Dr. Sears'
Confidential Cures
Your Guide to Truth and Lies in Medicine from Around the World

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Dear Reader,

I love to fish, and I used to take my son out all the time. He caught fish like crazy. On the other hand, I never seemed to catch a thing.

But it didn't matter. Fishing puts us in a different world. There's an old Babylonian proverb that says, *"The gods do not deduct from man's allotted lifespan the hours spent fishing."*

Sadly, unlike my father and his father before him, today we can't count on the fact that the fish we catch are healthy for us.

And we have to be choosy about what we consume.

Our ancestors thrived on eating fish fresh from rivers, streams, and the ocean. After all, fish is a pure source of protein and healthy omega-3 fats.

But our modern fish supply is vastly different than anything our ancestors ate. As our waters have become more and more polluted, so has our seafood.

In fact, the fish on your dinner plate today are infested with toxic plastic trash and industrial pollutants.

That's why so many people turn to farm-raised fish. They think it's a better option because it's more sustainable and plastic-free. But neither of these claims is true...

You see, modern industrial farmed fishing follows the same model as factory-farmed meat. This is not only harmful for the fish and the environment, but it's also dangerous for anyone who eats it.

In your July edition of **Confidential Cures**, you will learn about the latest scientific research that reveals just how risky it is to eat the wrong kinds of fish.

I'm not suggesting you should stop eating fish altogether. You shouldn't.

But making smart choices about the fish you buy will preserve your health...

You will also discover:

- **The top seven fish you should never eat.** Of course, farmed fish are a definite no-go. However, not all wild-caught fish are safe either. I'll break down what is safe and what's not. I'll also reveal seven fish you can eat every day if you want to. In fact, I recommend that you do!
- **How to use your breath to conquer anxiety and defend against aging.** In the modern world, we're so distracted, we sometimes take breathing — inhaling and exhaling — for granted. And most people have lost the art of breathing properly. I'll share the remedies I use with my patients, and that I practice myself.
- **Why your body needs more stomach acid, not less.** For decades, you've been told that you have heartburn or acid reflux because you have too much stomach acid. Nothing could be further from the truth. Most people have too little... and it's leading to diseases like diabetes, osteoporosis, and even cancer. Find out how to protect your stomach, without the need to resort to Big Pharma's dangerous drugs.

To Your Good Health,

Al Sears, MD, CNS

Also in This Issue...

This Fish Makes You Fat (And Sick)

Of course you've heard all the health benefits of eating fish. It reduces your risk of heart disease... boosts your brainpower... provides your body with belly-flattening protein and healthy omega-3s... and keeps your skin radiant, supple and youthful.

There is no question about it, adding the right kind of fish to your diet works as an anti-aging powerhouse and is an easy way to protect yourself from dozens of diseases.

The problem is our fish supply is vastly different from the days when Teddy Roosevelt and Earnest Hemingway wrestled wild salmon from the great rivers of the West or giant Blue Marlin off the coast of Key West.

Most doctors, nutritionists, and the media will simply advise you to eat more fish — but you're not getting the full story.

These days, you must be choosy about the fish you eat.

That's because the vast majority of fish you buy in supermarkets, restaurants and even from specialist fishmongers is downright dangerous.

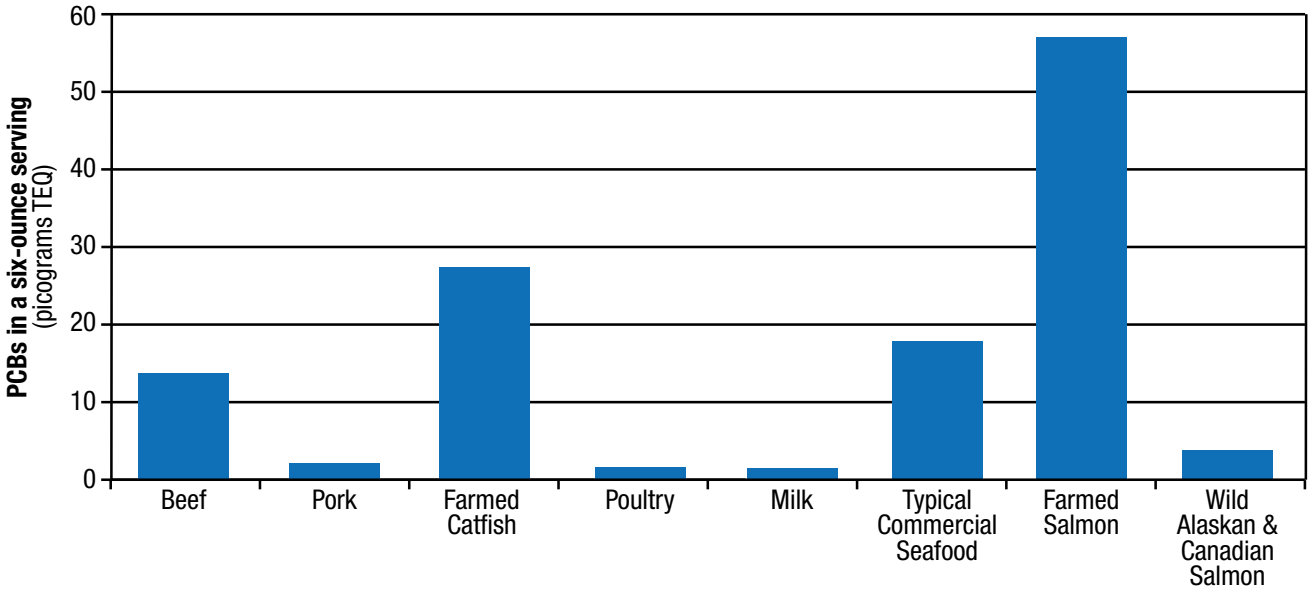
Recent studies reveal that certain fish contain hidden toxic ingredients that can...

- Make you fat
- Increase your stress levels
- Disrupt your hormonal systems
- Increase your risk of illnesses, including diabetes and cancer

Our ancestors thrived on eating fish fresh from rivers and oceans. Today, farmed fish make up around 80% of the fish consumed in America, and those that are caught wild swim in waters that are infested with toxic plastic trash and dangerous industrial pollutants.

Many people now think eating farmed fish is a better option because it's more sustainable and plastic-free. Neither of these claims are true.

One Serving Of Farmed Salmon Has 40 Times More Toxins Than Other Foods



An earlier study found that farmed salmon contained up to 1,000 times more toxins like PBC than wild salmon.

Source: www.ewg.org/research/pcbs-farmed-salmon Hites R, et al. "Global assessment of organic contaminants in farmed salmon." Science.

You see, modern industrial fish farming follows the same model as intensive livestock and agriculture farming practices. This is not only harmful to the fish and the surrounding environment, but also to the humans who consume them.

"These days, in most cases, a healthy-looking salmon steak is more likely to contribute to a weight problem than help you shed unwanted belly fat."

The dangers of eating farmed fish now far outweigh any benefits you might get.

In this **Confidential Cures** article, you'll learn about the scientific research that reveals just how risky it is to eat the wrong kinds of fish. I'm not suggesting you should stop eating fish altogether. You shouldn't. But making smart choices about the fish you buy will preserve the planet and your health.

The Hidden Dangers Of Farmed Fish

Fish farming — or *pisciculture* — closely resembles the factory farming of terrestrial livestock, like cattle, pigs, and chickens. Both forms of industrial farming practices prioritize yield over the welfare of the animal and the end consumer. And both produce unhealthy foods that are unfit for human consumption.

These days, in most cases, a healthy-looking salmon steak is more likely to contribute to a weight problem than help you shed unwanted belly fat. That's because today the vast majority of salmon — along with many other types of fish — is farm-raised.

And that means it's packed with poisons.

Multiple research studies have found that pretty much all farmed fish contains high levels of toxic chemicals, many of which have been banned or restricted in America and Europe.

These include:

- **Polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs)**: Once used as electrical coolants and lubricants, PCBs have been banned in the U.S. since 1976 and internationally since 2001.
- **Dioxins:** Toxic industrial byproducts that have been banned in most countries since the 1980s.
- **Polybrominated diphenyl ethers (PBDEs) flame retardants:** Once widely used in the manufacture of plastics, but now banned or restricted worldwide.
- **Ethoxyquin**: This toxic pesticide preservative is used in fish feed. It has been banned in Europe since 2017, but not in the U.S.

All of these chemical pollutants have terrible effects on your body and have been linked to weight gain as well as a range of diseases, including obesity.

It's hardly surprising that people who eat farmed fish as a strategy to lose weight can't shed their beer bellies or muffin tops.

In a study by the Environmental Working Group, researchers found that multiple samples of farmed salmon — one of the most common farmed fish — were contaminated with PCBs, as well as more than 100 pollutants and pesticides.[1]

In a population-based cohort study, researchers in Sweden found that high levels of the toxins most often found in farmed seafood — including PCBs— were linked with excess abdominal fat and obesity in thousands of individuals.[2]

Other studies reveal that frequent consumption of farmed salmon can cause insulin resistance, diabetes and obesity.[3]

The problem is not just specific to salmon, but all farm-raised fish — including trout, sea bass, turbot, halibut, sea bream, tilapia, barramundi, grouper, shrimp and carp.

You see, farm-raised fish have much higher levels of contamination because the fish are fed concentrated toxic fish meal to fatten them up. Also mixed into that fish meal is genetically modified corn, soy and canola oil. Some even get pellets of chicken pig and duck feces.

It takes around five pounds of fish meal to produce just one pound of farm-raised fish, and that makes these animals one of the most highly concentrated sources of PCBs and other toxins anywhere in our food supply.

What Happens To Your Body — And The Environment — When You Eat Contaminated Fish

PCBs are known disruptors of lipid metabolism in your body. That's a serious problem.

You see, lipids are vital compounds that include fats, cholesterol, sterol hormones like testosterone, estrogen and the stress hormone cortisol, fat-soluble vitamins, triglycerides and many others.

Lipids also act as signaling molecules and energy sources. So it's not surprising that when any of these are disrupted, sickness can follow.

When you disrupt your lipid metabolism, you're asking for trouble.

Decades of research reveal that lipid metabolic disruptions contribute directly to conditions like *obesity, diabetes, fatty liver disease*, and various other *metabolic syndromes*.[4]

Although the production of PCBs has been banned for years due to the risk to human health and wildlife, a total of 1.3 million tons of PCBs were manufactured since their introduction in the 1930s — and much of it is still in the environment.

PCBs are lipid-soluble and resistant to biodegradation, so they easily persist in the atmosphere, soil, and water.

When you eat contaminated seafood, you might as well be injecting this metabolic lipid and hormone disrupter directly into your organs.

Here's just a sample of the damning research on PCBs...

- A study published in *Diabetes Care* found that people with the most exposure to PCBs and other persistent organic pollutants were almost 4000% more likely to have diabetes.[5]
- Another study found infants and children with higher PCB exposures during development can experience lower IQ scores and reduced hearing.[6]
- Researchers found that older adults (49 to 86 years old) who ate fish farmed in the Great Lakes with high levels of PCBs and other contaminants, achieved lower scores on several measures of memory and learning.[7]

It takes five pounds of toxic fish pellets to produce one pound of farm-raised fish.

A large study that examined 246 samples of farmed salmon from around the world found that all samples contained higher levels of toxins, like PCB and dioxin — in some cases, 1,000 times more — than wild salmon.[8]

Seven out of 10 pieces of farm-raised fish tested had concentrations of PCBs that were high enough to trigger health warnings from the EPA.

The study also found that European-raised salmon had significantly greater contaminant loads than those raised in North and South America. It noted that farm-raised salmon from Scotland had the highest levels of PCBs than anywhere else in the world.

But PCBs are not the only issues with farm-raised fish.

Farmed fish are also fed antibiotics, chemicals, and growth hormones to speed up production — all of which, along with industrial toxins, are passed into the bloodstream of unsuspecting consumers.

Meanwhile, fish farms in China, which supply much of the farmed shrimp, tilapia and catfish consumed in America and Europe, are raised in ponds that are contaminated with sewage, industrial waste and pesticides from agricultural runoff.[9]

And Chinese fish-farming operations have attempted to counter the problem of their toxic fish ponds by mixing illegal veterinary drugs and

pesticides directly into their fish feed. This keeps their fish stocks alive, but it leaves poisonous and carcinogenic residues in the seafood they export.

Farmed tilapia also have very low levels of omega-3s and very high levels of inflammatory omega-6 fatty acids — which negates one of the main reasons to eat fish in the first place.

Even in North America, extensive use of pesticides in local marine ecosystems has induced coastal habitat loss and increased genetic and health risks to wild marine populations. Insecticides used to kill salmon parasites, like fish lice, have also led to widespread disease persistence and pest resistance.

So much for the health and sustainability claims of fish-farming corporations.

Plastics Wreak Havoc With Your Hormones

Fish that swim freely in our oceans and rivers carry their own set of dangers.

Every year, billions of pounds of plastic waste pour into our oceans and rivers. I'm talking about things like grocery bags, drinking straws, water bottles and more.

It's now estimated that up to 51 trillion pieces of plastic contaminate our oceans.

You may already know that some of the chemicals in these plastics — like bisphenol A and phthalates — disrupt hormones. They lead to estrogen overload in men and women alike. They lower a man's testosterone. They disrupt thyroid function to make you gain weight.

They also bring on extreme symptoms of PMS and menopause. They can also lead to diabetes, neurological problems, heart disease, and infertility.[10] And they've been linked to breast and other hormone-related cancers.

In addition, millions of tiny microbeads flow into your local sewer system every day. Manufacturers add these gritty specks to face and body scrubs, shower gels, toothpaste and other personal care products. They're too small to be filtered out of our water supply.

Taking just one shower could result in 100,000 of these tiny plastic particles making their way into the ocean.

This trash is carried on currents in massive swirls that cover about 40% of the world's ocean surfaces. These plastics are on almost every beach in the world and the polar icecaps.

These plastic particles act like a sponge. They pick up pollution, pesticides, bacteria, chemicals, flame retardants and heavy metals.

Tiny fish and other sea creatures mistake these particles for a natural food source. They gorge themselves on this junk. Much of that plastic ends up in their guts.

And by entering fish, these plastics enter our food supply.

Choose The Right Kinds Of Fish

I strongly recommend you stay away from all kinds of farmed fish. But not all wild-caught fish are safe either.

Here's what I tell my patients...

• **Know where your fish is on the food chain:** Big fish feed on smaller fish and so on down the line. So the bigger the fish, the more plastic and pollutants it contains. Overall, stay away from fish that are at the top of the food chain. These fish are the most contaminated fish in the world's oceans.

Here are 7 of the worst polluted fish. Avoid these in your market and on the menu.

1. **Chilean Sea Bass**. The real name of this fish is the Patagonia toothfish. You should never eat this fish because of its high mercury levels.
2. **Farmed or Atlantic Salmon.** Most salmon marketed as "Atlantic" salmon is farmed. It is ridden with pesticides, feces, bacteria and parasites. And don't buy anything labeled "wild" Atlantic salmon. It is illegal to catch Atlantic salmon because they are an endangered species.
3. **Imported Catfish. This is a trendy new menu item that is really named *pangasius***. Studies show 70 to 80% of these fish are

contaminated with ***vibriobacteria*** — the same microbes that cause shellfish poisoning. They are raised in fish factories where fish swim in waste and sludge, and are treated with high doses of antibiotics, pesticides, and disinfectants.

4. **Atlantic Bluefin Tuna.** Often found on sushi menus as Hon Maguro, this is also a fish high in mercury. Instead of eating this, look for katsuo or wild-caught skipjack tuna.
5. **Swordfish.** Mercury in this fish is so high women and children should avoid it altogether. Men should limit it to one serving a month at the most.
6. **King Mackerel.** Some types of mackerel are safe. But avoid King and Spanish mackerel. They harbor high levels of mercury.
7. **Grouper.** This fish is also very high in mercury.

When choosing safe seafood, I advise my patients to use Monterey Bay Aquarium's Seafood Watchlist. Click here to see their "Super Green List" of the healthiest fish.

My advice is to stick to fish that are lower down on the food chain because they have a lower concentration of plastics and other contaminants.

My favorite seven are:

1. **Wild-Caught Alaskan Salmon.**
2. **Pacific Sardines.** They're not just canned. Look for these little fish fresh, or marinated in garlic and olive oil.
3. **Atlantic Mackerel.** Don't confuse this with King or Spanish mackerel.
4. **Sablefish/Black Cod.** These healthy fish are native to waters off Alaska and the Canadian Pacific.
5. **Albacore Tuna** (troll- or pole-caught, from the U.S. or British Columbia). Wild Planet is a good brand to look for in the canned versions.
6. **Wild-Caught West Coast Dungeness Crab.**
7. **Squid.** Many people enjoy squid as calamari. And it's a healthy choice.

• **Know where in the world your fish comes from:** The ocean with the largest amount of plastic is the North Pacific. That's followed by the Indian Ocean, the North Atlantic and the South Pacific. Limit your fish consumption from these regions.

The South Atlantic and the Mediterranean Sea have the least plastic contamination. Great-tasting fish from these regions include mullet and spotted sea trout.

• **Be a smart consumer:** If you can't buy fish from a local source, ask the fishmonger in your grocery store where your fish comes from. They are usually extremely knowledgeable and helpful.

If your grocery store can't guarantee where its fish comes from, I recommend ordering online. Today, you can order fish from almost anywhere in the world. That way you can pick the fish you want, from the ocean that you want. Most places will fillet it for you, pack it on ice and send it out the same day.

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Use Your Breath To Conquer Anxiety — And Defend Against Stress-Induced Aging

Most doctors haven't got a clue about treating anxiety. That's why they just write prescriptions for Big Pharma's relaxants, benzodiazepines, and antidepressants

But there is a price, and I'm not just talking about the financial cost.

None of these drugs will cure the problem — they merely mask it. And they often cause more harm than good.

And all come with horrible side-effects and interfere with your body's natural chemicals.

Ironically, the very drugs that are supposed to calm you also cause headaches, nausea, aches, pains, weight-gain, sexual dysfunction and suicidal thoughts.

And they simply don't work.

If they worked, more than 300 million people worldwide and at least 40 million adults in America wouldn't suffer from anxiety disorders — and the numbers wouldn't keep rising each year.[1,2]

But with the natural remedies I recommend, you will stop losing precious moments to stress, anxiety and depression, and even add years to your life.

And you certainly won't be turned into a groggy, confused zombie, shambling through your day.

The natural remedies I recommend not only ease pain, but they boost your physical and mental stamina. They will also lift your spirits and soothe your nerves. They can even make your mind sharper and improve your ability to concentrate, learn, and remember.

In this *Confidential Cures* article, I'll share the remedies I use with my patients at the Sears Institute of Anti-Aging Medicine — and that

Proper breathing techniques can ease pain, increase your energy, and even make your mind sharper.

I use myself. One of these natural remedies is something so inherent to us, it's the first thing we do when we enter the world. Let me explain...

Breathe Your Way To Less Stress

Of course, it's no secret we live in a stressful 24/7 world. But mounting evidence suggests our ability to cope with stress has nothing to do with antidepressants and boosting serotonin levels.

Research now reveals a profound link between our modern epidemic of anxiety and the most basic act of living...

I'm talking about breathing.

The truth is most people have lost the art of breathing properly. We breathe mostly through our mouths and into our chests, and we do it way too fast.

And in the internet age, the problem has become worse — which at least partly explains why the number of anxiety disorders has surged over the past 25 years.

There's even a phenomenon called "email apnea." This occurs when people are so focused on their phones or computers, they either breathe shallowly or don't breathe at all.

This can have a profound effect on both your physical and your mental health, because bad breathing habits directly equate to a lack of oxygen being delivered to your body and brain.

It shouldn't be surprising that an Australian study found that a staggering 83% of people with anxiety have dysfunctional breathing and that's not a coincidence.[3]

The Norwegian HUNT study, which looked at 250,000 people between 2011 and 2019 — found that poor breathing habits can be both a result and a trigger of anxiety.[4]

In other words, anxiety may lead to changed breathing patterns — but these patterns can also heighten anxiety by sending signals to the brain to perceive a threat.

Meanwhile, other studies reveal that panicked breathing has a direct impact on the *amygdala*, the part of the brain that manages our emotional responses.[5]

And it turns out that techniques like hyperventilating or mouth breathing, which are often recommended to calm anxiety, can trigger even more anxiety by lowering your body's CO2 tolerance and amplifying the natural fight-or-flight response.

Whatever life events you feel are piling on stress — car payments, rising insurance costs, the 30-year mortgage, your children, or the worsening political crisis — your ability to cope depends on how well you breathe.

Deep and meaningful breathing offers a different approach to coping with anxiety.

Have You Heard Of Diaphragmatic Breathing?

In a 2017 study, a group of participants with severe anxiety disorders were assigned to take a course in diaphragmatic breathing relaxation. It involved breathing deeply into the abdomen, rather than taking shallow breaths into the chest.[6]

Participants who were assigned to diaphragmatic breathing reported much less anxiety compared with a group that didn't receive the training. They also showed fewer physical signs of anxiety — lower heart rate and slower breathing — and a better ability to cope with it before panic attacks struck.

In another study published in the *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, researchers told participants they were going to receive electric shocks (which were never actually administered). Some of the participants practiced breathing slowly beforehand, while others focused on breathing at a normal rate or didn't regulate their breathing at all.[7]

The slow breathers — at about eight breaths per minute — not only reported feeling less anxious while anticipating the pain, but they also showed lower anxiety on a physical level, as measured by sweat and blood flow to the fingers.

Proper Breathing Beats So Much More Than Just Stress

Learning to breathe the right way benefits every part of your body from your heart to your brain — and even your sex hormones.

Most doctors won't tell you about it. But when this system is working right, you'll:

- Feel more energized
- Have better concentration
- Sleep soundly
- Eliminate mood swings
- Think more clearly
- Have fewer food cravings
- Have a positive frame of mind
- Maintain a healthy weight

The proper breathing techniques can also protect you all the way down to your DNA. And a breakthrough study proves it.

The study wanted to know if stressful events — like the extreme destructive weather we've been seeing over the past decade — could speed up the aging process.

Scientists at Arizona State University's School of Life Sciences recently discovered that the stress triggered by extreme weather events could result in internal inflammation storms and molecular changes. These can cause your body to accelerate aging and cut your life short by a staggering 7-8 years.[8]

The researchers, who studied the biological impact of Hurricane Maria after it slammed into Puerto Rico in September 2017, found that the stress levels activated by the category 4 storm caused the down-regulation of specific genes associated with chronic inflammation.

In turn, this dramatically raised the risk of:

- Cardiovascular disease
- Alzheimer's disease
- Diabetes
- Impaired immune system function

The aging impact of the hurricane on gene expression was a reflection of the damage being done to the telomeres of the storm victims.

If you're a regular reader, you'll know that telomeres are the tiny tails at the end of each strand of DNA in the nucleus of each of your cells. They are also your hidden biological clock and determine how fast you age.

The longer your telomeres are, the younger your cells act. The shorter your telomeres, the more prone you are to chronic diseases and "old age."

Multiple studies show that high levels of the stress hormone cortisol attack your telomeres, grinding them down and accelerating the aging process.[9]

It wasn't until the discovery of telomeres that we could prove stress causes you to age more quickly. Because of this discovery, I can show you ways to help slow down the aging process right now.

It's never too early to take control and maintain your telomere length. A recent study shows that people who suffer from depression, anxiety, and stress have much shorter telomeres... and they've measured the effect in children as young as 11.[13]

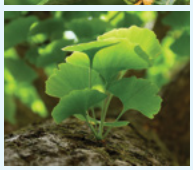
The effects of stress on telomeres also get worse with age if you don't do anything about it. Studies show that women with high stress who are over 55 have significantly shorter telomeres.[14]

A study from the University of California looked at women under severe emotional stress and compared them to women with normal stress levels of the same age group. The high-stress women had aged up to 10 years faster than women with low stress levels.

"Super Adaptogens" End Stress And Protect Telomeres

Adaptogens are a group of natural herbs that have been used in ancient medicine for centuries.

There are three that I call "super adaptogens" because they're the most effective at protecting your telomere length from stress-related damage. They are:



- **Asian ginseng.** Ginseng is particularly effective against chronic stress — the kind of relentless pressure so common in our modern world. According to a study in Current Clinical Pharmacology, Siberian ginseng lowers levels of cortisol — the main stress hormone.[10]
- **Ashwagandha.** This Indian root has been used in ancient Ayurvedic medicine for thousands of years to counter stress and aid in longevity. Research also shows those taking it reduced stress 71% in two months.[11] Take 250 mg twice daily.
- ***Ginkgo.*** A four-week study showed that Ginkgo reduced anxiety in a group of traumatized war refugees.[12]

I recommend 200 mg of Asian ginseng and 30 mg each of Ashwagandha and Gingko daily.

An Ohio State University study linked shorter telomeres to high-stress occupations such as long-term caregivers of Alzheimer's patients. The Alzheimer's caregivers showed a four to eight year shortening of life span.[15]

Ancient Art Of Breathing

I've been recommending anxiety-busting breathing strategies to my patients for decades. One of my favorites is the ancient art of Qi Gong.

This gentle breathing exercise is thousands of years old. It's based on the principle that "energy follows breath," and millions of people practice it in Asia to ward off migraines, diabetes, heart disease, and digestive problems.

Its graceful, relaxed movements are accompanied by soft, steady abdominal breathing.

I've practiced it for many years now, and it gives me a sense of serene wellness. The good news is anyone at any age can learn Qi Gong.

- Begin by placing the tip of your tongue gently on the roof of your mouth. This "completes the circuit" so your energy can flow freely.
- Next, take a comfortable, relaxed stance with an ever-so-slight bend in your knees. Your chin is slightly tucked. Your pelvis is rotated slightly forward, not back.
- Some practitioners find it helps to imagine being suspended from an invisible string attached to the top of their head and extending down through their body. The idea is to achieve proper body alignment, thereby allowing *your breath-energy to flow unimpeded*.
- Hold your hands out in front of you as if you're holding an invisible ball. The palms face each other about 12 to 18 inches apart.
- As you inhale through the nose, slowly move your hands apart like the ball is expanding. As you softly exhale, bring your hands back to the starting point. The tongue should lightly touch the roof of your mouth, right behind your front teeth.
- As they breathe, some practitioners visualize a white stream of energy flowing out from a point about 2 inches below the belly button, known as the Tan T'ien in traditional Chinese medicine. This is the "reservoir" where your energy collects and builds.
- Keep your mind clear and focus on your breathing. Repeat the movement four times and remember to synchronize your breathing. Over time, build up to six or seven repetitions.
- Next, turn your palms face up at about the level of your navel. As you breathe in, gradually raise your hands up to your pectoral muscles. Then rotate your palms down and softly exhale as you lower your hands back down to where you started.

Very gradually, build up to 10 to 20 minutes of Qi Gong daily. It's a great way to start each day ... and you'll have less stress and stronger lungs.

One of the most effective anxiety-busting breathing strategies is the ancient art of Qi Gong.

3 Simple Ways To Easily And Effectively Breathe Away Stress

I've been recommending anxiety-busting breathing strategies to my patients for decades. Here are three of my favorites...

1. Practice the Marine mind trick. This mindfulness meditation exercise is used by the U.S. Marines and Special Forces to knock out stress and anxiety — and increase telomerase.[16] As you recall, telomerase is the enzyme that rebuilds telomere length.

And it's not only marines who use this trick.

One study looked at family caregivers in their very stressful jobs. Researchers found that after only eight weeks, those who meditated with deep breathing significantly lowered their levels of anxiety and depressive symptoms and had better overall mental health.[17]

Here's the technique the Marines and Special Forces use. One thing to remember is that the benefits come from being mindful and keeping focused on your breathing.

- Sit in a comfortable position, close your eyes.
- Let your awareness settle on the movement of your breath.
- Follow the in-breath and out-breath, perhaps by saying "breathing in, breathing out" quietly to yourself.
- Sit upright, with spine straightened and chin tucked in, while you calmly focus on your breath.
- Do this for 10 to 15 minutes for a calmer outlook on your day.

2. The 4-7-8 breathing technique. I recommend *pranayama* — the yogic practice of focusing on your breath — as an anxiety reliever. In yoga, breath is associated with prana, and pranayama is a way to boost your prana-shakti, or life energies. It's also called the 4-7-8 technique.

Here's what you do...

- **First:** Empty your lungs until there's no more air. Exhale completely. Force out every drop.
- **Second:** Inhale deeply for a slow count of 4. Fill your lungs until you can't inhale any more.
- **Third:** Hold your breath for a slow count of 7. Anticipating the exhalation creates a calming effect.
- **Fourth:** Now exhale for a count of 8. Empty your lungs fully, then push out any remaining air. This is the part we usually forget, but it's the most crucial. As you exhale, you will feel yourself relax.

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The Key To Better Gut Health Is MORE Stomach Acid, Not Less

If you suffer from acid reflux, you may have been brainwashed by TV commercials into believing your problem is that you have too much stomach acid.

This couldn't be further from the truth.

You probably need more stomach acid, not less — which is often the cause of acid reflux in the first place.

Most doctors will throw Big Pharma "treatments" at you, like proton-pump inhibitors (PPIs). You may know them better as omeprazole, esomeprazole, and lansoprazole. They're sold under the names Prilosec, Prevacid, and Nexium.

These drugs aim to relieve acid reflux by causing a profound and prolonged reduction of your stomach acid production.

They work by inhibiting your stomach's gastric hydrogen-potassium-ATPase proton pump, which activates the acid.

But acid reflux is not caused by too much acid.

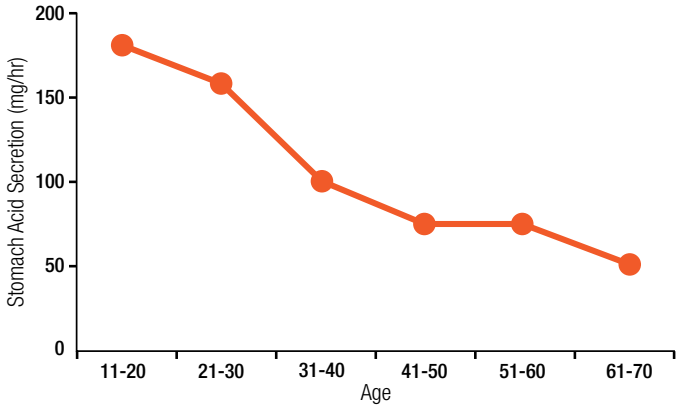
The real cause is the inefficient closing of your lower esophageal sphincter (LES), a small muscle that opens and closes to allow food to move from your esophagus into your stomach.

This is the result of an overload of unnatural grains, preservatives, artificial sweeteners and other additives in the modern American diet. Your body has a hard time breaking down these alien ingredients.

When your LES doesn't close completely, food, bile, and acid flow back into your esophagus, causing painful heartburn and indigestion.

Blocking the production of your stomach acid will provide only temporary relief, and it's like declaring war on your own body. And of course, that's never a good idea.

The Real Acid Test



As you age, you produce less stomach acid — NOT more.

You see, when your stomach doesn't produce enough acid, key minerals and proteins can't be absorbed into your body. And if your body doesn't get the necessary nutrients, you can become vitamin or mineral deficient.

Stomach acid also helps protect you from harmful bacteria — like H. Pylori. This bug thrives in a low-acid environment and is a major cause of stomach and duodenal ulcers, gastritis and even gastric cancer.[2]

In fact, as you get older, your body produces LESS stomach acid. A study published in the *American Journal of Digestive Diseases* shows that 69% of adults over the age of 80 suffer from achlorhydria — LOW stomach acid.[3]

Stomach acid is also responsible for killing harmful bacteria from foods. Low gastric acid can leave the body vulnerable to a number of diseases and health complications.

How We Got Here

Since gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD) was first identified in the 1930s, the number of people experiencing heartburn has increased substantially. In fact, one study shows that in just 10 years, the number of people experiencing:[1]

- Any GERD symptoms increased 30%
- Symptoms at least once a week increased 47%
- Severe GERD increased 24%

While these numbers are concerning, I'll admit they're not surprising considering the typical American diet.

Our nutrition-less, grain-based diet of carbohydrates and starches has wrecked our health and made our bodies behave in ways nature never intended.

This has led to an epidemic of chronic diseases like Alzheimer's, diabetes, heart disease, cancer, obesity — and even gastroesophageal reflux disease.

Today, more than 60 million people in the U.S. to experience the painful burning sensation of gastroesophageal reflux disease at least once a week and in many cases, every day.

And instead of advising patients to eat the natural diet of their ancestors, doctors continue to dole out Big Pharma's heartburn medications like candy.

Low Stomach Acid Has Also Been Linked To...

- Nausea
- Malnutrition
- Constipation
- Diabetes
- Asthma
- Osteoporosis
- Leaky gut syndrome
- Cancer
- Rheumatoid arthritis
- Small intestinal bacterial overgrowth (SIBO)

It's true these drugs can sometimes be effective at reducing your stomach acid. So they will help your heartburn — but they only proved short-term relief.

But reducing your stomach acid is not a lasting solution to your problem.

And brand-new studies show there are some pretty serious downsides to using PPIs. Side effects that are so dangerous, mainstream medicine is finally starting to understand the cure is worse than the disease.

Ditch Dangerous Heartburn Drugs

I've warned my patients and readers to avoid these dangerous drugs for years. And it seems like the message is finally starting to get through to mainstream medicine.

Guidelines published in the *Journal of Post-Acute and Long-Term Care Medicine* advise doctors to stop prescribing PPIs long-term and suggest only taking them "as needed."[4]

That's because, as I've been saying for years, the risks outweigh the benefits. Sadly, as my patients confirm, traditionally trained doctors still haven't gotten the message that PPIs are linked to an increased risk of many diseases, including:

■ **Heart attack and stroke.** Researchers found that long-term usage of these PPIs had a negative effect on the cells that line the interior of blood vessels.[5]

Here's why that's important... Normally, protective endothelial cells produce substances that relax your blood vessels. They create a slick "Teflon" coating inside the vessels. This protects your heart by preventing plaque or blood clots from sticking to blood vessels and forming blockages.

When waste builds up in your body, it hampers the ability of cells to protect your blood vessels.

Instead of Teflon, your blood vessels become more like Velcro. The plaque and blood clots begin to stick. When this happens, you're at a greater risk of heart disease, kidney disease, and dementia.

And that's not all the researchers found.

PPIs also affect lysosomes. Those are acid-producing cells in your body that clear up unwanted debris. Without enough acid to remove the waste, the cells protecting your blood vessels age rapidly. That can lead to a heart attack and stroke.

■ **Diabetes.** New research has found that people who regularly take PPIs are almost twice as likely to develop diabetes.[6] And the longer these patients took the drugs, the higher their risk.

For the meta-analysis, published in the journal *Gut*, researchers looked at almost 205,000.

Volunteers were asked if they used PPIs at least twice a week in the last two years. After accounting for other outside factors, the researchers determined that the risk of type 2 diabetes diagnosis among PPI users was 24% higher compared to those not taking PPIs. Using the pills for longer than two years increased the risk even more.

■ **Hip fractures.** A study published in *BMJ* found that postmenopausal women who took a PPI for two years were at a greater risk for breaking a hip.[7]

For nearly eight years, researchers followed 80,000 women. In that time, there were about 900 hip fractures.

Compared with women who never used PPIs, the women who regularly relied on these acid suppressing drugs had a 35% greater risk of hip fracture.

■ **Dementia and Alzheimer's.** I recently read a "scientific" study denying the evidence of at least two major independent studies linking PPIs with Alzheimer's and dementia.

After a little research, I wasn't very surprised to discover that two of the study's lead authors have strong ties to the drug companies that manufacture PPIs. One of the researchers even serves as a consultant for Pfizer, which makes Nexium. This top-selling heartburn med makes them more than $9.5 billion a year.[8,9]

But the evidence is crystal clear: Even though Big Pharma wants to bury the conclusions of two key independent studies, PPIs do raise your risk of dementia.

In the first study, the researchers collected data from almost 74,000 seniors over seven years and found that people who regularly take PPIs have a 44% increased risk of dementia. At the start of the study, none of the seniors had cognitive problems. But seven years later, almost 30,000 PPI users were diagnosed with dementia.[10]

Even more shocking was that most of the patients had only used a PPI for a short time — in some cases, just once every three months.

The second study closely tracked more than 3,300 people for six years and found PPI users had a 38% increased risk of dementia and a 44% increased risk of Alzheimer's.[11]

Additional research has also connected PPIs to:

- Chronic kidney disease[12]
- Osteoporosis[13]
- Liver cancer[14]
- Iron deficiency and anemia[15]

Make Small Changes For Long-Term Relief

Avoid these foods. If your heartburn is persistent, there are some easy, initial changes you should make that can have a big impact. You should avoid or minimize smoking, caffeine, alcohol, citrus juices, spicy foods, and greasy and fried foods.

These can make your heartburn symptoms worse and contribute to LES malfunction.

And here's another tip. Don't lie down within three hours of eating a meal. Research shows this can aggravate heartburn symptoms. And if possible, sleep on your left side to reduce reflux. When you do this, gravity will work in your favor since your stomach is now positioned below your esophagus. This makes reflux more difficult. Should stomach acid escape, gravity is able to return it to your stomach quicker than when on your right side or on your back.

Also try to maintain a healthy weight. You should also try to maintain a healthy body weight. Excess abdominal fat put pressure on your stomach and your LES. This makes it easier for

stomach acid to flow back into your esophagus.[16] Losing 10 to 15 pounds can reduce heartburn by 40%.[17]

Extinguish Heartburn With 6 Simple Remedies

You don't need to pop pills to get relief from heartburn. There are a few favorite alternatives that I often recommend to patients:

1. **Ginger root:** Research shows ginger can strengthen the lower esophageal sphincter (LES). Add one-half teaspoon of freshly grated ginger root to a cup of hot water. Let the ginger steep for 10 minutes. Strain the ginger and drink.

2. **Peppermint:** You can take this in capsule form. But for optimal effect, use fresh peppermint. Place a wad of peppermint leaves between your molars and chew for a minute before swallowing. The calming effect on your stomach is almost immediate.

3. **D-limonene:** This is an extract from orange peel that's highly effective. In one study, 90% of the people reported complete relief of their heartburn symptoms in just two weeks. What's more, the effect lasted for six months after they stopped taking it.[18] Take 1,000 mg every other day for 20 days. Then take a maintenance dose as needed.

4. **Zinc:** Zinc has incredibly powerful gastro-protective effects. One study compared zinc to Pepcid. The result? Patients in the zinc group experienced identical symptom relief to those who took drug.[19] Aim for 96 mg of elemental zinc per day.

5. **Betaine hydrochloride and pepsin:** Taking hydrochloric acid (HCL) and pepsin (a digestive enzyme) with every meal eliminates heartburn symptoms and helps break down food. Thousands of patients have experienced relief as a result of taking an HCL and pepsin combination.[20] I've found it to be the case for many of my patients as well. Take 600 mg before each meal.

6. **Deglycyrrhizinated licorice (DGL):** DGL increases mucus production, which creates a barrier that protects stomach and esophageal tissue from acid and may help prevent future acid reflux.[21] And adults who took 75 mg of DGL twice a day for one month experienced reduced heartburn compared to those who took a placebo.[22] Look for a formula that contains 1 gram of mastic gum extract and 760 mg of DGL.

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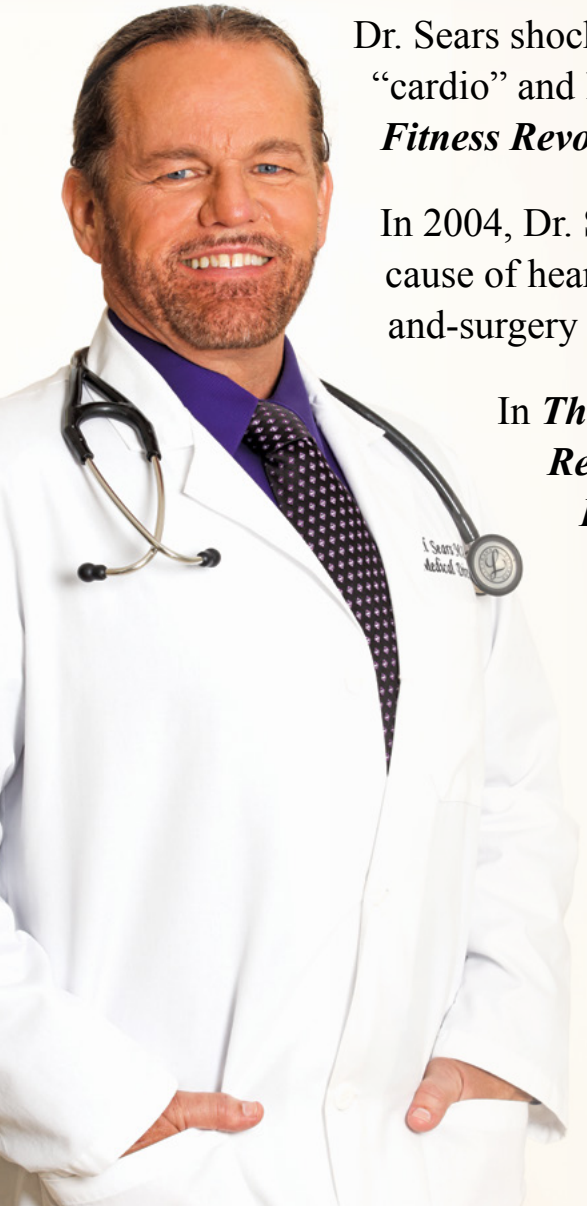
Al Sears, MD

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).