you and your unique health needs, can be developed with the goal of optimal success, for gout or any other health challenges you may be facing.



**Dr. Katie DeGroot, BSc, ND, MScN**

Dr. DeGroot is an Alberta-registered naturopathic doctor who also holds a Master of Science in Nutrition. She offers nutritionally focused care and has a special interest in digestive issues and supportive mental health-care.

[drkatiedegroot.ca](http://drkatiedegroot.ca)

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# Travel Tips for Your Dream Vacation

by Gordon Raza, BSc

From posts on social media to conversations with friends, it seems like many of us are taking an overdue vacation. It may have been a while, so here are a few reminders to make sure your well-earned escape proceeds “without a hitch.”

Let’s start with some logistics. If you travel exclusively with carry-on luggage, liquids, creams, and aerosols can not exceed 100 ml per individual item. Organize them in an easily accessible one-litre-sized clear resealable bag to help with security and customs checks. In addition to standard daily essentials, and sunscreen required for sunny destinations, we’ve got some suggestions to help keep you in top health, no matter your destination.

If you’re flying to a different time zone, or are simply too excited to sleep, some melatonin, passionflower extract, or a botanically based sleep formula can help you get the most out of your vacation.

For antibacterial and antioxidant support, pack a small bottle of oregano oil. A few drops go a long way; plus, the robust scent of oregano on your breath may help fellow travellers respect your personal space. Grapefruit seed extract is another must-have for travel. Its versatility will help ease abdominal upset or make a great antibacterial rinse for market-fresh fruits and vegetables. A few drops in your water bottle can ease your doubts, either for drinking or when rinsing after brushing your teeth. It also works well to sanitize surfaces including kitchen and bathroom counters.

The sun-and-surf can take its toll on your skin and hair. Moisturizing with some organic argan oil at the end of the day can work wonders. Staying well-hydrated can mean different things while on vacation. Adding some electrolyte powder to your water bottle can help avoid dehydration and cramping. Should a few too many “Tiki Bar” beverages make you feel like you’re the one that went through the blender, the amino acid L-cysteine in supplement form can help with recovery.

Most importantly, make sure to bring along some probiotics, as both your immune system and your digestive system may face novel challenges such as insect bites or digesting exotic dinners or snacks from local vendors’ carts. Many trips have been spoiled by traveller’s sickness. A broad-spectrum, enteric-coated probiotic can save your dream vacation from becoming a nightmare. Look for a formula including the probiotic yeast *Saccharomyces boulardii*: It crowds out harmful bacteria and neutralizes their toxins, a little like putting up a “no vacancy” sign for these unwanted guests.

Cheers to a well-deserved break! Soak up some sun and make some memories—you deserve it!



**Gordon Raza, BSc**

A graduate in biology from Acadia University, Gord serves as the supplement specialist for *Flourish* where he shares his unique perspective on natural health products, nutrition, and active living.

# MAKE MEMORIES AT JOLLYMORE RANCH

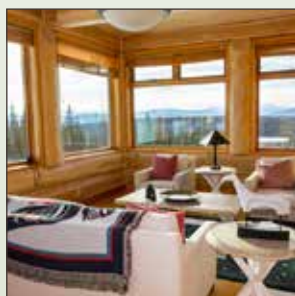
While you may not have heard of Smithers, British Columbia, no guest is soon to forget their visit to Jollymore Ranch—five luxurious all-season cabins nestled in alpine meadows with 270-degree views of mountain vistas. Boasting 1,310 acres of breathtaking wilderness and an abundance of wildlife and rugged hiking trails, this is natural beauty in all its pristine splendour.

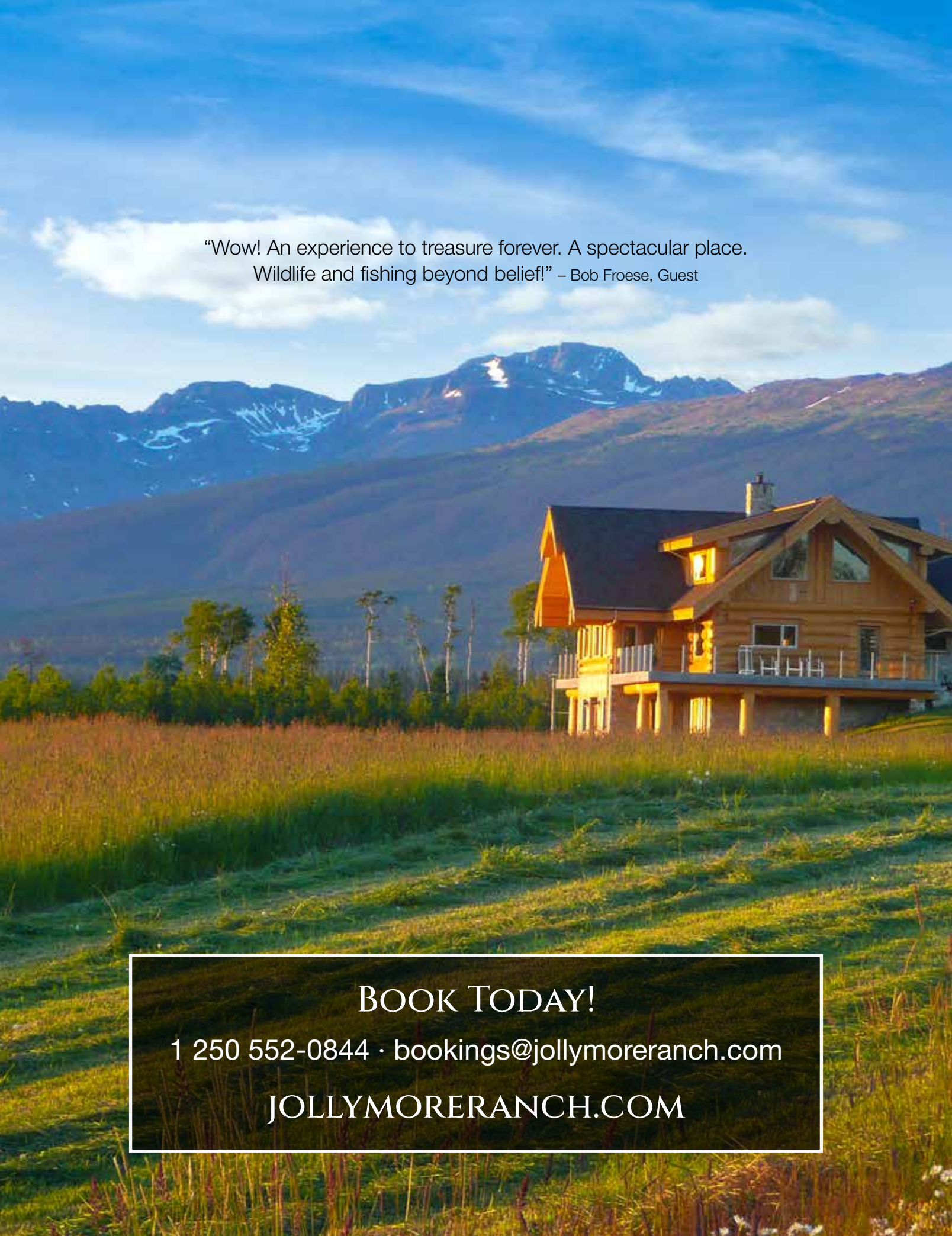
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# Magnesium Stearate

## The Controversial Compound?

by Gordon Raza, BSc

Magnesium stearate is among the most polarizing nonmedicinal ingredients employed in the supplement industry. Yet, it keeps appearing on the ingredient decks in the majority of natural health products in capsule or tablet form. Let's discuss its essential role and whether it genuinely deserves the criticism it receives.

### Defining Magnesium Stearate

It's a simple salt made up of two common nutritional substances: the mineral magnesium bound to stearic fatty acid. Stearic acid is an organic long-chain fatty acid which occurs naturally in chicken, eggs, cheese, salmon, walnuts, almonds, cashews, Brazil nuts, and coconut and palm oils, to name but a few sources.

Magnesium ranks among the most critical minerals for virtually every aspect of our health, with good sources being spinach, bananas, beans, and whole grains. Far from being harmful, they're both beneficial to human health. The good news is that magnesium and its stearic fatty acid component break down within the digestive tract to support energy, metabolism, immunity, and countless biological processes essential for life.



### The Role of Magnesium Stearate in Supplements

Magnesium stearate has a slick texture, which makes it an excellent flow agent when formulating supplements as capsules or tablets. When added in small quantities, it ensures ingredients mix into a homogeneous blend, which ensures consistent dosage.



Magnesium stearate is also an anticaking agent, as it improves efficiency by preventing powder from clumping and sticking to production equipment.

## Magnesium Stearate: Of Mice and Men

Damaging gossip and publicity have been generated within our industry regarding the potential “dangers” associated with magnesium-stearate consumption. Social-media so-called “warnings” describe the suppression of immune T-cell function, by means of the erosion of their cell membranes.

These claims are based upon a study conducted in 1990 which examined T-cell function in mice, *not* humans. In this experiment, T-cells were isolated, then immersed within a petri dish of stearic fatty acid (*not* magnesium stearate), in amounts exponentially higher than normal dietary intake. This indeed compromised their function.

The basic fact which makes this trial irrelevant for human safety is that mice lack the enzyme required to break down stearic acid (*not* magnesium stearate) to oleic fatty acid, a healthy and beneficial omega-9 fatty acid. Humans have the *delta-9*-desaturase enzyme responsible for this conversion. This refutes speculation for potential accumulation within the intestines.



When reviewing research studies, it is important to verify that they are applicable to humans, as many studies may specifically involve murine models, which refer to a subfamily in rodent classification, derived from the Latin term *murine*.

## Exploring Safe Consumption Levels

The National Center for Biotechnology Information considers consumption of 2,500 mg per kilogram of body weight safe. This translates to 170,000 mg per day for a 150-pound adult! Supplements typically employ between 0.25 and 5 mg of magnesium stearate per capsule or tablet. Let’s make an extreme approximation regarding consumption: Twenty capsules containing the upper end of magnesium stearate (5 mg per capsule) would still amount to only 100 mg. Typical stearic-acid consumption from all food sources for North American adults is 7,000 mg daily. For example, ½ cup of breastmilk or a small chocolate bar contain 5,000 mg stearic acid.

## Magnesium Stearate’s Respected Legacy

Magnesium stearate has a “generally regarded as safe” (GRAS) status throughout the world. It is accepted for use as a food and supplement additive by Health Canada, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) in the United States, the European Union, China, Japan, Australia, and New Zealand.

The global wellness economy is expected to soar to 7 trillion US dollars by the year 2025. Magnesium stearate has earned its place to ensure safe, effective, and affordable natural health products worldwide.

To your health!



**Gordon Raza, BSc**

A graduate in biology from Acadia University, Gord serves as the supplement specialist for *Flourish*, where he shares his unique perspective on natural health products, nutrition, and active living.

Visit our blog for the full article including references: [newrootsherbal.com/en/blog](https://newrootsherbal.com/en/blog)



# ADHD Alternatives for Summer

by Gordon Raza, BSc

According to the Center for ADHD Awareness Canada, 1.8 million Canadians are afflicted with attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder, 5–7% of which are children. It's classified as a neurodevelopmental disorder characterized by lack of attention span, difficulty in learning, and impulsive and uncontrollable behaviour. Unfortunately, an alarming 65% percent of children with this condition remain afflicted well into adulthood.

Prescription drugs are a common approach to ADHD, including the most often-prescribed methylphenidate, which should only be recommended in severe cases of ADHD. The aforementioned increases the amount of the neurotransmitters dopamine and norepinephrine in the brain. These neurotransmitters have crucial roles in regulating attention, impulse control, and behaviour. These drugs should only be prescribed for extreme cases of ADHD.

Unfortunately, in young individuals, the evaluation of severity is subjective, leading many of us to opt for a “quick solution” instead of exploring natural approaches that may require more time and effort. Pharmaceutical approaches to ADHD work for many; however, the long-term effects are still unknown.

Behavioural therapy (setting up routines) and dietary approaches (seeing if certain foods can be triggers) are well worth the investment in time. Other alternatives involve enhancing the gut-brain axis through the use of probiotics, as well as incorporating cold-water fish such as sardines, anchovies, mackerel, and salmon as sources of omega-3 fatty acids.

These alternatives have been extensively studied as potential substitutes for pharmaceutical interventions. The omega-6 *gamma*-linoleic acid (GLA) found in evening primrose oil has also been shown to exert anti-inflammatory action within the nervous system, beneficial for ADHD symptoms.

The summer break presents a chance to engage with your health-care practitioner and discuss alternatives or supplementary methods for managing symptoms of ADHD.

Choosing the natural path from childhood through adolescence and into adulthood could be the optimal route to achieve a balanced and fulfilling academic, personal, or professional life. Why not give it a try?



**Gordon Raza, BSc**

A graduate in biology from Acadia University, Gord serves as the supplement specialist for *Flourish*, where he shares his unique perspective on natural health products, nutrition, and active living.

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MEDICINAL BENEFITS**



**SPORES!**



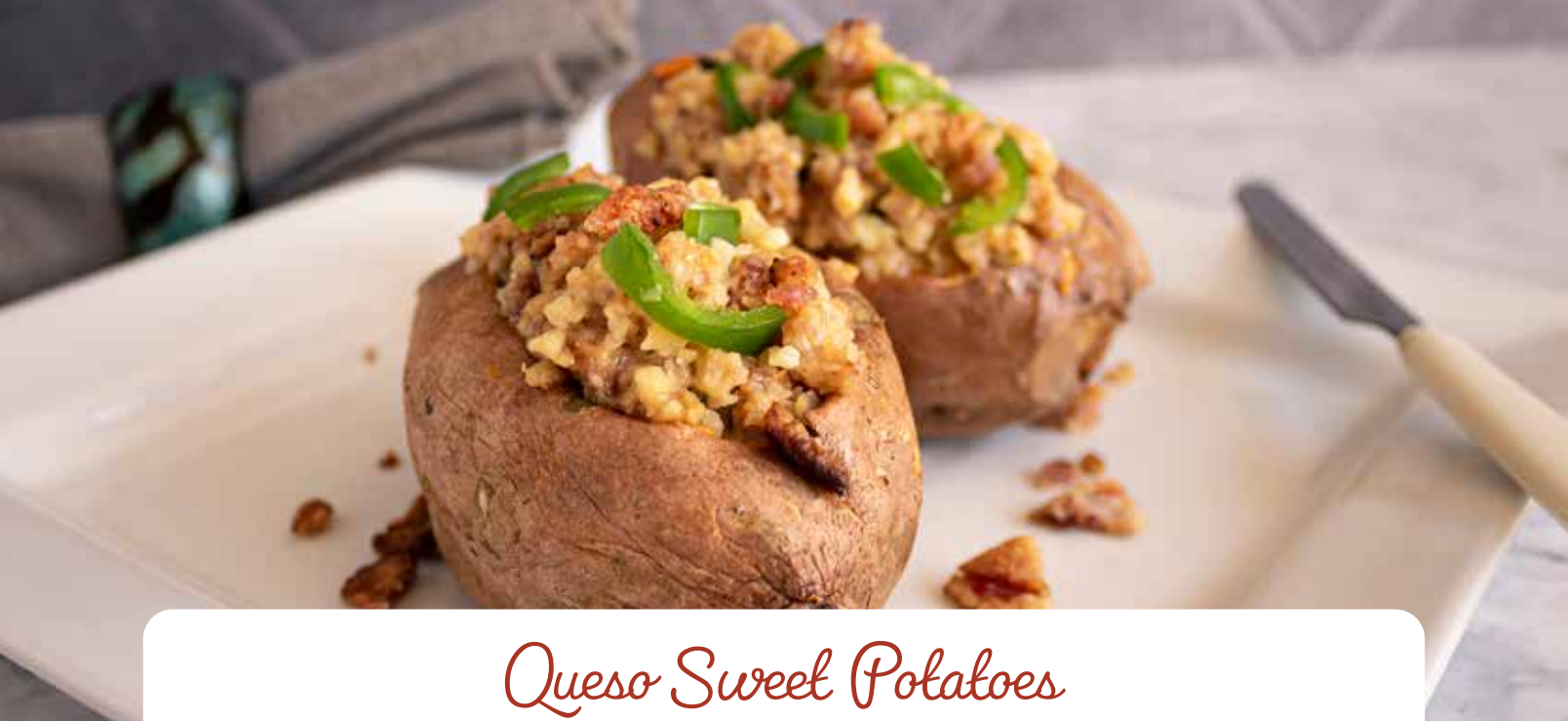
Inspired by Nature, Driven by Science to **Make Life Better!**



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The Only Canadian-Branded Natural Supplement Manufacturer That Tests All Products in an On-Site, 8,000 sq. ft., State-of-the-Art, ISO 17025-Accredited Lab



## Queso Sweet Potatoes

These potatoes can be made plant-based by removing the bacon, or paleo and adding the extra flavour—either way, it's a colourful experience. They hit the spot of sweet, spicy, and savoury, all while including healthy fats, antioxidants, and fibre.

### Ingredients

- 2–4 sweet potatoes or yams
- 2–4 slices sustainably raised bacon
- 1–2 carrots
- 1–2 jalapeño pepper
- 1 red pepper
- 1 yellow pepper
- 1 onion
- 1 lemon
- 2–4 cloves garlic
- 1 cup cashews
- 1 can black or pinto beans
- $\frac{3}{4}$  cup coconut milk, unsweetened
- $\frac{3}{4}$  cup nutritional yeast
- $\frac{1}{4}$  tsp. smoked paprika
- $\frac{1}{4}$  tsp. pepper and sea salt

### Instructions

Soak cashews in a bowl of water for 4–6 hours or overnight. Whether you are using yams or sweet potatoes, give them a quick rinse, then cut them halfway through and place them on parchment paper in a preheated oven at 400 °F (205 °C) for 35–45 minutes.

Start the bacon on low using one piece of bacon for each potato, and at the same time, start boiling  $\frac{3}{4}$  cup of carrots in a small pot.

Begin dicing up the peppers into small pieces along with the onions, and place in a bowl and wait until the bacon is crispy enough to be removed, then toss in the veggies and beans.

In a blender, add the soaked cashews, carrots, nutritional yeast, garlic, salt, pepper, coconut milk, lemon, red-pepper flakes, and smoked paprika, and blend until creamy consistency is reached. Start the blending process on a slower setting to reach the optimal level of thickness for your queso cheese while slowly adding the coconut milk.

Once the veggies and beans have cooked in the fat, dice up the bacon pieces and add them back in along with the queso cheese sauce, and put the stove top on low.

Remove the yams or sweet potatoes once fully cooked, slit then open, and stuff them with the queso cheese and veggie mix. Garnish with green onions and enjoy!



### Megan Luder, CNP

A certified nutritional practitioner who is passionate about creating and educating on the health benefits of nutrient-dense whole food.

[libertynourished.com](http://libertynourished.com)

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## Lion's Mane Mushroom Balls

Packed with savoury flavours and the brain-boosting benefits of lion's mane, these delectable bites are sure to please your taste buds while nourishing your mind.

### Ingredients

- 20 oz. portobello mushrooms, finely chopped
- 1 medium vidalia onion, chopped
- 2 eggs
- 4 garlic cloves, minced
- 1 cup quick-cook oats
- 1 cup breadcrumbs
- ½ cup grated Parmesan cheese (optional)
- 3 tbsp. New Roots Herbal's Heart Smart Olive Oil
- ½ cup. chopped parsley
- 6 tsp. New Roots Herbal's Lion's Mane Powder
- ½ tsp. dried oregano
- ½ tsp. dried thyme
- ¼ tsp. salt
- ¼ tsp. pepper

### Instructions

Sauté onions in one tablespoon Heart Smart Olive Oil for 5 minutes. Add mushrooms and garlic, then reduce until golden brown.

Combine with remaining ingredients, mix well, and shape into golf ball-sized portions.

Pan sear on medium heat until crispy, or air fry at 200 °C for 20 minutes or until golden brown.

The rich seafood flavour profile of lion's mane, paired with the meaty flavour and texture of portobello, goes great with a classic tomato-basil sauce. Enjoy!

Serves 4 people.



### Gordon Raza, BSc

A graduate in biology from Acadia University, Gord serves as the supplement specialist for *Flourish* where he shares his unique perspective on natural health products, nutrition, and active living.

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## Watermelon Pizza

What's more refreshing than a slice of watermelon on a warm summer day? I would argue it doesn't get much better—but it does! Turning watermelon into pizza is refreshing, fun, and delicious. It makes for the perfect snack or healthy dessert to make with your kids or serve at a summer party.

### Fun Facts about Watermelon

- Watermelon is 92% water, which makes it a great fruit to enjoy on a hot summer day. It is also great for your muscles.
- It contains L-citrulline, an amino acid that has been shown to improve muscle recovery and reduce muscle soreness. L-Citrulline is converted into arginine in the body, which helps increase blood flow and oxygen delivery to your muscles. This increased blood flow can decrease muscle fatigue and support faster recovery postexercise.

### Ingredients

- Watermelon slices
- Yogurt of choice (to add more sweetness, you can do a strawberry or vanilla flavour; it can be dairy-based or a vegan alternative).
- Toppings: Other fruit of choice, shredded coconut, fresh mint... anything you would enjoy. On my watermelon pizza, I sprinkle some strawberry granola as well as cut-up raspberries and peaches.

### Instructions

Cut your watermelon into slices.

Place on your serving dish or plate.

Spread some yogurt on top.

Top with your toppings.

Enjoy! Simple, fresh, and delicious. I hope you get to enjoy lots of watermelon pizza this summer. Cheers to happy and healthy eating!



### Angela Wallace, MSc, RD

A registered dietitian with the College of Dietitians of Ontario, personal trainer, and family-food expert who specializes in women and child nutrition and fitness, she loves helping families get healthy together.

[eatrightfeelright.ca](http://eatrightfeelright.ca)

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# AskGord



*I learned about a recall for a supplement I purchased at a pharmacy, and that I've already finished. Should I be concerned?*

Your concern is completely understandable, as it concerns your health and safety. Recalls are more common than people realize. When faced with a recall, it's important to follow the guidance provided by Health Canada. Adhering to their advice ensures you are taking the appropriate measures for your wellbeing. You can view all of Health Canada's recalls at [recalls-rappels.canada.ca](http://recalls-rappels.canada.ca). You'll find instructions on how to proceed in the "What to do" section.

To avoid potentially dangerous issues and to ensure the safety of health products, choose a brand that is regularly and thoroughly testing from A to Z in an ISO 17025-accredited laboratory. Different forms of laboratory analysis detect potency discrepancies, heavy metals (arsenic, cadmium, lead, mercury, etc.), and microbiological contamination (*Listeria*, *Salmonella*, *Clostridium botulinum*, *Escherichia coli*, etc.).

Recalls of inferior products remind us of the importance of choosing brands with stringent quality standards.

Here's to your health!

*My mother is in great health other than her recently diagnosed age-related macular degeneration. Any suggestions?*

Sadly, AMD is becoming more prevalent. When the macula is unhealthy, it leaves the central field of vision blurry, degenerating to dark obstruction. Avoid smoking; ease off on alcohol consumption; eat plenty of brightly coloured berries; and load up on dark-green vegetables including spinach and kale, which are rich in the antioxidant compounds lutein and zeaxanthin.

Therapeutic amounts of these vision-specific compounds are available in convenient supplement form. Look for one from marigold flowers for a naturally occurring source rather than synthetic, and strive to get 25 mg of lutein and 5 mg of zeaxanthin. These compounds are naturally occurring pigments found in the macula that filter ultraviolet rays from the sun and blue-light emissions from computer screens. They have been clinically proven to help slow down the progression of this degenerative disease.

Heredity and genetics contribute to your chances of being afflicted as well. If you've hit your 40s, you may want to consider starting to take these yourself.

These products may not be right for you. Always read and follow the label. Content provided is for informational purposes only, and does not intend to substitute professional medical advice, diagnosis, or treatment.

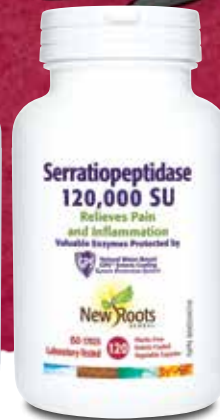
You have a question you would like answered about your health and supplements? Gord would be happy to answer them! We could even feature them in this page if others could benefit from the information.

Reach out to him at [facebook.com/newrootsherbal](https://www.facebook.com/newrootsherbal) or call 1 800 268-9486 ext. 237

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