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The No. 1 Most Ignored Disease

There are a few universal truths: No matter our age, we want mobility, strength and independence.

These things come easy when you're young, when you're in your prime. But as we age, many people experience a sudden loss of strength and sex drive. You might notice that you're losing your motivation — and maybe even your hair...

Many doctors write this off as symptoms of aging.

Some people also struggle under the weight of unpredictable mood swings, constant fatigue, feeling cold, frequent headaches and an inability to concentrate.

Still, their doctors fail to recognize what's going on.

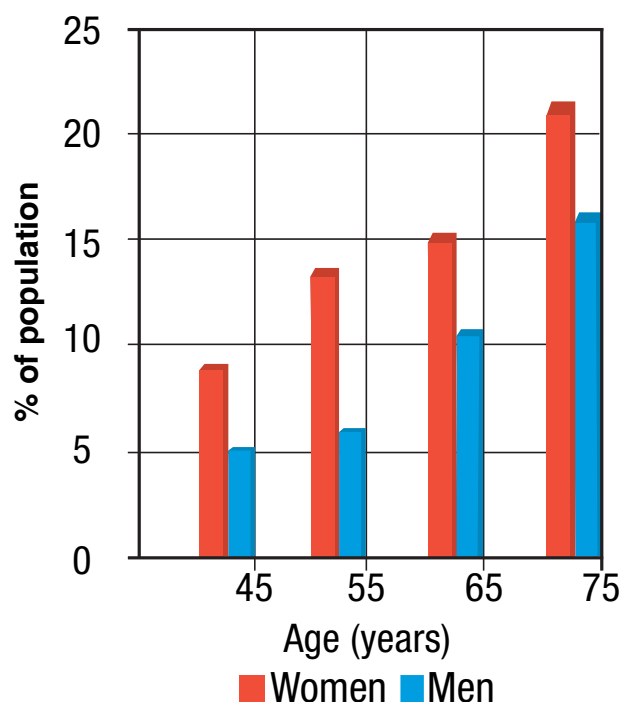
I'm here to tell you that this isn't a normal part of the aging process and you DON'T have to feel this way...

You see, these symptoms may be the result of an underactive **thyroid gland**.

Underactive thyroid, or *hypothyroidism*, is the **number one most misdiagnosed condition in America**.

In this article, I'll teach you how to protect your thyroid *and* reverse thyroid disease with the natural 3-step protocol I use with my patients at the **Sears Institute for Anti-Aging Medicine**.

THYROID TROUBLES SKYROCKET AS YOU AGE



Due to our toxic environment, the risk of developing thyroid disease more than doubles between the ages of 45 and 75.

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Why Most Doctors Get It Wrong

Your thyroid is a small, butterfly-shaped organ that sits low on the front of your neck. It's part of your body's hormonal system of glands, which includes your pituitary, pineal, hypothalamus, pancreas and adrenals.

The function of your thyroid is a chain reaction that starts with the pituitary gland in your brain, where it produces thyroid-stimulating hormone (TSH).

Your pituitary then sends TSH to the receptors on your thyroid, signaling the gland to use its supply of iodine to make two main hormones, T3 and T4. These control the rate at which every organ and organ system in your body functions — from your brain and heart, to your liver, kidneys and skin.

When your thyroid works well, it's taken for granted. But when it isn't producing enough T3 and T4, almost all of your body processes are forced to slow down.

That's why the ***number one symptom of hypothyroidism is fatigue.***

Other common symptoms include heart palpitations... excessive sweating... weight gain... joint and muscle pain... depression... headaches... brittle nails... constipation... and memory loss.

A lot of doctors look at these symptoms and offer treatments for them individually. They don't look at all the pieces of the puzzle and realize there's a single cause for your symptoms.

And even if your doctor does properly diagnose your thyroid disorder, he or she will likely prescribe Synthroid, a synthetic and potentially harmful drug.

For the past decade, Big Pharma's Synthroid has been America's most-prescribed drug. Doctors write a staggering 23 million prescriptions for Synthroid EVERY MONTH.¹

Synthroid can sometimes help, but it can't get to the root cause of the problem. And like all of Big Pharma's chronic disease drugs, doctors want you to take it indefinitely.

So you could be suffering the side effects for the rest of your life — including hair loss, headaches, sweating, diarrhea, weight gain, mood swings and heart palpitations.

Not Just a Woman's Condition

Women are more likely to develop hypothyroidism, but it's a problem that affects men, too.

Men are surprised to learn their thyroids are underperforming, because hypothyroidism is considered a "woman's condition."

Most scientific studies focus on women, excluding men from the conversation. Many doctors associate the disease with women and simply overlook low thyroid in men.

While hypothyroidism can cause many of the same symptoms in both men and women, some symptoms are unique to men, like:

- Loss of muscle and muscle strength — but not weight gain (a common symptom in hypothyroid women);
- Decreased ability to deal with stress;
- Reduced sex drive;
- Erectile dysfunction;
- Decreased testosterone levels;
- Increased testicular size;
- Balding and other hair loss, including eyebrows and body hair;
- Raised LDL "bad" cholesterol and reduced HDL "good" cholesterol.

And many physicians don't realize that the symptoms of hypothyroidism in men can be similar to low-testosterone symptoms.

Some of my male patients were treated for "low T" by doctors, but their underlying hypothyroid condition went completely missed.

You see, hypothyroidism causes sex hormone-binding globulin (SHBG) levels to drop.² SHBG is the transporter that carries testosterone to the receptors around your body. So when SHBG levels fall, you have less “free” testosterone.

In other words, if you’re a man with a thyroid that’s not functioning properly, you may still be experiencing symptoms of low testosterone. Even if you’re being treated for it.

Your Thyroid Is Under Attack

Your thyroid is sensitive and often behaves like an early warning system for the rest of your body. That’s why it’s one of the first organs to malfunction and become diseased from exposure to modern toxins, including:

- **Chlorine and fluoride** – Chemical irritants in drinking water.
- **Bromides and bromines** – Additives used in plastics, fire retardants, pharmaceuticals, bakery products, pesticides and sodas.
- **Perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA)** – Used in nonstick products like water- and grease-resistant clothing, upholstery, Teflon cookware, microwave popcorn packaging, fast-food wrappers and stain-resistant carpeting.
- **Perchlorate** – Synthetic chemical in jet fuel, road flares, fireworks and fertilizers.
- **Bisphenol A (BPA)** – Common industrial chemicals used in soft plastics that come into contact with your food and drinks.
- **Mercury** – Spewed by the coal-burning power plants, gold mines and cement kilns.

All of these contaminants bind to receptors on your thyroid — blocking TSH and inhibiting the production of T3 and T4.

Fluoride is one of the most caustic. Since 1962, about 75% of Americans have been getting dangerous levels of fluoride in tap water as a public-health strategy to cut dental cavities.

A recent study by the University of Kent in the U.K. reveals that most fluoride levels in U.S. water increase your risk of hypothyroidism by 30%.³

And people with high levels of PFOA in their blood can be twice as likely to suffer thyroid dysfunction, according to a survey of medical records of nearly 4,000 otherwise healthy American adults.⁴

Mainstream medicine continues to deny the link between hypothyroidism and thyroid cancer, and refuses to acknowledge their root causes and shared triggers.

Meanwhile, the rates of thyroid disease and thyroid cancer has more than tripled since the 1970s.⁵

Dr. Sears’ 3-Step Thyroid Protocol

My 3-step natural strategy to prevent and reverse thyroid disease has helped thousands of patients at the **Sears Institute for Anti-Aging Medicine**. Here’s how it works...

Step 1: Detox Your Body.

I advise my patients to detox their bodies every six months. It helps eliminate the toxic buildup in your tissues that blocks thyroid receptors. I recommend two detoxifiers that can be taken together:

- **Activated Charcoal:** Hospitals have used this form of charcoal for years as an antidote for drugs, poisons and medicinal overdoses. It’s a great general cleanser, especially against heavy metals, but also against gases, toxins and other chemicals.

Just a tiny amount can absorb and wash away years of toxic buildup. Look for activated charcoal as a very fine, black powder in health food stores or online. Take 20 to 30 grams of powdered activated charcoal mixed with water once a day for one to two weeks.

- **Eugenol:** This is an estrogen-lowering compound that helps keep your body from absorbing fake estrogens, like BPA.

You can get this extract into your diet with herbs and spices, like cinnamon, dill and holy basil.

You can also get eugenol by using clove oil. The eugenol in cloves stimulates enzymes in your stomach that convert these fake estrogens into harmless water-soluble compounds before flushing them from your body.^{6, 7}

Place two drops of essential clove oil extract on a teaspoon, diluted in a tiny amount of almond or olive oil (to enhance absorption), and then down the hatch. I recommend daily use, but make sure it's 100% pure clove oil.

You can also make clove tea by grinding fresh cloves in a coffee grinder and stirring into a cup of hot water. Or add it to your favorite herbal teas for extra flavor. And it's a great cooking spice. You can buy fresh cloves at most health food stores — but I don't recommend buying clove powder, because it doesn't stay fresh for long.

Step 2: Boost Your Vitamin D Levels.

Your thyroid needs vitamin D to work properly.

One study looked at the impact of vitamin D deficiency in people who were otherwise healthy. Researchers found that low levels of vitamin D were associated with a higher risk of thyroid antibodies. These antibodies are found in people with autoimmune thyroid disorders, like Graves' disease and Hashimoto's thyroiditis.⁸

But even when autoimmunity isn't present, inflammation can reduce levels of circulating thyroid hormones.⁹ Vitamin D stops inflammation and the expression of pro-inflammatory messages.¹⁰

Your body is wired to get all of its vitamin D requirements from sunshine. Just 15 or 20 minutes a day in the sun will produce about 10,000 international units (IUs).

I recommend you get at least 8,000 IUs a day through a cocktail of sunshine, D3-rich foods like wild salmon, mackerel, sardines, tuna, eggs and grass-fed beef — and supplements. Take 2,000 IUs of a D3 supplement called *cholecalciferol* every morning.

Step 3: Get These Key Thyroid Boosters.

There are several herbs and nutrients that can nourish and protect your thyroid. Here are three of my favorites:

- **Iodine:** This trace element is your thyroid's number one nutrient — but you don't need much.

The problem is trace minerals like iodine were once plentiful in our water, soil and food supply... *until modern industry and commercial farming made them scarce.*

That means an iodine deficiency might be at the root of your hypothyroidism. Good sources include cod, shrimp, eggs and seaweed. Be careful to avoid Japanese seaweed, because of the Fukushima nuclear accident. I recommend *kombu* that's been harvested in Iceland.

You can also take **Iodoral** tablets, which contain iodine and potassium iodide, two molecules essential to a healthy thyroid. Take 6.25 mg per day.

But iodine doesn't work alone... and taking iodine alone will NOT always help...

That's why I recommend you take iodine together with selenium. I also recommend adding the Indian herb ashwagandha.

- **Selenium:** A deficiency in selenium is far more dangerous to your thyroid than low iodine levels. Low selenium causes an intolerance of iodine in your body — so you should never take iodine with selenium deficiency.

But you need only small amounts of this amazing mineral, one of the most powerful antioxidants on the planet.

Selenium is vital to the normal functioning of your thyroid, because it helps convert T4 into the active T3 your body needs for strong metabolism and more energy.¹¹

The best food source of selenium is Brazil nuts. I recommend 200 mcg of selenium a day and one Brazil nut contains around 100 mcg — so you just need two per day. You can also get selenium from red meat, tuna, eggs and walnuts.

And you can take a supplement. Most multi-vitamins contain a little selenium, but make sure you're getting 200 mcg per day.

- **Ashwagandha:** This ancient Indian herb has been used for centuries by Ayurveda healers to normalize the amount of hormones secreted by your thyroid. This keeps your levels from going too high or dropping too low.¹²

Ashwagandha also reduces stress. You see, stress stimulates higher production of cortisol from your adrenal glands — and cortisol slows the conversion of T4 to T3.

I recommend 500 mg a day. You can buy it in capsule form.

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Beat Modern Stress With Bali's Sacred Herb

Stress is not a bad thing.

Yes, you read that right...

It's healthy for your body to go through the occasional ups and downs of daily stress responses. They're normal and you may not even know they're happening.

In fact, your body is constantly having these kinds of responses based on your environment. Everything your body does is evolutionarily designed to ensure your survival.

Your adrenal glands are the part of your body that regulates your stress response. They secrete hormones like adrenaline, norepinephrine and the life-sustaining cortisol.

When these hormones are in balance, they help you feel more energized, think more clearly and maintain a healthy weight. They help you sleep more soundly and have fewer food cravings.

But in the modern world, people are bombarded by stress 24 hours a day. High levels of stress hormones stay elevated for long periods of time. Our bodies never have time to rebalance. Our hormones don't get a chance to stabilize.

This can have a devastating effect on your health.

For instance, when your cortisol levels stay too high for too long, it can cause impaired cognitive function... decreased bone density and muscle mass... interrupted sleep patterns... elevated blood pressure...

You can see a more detailed list of the effects of too much cortisol in the table to the right.

Mainstream medicine has a laundry list of drugs they'll give you to help reduce stress. But the side effects can be just as devastating to your body as chronic stress.

Effects of Excess Cortisol
Decreased metabolism
Depression
Hypertension
Chronic fatigue
Sleep deprivation
Migraines
Tunnel vision
Acid reflux disease
Hostility
Hunger
Arthritis
Decreased immune system

Luckily, I've discovered a class of plants during my travels around the world that can help your body adapt to modern life's stressors. I'll tell you more about them in a bit, but first you need to understand what's going on in your body...

When Your Adrenals Crash and Burn

When chronic stress persists, your body demands more cortisol. Your adrenals can't keep up. They become fatigued.

I call it "adrenal burnout."

Most doctors don't even recognize adrenal burnout as a real condition. But the symptoms are very real for the patients I see at the **Sears Institute for Anti-Aging Medicine**.

Once your adrenals become fatigued, your body can no longer cope with stress the way nature

designed it to. If you're experiencing adrenal burnout, you might recognize some of these symptoms:

- You don't really seem to "wake up" until midmorning, even if you got out of bed early;
- You get a little sleepy and "foggy" in the early afternoon;
- You have a burst of energy around and after dinner;
- You get sleepy around 9, but you resist going to bed;
- You experience a kind of second wind, but then can't get to sleep until after midnight;
- You crave salty foods;
- You have some muscle weakness.

Doctors Don't Recognize the Problem

Chances are if you go to your doctor complaining of these symptoms, they won't know what's happening.

In medical school, they are only taught to look for extreme adrenal malfunction. Either Addison's Disease, which is when the adrenal glands don't produce enough cortisol, or Cushing's Syndrome, which is when they make too much.

They check adrenal function by testing ACTH levels. But only the top and bottom 2% are considered abnormal. Everything in the middle is considered "normal." Yet adrenal burnout happens to 15% of people on either end of the testing.

That means your adrenal glands could be working far from normally, but most mainstream doctors won't even recognize that you have a problem.

Stress Isn't a Modern Problem — Your Body's Response To It Is

The damaging effects of elevated stress hormones like cortisol and the resulting adrenal burnout are modern problems. And it's not because your ancient ancestors led stress-free lives. They had plenty of stress!

Hunting a ferocious beast or getting attacked by a saber-toothed tiger will definitely do that to you!

The instant their brains recognized an impending threat — real or imagined — their bodies' "fight or flight" response jumped into action.

This stress response was how your primal ancestors saved themselves from danger. It gave them a surge of superhuman strength to either defend themselves or run away.

The big difference is that your ancestors' stress lasted only a few minutes and then it was over — until the next time they needed it.

Their hormones would have time to rebalance themselves after the threat was over.

The problem today is your body still responds as if all your modern stressors were life-threatening situations. Relentless daily pressures come at us from every direction... car payments, rising insurance costs, your 30-year mortgage, saving for retirement or college... and the rest. Every year, it seems to pile up and get worse.

Your "fight or flight" response no longer functions in short bursts as it was originally intended. Today, your body is in constant "fight" mode.

How Stress Throws Off Your Sex Hormones

Chronic stress affects every area of your health, even the delicate balance of your sex hormones.

This can lead to estrogen dominance and accelerated aging in men, producing a host of miserable side effects. These include erectile dysfunction... man boobs... loss of body hair... loss of muscle mass... spare tires around the middle... loss of bone mass... and at least half a dozen different types of cancer.

You see, high levels of cortisol inhibit your body's production of the "source" hormone progesterone — which converts into testosterone in men and acts as a kind of counter balance to estrogen in women.¹

But in women, the thyroid gland is often the first organ to be affected by stress, causing chronic fatigue, weight gain, brain fog and memory loss. Because stress alters hormone levels, it also presents a risk for breast cancer and estrogen-dependent gynecologic cancers.

Researchers at the University of California discovered that stress also makes your cells die before their time — and it produces all the terrible effects we think of as aging.

They compared women who felt a lot of stress to women under little stress. Using cellular markers, they discovered the high-stress women were up to 10 years “older” than women with low stress levels.²

The Power of Adaptogens

You can’t change the stressors of modern life — sadly, most are here to stay — but you *can* change how your body reacts to them.

That’s where **adaptogens** come in...

This special class of healing herbs has been used for thousands of years in Ayurveda, the oldest health care system in the world, and traditional Chinese medicine, to balance and regulate your body.

Unlike Big Pharma’s antidepressants and anti-anxiety meds, adaptogens support your body’s vital processes instead of suppressing them.

These extraordinary plants help your body resist stressors, working to normalize your body’s functions and strengthen systems that are compromised by extraordinary challenges. Adaptogens help your body *adapt* to stress.

You can think of adaptogens like a thermostat for your adrenals. When you’re stressed, your adrenals are pumping out cortisol. They’re running hot. Adaptogens turn down the heat.

At the same time, when your adrenals are fatigued, adaptogens spark the fire again. But they don’t overstimulate your adrenals.

Clinical trials reveal that adaptogens stimulate your

central nervous system and have neuroprotective, antifatigue, anti-inflammatory, antibacterial, antifungal, anti-anxiety and antidepressive properties, as well as memory and cognitive supporting abilities.³

Plants with adaptogenic properties include *ginseng*, *licorice*, *astragalus*, *ashwagandha*, *maca*, as well as some mushrooms.

These are all powerful adaptogens, but one of my favorites is an incredible herb I discovered on my visits to Bali. It’s so potent I call it a “Super Adaptogen” — and I devoted an entire chapter to it in my book [*Healing Herbs of Paradise*](#).



Holy basil is one of the most incredible herbs I know of. Yet its healing power is ignored by Western medicine.

Holy Basil: the Super-Adaptogen

Ayurveda medicine calls it *tulsi*, which in Hindi means “The Incomparable One,” because of its unique health benefits. It’s better known in the West as **holy basil**, or *Ocimum sanctum*.

Western medicine completely ignores the healing power of this small shrub, but I use it routinely at the **Sears Institute for Anti-Aging Medicine**. It dramatically reduces the effects of stress in almost every part of your body.

Holy basil is a rich source of potent phytonutrients — including *eugenol*, *camphor*, *ursolic acid*, *rosmarinic acid*, *flavonoids* (plant antioxidants) and others.

Holy basil also has strong antiseptic, anti-inflammatory, antibacterial, antifungal and anti-parasitic properties — helping your body beat back many kinds of disease-causing organisms.

But it's real power as a super-adaptogen comes with its ability to lower and stabilize the production of stress hormones, like cortisol and adrenaline — even when the stresses around you seem overwhelming.^{4, 5}

The high eugenol content in holy basil not only helps reverse estrogen dominance by stabilizing stress hormone levels, it also improves your mental clarity and memory.^{6, 7}

And it modulates blood sugar levels by stabilizing cortisol and insulin.

A 2001 study published in the *Indian Journal of Clinical Biochemistry* backs up holy basil's ancient reputation as a natural treatment for diabetes and its power to reverse some of the disease's most devastating effects, like neuropathy and retinopathy.

At the same time, holy basil is also packed with antioxidant vitamins C and A, which mop up free radicals throughout your body, attacking inflammation and improving cellular integrity, blood flow and genetic expression. Studies also show that it protects against stress-induced heart disease and brain degeneration.⁸

It also has the ability to quiet down the immune system to reduce inflammation when necessary — and studies show that it's a powerful protector against cancer.⁹

How to Take Holy Basil

You can buy holy basil on the Internet, from health food stores or at specialty grocers that carry Indian products.

You can use its ground leaves as a tasty herb in soups, fish dishes and desserts. Or even sprinkle it into a smoothie.

I recommend taking at least 420 mg a day — but you can take up to 800 mg.

One of the best ways to enjoy holy basil is to make a delicious herbal tea from it. All you need are a few leaves, dried or fresh, of the holy basil plant.

Here's how to make "Tulsi tea" in four easy steps:

1. Heat a quart of water in a pot.
2. Put in 3 heaped teaspoons of ground leaves and let them decoct for about 5 minutes.
3. Strain into a cup or glass.
4. Add lemongrass or ginger for extra flavor.

You can also take a holy basil supplement. Capsules are available online or in health food stores. Make sure the product you're buying has at least 2.5% ursolic acid to get the anti-inflammatory effect. I recommend 150 mg three times a day with meals.

And Two More Great Stress-Busting Adaptogens



Rhodiola has a powerful effect on the nervous system. It provides both cognitive stimulation and emotional calming.

Rhodiola Rosea: This herb is also known as rose root, golden root, Aaron's rod, king's crown, lignum rhodium and orpin rose. It has been used as a powerful adaptogen in Asia and Europe for thousands of years to relieve nausea and depression, sharpen concentration and reduce fatigue. Oriental healers also use it to treat altitude sickness.

I use it in my clinic to naturally energize my patients and give their immune systems a real kick-start.

In just a few months, they're visibly younger and stronger. And they tell me they feel it, too. They also say they get fewer infections and catch fewer colds and flu bugs.

The herb's two major active ingredients — *salidroside* and *rosavins* — team up to supercharge your brain and your nervous system. With their help, they help your body adapt — physically, mentally and emotionally — to take on the challenges and stresses of modern life.

Rhodiola capsules are available in most health food stores and online.

But make sure they contain enough *rosavins* and *salidroside*. You want capsules with 0.8% to 1% *salidroside* and 2% to 3% *rosavin*.

For the first week, take 100 mg once a day. The second week, you can up the daily dosage to 200 mg. Over the next couple of weeks, increase by 100 mg. But don't go over 400 mg a day.



I learned about the African herb kanna during one of my many trips to Africa.

Kanna: This potent adaptogen herb is not very well known outside of Africa. But it's been used for millennia by the hunter-gatherer peoples to elevate mood and reduce stress. Traditional healers I met in Uganda told me they use it to treat anxiety, too.

The active component is called *mesembrine*, which studies reveal can help lessen the effects of stress and can also produce a mild euphoric affect.

It's a small plant that was usually chewed. But now you can get it as an extract powder. It's available online and at health food stores.

You might see the extract under the trade name *Zembrin*, which is the extracted and standardized form from South Africa. You can also find it blended with another South African tea leaf, rooibos.

To use kanna powder, try adding about 1/3 of a teaspoon into a cup of tea. It should always be taken on an empty stomach — but it shouldn't be combined with antidepressants like *Prozac* or *Zoloft*.

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Today's World Isn't Easy on the Eyes

Save Your Vision With These 3 Simple Steps

Four out of every 10 Americans wear glasses or contact lenses for distance viewing. If you're one of them, you've probably noticed that your prescription gets stronger every time you visit the eye doctor.

That's because your glasses are actually making your vision *worse*.

Sure, your glasses help you see more clearly. But they make your eyes lazy. And the more you wear your glasses, the worse your vision gets.

Now, I'm not suggesting you stop wearing them...

But I want to point out that it's just one more example where modern medicine is treating the "symptom" instead of the cause.

And a big part of the reason that doctors aren't interested in treating the root cause of myopia — or nearsightedness — is because they don't understand what's really going on. They're perfectly content in their belief that myopia is genetic.

It's not. But the idea that it's hereditary has become accepted as gospel. And no one even questions it...

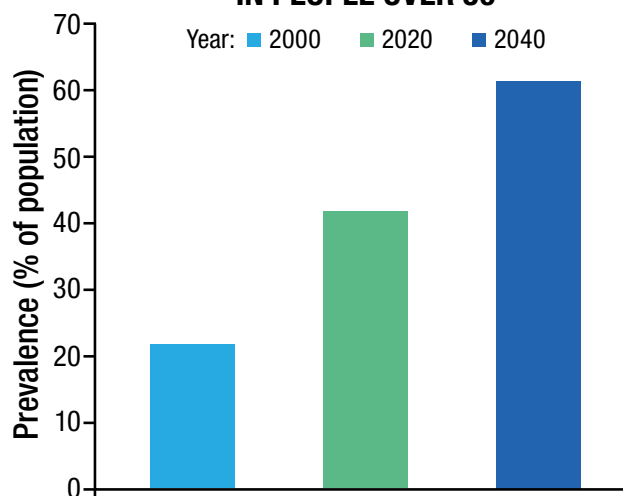
That's a shame, because the rates of myopia are rising in epidemic proportions around the world. It's even worse in Asia than it is in the U.S. About 90% of young people there are nearsighted!

The evidence that myopia isn't hereditary is overwhelming! Yet doctors continue to mislead their patients...

So what's really going on?

I'll tell you the real causes of myopia in a minute. I'll also show you the steps you can take to protect your vision. But first I want to explain the connection between myopia and your overall eye health as you age.

**ALARMING RISE IN NEARSIGHTEDNESS
IN PEOPLE OVER 50**



By the year 2040, approximately 60% of people over the age of 50 are expected to be myopic.

Why Myopia Matters

Myopia typically starts developing in adolescence. For those whose eyes *are* myopic, it can continue to progress throughout the years.

And that's a double-whammy for you as you get older.

You see, as you age, your eyes naturally become more and more *presbyopic* — or farsighted. These two conditions don't cancel each other out. They combine.

That's why so many older people today require multifocal lenses. Or separate pairs of glasses to treat their separate vision disorders.

But it's not just worsening vision and the inconvenience of bifocals that you should be concerned about.

For people who are very myopic, the risks of developing other eye disorders shoots way up.

People with myopia tend to develop cataracts at an earlier age, and those who had a larger degree of myopia had worse outcomes after cataract surgery.¹

There's also a greater risk of developing glaucoma — an eye disease in which fluid pressure increases within the eye. It can lead to vision loss and even blindness. An Australian study found that people with myopia were 4.2 to 7.6 times more likely to develop the glaucoma than people who had normal vision or were farsighted.²

Myopia also greatly increases the risk of retinal detachment. The risk for people with mild myopia is 4-fold. For those with moderate or high myopia, it's **10-fold**.³

Poor Vision Is a Modern Problem

Our primal ancestors had perfect vision. If they didn't, they wouldn't have survived. They needed to see clearly so they could hunt for food.

And when I visit native tribes in remote villages, I don't find many people at all who have myopia. In fact, studies show that among indigenous people, rates of myopia are extremely low. Researchers who've studied these tribes have found the rates to be between just 0.4% to 4%.

But as modern culture reaches these tribes, rates shoot up.

There are a few reasons for this. And they all have to do with our modern environment and our modern lifestyle.

Our primal ancestors ate a diet that was packed with all the vitamins and nutrients their bodies — and eyes — needed in order to perform at their optimal level. And they spent most of their time outdoors. These two things kept their visions sharp.

Today, we spend most of our time indoors and we eat a diet that's loaded with sugar, refined carbs and other processed foods.

And it's costing us our vision...

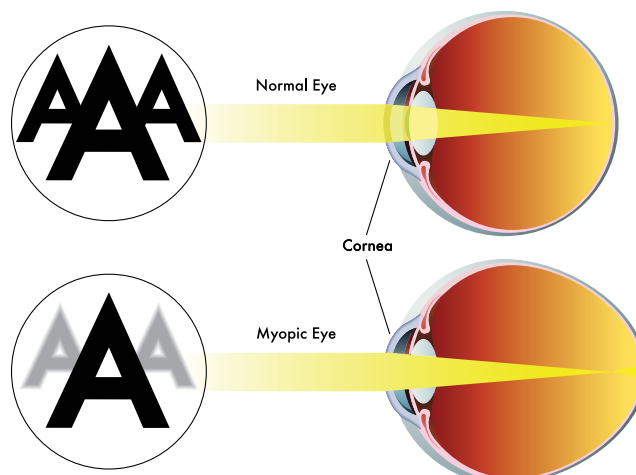
Nature's Perfect Design

Our eyes were designed for distance viewing. When you look out 20 feet or more, light enters your eye naturally. Your eye muscles relax to let it in. But when you focus on nearby objects, your eye muscles tense up.

In today's busy world, our eye muscles rarely have time to relax. All that muscle tension reshapes the eyeball. Instead of round, it becomes egg-shaped.

When that happens, light doesn't hit the retina at the back of the eye. It stops short. And the image is blurred.

NORMAL EYE VS. MYOPIC EYE



Diet plus lack of outdoor activity is causing the eyes of our youth to become misshapen.

Some researchers have suggested that close work — like reading — is behind the myopia epidemic.

But it's not true...

What matters is how much time kids spend outdoors.

Researchers from Ohio State University tracked the activities of more than 500 8- and 9-year-olds with healthy eyesight for five years. At the end of the study, 20% had developed myopia.

And the ones most likely to get it were those who spent the least amount of time outdoors.⁴

Another study of 4,000 children in Australia confirmed that children who spend less time outside are at greater risk of becoming nearsighted. And it didn't matter what they did outside. They could be engaged in sports, or playing — or even reading! What mattered most was exposing the eyes to bright light.⁵

This proves that sunlight played a big role in our primal ancestors' healthy vision.

You see, sunlight triggers the release of dopamine in the retina. This helps control the growth and development of the eye. When we don't get enough dopamine, the eye grows out of control. And just like extended periods of muscle tension that don't give your eyes time to relax, the lack of sunlight contributes to the elongation of the eyeball.

Animal studies show that natural sunlight (about 30,000 lux — a measure of brightness) produces enough dopamine to stop the eye from growing into the myopic egg shape. But our typical home lighting (about 500 lux) does not.⁶

Study Proves That Sun Exposure Prevents Myopia

Sun exposure really works. In a study in China, teachers were asked to send students outside for 80 minutes each day. After one year, only 8% developed myopia. The rate of myopia in children at a control school was 18%.⁷

Other studies show that children need about three hours a day under light levels of at least 10,000 lux to protect against myopia.

And there's even more reason for older adults to get more sunlight.

As you get older, your lens gradually yellows and your pupil narrows. This makes it harder for sunlight to reach cells in your retina that regulate your body's circadian rhythm system. A disrupted circadian rhythm could affect your hormonal balance. It's also

believed to be connected to things like memory loss and insomnia.

But getting enough sunlight is just one part of the equation...

How Carbs Are Killing Your Vision

As I mentioned earlier, the rates of myopia among indigenous tribes has historically been very low.

In fact, a century ago, the rate of myopia among the Alaskan Inuits was less than 1%. Today it's close to 50%! And those numbers shot up in just a *single generation*.

So what's changed for the Inuits?

Their diets.

The traditional Inuit diet was stable for generations. It consisted of what they could catch from the ocean, as well as seeds and berries during the summer. Then, a few decades ago, more processed foods were introduced into the community.

A 2004 study found that *only 16% of foods consumed by Inuit adults were from their traditional diet*.⁸

So it's not surprising that one study found that only 2 out of 131 Inuit elders had myopia. But more than half of their children and grandchildren — who grew up on processed foods — were nearsighted.⁹

The medical industry can't blame this on genetics.

So they've shifted the blame to compulsory schooling and "close work." Inuit children began attending Canada's federal schools in the 1950s and 1960s.

It's a nice theory, but it doesn't hold water, either.

Here's why...

There's an island nation in the South Pacific called Vanuatu. The children of Vanuatu attend school for eight hours a day. The majority of people under 35 are literate.

But the people of Vanuatu still eat a traditional diet.

Man's Best Friend: A Vision Study From the Other Lab

What can we learn about the modern myopia epidemic from dogs?

A lot!

Dogs who live in the wild are naturally farsighted. And their diet consists of what they can catch and kill.

Domesticated dogs, on the other hand, are becoming more and more nearsighted — just like us humans. And a study of Labrador retrievers pointed to the cause...*

Modern dog foods are packed with grains and cheap fillers — just like our diets.

It's the exact same pattern found when indigenous tribes switch to a modern refined diet. And the end result is the same when it comes to our vision.

*Mutti DO, et al. Naturally occurring vitreous chamber-based myopia in the Labrador retriever. *Invest Ophthalmol Vis Sci* 1999; 40: 1577-1584.

Most grow their own food — papaya, yams, coconut and mangoes. They eat fish and raise fowl. The kids there don't eat Rice Krispies for breakfast — they don't eat sandwiches on white bread for lunch.

And the myopia rate in Vanuatu's children is just 2%.

"Dr. Sears," you might be thinking, "that's compelling, but it's not proof..."

You're right. Here's what's happening to your eyes on a carb-heavy diet...

The refined foods in the typical Western diet send a lot of sugar into your body. All that excess glucose — and your body's insulin reaction — is yet another contributing factor to the changing shape of your eye.¹⁰

On top of that, when your blood sugar constantly

rises and falls, the delicate tissue and blood vessels in the eye get damaged. High sugar levels also make the lens of the eye swell. This causes blurry vision.

This is common in diabetics. But the truth is *anyone* with consistently high blood sugar is at risk of serious eye disease. One study from Tufts University found that people eating the most sugary carbs increased their risk of age-related macular degeneration (AMD) by up to 42%.¹¹

That's a huge problem because AMD is the most common cause of blindness as you get older.

3 Steps to Better Vision

Step 1: Get More Natural Light.

Sadly mainstream medicine today views the sun as the enemy. But I advise my patients to get plenty of natural sunshine. Healthy vision is one more good reason to get outdoors every day.

Unfortunately, most of us can't spend three hours a day in bright sunlight. That's why I suggest using daily indoor light therapy for many of my patients.

You can find light boxes online. These lights can deliver up to 10,000 lux or more. Follow the manufacturer's instructions. Here are a few tips I give my patients on how to use the box:

- Set your box on a table or desk near where you sit or work. I recommend a 10,000-lux light box at a distance of about 16 to 24 inches from your face.
- The light from the box should enter your eyes indirectly. Don't look directly into the light. The bright light can damage your eyes.
- Your daily light therapy sessions should last about 20 to 30 minutes. A lower-intensity light box, such as 2,500 lux, may require longer sessions. You may want to start with shorter sessions and gradually increase the time.
- For most people, light therapy is most effective in the morning after you first wake up.

Step 2: Eat Like Our Ancestors.

Get most of your calories from fat and protein. They won't spike your insulin. Look for grass-fed beef and dairy products, wild-caught coldwater fish, and poultry and eggs from pastured animals. Choose healthy fats like olive oil, butter and coconut oil.

And when it comes to carbs, stay on track with the *Glycemic Index* (GI). The GI is a measure of how quickly blood sugar levels shoot up after eating carbs. Foods with a higher GI give you a higher spike in blood sugar. Carbs with a low GI break down slowly. They release smaller, more manageable amounts of glucose into your bloodstream. But the GI won't tell you how much carbohydrate per serving you're getting. That's where the Glycemic Load (GL) is a great help. It measures the amount of carbohydrates in each serving of food.

Foods with a GL under 10 are good choices. Foods that fall between 10 and 20 on the GL scale have a moderate effect on your blood sugar. Foods above 20 will spike blood sugar and insulin — eat these foods sparingly.

[Click here to check out my glycemic guide.](#)

Step 3: Take Vision-boosting Supplements.

- **L-Taurine.** This amino acid strengthens the cells of your retina and protects your lenses from drying out. I recommend taking 320 mg per day.
- **Bilberry Extract.** This super berry helps treat cataracts and retina problems. During World War II, British Royal Air Force pilots ate bilberry jam prior to missions to improve their night vision. To get the best results, look for an extract standardized to 25% *anthocyanosides*. These are bilberry's powerful antioxidants. Get 100 mg daily.
- **Ginkgo biloba.** This herb boosts healthy blood circulation to your eyes and reduces inflammation that can be caused by high blood

sugar levels. And studies show that ginkgo improves the vision of people with glaucoma. Take 50 mg daily.

- **Lutein and zeaxanthin** are carotenoids that are critical for optimal ocular health. These nutrients have shown to cut the risk of AMD in half. They also help reduce the risk of cataracts by 18%.¹²

Eggs are a great dietary source of lutein. So are mangoes, sweet potatoes, and dark, leafy greens like spinach, kale, collards and Swiss chard.

Zeaxanthin is found in colorful fruits and vegetables like zucchini, squash, kiwi and orange bell pepper.

You can also find supplements online and in health food stores that contain both lutein and zeaxanthin. Look for one with at least 20 mg of lutein and 1 mg of zeaxanthin.

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The information provided in this letter is for educational purposes only and any recommendations are not intended to replace the advice of your physician. You are encouraged to seek advice from a medical professional before acting on any recommendations in this publication.



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Al Sears, MD, CNS, is a medical doctor and one of the nation's first board-certified anti-aging physicians.

As a board-certified clinical nutritionist, strength coach, ACE-certified fitness trainer and author, Dr. Sears enjoys a worldwide readership and has appeared on more than 50 national radio programs, ABC News, CNN and ESPN.

In 2010, Dr. Sears unveiled his proven anti-aging strategies in *Reset Your Biological Clock*. As the first U.S. doctor licensed to administer a groundbreaking DNA therapy that activates the gene that regulates telomerase, Dr. Sears made history by bringing telomere biology to the general public.

Dr. Sears shocked the fitness world by revealing the dangers of aerobics, “cardio” and long-distance running in his book, *PACE: The 12-Minute Fitness Revolution*.

In 2004, Dr. Sears was one of the first doctors to document the true cause of heart disease and expose the misguided and often fatal drugs-and-surgery approach to heart health.

In *The Ageless Heart Manual: Advanced Strategies to Reverse Heart Disease and Restore Your Heart's Pumping Power*, Dr. Sears outlines the easy-to-follow solution that effectively eliminates your risk of heart disease, high blood pressure and stroke.

An avid lecturer, Dr. Sears regularly speaks at conferences sponsored by the American Academy of Anti-Aging Medicine (A4M), the American College for the Advancement of Medicine (ACAM) and the Age Management Medicine Group (AMMG).