

# HEALTHfirst

Your neighbourhood nutrition source

## What's Inside:

Healthy Liver	2
Lung, Bronchial & Sinus Health	2
Sunscreens	3
Detoxification Strategies	3
Good Hair Days	4

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## You can't live without daily nutrients

by Lorna R Vanderhaeghe, BSc

You have probably asked, "Why should we take supplements? I have heard we can get all our nutrients from our food." The answer is simple. No longer does science believe that we can get all our nutrient needs from the foods we eat. Over 50 percent of Canadian women do not eat breakfast. Lunch is often a sandwich and dinner is a piece of meat with one vegetable and a starch. And there are problems with the way our food is produced. Foods are harvested before they are ripe; foods are grown on soils exhausted of their essential elements; we eat parts of the plant and not the whole food; we eat refined or highly processed foods devoid of nutrients. Over thirty nutrients are removed during the milling process of grains, but only a few are added back during processing.

If you are like most women you may be too busy to eat, on a weight-loss diet or fitness program, or if you are under stress, you cannot get all your nutrients from food. If you are taking the birth control pill, it depletes your body of B vitamins and folic acid so it is imperative that you take essential nutrients.

As a woman over forty with two daughters (my oldest a mother of four children), I know how important multi-nutrients are to our health. Nutrients aren't optional – they are essential and they ensure our heart stays strong well into our nineties; that our breasts are protected from disease; that our thyroid functions properly and our bones don't break. Fuel your body with the right nutrients and you will reap the rewards of health and vitality.



## Enzymes: Improving digestion, increasing energy

Involved in almost every biochemical activity in the body, enzymes have earned their reputation as the "sparks of life." Enzymes are catalysts in digesting food, stimulating the brain, supplying cellular energy and in repairing tissues, organs and cells. Simply put, we can't live without enzymes.

Unfortunately, many of us don't consume enough enzymes in our diet. The over-processing and over-cooking of modern foods can destroy these important molecules. Regular occurring indigestion is often the initial symptom of poor enzyme activity. This occurs when there are insufficient enzymes to properly digest food, resulting in an excess of hydrogen and carbon dioxide from undigested and fermenting food. Anyone who has experienced bouts of bloating and gas knows the discomfort of indigestion.

A full spectrum enzyme supplement can be an effective way to get relief from indigestion from a variety of food types. Some of the specific enzymes to look for in such a supplement are:

- Protease and enzyme-rich bromelain to break down proteins
- Lipase to break down fats
- Amylase and amyloglucosidase to break down carbohydrates
- Cellulase and hemicellulase to break down fibres
- Lactase to break down milk sugars

Not only can enzymes help with indigestion, but the increased energy you will feel due to the improved absorption of important food nutrients is yet another reason to supplement with a full spectrum enzyme formula.



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## HEALTH FIRST Advisory Panel



### Cheryl Wright

is a Registered Nutritional Consultant from the Greater Toronto area. She currently lectures on holistic nutrition and specializes in digestive care and cleansing.

### Lorna R. Vanderhaeghe, BSc

is a medical journalist who has been researching and writing on the subject of nutritional medicine for over 20 years. She has a Bachelor of Science degree in Biochemistry. The author of *An A-Z Woman's Guide to Vibrant Health* and co-author of *No More HRT*.



### Dr. Michael Murray, ND

is a graduate of Bastyr University in Seattle, Washington, and the author of over 20 books including co-author of "How to Prevent and Treat Diabetes with Natural Medicine". Dr. Murray is Director of Product Development for Natural Factors Nutritional Products Ltd.

# Healthy Liver = Healthy You!

by Cheryl Wright

A healthy liver is vital for good health. When one considers the sheer quantity of toxins filtered through the liver each day, it is easy to see why it is one of the most important organs in the body. If allowed to become unhealthy or 'sluggish', it can cause problems throughout the entire body and wreak havoc with its systems.

The liver has many functions in the body, but its main role is detoxification. It does this through 2 different mechanisms or 'phases of detoxification'.

- **Phase I** eliminates toxins through a group of enzymes, 'Cytochrome P450', which breakdown toxins into non-toxic substances.
- **Phase II** involves the process 'conjugation', which binds toxins to other substances (such as glutathione, methionine, and sulfur). Once bound, these toxins can be safely eliminated.

### Many different herbs and amino acids help to support and enhance liver function:

- Glutathione is essential for Phase II detoxification.
  - Alpha Lipoic Acid stimulates glutathione production.
  - L-Methionine and N-Acetyl-Cysteine are amino acid precursors to 'glutathione'.
- Milk Thistle prevents depletion of glutathione and it is also effective for various liver diseases.
- L-Taurine increases 'sulfaction' conjugation,

which detoxifies drugs, food additives, intestinal toxins and removes excess steroid and thyroid hormones.

### A number of ayurvedic herbs also protect the cells of the liver including;

- Eclipta Alba
- Tinospora Cordifolia
- Andrographis Paniculata
- Picrorhiza Kurroa

When cleansing the liver use supportive ingredients like those above, and herbs which stimulate the production of bile and Phase 1 liver detoxification (Artichoke Leaf, Dandelion Root and Eclipta Alba). Bile carries toxins into the small intestine, where it is absorbed by fibre and eliminated through the colon.

Cleansing the liver at least 1-2 times per year can help you to achieve healthier liver function, a necessity for optimal health.

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## Natural Support for Lung, Bronchial & Sinus Health

by Dr. Michael Murray, ND

We often take a good breath of air for granted. However, for millions suffering from chronic sinusitis, asthma, bronchitis, chronic obstructive lung disease, and other diseases of the respiratory tract an effortless breath of air is greatly appreciated.

Elasticity and fluidity of the respiratory tract secretions is the key. If the mucus is too thick and viscous, it creates blocked airways and difficulty in breathing. Fortunately natural therapies can improve these secretions and lead to easier breathing. Some key supporting nutrients include:

**N-acetylcysteine (NAC)** has an extensive history of use as a mucolytic in the treatment of acute and chronic lung conditions such as emphysema, bronchitis, chronic asthma, and cystic fibrosis. As a result it improves bronchial and lung function, reduces cough, and improves oxygen saturation in the blood.

**Ivy extract** is proven to reduce bronchial spasm, improve respiratory secretions, lung function and reduce asthma attacks.

**Bromelain** is shown to clear the airways, suppress coughs, and reduce the viscosity of respiratory tract secretions, believed to be the result of its respiratory decongesting effect.

**Mullein** is one of the most important herbs for the relief of chest congestion and dry, irritating coughs. Mullein heals and alleviates inflammation of the upper respiratory tract, dissolves phlegm and encourages expectoration.

**Horehound** - The German Commission E has approved horehound for the treatment of bronchial catarrh. The volatile oil, tannin and a bitter principle called marrubiin, are responsible for its medicinal action.

**Wild cherry bark** offers more than just flavouring, its use for reducing symptoms of respiratory distress is without equal in the herb kingdom.

**Marshmallow** protects and soothes inflamed mucous membranes. Marshmallow's demulcent

qualities bring relief to dry coughs, bronchial asthma, bronchial congestion, and pleurisy.



# Sunscreens Are Important Year Round



According to the American Cancer Society, skin cancer is the most common type of cancer. It is caused by a combination of factors: UV Index, skin type and exposure time. The American Cancer Society projects that half of all Americans who live to age 65 will develop skin cancer. Eighty percent of our lifetime exposure occurs before 18 years of age. As such, sunscreens have become a standard household item. However, it is important to remember that sunscreens can only help increase your exposure time; they can't change your skin type or the UV Index.

Sunscreens only diminish the amount of sunrays that reach the skin; they do not totally block skin from exposure. The SPF (Sun Protection Factor) indicates the level of protection against the sun's UVB rays. UVB rays cause burning which contributes to skin cancer. A "broad-spectrum" sunscreen also protects against the sun's UVA rays, further contributors of skin aging and cancer.

A SPF rating assumes adequate and frequent use. For maximum effectiveness, sunscreen needs to be applied liberally 20 - 30 minutes prior to sun exposure and generally reapplied every 2 hours. Lotions are preferred as they provide even coverage. Re-apply after towel drying, extended water activity or heavy perspiring. During swimming or sweating due to activity, a "water-

resistant" sunscreen will retain its stated SPF for 40 minutes; while a "very water-resistant" sunscreen for 80 minutes. The average adult will use approximately 1 ounce per application for full coverage: that's 3 - 5 ounces per day for continuous exposure. Re-application is especially important to the face, neck, arms, hands, feet, tops of ears & shoulders and upper back.

A guideline to calculate your safe exposure time is as follows: estimate the amount of time it would take you to burn without sunscreen and multiply this by the SPF. For example, if you typically burn in 10 minutes, SPF 18 will protect you for roughly 180 minutes or 3 hours.

Clearly, it is important to wear sunscreen more frequently, even in the winter when the sun's damaging effects are not as obvious. Daily facial sunscreen is important to prevent premature aging such as wrinkles and skin discoloration. However, the era of choosing a sunscreen based solely on the SPF rating is gone. There are specific formulations for children or for allergenic skin types, for example. Since we'll be wearing them more often, it makes sense to choose sunscreen wisely: one that nourishes as well as protects.

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## Detoxification Strategies for Optimum Health

### Indicators of optimal health include:

- Ample energy to enjoy life
- Stable mood patterns
- Effortless initiation of sleep, refreshed upon waking
- Regular daily bowel movements

When out of balance, the body produces signals or 'symptoms' (e.g. headache). Conventional medicines simply blunt symptoms while allowing the underlying disease to progress. Conversely, addressing symptoms at their root reverses the onset of disease.

Disease begins at a tissue level. Built-in defense mechanisms combat invading toxins. However, when our defenses become overburdened, toxins disrupt the delicate pH balance. This leads to inflammation, congestion and a "leaky gut" which allows toxins to re-enter the bloodstream from the colon. Over time, accumulated toxins lead to dysfunction of the immune and endocrine systems which fosters the onset of auto-immune conditions such as Crohn's disease, multiple sclerosis, and of endocrine disorders such as diabetes, chronic fatigue syndrome, infertility. Further dysfunction overloads the DNA system creating mutations and cellular dysfunction.

### Steps to reversing the disease process:

- Alleviate toxins in body & environment
- Re-establish pH balance
- Decrease membrane permeability ("leaky gut")
- Flood body with nutrients and antioxidants
- Maximize elimination pathways: bile secretion, bowel movements, urination, sweating, exhalation
- Re-set immune function
- "Rest and relax" the nervous system
- Increase tissue perfusion via blood circulation, organ muscle relaxation & lymph flow
- Decrease cell destruction

As many factors contribute to disease, many aspects of life must change to re-establish optimum health. Nature has provided us with many helpful herbs such as burdock, slippery elm, blessed thistle and watercress to remove toxins, and Turkish rhubarb, red clover, sheep sorrel and kelp to re-set immune function. Choose certified organic herbs when available, and keep in mind that liquid extracts are far more easily absorbed and utilized by the body. Given the right nutrients and conditions, the body will heal itself.



So you know about multi-vitamins.

## What about multi-EFAs?

Essential fatty acids, also known as “EFAs” or “good fats”, are critical to our everyday health. In fact, they are as important to us as vitamins. While the idea of taking a multi-vitamin for health insurance is considered common sense, all too many of us are unaware that taking a multi-EFA supplement is equally important.

EFAs are indeed essential. They are needed for maintaining cell wall and membrane structure, energy and hormone production and normal functioning of the brain, nerves and eyes. Further, studies show that EFAs help us deal with such serious health issues as heart disease, rheumatoid arthritis, diabetes, mental disorders and cancer. The most important fatty acids are ALA (alpha

linolenic acid), GLA (gamma linolenic acid), and Omega-3 fatty acids (including EPA and DHA). We can obtain these fatty acids in fish, flaxseed, nuts and various seed oils.

With the busy lives that most of us lead today and our tendency to eat processed, convenience-oriented foods low in good fats and high in bad fats, getting enough essential fatty acids through food alone is almost impossible. What can we do? The most convenient way to get the essential fats needed for optimal health is to select a quality multi-EFA product. A good multi-EFA supplement contains a full spectrum of omega 3, omega 6 and omega 9 fatty acids from oils such as borage, flax and fish. Make a multi-EFA a part of your daily health routine.

## Iron Deficiency – *a Worldwide Nutrition Dilemma*

Iron deficiency affects up to twenty-six per cent of the global population, and is one of the most common dietary deficiencies worldwide. Iron is essential to hemoglobin formation and the effective circulation of oxygen throughout the body. Without adequate levels of iron in the blood, a person will feel very tired and fatigued.

The high-risk groups for iron deficiency are women, vegetarians and athletes: women due to the monthly loss of blood, vegetarians because of the absence of iron-rich meat in their diet, and athletes because of the intense loss of fluid and minerals. Because fatigue has many causes, people often suffer from

iron deficiency without realizing what the problem is.

The best food sources of iron are red meat and dark green leafy vegetables. However, even with these foods in the diet, iron deficiency still occurs because of the difficulty in absorbing that iron. Dr. Gerhard Schrauzer, PhD, director of the San Diego-based Biological Trace Element Research Institute and Professor Emeritus, states in his research that minerals, such as iron, are better absorbed in solution than in solids. This means that liquid iron puts less stress on digestion and results in higher absorption than tablets, capsules or even food.



Have Good  
Hair Days...  
Naturally.

When it comes to body and hair care products the list of what's not in the product can be even more important than the actual ingredient list. Many common ingredients such as DEA, paraben, sodium lauryl sulfate and petroleum derivatives are suspected of causing endocrine hormone disruption leading to serious health concerns. As customers learn more about the dangers of many standard ingredients used in popular brands of hair care products, they are seeking alternatives that will still make their hair look and feel healthy and beautiful. Market analysis statistics published in Nutrition Business Journal show the natural personal care market continues to grow at double-digit rates with the hair care segment growing at a rate of 17% annually.

Learn to read labels and question ingredients. Here are a few to avoid:

- 1. Paraben** - Evidence suggests that paraben preservatives act as endocrine disruptors and estrogen mimickers and have been detected in breast milk and tissue. Look for a product that uses a natural enzyme-based preservative like glucose & glucose oxidase and lactoperoxidase.
- 2. Sodium lauryl sulphates** - These dry and irritate the skin and eyes. Sulfosuccinates, such as disodium oleamido, are much less reactive and irritating surfactants as they are made with sulphonic acid, not sulphuric acid, and are derived from a wheat germ oil base. Sulfosuccinates belong to a new, more effective class of shampoo agents.
- 3. Petroleum** - This semisolid mixture of hydrocarbons is derived from petrochemicals i.e. mineral oil, paraffin wax and propylene glycol. These petroleum by-products actually dry, clog and suffocate the skin/scalp (the body's largest organ) by forming a film, thereby almost stopping new cell development.
- 4. Artificial fragrances or colours** - As petroleum-based synthetics, these do not degrade in the environment and frequently cause allergies and skin/eye irritation. Look for products that use pure, natural plant oils as fragrances and food-based colours like blueberry, chlorella and grape.
- 5. DEA** - Diethanolamine (DEA), Cocamide DEA, Fatty Acid DEAs, Triethanolamines (TEA), and Monoethanolamines (MEA) are synthetics used in soaps, bubble baths, facial cleansers, dishwashing liquids. These chemicals are made from coconut or animal oil and a component of diethanolamine, a derivative of ammonia. DEA/TEA/MEA are known hormone disrupters and are suspected blood, heart, liver, kidney and skin toxins/neurotoxins and should be avoided.



Look for our Health First Sale Flyer in April.

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