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Health, Mind & Body



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Freezing fat cells may be a way to achieve a slimmer physique without the need for surgery.

Fat freezing is billed as a treatment that can eliminate people's fat cells in predominately troublesome areas of the body to create a slim physique. Also known as cryolipolysis, this noninvasive procedure is attracting a growing number of people interested in reshaping areas of their bodies without the need for going under the knife. Liposuction has traditionally been one of the more popular procedures for removing excess fat and helping to mold the body. WebMD says liposuction removes fat using suction. A small, thick, blunt-tipped cannula is inserted through tiny cuts in the skin. Fat

Fat-freezing techniques 'heating' up

is then vacuumed out through these tubes as the doctor moves the tubes around to target certain fat deposits. Although newer techniques, including using various anesthetics, have been introduced to make liposuction more comfortable, swelling, bruising and pain as well as fluid drainage from the incision sites may result.

Fat freezing, which is primarily known by the name CoolSculpting®, is a Food and Drug Administration-cleared, nonsurgical procedure that helps to eliminate fat. The company states that it uses controlled cooling to eliminate fat that resists the effort of diet and exercise.

The concept of fat freezing actually started with a popular dessert. Scientists at Harvard University discovered that some children who ate popsicles ended up with dimples in their cheeks. Doctors Dieter Manstein and R. Rox Anderson later concluded that the popsicles froze and eliminated small pockets of fat cells without damaging skin or surrounding tissue. This was the science behind cryolipolysis.

The doctors developed a system to deliver precisely controlled cooling to target fat cells under the skin. The crystalized cells die and are naturally eliminated from the body through time.

Dermatologists and medical spas are increasingly offering fat-freezing services to their clients. Many people are attracted to CoolSculpting because it doesn't require surgery.

According to Zeltiq Aesthetics, the original parent company of the CoolSculpting technology, the FDA found the procedures offered "clinically meaningful" changes in 60 patients after treatment for the reduction of love handles. Six months after treatment, ultrasound measurements found an average 19 percent reduction of the targeted fat layer.

During a roughly one-hour treatment session, a vacuum device pulls on fat bulges and exposes the fat to cold. It may take several treatments to achieve desired results, and decreases in fat do not immediately occur, but can be seen two to four months later, on average. Treatments are not covered by insurance and can range from \$750 to \$2,000 per area.

Currently, there are no safety concerns, but the technology is still very new and there are no long-term study results. Side effects can include temporary redness, swelling, blanching, bruising, firmness, tingling, stinging, tenderness, cramping, aching, itching, or skin sensitivity, offers CoolSculpting.

According to the American Society for Dermatologic Surgery, CoolSculpting accounted for almost half of all body-sculpting treatments in 2016.

Freezing fat cells is another way that people may be able to rid themselves of stubborn, unwanted fat.

Methods to treating arthritic knees

Osteoarthritis of the joints can affect people of all ages, but is one of the leading causes of disability in the aged population in the United States. A study published in the *Caspian Journal of Internal Medicine* found incidence of knee OA is rising by increasing average age of the general population. Age, weight, trauma, and repetitive movements are common risk factors for the condition.

According to Dr. Scott Paris of Central Jersey Spine and Wellness, more than 27 million people in the country suffer from knee arthritis. An estimated 37 percent of Canadians aged 20 or older who had been diagnosed with arthritis reported osteoarthritis, with 29 percent occurring in the knees, states Statistics Canada. Knee arthritis occurs when there is a degeneration of articular cartilage that covers and protects the patella (knee cap) at the knee joint, offers the online resource Arthritis-Health. Since this cartilage has no nerve endings, some people can experience arthritis but feel no pain.

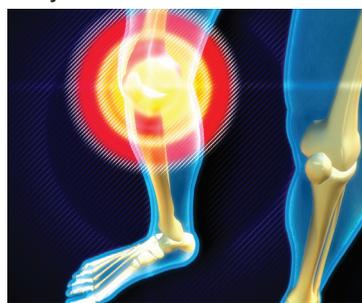
However, pain may occur when doing specific activities that cause impact between bones, like jumping, walking up stairs or certain sports.

Over time, knee arthritis may become worse, and pain can be accompanied by stiffness and loss of mobility. This

may be accompanied by knee locking or buckling. Those who suffer from knee OA may seek treatment. In 2014, the Osteoarthritis Research Society International, a nonprofit organization dedicated to promoting osteoarthritis research and treatment, updated its recommendations for the treatment of osteoarthritis targeted to different patient characteristics. The main categories of treatment include non-drug treatments, medication, injections, and surgery.

Non-drug treatments: Examples of non-drug treatments include exercise, stretching and range-of-movement

strategies. Weight loss can alleviate excess strain placed on the hips and knees and reduce pain. Braces, sleeves and orthotics may help reduce pain and joint stiffness when directed properly through a specialist.



Medications: Many medications are geared around reducing inflammation and pain and include over-the-counter pain relievers and NSAIDs, such as acetaminophen, ibuprofen and naproxen sodium. Topical NSAIDs may be tried, and these can

reduce the risk of gastrointestinal side effects from oral medications. OARS also found that the antidepressant duloxetine may help with chronic knee pain.

Injections: The Arthritis Foundation says that some doctors can inject corticosteroid compounds directly

into affected joints. Use of hyaluronic acid injections can supplement the natural substance that gives joint fluid its lubrication and viscosity. These injections may help relieve pain and improve mobility.

Surgery: In cases when the aforementioned treatments are unsuccessful, doctors may suggest surgery. The Arthritis Foundation says joint lavage and arthroscopic debridement, which involve flushing the joint with a sterile saline solution and the surgical removal of tissue fragments from the joint, are controversial but may help some people achieve short-term relief. Partial knee replacement may be another option that offers a similar improvement in function, but fewer complications than a total knee replacement. Osteoarthritis in the knee can be painful and restrictive. Working with a qualified doctor, individuals can develop a treatment plan that works for their specific conditions.

Safe ways to deal with sinus pressure

Sinuses are bony, hollow, air-filled cavities inside the face and skull. They are located in the low-center of the forehead, behind the eyes and in bones behind the nose.

Cedars-Sinai Medical Center says the sinuses lighten the skull and produce a mucus that moisturizes the inside of the nose.



Unfortunately, when colds or the flu strike, sinuses may become one of the first spots affected by these illnesses.

When the sinuses are working properly, mucus will drain into the nasal passages or out the back of the throat. Most of this drainage goes unnoticed. However, the American Sinus Institute says that factors such as allergies, illness, weather changes, dehydration, and dry air can make the sinus mucus thicker and drainage more difficult. This is when problems like infection, stuffiness or throat irritation may occur.

In order to combat sinus congestion and drainage concerns, people may try certain strategies that include flushing the sinuses and thinning the mucus. It is imperative to use safe flushing methods to keep the sinuses healthy.

Neti pots are among the more popular methods to flushing sinuses. These small teapot-like devices with elongated snouts have become a fixture in many medicine cabinets. Because they are drug-free alternatives, they can be handy for those worried about antihistamines making them drowsy or reacting with other drugs. Neti pots and other nasal irrigation systems use saline to moisten and clear out nasal passages to promote drainage of sinus cavities. However, according to the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, using these devices improperly can increase one's risk of infection. CBS News says that neti pots have even been linked to the deadly *Naegleria fowleri*, which is otherwise known as the "brain-eating" amoeba.

The key to preventing infection is to only use previously boiled, sterile or distilled water to irrigate. Tap water is not adequately filtered, says the FDA, and may contain low levels of organisms that can stay alive in nasal passages and potentially cause serious infections.

Those who are concerned about nasal irrigation safety may be wise to skip neti pots and use pre-packaged, sterile saline solutions that are bottled for the purpose of alleviating congestion. However, when prepared water is used in a clean neti pot or other device, these methods can be perfectly safe.

Sinuses can get clogged for many reasons. To free up breathing, people are urged to consult their physicians to learn more about how to safely irrigate their nasal passages.



Did you know?

Keeping newborn babies safe is a priority for mothers, fathers and other caregivers. Various ailments can afflict newborns, and one many new parents may be unfamiliar with is respiratory syncytial virus, or RSV. According to Hackensack Meridian Health, RSV is the leading cause of hospitalization of babies younger than one year of age in the United States. RSV produces symptoms similar to the common cold or the flu and can include runny nose, cough and trouble breathing. In severe cases, particularly in infants, a baby may need to

be hospitalized if his or her breathing is greatly compromised. Examples of severe infections include bronchiolitis (an inflammation of the small airways in the lung) and pneumonia. RSV also can affect adults, but healthy adults are usually only affected by mild symptoms, says the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. In such instances, recovery can take between one and two weeks. Researchers are looking into immunizing pregnant women against RSV as a way to help protect babies from the virus.



How aging adults can maintain their mental acuity

Aging is associated with or linked to a host of mental and physical side effects. For example, many adults expect their vision to deteriorate as they grow older. Such a side effect can be combatted with routine eye examinations that may indicate a need for a stronger eyeglass prescription, a relatively simple solution that won't impact adults' daily lives much at all. While physical side effects like diminished vision might not strike much fear in the hearts of aging men



and women, those same people may be concerned and/or frightened by the notion of age-related cognitive decline. Some immediately associate such decline with Alzheimer's disease, an irreversible, progressive brain disorder that gradually destroys memory and cognitive skills, ultimately compromising a person's ability to perform even the simplest of tasks. But age-related cognitive decline is not always symptomatic of Alzheimer's disease. Learning about Alzheimer's and how to maintain mental acuity can help aging men and women better understand the changes their brains might be undergoing as they near or pass retirement age.

Is Alzheimer's disease hereditary?

The National Institute on Aging notes that only a very rare form of Alzheimer's disease is inherited. Early-onset familial Alzheimer's disease, or FAD, is caused by mutations in certain genes. If these genes are passed down from parent to child, then the child is likely, but not certain, to get FAD. So while many adults may be concerned about Alzheimer's because one of their parents had the disease, the NIA notes that the majority of Alzheimer's cases are late-onset, which has no obvious family pattern.

Can Alzheimer's disease be prevented?

Studies of Alzheimer's disease are ongoing, but to date there is no definitive way to prevent the onset of the disease.

How can I maintain mental acuity as I age?

Researchers have not yet determined a way to prevent Alzheimer's disease, but adults can take certain steps to maintain their mental acuity into retirement.

Exercise regularly. Routine exercise may be most associated with physical benefits, but the NIA notes that such activity has been linked to benefits for the brain as well. For example, a 2011 study published in the journal *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America* found that aerobic exercise training increases the size of the hippocampus, leading to improvements in spatial memory. The NIA also notes that one study indicated exercise stimulated the brain's ability to maintain old network connections and make new ones vital to cognitive health.

Read more. Avid readers may be happy to learn that one of their favorite pastimes can improve the efficiency of their cognitive systems while delaying such systems' decline. A 2013 study published in the journal *Neurology* by researchers at Chicago's Rush University Medical Center found that mentally active lifestyles may not prevent the formations of plaques and tangles associated with Alzheimer's disease, but such lifestyles decreases

the likelihood that the presence of plaques or tangles will impair cognitive function.

Stay socially connected.

Maintaining social connections with family, friends and community members also can help women prevent cognitive decline. Epidemiologist Bryan James of the Rush Alzheimer's Disease Center studied how social activity affected cognitive decline, ultimately noting that the rate of cognitive decline was considerably lower among men and women who maintained social contact than it was among those with low levels of social



Maintaining social connections can help aging men and women prevent cognitive decline.

activity.

The idea of age-related cognitive decline strikes fear in the hearts of many men and women, but there are ways for adults to maintain their mental acuity well into their golden years.



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How to overcome workout fatigue



Regular exercise provides a host of immediate and long-term benefits. Those who exercise regularly can maintain healthy weights while reducing their risk for illnesses such as cardiovascular disease and diabetes. While exercise can make people more energetic throughout the day, some might find themselves battling fatigue during their workouts. Muscle fatigue is a normal side effect of exercise, but people who are experiencing difficulty getting through their workouts due to fatigue may benefit from the following strategies.

Eat a balanced diet. The Hospital for Special Surgery in New York City advises that a well-balanced diet that includes complex proteins, fruits, vegetables, and carbohydrates can help men and women combat workout fatigue. People who are working out in an effort to lose weight may think that combining exercise with a diet low in carbohydrates can help them achieve their goal more quickly. However, the HSS advises people dealing with

workout fatigue to increase the amount of carbohydrates they eat. Doing so will help muscles maintain their glycogen levels, which are depleted during exercise. According to the HSS, carbs should account for between 40 and 60 percent of aerobic athletes' caloric intake, and between 30 and 35 percent for anaerobic athletes.

Eat before and after a workout. Early risers who like to exercise first thing in the morning might develop muscle fatigue if they workout on empty stomachs. The HSS recommends eating a light meal or snack roughly two hours before exercising, and then eating again within one hour of finishing a workout. Doing so provides some energy during a workout and helps muscles broken down during exercise refuel and repair.

Stay hydrated. Hydrating during a workout helps replace the water and nutrients that are lost through sweat. Muscles that are not hydrated during a

workout and throughout the rest of the day are susceptible to fatigue.

Use proper form when exercising. Improper form can lead to injury and/or muscle fatigue. Men and women who cannot adhere to proper form when working out may need to reduce the amount of weight they're lifting. As activities are performed using proper form, people may find they're building muscle without growing fatigued. As workouts progress, weight can be added.

Give the body time to recover. Whether it's more time between sets of repetitions or an extra day off between workouts, a fatigued body might just need more time to rest and recover. Aging men and women must recognize that they might not be capable of pushing themselves as hard as they once did and should adjust their workouts accordingly.

Fatigue is a formidable foe for exercise enthusiasts. But such exhaustion can oftentimes be overcome with a few simple strategies.

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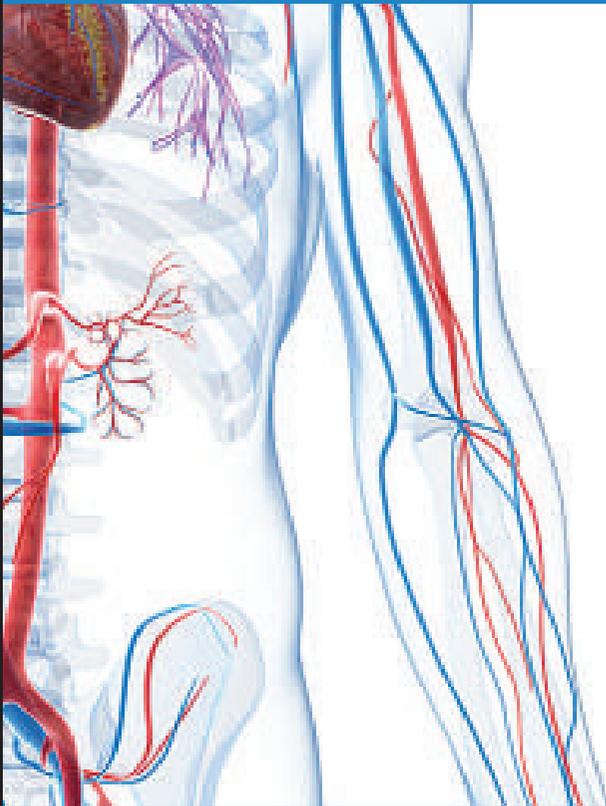
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What is seborrheic keratosis?

A seborrheic keratosis is one such type of skin growth that is actually benign but may cause concern due to its appearance.

Seborrheic keratoses, or SKs, are one of the most common noncancerous skin growths, says The Mayo Clinic. Although anyone can get them, they are more common in middle-aged to older adults. Also known as basal cell papilloma, senile warts or barnacles, these growths form as a common sign of skin aging, according to DermNet New Zealand.

The American Academy of Dermatology says a seborrheic keratosis may seem worrisome because it can look like a wart, a pre-cancerous skin growth or even skin cancer. However, despite their appearance, SKs are harmless.

How do SKs form?

Seborrheic means “greasy” and keratosis means “thickening of the skin.” Despite the name, SKs are not known to be caused by an abundance of sebum in the skin, nor are they limited to areas of increased oil

production. The exact cause of SKs isn’t known, but some doctors feel that an overproduction of skin cells can cause a thickening of the skin in certain areas. The American Osteopathic College of Dermatology offers that SKs are most likely hereditary, and they often are found on the trunk of the body and where the face meets the scalp. Sometimes seborrheic keratoses may erupt during pregnancy, following hormone replacement therapy or as a result of other medical problems.

Appearance of SKs

Some of these growths have a warty, rough surface, while others look like dabs of warm, brown candle wax on the skin. ADA says they can range in color from white to black, but most are tan or brown. The appearance of SKs may change as one ages, and it is even possible for them to fall off naturally over time. The Mayo Clinic says that, unless changes include becoming sore or bleeding without healing, there’s little need to act. SKs may form singularly, but often they appear in groups.

Cancer risk?

SKs have no relationship to skin cancer and do not pose a risk to one’s health. Unlike moles, they will not turn into melanoma. The superficial nature of SKs mean they can become irritated by clothing and grow.

Treatment

Unless a seborrheic keratosis is in an area that causes constant irritation, there is really no need to seek treatment. However, dermatologists can remove them quite easily if they are unsightly or uncomfortable. A topical anesthetic, cryosurgery or laser therapy is possible. Generally little scarring is produced, offers AOCD. Although SKs are harmless, their appearance may be similar to skin conditions that are not. Those who are unsure about changes to the skin should always seek the help of a licensed dermatologist.

Thanks to education and awareness about skin cancer, more people are taking heed of skin growths and changes and visiting their dermatologists. A spot or mole on the body can be a cause for concern.

How to avoid muscle soreness



potentially painful condition that can adversely affect quality of life can fell even the most ardent fitness fanatic.

Those who find themselves routinely battling muscle soreness can employ the following tactics to feel better and enjoy the fruits of their labors in the gym.

Listen to your body. Daily exercise can greatly benefit long-term health, but it’s important that men and women listen to their bodies, paying attention to any signs that it might be time for a break. Each person is different, but exercise aficionados who recognize any abnormal signs such as unexplained fatigue or cramps may need to take a day off. Bodies need time to recover after a workout.

Get adequate sleep. Getting enough sleep provides recovery time. The National Sleep Foundation recommends that adults between the ages of 18 and 64 years of age get between seven and nine hours of sleep per night. The NSF recommends adults 65 and older get between seven and eight hours of sleep per night.

Don’t overdo it. Pushing a body too hard increases a person’s risk of injury or illness. Muscles that are overtaxed will very likely begin to feel a type of pain

known as delayed onset muscle soreness, or DOMS. The American College of Sports Medicine notes that any type of activity that places unaccustomed loads on muscle may lead to DOMS, but activities such as strength training exercises, walking down hills, jogging, step aerobics, and jumping are known examples of contributors to DOMS. Such activities should not necessarily be avoided, but it’s important that men and women not push themselves to the point of overexertion when performing them.

Stay hydrated. Muscle soreness may appear if men and women are not drinking enough water before, during or after their workouts. A dehydrated body’s muscles do not have enough electrolytes, and that can be contributing to the feelings of soreness some exercise enthusiasts feel. Drink lots of water throughout the day, and don’t forget to bring a water bottle along to the gym when working out. Muscle soreness can be painful and difficult to deal with. But the solution to address such soreness is oftentimes very simple.

Muscle soreness can affect people from all walks of life. While exercise enthusiasts who work out several times per week may feel like they should be immune to muscle soreness, this

Distinctions between Crohn's disease and ulcerative colitis



Crohn's disease

Crohn's disease may affect any part of the GI tract (mouth to anus). However, Crohn's is most often to blame for symptoms at the end of the small intestine, called the small bowel, and the beginning of the colon, or the large bowel.

WebMD says Crohn's disease can affect all layers of the bowel walls. Those with Crohn's may have healthy areas interspersed with inflamed spots. Rectal bleeding or blood in stools is less common in Crohn's sufferers, and because it can impact more areas of the body, those with Crohn's may experience mouth sores, anal tears or infections. Crohn's also may affect areas outside of the GI tract, including the skin, eyes, joints, and liver.

Ulcerative Colitis

Contrary to Crohn's disease, UC is confined to the colon and only affects the inner lining of the colon. Those with UC will have much more continuance to their inflamed areas with no interruption. Also, UC is more likely to produce blood in stools because it appears at the lower end of the large intestine.

UCLA Health also says approximately 10 percent of cases of inflammatory bowel diseases exhibit the features of both Crohn's disease and ulcerative colitis. These are typically known as indeterminate colitis.

Shared symptoms

People with UC or Crohn's disease can expect to encounter one or more of these symptoms:

- cramps and pain
- diarrhea
- urgent need to visit the bathroom
- diminished appetite
- weight loss
- fatigue
- night sweats

Symptoms may flare up and then go into remission. Doctors will use testing such as a colonoscopy or a CT scan to diagnose the right form of IBD. Even though there is no cure for these conditions, medication and lifestyle changes can help minimize symptoms.

Inflammatory bowel conditions affect millions of people. Some of these conditions share symptoms, but may have certain distinctions that set them apart from one another.

Ulcerative colitis and Crohn's disease are two conditions that are similar but not one and the same. As a result, only a doctor can properly diagnose each condition.

The UCLA Center for Inflammatory Bowel Diseases says both colitis and Crohn's are characterized by inflammation of the digestive tract.

Both diseases can develop at any age, but often occur in teenagers and young adults. They also affect men and women equally. Another similarity is that the causes of UC and Crohn's disease are unknown, although environmental, genetic and an inappropriate response by the body's immune system can be factors.

To the average person, it may be difficult to figure out if they are suffering from UC or Crohn's disease because of these startling similarities. Yet, Healthline says there are important differences as well, which include the location of the illness in the gastrointestinal tract and the way each disease responds to treatment. Here's a look at what sets UC and Crohn's apart.

Flu-fighting tips to keep you and others healthy



off the flu in its early stages.

Flu shot and medications

Annual flu shots administered in advance of flu season can help protect people and their families from getting the flu. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration says that, in select situations, antiviral medications — which are usually prescribed to treat the flu and lessen symptoms — can reduce the chance of illness in people exposed to influenza.

Many over-the-counter medicines can alleviate symptoms of the flu, but cannot fend it off.

Stop germ proliferation

Germs can be spread easily between persons through direct contact and indirect contact with surfaces sick individuals have touched. Doctors recommend staying home for at least 24 hours after a flu-induced fever has dissipated. Well individuals should avoid contact with sick people.

Frequent hand-washing with soap and water can stop germs from spreading. When soap and water is not available, alcohol-based hand sanitizers can help. People also should avoid touching their eyes, noses and mouths after being in public places or around someone who is ill.

Rest and restore

Those who feel symptoms coming on should begin drinking more liquids to keep the respiratory system hydrated and make mucus less viscous. Remember to get adequate sleep, as a tired body cannot effectively fight the flu virus.

People of all ages should take steps to protect themselves from the flu.

Sniffles, sore throat, fever, and aches and pains may accompany a number of illnesses, but during the wintertime such symptoms are typically indicative of influenza. Throughout much of North America, flu season peaks between December and February. But flu season can occur anywhere from October to March, advises the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The flu is contagious and can sideline people for extended periods of time. The CDC says that each year one in five Americans gets the flu. Taking steps to fend off the flu can help men and women and the people they routinely come in contact with.

Foods

Food can be used to fend off the flu. Common foods that many people already have in their pantries can be powerful flu-fighters. Garlic, for example, contains compounds that have direct antiviral effects and may help destroy the flu before it affects the body. Raw garlic is best. In addition to garlic, citrus fruits, ginger, yogurt, and dark leafy greens can boost immunity and fight the flu, according to Mother Nature's Network. The *British Journal of Nutrition* notes that dark chocolate supports T-helper cells, which increase the immune system's ability to defend against infection.

A study published in the *American Journal of Therapeutics* showed that carnosine, a compound found in chicken soup, can help strengthen the body's immune system and help fight

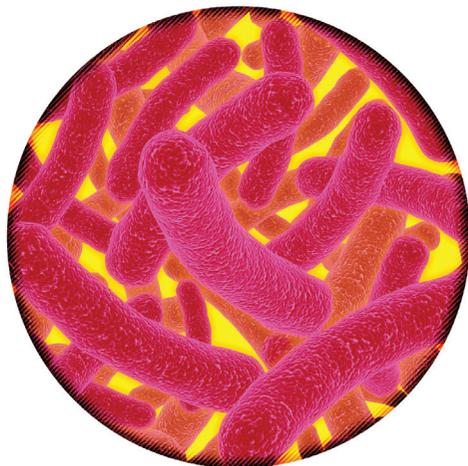
Embracing germs: They're not all bad

Germs have gotten a somewhat undeserved reputation. For decades, people have done what they can to avoid these unseemly organisms, thinking that exposure to germs is the single-best way to get and remain sick. Certainly there are germs that a person would be wise to avoid. However, not all germs must be avoided.

Germs are tiny organisms that can enter the body through open cuts, the mouth, the nose, and the eyes. Germs are found all over the world. The four main types of germs include bacteria, viruses, fungi, and protozoa.

Bacteria are a type of germ that often get a bad rap but actually may have benefits that outweigh their negatives.

Bacteria are tiny, one-celled creatures that get nutrients from their environments to live. In some instances, that environment is the human body. Bacteria can reproduce inside and outside of the body. While bacteria that cause repeated infections might be considered bad, there actually are a host of good



bacteria. Such bacteria help people digest food and protect against gastrointestinal upset, such as diarrhea. Some bacteria may help people fight off illnesses caused by other bacteria or viruses, says research published in the journal *Best Practice & Research Clinical Gastroenterology*.

Beneficial bacteria may help stimulate the immune system so that the body is better able to fight off diseases naturally.

People frequently overlook good bacteria in an effort to eradicate bad bacteria, and that can have serious detriments.

Unfortunately, the “antibacterial” products available for cleaning and medicines used for treating bacterial illnesses do not discriminate between good and bad germs. They simply eradicate them all. Healthline says that this can create an

imbalance of bacteria in the body that may lead to harmful bacteria taking over. Harmful bacteria also may evolve to resist common treatments because of the overuse of antibacterial and antimicrobial

medicines and products.

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention says that antimicrobial agents have been used for the last 70 years to treat patients with infectious diseases. Although they've helped treat illnesses, these drugs have enabled the organisms they're meant to destroy to adapt to them, making the drugs less effective. Some bacteria are even resistant to certain antibacterial drugs. The CDC says each year in the United States at least two million people become infected with bacteria that are resistant to antibiotics — with at least 23,000 people dying as a result of these infections.

Various medical sources urge that regular handwashing with plain soap is enough for cleansing. Consuming foods with naturally occurring helpful organisms, such as yogurt, chocolate, feta cheese, pickles, and dark chocolate, can help increase the levels of good bacteria in the body. Taking a probiotic supplement also may help, although researchers at the Cleveland Clinic report that there is not enough proof to say for sure.

People should speak with their doctors before taking probiotics or other steps to increase bacteria to make sure they are a wise decision for each individual.

What are the risks and benefits to endometrial ablation?

Females undergo many different experiences thanks to their reproductive systems. From the start of puberty to the final stages of menopause, the female body goes through many changes, many of which are spurred on by hormones. One condition women in their 30s and 40s may face is the onset of heavy menstruation levels and/or irregular bleeding.

Menorrhagia is the medical term for menstrual periods with abnormally heavy or prolonged bleeding, offers The Mayo Clinic. Hormonal imbalances may cause the buildup of the lining of the uterus (endometrium) to develop in excess and eventually be shed in the form of heavy bleeding. Fibroids, dysfunction of the ovaries, polyps, cancer, and intrauterine devices all may contribute to heavier than normal periods.

Heavy menstrual cycles can impact quality of life, particularly if they are accompanied by severe cramping and bleed-through. Doctors may recommend treatment if heavy periods soak a pad

or tampon every two hours or less; if menstrual periods last longer than eight days; or if periods are accompanied with anemia from excessive blood loss, says Healthline.

Typically, hormone therapy, IUDs or medications are first prescribed to treat the problem. However, if these are not effective, a gynecologist may recommend a procedure called endometrial ablation.

To understand how endometrial ablation works, it is first necessary to comprehend the basic menstrual cycle. Each month, a woman's body readies itself for the prospect of pregnancy. In addition to an egg being released to fertilization, the endometrium will build up in the uterus to provide a place for the fertilized egg to implant and develop. If no fertilization occurs, the egg and the lining will shed away and exit the body through menstruation.

During endometrial ablation, a doctor will perform a procedure that will permanently remove the endometrium and prevent further periods, says The Mayo Clinic. The process varies

depending on certain factors, but will begin with the dilation of the cervix to allow for the insertion of medical instruments. Options to treat the endometrium include electrosurgery, cryoablation (freezing), hot fluid, heated balloon, microwave, and radiofrequency. NovaSure Endometrial Ablation uses radiofrequency distributed through a netting inserted into the uterus.

In many cases, women who have undergone endometrial ablation will gradually see their periods lighten, and some may stop altogether. The recovery time can take anywhere from a few weeks to months.

One of the risks of endometrial ablation is sterilization. Although it is not designed as a birth control method, endometrial ablation will make the endometrium unable to sustain a fertilized egg or a growing embryo, and miscarriage is likely, says Healthline. Therefore, women who are still planning to have children should not undergo the procedure. Those with uterine or endometrial cancer or other conditions



A doctor may suggest endometrial ablation to alleviate heavy

may be precluded from having an ablation procedure.

Apart from cramping, watery discharge and increased urinary frequency may occur after the procedure. Rare side effects include damage to the vagina, vulva or bowels.

Women considering endometrial ablation are urged to go over all of the benefits and risks with their doctors.



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