

The following diet, health and fitness book, *Effortless Healing*, Dr. Joseph Mercola (2016) was a gold mine for me to make improvements in diet, and it eerily speaks to our current health crisis in 2020-2022. Before I jump into summarizing a 2016 book, here's a health question for 2021: are you aware that Life insurance companies are reporting a 40% increase in deaths for working age people in 2021 from 2020 (CDC numbers)? Statistically, if the death rate increased from average only 10%, this would be a 1 in 200 year event (without special cause). A 40% increase is impossible statistically- unless there's a special cause. One America is an insurance company with 10 million customers and has been in the business since before World War 1, and even including WWI, WWII, the Vietnam War- they've never had a 40% increase in deaths in working age people in the U.S. I had researched around May 2021, and the death rate overall for 2020 and 2019 were the same out to 2 decimal points- it's that consistent year after year. So what caused the large increase in 2021? What was unique about 2021 and not unique about 2020? I'll let you figure that one out. The mainstream media surely has answers (or maybe they are focusing on the war in Ukraine to divert the issue?) Jesus spoke of two shepherds, describing Himself as the "Good Shepherd" and warning us about the "hired hands"- may we all have discernment.

The Present Health Crisis in the U.S.A.

Your body was designed to be healthy without requiring a drug. Give it what it needs to thrive, and it will typically regenerate itself without any outside interventions. We're in a health crisis in this country, and if you go along with the status quo, you're bound to get burned eventually in your health. Here are some startling statistics:

- For the 1st time in history, this generation will live a shorter time than their parents.
- By 2050, 1 in 3 U.S. adults will have diabetes.
- 1 in 8 over 65 currently has Alzheimer's and this is expected to rise to 1 in 4 in 20 years.
- Cancer is expected to rise from 14 million new diagnoses per year to 22 million 20 years from now.
- Asthma, hay fever, eczema, food allergies, lupus, MS and other auto immune diseases are all on the rise, with estimates that they have doubled or quadrupled in the last few decades.
- Nearly 70% of all Americans are taking at least 1 prescription drug for a chronic or other medical condition, with anti-biotics, anti-depressants and opiates topping the list.
- 1 in 4 senior citizens takes 10 or more pills a day.
- Adverse reactions to prescription drugs were responsible for 2.3 million emergency room visits in the U.S. in 2011, up 84% since 2005.
- A 2013 study stated the number of deaths due to medical errors could be as high as 440,000 a year.
- 90% of foods Americans purchase are processed.

Seven Gages to Monitor Your Health

It can be difficult to know how your health is doing without some blood tests and other measurements:

- 1) Fasting Insulin Level: the ideal is below 3.
- 2) Vitamin D 25(OH)D: ideal is 50-70 ng/ml
[www.grassrootshealth.net has a helpful chart to tell you, based on your current Vitamin D level, how much more you need to take daily]
- 3) Waist to Hip ratio: a large waist is a sign of too much fat around organs, impairing their function and greatly increasing the risk of diabetes, stroke and heart attack.
Waist = Measure around smallest part of the torso (usually just above belly button)
Hip= measure around largest part of your buttocks.
Waist to Hip Ratio = Waist/Hip

	<u>Men</u>	<u>Women</u>
Ideal	0.8	0.7
Low Risk	<0.95	<0.8
Moderate Risk	0.96-0.99	0.81-0.84
High Risk	>1.0	>0.85

- 4) Body Fat Percentage: Excessive body fat is linked to heart disease, diabetes, Alzheimer's and cancer.

<u>% Body Fat</u>	<u>Women</u>	<u>Men</u>
Athletes	14-20	6-13
Fitness	21-24	14-17
Acceptable	25-31	18-24
Obese	≥32	≥25

Fat calipers can be purchased on Amazon for \$5+.

- 5) Cholesterol and HDL Ratios:
HDL/Total Cholesterol should be > 24%, ideally > 30%, levels below 10% usually indicate imminent stroke or heart attack.
- 6) Triglyceride/HDL Ratio: (should be below 2) The higher this number is, the worse your insulin control likely is.
- 6) Blood Pressure- hypertension is blood pressure over 120/80. The underlying cause of high blood pressure is typically insulin resistance and obesity. Eating a low grain, high quality fat diet normalizes elevated blood pressures in the vast majority of people.
- 7) Uric Acid Level (Should be between 3-5.5 mg per dl). If you have uric acid levels higher than this, you are likely consuming too much sugar and grain carbohydrates.
Order lab tests: www.directlabs.com.

Healing Principle #1: Drink Pure Water

Make sure you drink enough- chronic low grade dehydration is common, because we don't listen to our body's cues of thirst for more water. When your body says it's thirsty or hungry, give it a glass of water. Other cues are dark colored urine and fatigue. Symptoms of dehydration: heartburn, constipation, urinary tract infections, kidney stones, high blood pressure, headaches, cracked and/or flaky skin. The single most important health step an average person can take is to stop drinking any type of soda or sports drink or artificially flavored water or juices and drink pure water. In addition, make sure it has been properly filtered: tap water, besides being loaded with processed sugars and artificial sweeteners contains toxic chemicals.

Artificial sweeteners in soft drinks and sports drinks: Aspartame (sold under NutraSweet and Equal) kills off

brain cells and is addictive, causes headaches, migraines, autoimmune diseases like MS, seizures, cognitive problems, fatigue and symptoms similar to ADD. A study in 2014 by the American Journal of Clinical Nutrition found that overweight and obese people who regularly drank these “diet” beverages consumed more calories from food than overweight and obese people who drank beverages sweetened with sugar- the net effect: drinking diet soda leads to weight gain. Other Dangerous Artificial Sweeteners: propylene glycol, sucralose (Splenda), Acesulfame polysorbate 60, BVO.

Bottled water: while better than tap water, the Environmental Working Group found 38 low level contaminants in bottled water in each of 10 tested brands. Also, most plastic water bottles contain phthalates and BPA which mimic hormones in your body.

Functional waters: read the labels for these energy drinks, “healthy” teas, chia drinks, juices, vitamin waters, fitness waters- many are filled with bad ingredients like high fructose corn syrup, aspartame and other dangerous substances. Sports drinks are a nutritional disaster.

Tap Water in the U.S. is virtually pathogen free, but is generally loaded with:

- 1) DBP's: (disinfection by-products) caused by chlorine being used to disinfect water reacting with organic materials forming hundreds of different toxins that are a thousand times more toxic than chlorine due to chlorine bonding with organic material.
- 2) Fluorine- researchers at Harvard added fluorine to the list of top developmental neurotoxins. Over 30 studies have linked fluoride toxicity to increased lead absorption, lowered I.Q., hyperactivity or lethargy, muscle disorders, GI problems, arthritis, dementia, bone deformations and fractures, thyroid diseases and increased cancer rate.
- 3) Other dangerous ingredients in tap water: Aluminum, Arsenic, prescription and OTC drugs and industrial waste products.

Water Filtration Systems:

- 1) Reverse Osmosis: will remove chlorine and the organic and inorganic contaminants and 80% of fluoride in your water: major drawback: expensive, slow, inefficient, needs to be cleaned.
- 2) Distilled water: pure, but minerals lost.
- 3) Carbon filters- common for the countertop/under the counter- great for removing organic chemicals, but they don't remove much fluoride. Whole house granular carbon systems are typically installed close to the main water supply. Inexpensive pre-filters changed once/mo and main primary filter ever 5 years. Costs for whole house filters: \$180+.
- 4) If whole house filters are too expensive, you might consider in addition to a countertop filter for the drinking water to obtain a shower filter, as you breathe in much steam in the shower, and the contaminants in the water interact with all of your skin.

Healing Principle #2: Eat Your Veggies

The process of healing virtually every major disease, from cancer to diabetes to heart disease, has at its core the same basic approach: optimize your diet to improve your insulin and leptin sensitivity. Even if you're basically healthy, eating to assist your body's receptivity to insulin and leptin will improve nagging conditions like constipation, fatigue, poor sleep, allergies and a compromised immune system.

Vegetables are the food group that should take up the most room on your plate- fresh, minimally processed, high quality vegetables, ideally locally grown and organic. Consume a majority of them raw. Eating more vegetables increases fiber, vital phytonutrients and most importantly, potassium, which counters the sodium in processed foods. A 2011 federal study of sodium and potassium intake found that those at greatest risk for cardiovascular disease were those who got too much sodium combined with too little potassium.

- Great food sources of potassium: swiss chard, avocado, spinach, chestnut mushroom, broccoli, brussel sprouts, celery and cos lettuce. The greener or darker the vegetable, the more nutritious it will typically be.
- It's important to eat primarily non-starchy vegetables (high starch vegetables like potatoes convert into glucose, which triggers your body's release of insulin).
- Organic vegetables are preferred, but if you can't obtain organics, any vegetables are better than no vegetables- just take extra care with non-organic vegetables: wash them thoroughly and remove peels and cores when possible to reduce exposure to pesticides. USDA Organic farmers include restricted use of pesticides, synthetic fertilizers, sewage sludge, Genetically Modified Organisms (GMO's) and ionizing radiation. The EPA considers 60% of herbicides, 90% of fungicides and 30% of insecticides to be carcinogenic.
- Eating raw: Food contains many micronutrients. Cooking and processing it can destroy these by altering their shape and chemical composition. In fact, malnutrition- nutrient deficiencies- from consuming a highly processed diet is one reason many people cannot lose weight.
- Regularly consuming fresh vegetable juice will help you get more nutrients from vegetables. As a result of making less than optimal food choices over many years, many of us have impaired digestion: our body's ability to absorb nutrients is limited. Juicing helps “pre-digest” them.
- Sprouts are some of the most nutrient packed foods you can eat- sunflower and pea sprouts top the list of nutrient dense. Others: mung bean, clover, radish, watercress, brassica, and wheat grass (which is primarily for juicing).

[In addition, what goes into our lungs is also critical. We consume around 600 liters of air per day. How well are you filtering your air from mold, bacteria, dust mites and household chemicals that come from various sources including carpeting? Are you inhaling cigarette smoke?

Per www.cdc.gov/tobacco/campaign/tips/diseases/cancer.html ,

nearly 9 out of 10 lung cancers are caused by cigarette smoking, and smokers have greater risk for lung cancer today than in 1964 due to what is in cigarettes today. 7300 non-smokers die each year from lung cancer due to second hand smoke. Obviously other foreign substances such as cigars or marijuana are harmful to our lungs.]

Healing Principle #3: Burn Fat for Fuel

If the calories you consume come primarily from sugar and grains (bread, pasta, rice, cookies, fruit), you're conditioning your body to burn sugar as its primary fuel. Your body stores the sugar in your liver and muscles as glycogen. After the glycogen store is filled, any additional sugar is converted into fat. Foods high in sugar and grains will satisfy your current hunger, but can also set you up for metabolic disasters like obesity, fatigue, diabetes, heart disease and fuel excess body fat. When you eat sugar, your body releases insulin and leptin, which regulate energy intake and expenditure. Eventually, if your body develops a resistance to insulin and leptin, you will require more and more of them to do their job. The result? You stay hungry. You crave sweets and your body stores more fat. Other common ailments to insulin resistance are excess weight, high blood pressure, diabetes and cancer.

Your body can burn either sugar or fat for food. Burning mostly sugar for energy instead of fat could be likened to using paper and twigs in a fire with no slow burning logs- the fire constantly must be replenished. Your body stores at most 12 hours of sugar/glycogen. When you eat regularly 3 meals a day a diet with plenty of carbs and sugar, your body learns to rely on sugar as its primary fuel, resulting in frequent and urgent hunger to replace sugar stores- your body forgets how to burn fat because it has no need to do so when you are in a constant feast mode and have full glycogen stores.

One of the ways to teach your body to start burning fat is to eat substantially more healthy fats like coconut oil, olive oil, olives, butter, eggs, avocados and nuts, and eat much less sugar and carbohydrates. Another way to teach your body to burn fat is to restrict your eating to an 8-10 hour window each day- you may want to skip breakfast. It will take some will power and self-discipline to reach the 8-10 hour window because until your body shifts to fat burning mode, you will still have sugar cravings. However, once you are adapted to burn fat as your primary fuel, you can easily go 14-16 hours and not be hungry. The following benefits result:

1. Reduced cravings for sugar and other unhealthy foods.
2. Promotes Human Growth Hormone which is commonly referred to as the fitness hormone- it maintains health, fitness and longevity and promotes muscle growth and revs up your metabolism.
3. Normalizes hunger levels- fasting inhibits the hunger hormone ghrelin, thereby helping to normalize appetite.
4. Brain health is boosted as burning fat as your body's primary fuel boosts production of BDNF, which causes stem cells to convert into new nerve cells and other healing events. It protects brain cells from

changes associated with Alzheimer's and Parkinson's diseases.

5. Dramatic reduction in risk of cardiovascular disease.
6. Helps treat or prevent cancer and inhibits the aging process.
7. Improves gut bacteria

To make this change to fat burning, start slowly- let your body adapt gradually. At first your body will struggle with the change (lack of energy)- but this will pass, and your hunger and cravings will pass. In the hours you do eat, minimize carbs and exchange them for more healthy green leafy vegetables and healthy fats. To help in the transition, when you have craving or lack of energy, eat a small amount of food that doesn't have carbs or sugar.

Exercise while fasting: Your body's fat burning processes are controlled by your Sympathetic Nervous System (SNS), and it is activated by both exercise and lack of food. Fasting and exercise forces your body to shed fat.

Healing Principle #4: Exercise, Posture, Movement

If you're sitting for long periods, such as at a desk job, frequently interrupt your sitting by merely standing up every 15 minutes. Also, sit with a posture that doesn't exert pressure on your stomach and other organs by sitting up straight.

Regular exercise normalizes glucose, insulin and leptin levels, strengthens muscles, increases lung and heart efficiency, promotes growth of new brain cells, improves mood, prevents depression and helps maintain muscle mass.

Your body has 3 types of muscle fibers:

1. Slow twitch- worked out by aerobics (red fibers)
2. Fast twitch- 5 times faster than slow twitch, used in bursts of exercise (white fibers)
3. Super fast twitch- anaerobic, short burst exercises like sprinting.

High intensity interval training works out all 3 types of muscle fibers, while aerobics only works out the slow twitch.

Strength training, Resistance Training (weights), 2-3 times a week, 5-12 repetitions at a weight where you cannot go more than 12 repetitions- improves bones (remedy against osteoporosis), slows aging in seniors, effective in glucose control and cardiovascular health and prevents muscle loss.

Healing Principle #5: Benefits of Sunlight Exposure

The sun prompts your skin to produce vitamin D. Vitamin D production is the most important benefit of the sun- vitamin D influences 10% of all genes in our body. It plays a major role in preventing cardiovascular disease, reduces hypertension and the risk of heart attack and stroke. Vitamin D works with Vitamin K to help absorb calcium. About 70% of Americans have unhealthy low levels of vitamin D. Vitamin D deficiency is very common in sick children. There are links between vitamin D deficiency and cancers, including skin cancer. Vitamin D supplements: take whatever dose causes your 25-hydroxy

Vitamin D blood test to be between 50-70 ng/ml. Most adults can safely take 5000 IU a day. A surprising number of people need to take more than 20,000 IU a day to reach these levels. Vitamin K₂ is needed to work with vitamin D (100-250 mcg daily).

Healing Principle #6: Let Your Gut Flourish

10 Trillion bacteria live in our guts. They play the following roles:

1. Optimize immune system, resist infections
2. Digestion of foods
3. Detoxify heavy metals and chemicals
4. Provide vitamin D and K₂.
5. Source of neurotransmitters for our nervous system.
6. Train our immune system to distinguish between pathogens (disease causing microbes) and non-harmful microbes.

Your intestinal health greatly influences your mental health- your gut is your 2nd brain- your gut sends far more info to your brain than your brain does to your gut. Your gut houses 80% of your immune system.

Signs that unhealthy bacteria have taken over too much real estate in your gut:

1. Gas, bloating.
2. Constipation or diarrhea
3. Fatigue
4. Nausea or headaches.
5. Sugar/refined carb cravings
6. Depression
7. Frequent infections
8. Insomnia

The gut's good bacteria are extremely sensitive to:

1. Antibiotics- kills the good bacteria and imbalances the population of friendly bacteria. If the meat you're eating isn't organic, you're getting antibiotics with each bite.
2. Chlorinated water.
3. Anti-bacterial soap
4. Agricultural chemicals- herbicides.
5. Air pollution- that includes smoking.

The most important factor is our diet. The following are enemies to a healthy gut:

1. Processed foods
2. Sugar and refined grains- which provide fuel for pathogenic bacteria.
3. Genetically modified ingredients (GMO) in processed foods.

Consistently reseeding your gut with healthy bacteria prevents virtually all disease, from coughs, colds, flu, allergies, autoimmune disorders, psychiatric disturbances and cancer. Evidence shows all of the following are impacted by healthy gut flora: ADHD, autism, learning disabilities, obesity, MS, depression, anxiety and skin issues.

How to Nourish Your Gut with Food: It's about moving the right bacteria in the right amounts into permanent residence in your digestive tract: avoid/drastically reduce sugars, chlorinated water and processed foods. Eat more fermented foods (that are not pasteurized): fermented vegetables, yogurt and kefir, fermented soy, probiotic supplements, raw milk, cheeses each day.

Healing Principle #7: Clean Your Brain with Sleep

Sleep is prime time for the brain to clear out waste products and repair itself.

Sleep Helpers:

1. Good sleep habits- wind down before bed, consistent routine.
2. Avoid blue light later in the night- your body produces melatonin as it gets dark, aiding in sleep. Avoid T.V., computers and mobile devices later in the evening.
3. Increase exposure to daytime light- it helps set your internal clock.
4. Make night time dark.
5. Keep the bedroom cool (60-69F)
6. Eat for sleep: almonds, avocados, chamomile tea before bed, cherries, green leafy vegetables and walnuts.
7. Sleep enhancing pills: the only recommended one is melatonin, which is what your body produces. Don't use sleeping pills- they don't treat the cause of sleeplessness, don't significantly increase sleep time and have side effects- some induce amnesia and some are linked with other health hazards.

Effects of not enough sleep:

1. Poor memory and concentration.
2. Increased stress- raised corticosterone, the stress hormone, which dials up heart rate and blood pressure, tenses muscles and slows digestion.
3. Weight gain/pre-diabetes.
4. Weakened immune system
5. Accelerated aging.
6. Increased likelihood for cancer (melatonin, the hormone that regulates sleep, has anti-cancer properties).
7. Increased risk of heart disease.

Healing Principle #8: Avoiding these 6 Unhealthy "Health Foods"

1. Whole Grains- so many of us struggle with insulin or leptin resistance (see Healing Principle #3). Carbohydrates cause a rise in blood sugar which triggers release of insulin. An additional issue with whole grains is gluten, the primary protein found in wheat, spelt, barley and rye. Many have a hidden intolerance to wheat, which causes the following issues:

1. Digestive problems: bloating, gas, constipation, diarrhea.
2. Fatigue after a meal, brain fog, dizziness.
3. Premenstrual problems
4. Joint pain
5. Mood swings, attention problems, migraines.

75% of the population has food allergies or sensitivities. When proteins break down into smaller proteins and get into the blood stream, the body attacks them, causing toxicity and inflammation. If you're overweight and/or insulin or leptin resistant, the recommendation is to stop eating all forms of wheat to eliminate gluten from the diet. Usually when people remove allergenic foods such as gluten from their diet, their cravings for sweets diminishes, their mood improves, weight drops, overall health soars, reduced joint pain, better digestion, and clearer mind.

Once you are at a healthy weight and free from high blood pressure and diabetes, then you can play with reintroducing grains to see how well you tolerate them.

Grains to avoid: Barley, millet, oats, rice, rye, spelt, sprouted grains and wheat.

Better choices: almond meal (in baking), buckwheat groats, buckwheat noodles, coconut flour (in baking) and sweet potatoes.

2. Natural Sweeteners: say goodbye to Agave, which is 77-97% fructose. Fructose appears to signal your body to eat more, it also increases triglycerides- fats in the blood. Only your liver metabolizes fructose- when you have excess fructose, it is stored as visceral fat around the abdominal organs, and is a major risk for heart disease. Honey is fairly high in fructose (53%). Honey has many health benefits in its raw form when used in moderation (maximum 2 teaspoons a day), if you don't have insulin or leptin resistance.

3. Soy Trouble:

- a. 91% of soy products are genetically modified.
- b. Unfermented soy contains goitrogens, substances that hinder thyroid production, which results in digestive problems, food allergies, anxiety and mood swings, insomnia, and weight loss problems.
- c. Unfermented soy contains estrogen- linked to impaired memory in elderly, breast cancer and kidney stones.
- d. Unfermented soy contains phytates which prevent mineral absorption in the body.

Fermented soy is healthy: the fermentation reduces the phytate and phytoestrogens and increases protein content and is an excellent source of vitamin K. Fermented soy products: tempeh, miso, natto, soy sauce (Tamari).

4. Vegetable Oils: Corn, soy, canola, sunflower and safflower oils: evidence shows they increase the risk of heart disease and cancer. Processed foods are loaded with them. Oils derived from vegetable seeds are major sources of omega-6 fats which are inflammatory and promote insulin and leptin resistance when consumed in excess. In contrast, omega-3 fats are healthy due to reducing inflammation throughout your body.

Better choices for oils: avocado oil, butter (organic), coconut oil (can be heated to 350F for frying), olive oil, walnut oil.

5. Large and Farmed Fish: In 2011, global farmed fish production topped beef production. Due to industrial pollution, most seafood is contaminated with heavy metals like mercury and chemicals like dioxin and PCBs. Mercury is a potent neurotoxin that also damages kidneys and lungs. More than 75% of exposure to mercury is typically from fish. Larger fish like tuna and swordfish have far more mercury. The EPA advises women to avoid fish high in mercury like tuna when they're pregnant.

Don't eat farm fish- they're fed high loads of soy that is genetically modified and laden with pesticides.

Krill oil is less perishable than fish oil- great for omega-3 fats and has very low levels of mercury.

Fish to avoid: Halibut, largemouth bass, marlin, pike, salmon (Atlantic or farmed), sea bass, swordfish, tuna, white croaker.

Better Choices: Anchovies, croaker, haddock, herring, Alaskan salmon, wild Pacific salmon, sardines, summer flounder.

6. Conventional yogurt: most yogurt is from cows fed with anti-biotics. In addition, most are low fat. Saturated fats provide the building blocks for your cell membranes as well as a variety of hormones essential for health. Eating fats slows down absorption so you can go longer without feeling hungry. In addition, they act as carriers for fat soluble vitamins A, D, E and K.

Important benefits of whole milk dairy: whole milk has:

- Palmitoleic Acid which protects against insulin resistance and diabetes.
- Conjugated linoleic acid (CLA), which significantly lowers the risk of cancer.
- Weight benefits: gain less weight
- Less likely to die of heart disease

Reduced fat dairy has added chemicals to get the creamy texture.

Diet and Fitness, a Spiritual Perspective

We've learned in this writing that the vast majority of people in the U.S. are headed down a wrong path when it comes to a healthy diet, and the consequences are deadly- and to head down this wrong path requires no energy at all- but to actually eat healthy requires a change, some denial of our cravings, some discipline. It turns out that we live in a very toxic environment and the food, pharmaceutical and health industries don't have our best interests at heart- it's a jungle out there. Likewise does God say we live in a toxic world of sin- we've all got the toxicity, but yet this toxicity is not taken care of by a little tweaking of our moral character. God says, "The wages of sin is death" (Romans 6:23a)- we've all got the disease, and it's terminal.

There's one cure: "but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." (Romans 6:23b) God has provided the remedy Himself, by becoming a man and dying in our place as a substitute, paying the fines for our sins, that the toxicity of sin would be completely removed for good, and we could experience His forgiveness, relationship and new lease on life. He gives us a new heart that has, instead of the old bent towards toxic sin, a new bent towards God. Jesus called this spiritual transplant being "born again", when the Spirit of God comes into our hearts and transforms us from the inside out, "you must be born again...for God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life." (John 3:3, 16) Have you received this cleansing? "If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved... all who call upon the name of the Lord will be saved." (Romans 10:9,13)