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E. EXCEL'S WORLD



October - December 2024

Be Yourself. Just Do It!

Diamond Masters Ho Hsin-Yi and Hung Chien-Jung



**Ho Hsin-Yi and
Hung Chien-Jung**

From: Taiwan

Strengths and Hobbies:

Cooking, making friends,
traveling

Dream: Stay healthy with friends
and family into old age, and
travel the world

Traveled with E. Excel to:

Beijing, Hokkaido, Canada, Royal
Caribbean Cruise, Vietnam, India,
Spain, Yunnan

Newly promoted Diamond Master Ho Hsin-Yi has a cheerful personality, with pronounced facial features and radiant confidence. She is unconcerned with others' opinions and is happy being herself. This personality has made her journey in managing her E. Excel career smooth and successful. What others see as setbacks are merely challenges to her.

Hsin-Yi has never regarded her E. Excel career as just a business. "I enjoy sharing and helping people stay healthy. I hope to emulate Dr. Jau-Fei Chen and contribute my small part to promote her philosophy, 'To share the gifts of health and knowledge with mankind.' Dr. Chen's persistence and dedication have helped more people get to know E. Excel and benefit from it; I aim to do the same."

Over 20 years ago, a sachet of *Nutrifresh* marked the beginning of Hsin-Yi's connection with E. Excel. "Because my grandfather ran a traditional Chinese medicine store, I grew up being exposed to Chinese herbal medicine and became accustomed to using it to nourish my body. When someone introduced to me the concept of Nutritional Immunology and the idea that plant-based foods are the most beneficial for the body, I quickly embraced it. I have been a loyal consumer of E. Excel products for 20 years now."

Hsin-Yi is not solely focused on E. Excel; she does accounting work in a car lift dealership and welcomed a lovely baby last year. People are curious about how she manages to excel in each role. "It is really thanks to the trust and support from my family, boss, and teammates that allows me to handle each role with ease. My daytime work schedule is flexible, and I am very familiar with my tasks, so I have pockets of time to provide after-sales service for my E. Excel customers. After I knock off work in the evening, I take care of my child's needs until about 8 PM. After that, my husband takes over to play with the child, and I can focus on my own activities, such as attending classes to learn about E. Excel." Hsin-Yi always describes her busy and fulfilling life in an understated way, but the reason everyone trusts her is because, over the years, she has built up a reputation as being a good person.

When asked about the secret to success, Hsin-Yi responded, "Be sincere! Be sincere! And be sincere! Put in 100% of your heart! Treat people sincerely and do what others can't." She added, "I once met in the market a mother whose little girl suffered from severe allergies. During our conversation, we discovered that our families' elders knew each other, and that we lived nearby. I then invited that little girl to stay with me for a short time to help adjust her daily routine and improve her diet. Eventually, her health began to improve. When a teammate's father fell ill, I moved into their home for a week to demonstrate how proper nutrition could aid in recovery." Hsin-Yi finds true fulfillment in sharing and giving to others, affirming her belief, "What a blessing it is to be needed!"



Optimistic Hsin-Yi laughs often daily, and those around her can feel her enthusiasm. Her principle is “Think good thoughts. Speak good words. Do good deeds.” She said, “I believe in the law of attraction; being around positive influences will lead to positive outcomes. By radiating positive energy, I can attract like-minded people.” Hsin-Yi has consistently held this belief, and over time, she has gathered a group of like-minded friends in E. Excel who cherish and support each other.

Hsin-Yi, who has always been indifferent to fame and fortune, said, “I never thought about achieving the Diamond Master rank for myself. It was more about providing a sense of belonging and a role model for the teammates who have supported me all this while.” She successfully achieved the Diamond Master rank within six months of setting her goal. “I am deeply grateful for my teammates’ support, which has allowed me to reach where I am today. I also appreciate my husband’s constant companionship and support. His expertise in food research and development has not only alleviated my concerns but has also made managing my E. Excel career more efficient. Additionally, I am thankful for the resources provided by my team; we learn and grow together, encouraging and supporting each other. You all are my strongest support!”

Hsin-Yi, who finds it hard to stop talking once she begins, dedicated her first time using a microphone to E. Excel. “I remember it was during an E. Excel convention when I was a tour bus leader. I was surprised to find myself so nervous that I was ‘stuttering’ when I picked up the microphone! That experience made me truly understand the saying, ‘one minute on the stage requires 10 years of practice off the stage.’ Through E. Excel, I have had opportunities to experience things that ordinary people might not have, such as speaking as a presenter, hosting on stage, attending dinners in formal attire, and receiving recognition for promotions. Additionally, I can travel the world with E. Excel and experience its beauty.” Hsin-Yi feels incredibly fortunate to have E. Excel in her life.

Hsin-Yi enjoys cooking and is currently living comfortably but cannot stay idle. Regarding her future plans, she said, “I hope that after retirement, I can open a restaurant with a homey atmosphere, serving healthy dishes and providing guests with a warm and comforting experience. Of course, the E. Excel business is my lifelong career and something I will never give up. I find joy in helping others through E. Excel.

“Everyone is a unique individual. The experiences of predecessors can only serve as a reference. Rather than copying others’ success, it is better to forge your own path. Opportunities are not for those who are prepared but for those who dare to seize them. As long as you bravely try everything, I believe you will gain something from each attempt! Your own experiences are what shape your life. Have the courage to be yourself, and just do it!” Hsin-Yi hopes that her ordinary story will inspire and encourage new E. Excellers.

Life Motto—“Remember your value! It does not diminish because of an unrefined appearance. Like gold, it will shine in its own time.”

Passion and Perseverance

E. Exceller Ho Siok Cheng, Michelle



Ho Siok Cheng, Michelle

From: Singapore

Strengths and Hobbies:

Traveling, reading, spending time with loved ones

Dream: To help more people stay healthy

Traveled with E. Excel to:

Osaka, Royal Caribbean Cruise, Yunnan

At first impression, Michelle Ho exudes an air of confidence and professionalism. It comes naturally to her as she holds an esteemed job in the corporate world. Michelle is also a mother of three. Despite a hectic full-time job and family commitments, she swiftly rose through the ranks to gain success within two years of taking up the E. Excel career on a part-time basis. How did she do it?

"You must be hungry for it. If you want something bad enough, you will find a way to do it," said Michelle with determination.

The word "hungry" popped up a few times during the interview. (Not because the interview took place near dinner time.) Michelle is hungry to learn more about Nutritional Immunology. Hungry to share the goodness of Nutritional Immunology with others. And hungry for success.

Michelle's voracious appetite for Nutritional Immunology knowledge began nine years ago when she suffered from poor health. The doctor warned of surgery if her condition worsened. It was then Michelle suddenly recalled the science of Nutritional Immunology she came across many years ago. She began adopting a healthy lifestyle based on Nutritional Immunology and taking E. Excel Nutritional Immunology products consistently. After about a year, she saw a vast improvement in her health.

Heartened by her personal experience, Michelle became a firm supporter of E. Excel products. It also ignited her passion to delve deeper into the science of Nutritional Immunology. She read Dr. Jau-Fei Chen's Nutritional Immunology books nearly every day and even reread them a few times. She also attended Dr. Chen's seminars. She did not know it then, but the knowledge she gained became a firm foundation for her E. Excel career later on.

During the first few years, Michelle did not intentionally set out to share about the goodness of E. Excel products. But the opportunities arose naturally when her colleagues saw her taking E. Excel products in the office and were curious about the remarkable improvement in her health. "Sharing is caring. I see how Nutritional Immunology has improved my health. If it can help me, I am sure it can help many others too," she said with a smile. Hence she began sharing Nutritional Immunology with her colleagues.

Michelle has a clear time frame for her retirement. As that age draws nearer, she gains new impetus to make retirement plans. "My current full-time job is hectic and stressful. I yearn for freedom of time, but I also have a family to support. Since I want to consume E. Excel products on a long-term basis, I might as well start sharing about them. So I decided to take up the E. Excel career on a part-time basis for now as I still have a full-time job," Michelle explained. "I take my E. Excel career very seriously and devote as much of my after-work time to it as I can."



Michelle initially felt awkward about having to humble herself and approaching others. But she adjusted her attitude so well that now she has no qualms sharing Nutritional Immunology knowledge and products with others. She tries her level best to reply to customer queries on the day she receives them, sometimes staying up late to search for the answers, and follows up with her customers closely. The bottom line is that she will always help her customers as best as she can.

"You must have a sincere heart to want to help others stay healthy," Michelle said. The genuine sharing and caring for the people around her is Michelle's secret to success in her E. Excel career.

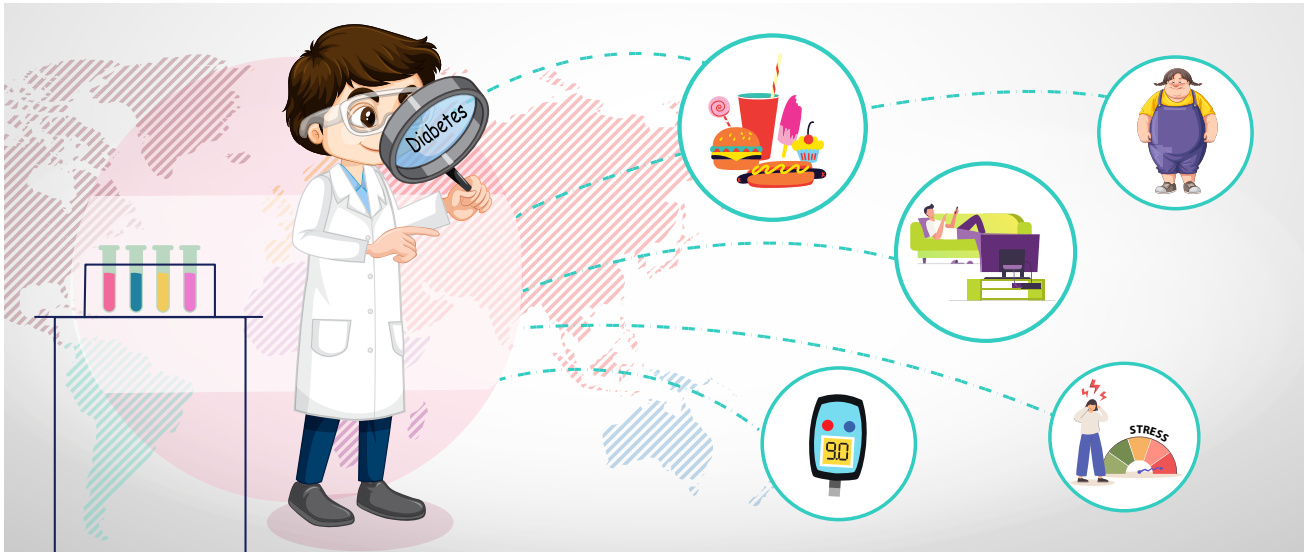
Success is where preparation and opportunity meet. Michelle makes sure to do her homework first before meeting a customer by finding out more about the customer's needs. She will also adopt the meet-up style that best caters to a customer's needs. For example, she will hold home parties and invite friends and relatives over to taste and try the products. For busy friends, she will conduct Zoom meetings with them. If customers have urgent needs, she will adjust her schedule to meet them.

Touching moments abound in the E. Excel career. Michelle shared an anecdote, "Recently, a friend brought her elderly mother-in-law to attend Dr. Chen's seminar. The mother-in-law was very impressed by the health knowledge Dr. Chen shared. After the event, she thanked me profusely for introducing 'such a good thing'—Nutritional Immunology—to her daughter-in-law. That moment moved me profoundly, and I felt sharing about Nutritional Immunology was so meaningful."

To Michelle, the E. Excel career will not just be her second wind after retirement. It will also be a legacy that she can pass on to her three daughters, now aged 18, 14, and 12, if they are keen. She will encourage them to take up the E. Excel career when they are of age. In fact, she has already begun prepping her eldest daughter. Of course, she will always support them in whatever interest they want to pursue, but she will remind them that the E. Excel career is one more option to explore. Michelle's eyes sparkled as she said, "They see the hard work I put into my E. Excel career and how I persevere even when I am very tired at times. I am touched when they tell me I am their role model."

To those thinking of taking up the E. Excel career, Michelle encourages, "Take action! And if you want to do something that you desire, do it well."

Diabetes

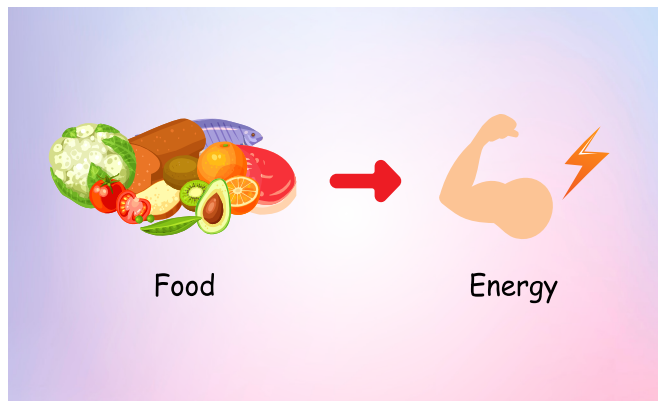


Let's explore some intriguing statistics about diabetes. Diabetes affects millions globally, and by examining these statistics, we can gain a clearer picture of its impact and the importance of awareness and management. Whether you are curious, personally interested, or seeking to be informed, join us in uncovering key facts about diabetes. Let's get started!

Diabetes is a growing global burden affecting individuals, families, and entire countries. According to estimates, in 2021, 10.5% of adults aged 20 – 79 have diabetes, with nearly half unaware that they have the condition, making it a significant hidden problem. Projections indicate that by 2045, one in eight adults, or approximately 783 million people, will be living with diabetes, a 46% increase. Around 90% of all diabetes is type 2 diabetes, which is driven by factors such as urbanization, an aging population, decreased physical activity, and rising rates of overweight and obesity.

Understanding Diabetes

Diabetes is a chronic medical condition that affects how your body turns food into energy. It involves issues with a hormone called insulin, which helps regulate blood sugar levels. There are two main types: type 1 diabetes, whereby the body does not produce insulin, and type 2 diabetes, whereby the body does not use insulin properly. Both types can lead to serious health complications if not managed properly, making awareness and understanding of diabetes crucial for maintaining health and well-being.

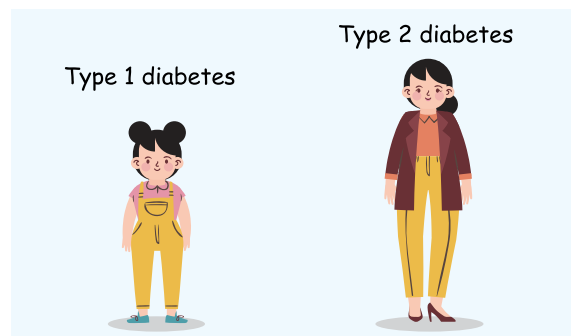


The Types of Diabetes

There are two main types of diabetes.

Type 1 diabetes is the result of an autoimmune reaction. It usually rears its head in childhood.

Type 2 diabetes, the more common form, is primarily linked to lifestyle factors and genetics. It is usually diagnosed in adulthood. It develops when the body becomes resistant to insulin or when the pancreas cannot produce enough insulin to maintain normal blood sugar levels. Key contributors to type 2 diabetes include being overweight, physical inactivity, poor diet, and a family history of the disease. Additionally, factors such as aging and high blood pressure can increase the risk of developing type 2 diabetes.



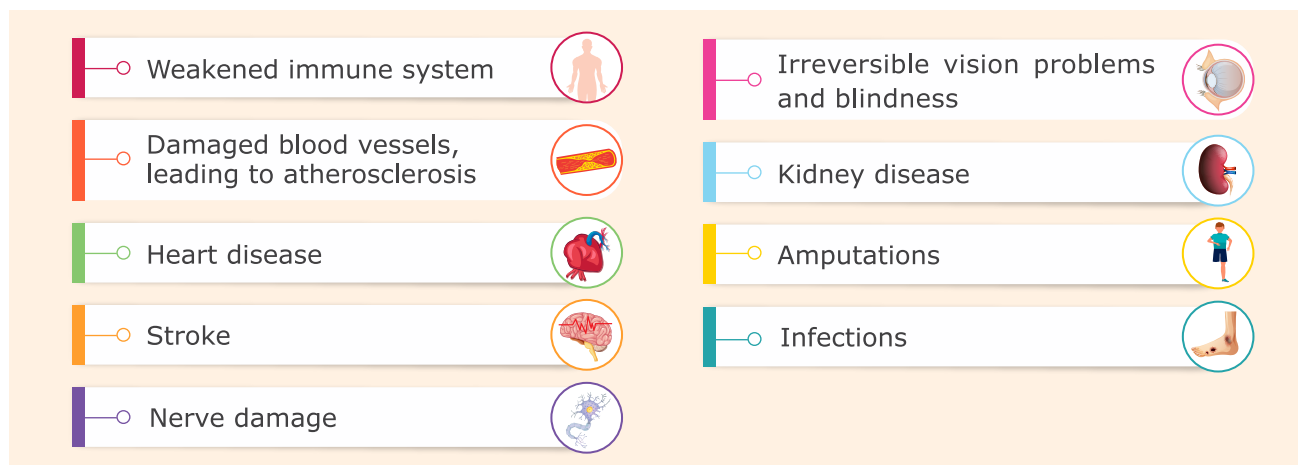
Sugar Does Not Cause Diabetes

One of the biggest misconceptions people have about diabetes is blaming sugar. For example, the Chinese name for diabetes translates directly to “sugar urine disease”, which is misleading. There is a lot of emphasis on the role of sugar in diabetes, which can cause many people to incorrectly believe that eating lots of sugar can cause diabetes. That is not the case at all! Eating a lot of sugary food, while not healthy, will not directly cause diabetes. High blood sugar levels are also not a cause of diabetes, but rather a consequence.

In fact, sugar is good. The human body needs sugar, in the form of glucose, to survive. Sugar works as the fuel for cells in the body to perform their necessary functions, and fuels the growth of new cells. Without their fuel, cells would starve to death. In fact, some parts of the body, such as the brain, requires a continuous supply of glucose to work right!

How Diabetes Damages the Body


Think of your body like a finely-tuned machine with intricate systems working together. One crucial component of this system is glucose, a type of sugar, which acts as fuel for your cells, providing energy for your body to function. When you have diabetes, there is a disruption in how your body handles glucose. As a result, glucose builds up in your bloodstream instead of entering your cells, leading to excess glucose that can wreak havoc on various organs and tissues over time.



Glycemic Index

The glycemic index (GI) is a valuable tool for understanding how different foods affect blood sugar levels. The GI measures how quickly foods raise blood glucose levels, compared to pure glucose, which has a GI of 100. Foods with a high GI cause rapid spikes in blood sugar, while those with a low GI result in slower, more gradual increases. Since diabetics have difficulty lowering and controlling their blood sugar, repeated spikes in blood sugar over time can cause complications, such as heart or kidney problems.

An important point to remember about the glycemic index is its lack of correlation with the sweetness of a food. A low GI does not mean that a food is low in sugar. A high GI does not mean that a food is high in sugar. The digestive system turns food into sugar as a fuel in the body. The GI is simply a reflection of how fast that process occurs. While some foods not known for sweetness can have a high GI, others with a sweet taste may have a low GI. This disparity means that a food's sweetness does not necessarily indicate its impact on blood sugar levels.

Food		Glycemic Index
Sweet Food		
	Banana	48
	Apple	36
	Orange	35
	Apricot	34
	Acerola cherry	20
Non-Sweet Food		
	Boiled potato	78
	White bread	75
	Whole wheat bread	74
	White rice (cooked)	73



For instance, white rice lacks sweetness and sugar content, yet it breaks down into sugar during digestion, boasting a high glycemic index of about 73. Conversely, despite its sweetness, an apple has a GI of about 36, indicating a slower increase in blood sugar compared to white rice.



High glycemic index foods are not inherently unhealthy. Carbohydrates, which often have higher GIs, are an essential part of a healthy diet and include vegetables, grains, and fruits. It is impossible to avoid sugar entirely, as all carbohydrates eventually break down into blood sugar (also known as blood glucose). This sugar is crucial for your cells’ survival and overall function. In particular, the brain, despite making up only about 2% of the body weight, uses about 20% of the body’s oxygen, and relies heavily on sugar to function properly. Therefore, it is important to recognize the role of sugar in providing necessary energy for your body, especially for vital organs like the brain.

Different sugars can have varying effects on the glycemic index, highlighting their diverse metabolic pathways. Notably, glucose, with a GI of 100, elicits a rapid increase in blood sugar levels. In contrast, fructose (also known as fruit sugar) has a much lower GI of only 23. Despite its sweetness, fructose metabolizes slowly, as it requires additional processing by the liver before being utilized as energy by cells. This differs from glucose, which is readily absorbed by cells without further processing. It is important to distinguish fructose from high fructose corn syrup (HFCS), which is a blend of fructose and glucose. HFCS can have a high GI due to its glucose content.


Sugar	Glycemic Index
Glucose	100
High fructose corn syrup	87
Sucrose (table sugar)	65
Honey	58
Lactose	46
Fructose	23



High fructose corn syrup is not fructose!
It is a mixture of glucose and fructose.

Fiber—A Natural Remedy for High Blood Sugar Levels

In addition to the glycemic index, several other factors influence how foods affect blood sugar levels. One crucial factor is the fiber content of foods. High-fiber foods, such as fruits, vegetables, and whole grains, tend to raise blood sugar levels more slowly than low-fiber counterparts. This is because fiber slows down the digestion and absorption of carbohydrates, leading to a more gradual release of glucose into the bloodstream. This means that adding fiber to a favorite food with a high glycemic index, such as white rice or bread, can help slow down the rise in blood sugar, allowing for less guilt when eating!

Higher in Fiber		
Food		Glycemic Index
	Brown rice (cooked)	50
	Banana	48
	Barley groats	25
	Buckwheat noodles	59
	Whole wheat pasta	40
	Wholemeal flour	60
Lower in Fiber		
Food		Glycemic Index
	White rice (cooked)	73
	Watermelon	75
	Cornflakes	85
	Rice noodles	65
	Pasta	50
	Wheat flour	85






The Glycemic Index Is Not Everything

Beyond the glycemic index, other factors play a role in determining the overall healthfulness of foods. For instance, red meat boasts a virtually zero GI, suggesting it will not cause blood sugar spikes when consumed alone. Conversely, vegetables exhibit a wide range of GI values, from very low (around 15) to very high (up to 97). However, it is crucial to recognize that a low GI does not automatically equate to healthfulness, nor does a high GI denote unhealthiness. Plant-based foods offer numerous health benefits and are associated with a reduced risk of various diseases, including diabetes. Conversely, research indicates a strong link between red meat consumption and an increased risk of type 2 diabetes. While red meat may have a low GI, it contains less desirable components such as saturated fats and cholesterol.











People often concentrate on specific aspects of their health, like the GI of their food or their sugar intake, without considering the broader implications for their overall well-being. This narrow focus can lead to health problems because it ignores the fact that the body’s systems are interconnected. Your body’s health should be thought of as a whole and not as divided, isolated parts.

Your body needs to be treated as a whole, and accordingly, your nutrition should be viewed as a whole as well. While a diet based on meat would be low in sugar and have a low GI, it could lead to an increased risk of diabetes and heart disease. Vegetables and fruits may have more sugar and a higher GI than some other foods. However, they could ultimately be the healthier choice because of the other nutrients contained within.

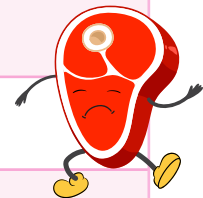
Food		Glycemic Index
Vegetable		
	Carrot (raw)	30
	Tomato	30
	Green beans	30
	Eggplant	20
	Broccoli	15



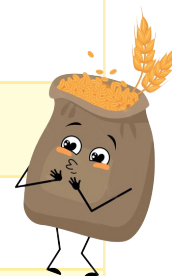
Food		Glycemic Index
Vegetable		
	Cauliflower	15
	Spinach	15
	Zucchini	15
	Lettuce	15
	Sweet pepper	15
	Mushroom	15
	Asparagus	15
	Cabbage	15



Food		Glycemic Index
Meat		
	Beef	0
	Mutton	0
	Chicken	0
	Pork	0
	Fish	0



Food		Glycemic Index
Grains		
	White bread	75
	Whole wheat bread	74
	White rice (cooked)	73
	Couscous	65
	Oats (rolled)	55
	Quinoa	53
	Brown rice (cooked)	50
	Bulgur	48
	Barley	28



Lifestyle Factors

While the glycemic index is a useful tool, relying solely on it is not sufficient for managing diabetes effectively. Other factors play a critical role in controlling blood sugar levels and overall health. For instance, incorporating high-fiber foods into the diet can help slow glucose absorption and improve blood sugar control. Beyond diet, regular physical activity, maintaining a healthy weight, and managing stress are essential lifestyle factors that contribute to diabetes management. Getting enough rest can also help. Therefore, a holistic approach that includes dietary considerations, physical activity, and lifestyle modifications is vital for effective diabetes management.



Effective diabetes management involves a healthy diet, regular physical activity, maintaining a healthy weight, and managing stress. Getting enough rest is also important.

Skinny Fat

There are many factors affecting diabetes. One of the most important key factors is obesity. However, it is not necessary to be obese to have an increased risk of diabetes. Despite appearing slender, Asians tend to have higher levels of body fat, particularly fat that is wrapped around vital organs in the abdomen. Asians in the United States, despite having lower average body mass indexes (BMIs), face a 40% increased likelihood of diabetes diagnosis compared to the white population.

This phenomenon, termed “skinny fat,” arises when skinny-looking individuals store fat deep within the belly and around vital organs, heightening inflammation and insulin resistance. Moreover, Asians, particularly South Asians, often exhibit less muscle mass, compounding insulin resistance. Alarming, Asian Americans also exhibit the highest proportion of undiagnosed diabetes among all ethnic and racial groups in the United States, standing at 51%! So while an Asian person may not look fat on the outside, he or she may be storing fat in less obvious places—not under the skin, or around the hips or thighs where it might be more obvious, but deeper in the body around the liver, in the muscles, around the heart, or other organs.



Some experts believe that the BMI cut-off points should be adjusted for Asians to account for this. Normally, a BMI of 25 or above would be an indication that someone is overweight. However, for Asians, a BMI of 23 or above would mean they are overweight.

Waist circumference is also a good indicator of diabetes risk. For Asian men, a waist circumference of above 90 cm means a higher risk of diabetes. For Asian women, a waist circumference of above 80 cm means a higher risk of diabetes. Waist circumference is measured across the belly button, not around the narrowest part of the waist.

Prevention

Some people are lucky enough to catch diabetes early enough to reverse it. Prediabetes is a warning sign of worse to come. Luckily, through lifestyle factors and weight control, it is entirely possible to reverse prediabetes and prevent it from progressing into full-blown type 2 diabetes.

It is essential to understand that managing diabetes is not only about monitoring food intake; it requires a multifaceted approach. While paying attention to dietary choices is crucial, incorporating sufficient fiber and engaging in regular exercise are equally vital components.



Prevention remains the optimal strategy. No matter what doctors do, injected insulin will never be as good as your body monitoring itself and producing its own insulin. Even with diligent insulin management, diabetics still face heightened risks such as compromised immune function and retinopathy. By prioritizing prevention through lifestyle adjustments, individuals can mitigate these risks and enhance their overall well-being.

Actions to take!

- ✓ Prioritize prevention.
- ✓ Focus on weight control.
- ✓ Exercise more!
- ✓ Eat more plant foods.
- ✓ Keep monitoring your health and catch prediabetes early.
- ✓ Keep learning to recognize the warning signs of prediabetes.



Sugar Does Not Cause Cancer

Many sources spread misinformation about the link between sugar and cancer. The claim is that since cancer cells need sugar to grow, sugar causes cancer.

Let's first understand what is blood sugar, also known as blood glucose. This is the main sugar found in your blood. Your body breaks down most of the food you eat into glucose and releases it into your bloodstream. Blood glucose is your body's main source of energy.



All cells, including cancer cells, need blood glucose for energy. This means that blood glucose fuels the growth of both normal and cancer cells. Avoiding glucose completely is impossible because the human body breaks down most foods into glucose for energy. Without glucose, both healthy cells and cancer cells would die. The real issue is not glucose itself but maintaining a balanced diet and overall health.

The Mayo Clinic states that "All kinds of cells, including cancer cells, depend on blood sugar (glucose) for energy. But giving more sugar to cancer cells doesn't make them grow faster. Likewise, depriving cancer cells of sugar doesn't make them grow more slowly."

Cancer Research UK states that "... there's no way of telling our bodies to let healthy cells have the glucose they need without also giving it to cancer cells... There's no evidence that following a 'sugar-free' diet lowers the risk of getting cancer, or that it boosts the chances of surviving if you are diagnosed."

The American Cancer Society has stated that "Sugar increases calorie intake without providing any of the nutrients that reduce cancer risk." Too many empty calories will promote obesity, which in turn, increases the risk of cancer.



Fructose Does Not Cause Fatty Liver Disease or Gout

It is easy to overconsume fructose in a Western diet high in processed foods, like soft drinks, boxed desserts, baked goods, and breakfast cereals, which often contain high fructose corn syrup (HFCS). However, fructose itself is not to blame for non-alcoholic fatty liver disease. Research shows fructose only causes harm when over-consumed, providing excess calories. The harmful effects are linked to excessive calorie intake or being overweight, not linked to fruits and vegetables.

The link between fructose and gout is also controversial. Some studies find no significant correlation between fructose intake and gout risk, while others link soft drinks to increased gout risk. High fructose intake from an unhealthy diet, particularly foods with HFCS, may cause hyperuricemia (too much uric acid in the blood). Fruits and vegetables, however, do not carry the same risk. Foods with HFCS are high in calories, increasing the risk of weight gain and, consequently, gout.

Fruits and vegetables, despite containing fructose, also offer other nutrients and fiber. It is difficult to consume harmful levels of fructose from these sources. In fact, higher intake of fruits and vegetables can protect against fatty liver disease, gout, and related conditions.



The Lifelong Learning article is contributed by Dr. EE Zhang, MBChB.

Over the years, the child found her mother's words true. Her daily practice with the gratitude jar instilled a positive attitude within her and gave her strength in challenging times. Conversely, when neglecting the jar, she noticed herself growing listless and empty. Reflecting upon this over many years, she came to appreciate her mother's wisdom. The scraps of paper in the jar represented her true treasures, and they would remain with her through thick and thin as long as she remembered them.

A spiral-bound notebook with the words "practice gratitude" written in a blue, cursive-style font. The notebook is open, showing two pages. A silver pen lies on the right page. In the top left corner, there is a round, golden-brown cookie with a heart-shaped cutout filled with red jam. A yellow circular object is partially visible on the left edge. The entire scene is set against a light blue background with a subtle grid pattern.

Gratitude is an attitude that takes hold of us when we recognize and appreciate the goodness and grace in our lives. Gratitude flows naturally from our understanding that many of the good things we enjoy are given to us, so we are the recipients of grace, blessings that we neither deserve nor have worked for. However, gratitude is not simply a feeling but a practice.

Life is not only goodness and grace but also hardship and sorrows. There are many things to be grateful for in life as well as many things we can complain about.



When faced with good and bad, it is more natural for us to be overcome with the bad and forget the good. We are prone to take the positive things in our lives for granted and focus on the negative. That is why gratitude must be felt and expressed consciously and intentionally.

Take school, for example. I took a difficult tax law course in law school. The concepts were difficult, the workload was heavy, and the professor, Mr. Carter, was known for his strict grading. A few months in, I found myself

struggling to keep up. I felt frustrated and angry and thought that Mr. Carter was unfair—after all, why was this course so much more challenging and time-consuming than the others?

I eventually made my way through it, albeit with some help. Gratitude first came in the form of my classmates. Forming a study group with other students struggling with the material, I found a sense of community and shared purpose. I was thankful for the camaraderie and the collective effort, which made the daunting material more manageable and enjoyable to learn.

I also developed a new appreciation for Mr. Carter's rigorous teaching style. His approach pushed me beyond my comfort zone, leading to a deeper understanding of the subject and a stronger work ethic, which was crucial in this field of study. I was grateful for his commitment to his students' learning, even if it was tough love. By the end of the course, I still did not get the grade I wanted, but I felt a new sense of accomplishment. I learned resilience and the importance of seeking help when needed—lessons I carry with me today.

The Power of Gratitude

A thoughtful and genuine practice of gratitude, such as the one taught by the mother to her child in the story, can be simple but has the power to transform our lives. I have found the attitude of gratitude to be essential to my well-being—positively impacting my emotional health and enhancing my relationships. To actively remind myself of things I am thankful for fills me with hope, encouragement, and goodwill. It combats anxiety and depression, and helps to keep my mind open to opportunities for good things to happen in my life. Appreciating my undeserved blessings also allows me to influence others positively. Instead of seeing life as a transaction, gratitude frees me to see life as one of charity and service. Gratitude is warm and affectionate; those who practice gratitude share that warmth and affection with others.



A grateful person is a happy person, a resilient person, and a reliable person. To be healthy in mind and body ourselves is the greatest testament to the mission of E. Excel, which is to share the gifts of health and knowledge with mankind. Gratitude will help us form and maintain crucial relationships, help ease the stress and pressure of self-directed business life, and open our minds to opportunities unseen by the ungrateful eye. Gratitude will keep us focused, gentle, kind, and friendly even during challenging or stressful times.



positively to team dynamics. This can be particularly impactful in networking and maintaining strong professional connections.

Gratitude is a Conscious Choice and a Daily Practice

Practice gratitude daily. It is a choice that we must make consciously. I find it helpful to be specific about what I am thankful for. Who am I grateful for, and why? For example, "I'm grateful that my mentor has taken the time to teach me and help me grow my confidence." "Thank you, my sister, for your endless patience and guidance, especially during my transition to a new career last year. Your reassurance during my moments of doubt and your practical advice on managing work-life balance has been invaluable." While we do not have to write down what we are grateful for, it is a good idea. A written record serves as a testament to our blessings, and allows us to revisit and recall what we were grateful for, even years later. We do not have to write it every day, but there is no day that gratefulness cannot help us.

Gratitude will not make all of our problems disappear, and thankfulness will not make our lives perfect. But it will alter our attitude and improve our perspective, influencing how we handle challenges in life and, ultimately, changing the outcomes. It makes us better friends, better neighbors, and even better professionals. If we stop and think about it each morning in a quiet moment of reflection, we will find that we have much to be grateful for.



The Professional Development article is contributed by Elei Zhang, JD.

Knowledge is power. Knowledge is instrumental to value-creation and is a critical asset in life. It is in many ways the primary instrument of progress and innovation. However, knowledge can be messy, particularly when false. Today, information spreads rapidly and comprehensively, and websites and social media outlets are easy access points for false information.

We're here to help discern fact from fiction. Knowledge becomes powerful in the right culture—collectively sharing in the truth and continually seeking progress and ideas. Building the right knowledge base is neither a short-term effort nor a one-off project. It is a lifelong process of discovery.



Let's Talk About Skin

In the exciting world of beauty and ever-changing beauty routines, skin misconceptions can run rampant. We are here to clear up some of these wild stories and give you a hand on your skincare adventures. Check out a few of these common skin myths, busted!

Myth

More bubbles mean better cleaning!



Truth:

If you think that lots of bubbles indicate superior cleaning power, sorry to burst your bubble! That is just a big bubbly myth! Contrary to popular belief, the presence of foam does not necessarily mean better cleaning efficacy.



Foam and lather are the result of the interaction between various chemicals (surfactants), water, and air during the cleaning process, which helps to reduce water's surface tension. However, the formation of these bubbles has little correlation with the actual cleaning power of the product.

So why do we still use bubbles? Well, foam can be useful when cleaning vertical surfaces or when visual cues are needed. For example, on vertical walls or when standing upright in the shower, foam adheres to our skin or the wall surfaces, slowing down the runoff of cleaning solutions and allowing more time for the active cleaning agents to work effectively.

In food facilities where sanitation is crucial, foam allows cleaners to visually confirm that the nooks and crannies are getting cleaned. In other words, foam serves as a visual indicator.

Finally, many people find the bubbles appealing, so from a marketing perspective, if the product makes nice bubbles, it is more likely to sell better.

However, excessive foam is not a good thing! For example, excessive foaming formulas may be more drying for the skin.

In conclusion, while bubbles may be visually appealing, their presence does not necessarily indicate superior cleaning power. It is important to maintain a clear perspective and evaluate face and body cleansers based on their actual performance rather than the amount of foam they produce.



Myth

My skin should feel squeaky clean after I wash it.



Truth:

The notion of being “squeaky clean” should be reserved for dishes, bathroom tiles, and windows, not for your skin. You might have assumed that achieving “squeaky clean” meant all the dirt and grime on your body had been scrubbed away, leaving your skin gleaming like a dish. However, that is not quite accurate.



The water you use also influences whether you feel squeaky clean or not. If you have hard water at home, the minerals in it can react with soap, leaving your skin feeling more “squeaky” (or rather, “sticky”). Conversely, soft water might leave your skin feeling more “slippery” with the same soap. But this slippery sensation does not mean that your bath products are left behind on your skin.



The most effective cleansing involves removing dirt, pollution, makeup, and other debris from the skin without harshly stripping it. That “squeaky clean” sensation often indicates that the skin’s natural balance has been disrupted, and the cleanser has stripped away the skin’s natural oils. Your skin relies on these oils to maintain its health, regulate sebum production, and support its natural processes, including cell turnover and maintaining a balanced microbiome.

Myth

Oily and acne-prone skin requires stronger cleansers.



Truth:

Let us start with the basics. Our bodies naturally produce oil (sebum) to maintain the softness and suppleness of our skin. However, when there is an imbalance in oil production—whether it is too little or too much—it can lead to issues.



Excessive oiliness can contribute to breakouts because pores become congested with excess sebum. While proper facial cleansing helps remove these impurities, it is crucial to understand that poor hygiene alone is unlikely to be the sole cause of blemishes. Factors such as changes in hormone levels, particularly during puberty and other life stages, as well as genetic predispositions, all play significant roles.

Using overly harsh and drying cleansers can strip the skin of its natural sebum and lipids, resulting in irritation and disruption of the skin's natural microbiome. This, in turn, can increase the likelihood of breakouts.

Some individuals with oily skin may avoid using moisturizers, fearing that they will worsen oiliness. However, skipping moisturizer can actually have adverse effects. When the skin lacks sufficient moisture, it compensates by producing more oil, which can further exacerbate breakouts. Therefore, striking a balance is essential for maintaining healthy skin.

Myth

Diet has no impact on oily, acne-prone skin.



Truth:

While food alone does not directly cause acne, certain dietary choices can impact skin conditions.



Milk: Consuming larger amounts of milk may increase the likelihood of acne. Scientists speculate that hormones present in cow's milk, particularly those produced during pregnancy, could contribute to this correlation. Individuals with higher levels of these hormones in their bloodstream often experience more severe acne.



Food and beverages with a high glycemic index (GI):

High-GI food and beverages, such as sugary sodas, white bread, white rice, and cake, can exacerbate acne. These foods cause rapid spikes in blood sugar levels, prompting increased insulin production. Elevated insulin levels can affect other hormones, leading to heightened oil production in the skin.

Oily foods: Despite common beliefs, consuming oily foods is not a direct cause of acne. However, spending excessive time

cooking oily foods can contribute to blemishes as oil from cooking surfaces can clog hair follicles.

On the positive side, incorporating high-fiber foods into your diet can improve acne. A diet rich in fiber helps regulate blood sugar levels and promotes a healthy gut microbiome. Though the precise mechanisms linking gut health and acne remain unclear, evidence suggests a strong connection. While skincare products are often a significant focus, it is crucial to prioritize internal health. Clear skin starts from within.

To support skin health, consider reducing dairy consumption and opting for a plant-based, high-fiber diet. While balancing gut microbiota may not provide immediate relief for everyone with acne, committing to a high-fiber diet offers numerous health benefits beyond skin improvement, including preventing constipation, reducing cancer risk, and supporting heart health.



Myth

Pores open and close.



Truth:

Despite common beliefs, no amount of steaming, splashing with ice-cold water, or applying warm compresses will cause your pores to open or close. Pores lack the ability to expand or contract because they lack muscles for such movements. This persistent beauty myth stems from a misunderstanding of what pores actually are. Pores are simply tiny openings on the surface of your skin where hair grows and oil is released. Unlike mouths, pores do not open or close at any time.



The size of pores is primarily determined by genetics, sun exposure, and aging. Collagen loss as we age can lead to skin laxity, causing pores to appear larger, rather than physically opening. Sun damage exacerbates collagen depletion, further accentuating the appearance of enlarged pores.

While pores cannot change their size, they can appear larger due to factors such as blockages and oil buildup. Cold or hot water cannot alter pore size either. However, warm water can help in

loosening sebum, making it easier to cleanse pores effectively.

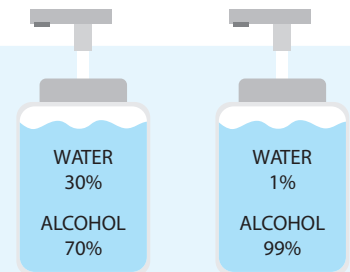
When splashed with ice-cold water or after certain beauty treatments, pores may seem smaller, but this effect is not due to pores “closing.” Instead, it is because of changes in the blood vessels in the face. Ice constricts blood vessels, which can also make pores look smaller. Similarly, beauty procedures like microdermabrasion, microneedling, or some forms of heat-based technology may also reduce the appearance of pores due to swelling. When the skin experiences trauma, it tends to plump up, and the pores may appear “squeezed” by the swelling, giving the illusion of being smaller, even though they remain unchanged in reality.



Pores can become clogged with dirt, oil, or dead skin cells, regardless of skin type, resulting in dull-looking skin. For those prone to acne, these clogged pores may develop into blackheads or whiteheads. When people mention “opening” their pores, they typically refer to wanting to thoroughly cleanse them to remove impurities. This process can temporarily reduce the appearance of pore size. Ultimately, it is important to understand that pores cannot be opened, closed, or made smaller.

Myth

Alcohol wipes with a higher alcohol percentage disinfect more effectively.



Truth:

Alcohol wipes are available in concentrations ranging from 70% (with 30% water) to 99% (with 1% water) isopropyl alcohol. While it might seem intuitive that higher concentrations, such as 99%, would be more effective than lower ones, like 70%, the reality is quite the opposite. The 70% concentration is actually more effective for disinfecting. Why? Because it contains more water!



Water slows down the evaporation of alcohol, giving it more time to effectively kill germs. The disinfecting power of rubbing alcohol decreases at concentrations higher than 80% to 85%. However, this does not mean that lower concentrations are superior. If alcohol concentrations drop below 50%, their effectiveness for disinfection sharply declines.

Water plays a crucial role in destroying or inhibiting the growth of harmful microorganisms with isopropyl alcohol. Water acts as a catalyst and helps denature the proteins of cell membranes in microorganisms. Solutions with 70% to 75% alcohol content penetrate the cell wall more thoroughly, reaching the entire cell and causing the microorganism’s death.

Myth

Preservative-free skincare is better.



Truth:

When a brand promotes its products as “free from” certain ingredients, consumers often assume there must be a valid reason for excluding those ingredients, or that the omitted substances are inherently harmful. Parabens, a common category of preservatives, have particularly garnered a negative reputation, largely due to a 2004 study that incorrectly linked them to breast cancer. Despite the U.S. Food and Drug Administration debunking this claim, the fear surrounding preservatives persists among consumers.



However, the truth is that products without preservatives can pose significant risks to our health. Microbes are microorganisms that are everywhere; they exist in the air we breathe, on our hands, and in our water. Common types of microbes include bacteria, viruses, and fungi. Some microbes can make us ill.

Each time we open a jar or use skincare products, they become susceptible to contamination by harmful microbes. Even refrigeration only slows down the growth of microbes; it does not halt it entirely.

Preservatives are crucial for preventing the proliferation of harmful microbes in our skincare products. Without them, skincare products become breeding grounds for molds and microbes as well as the toxins they produce. This can pose serious health risks, particularly when these contaminated products are applied on our faces. Infections can occur through inhaling harmful microbes into our lungs, getting them in our eyes, or microbes entering our bodies through

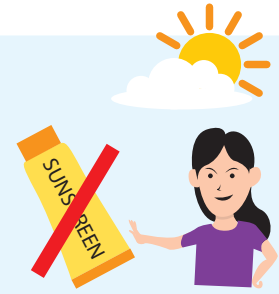
cuts on the skin, potentially leading to severe infections. Since we touch products with our fingers, there is a risk of ingesting mold toxins or microbes when handling food or feeding infants with contaminated hands.

Therefore, choosing skincare products with preservatives is the safer option. Even though preservative-free products might seem appealing, the potential risks outweigh any perceived benefits. Ensuring skincare products are safe and effective means recognizing the essential role of preservatives in maintaining product safety and protecting our health.



Myth

I do not need to wear sunscreen if it is not sunny.



Truth:

Protecting yourself from the sun's UV radiation remains essential even during winter and on cloudy days.



UV radiation damages the DNA in skin cells, producing mutations that can lead to skin cancer and premature aging. It can penetrate through clouds, causing damage to your skin even on overcast days. Additionally, the sun's UV rays can reflect off surfaces like sand, water, or concrete, further endangering your skin.

UVA and UVB rays are the two main types of UV rays from the sun, and it is crucial to shield yourself from both. Let us have a quick look at the differences between UVA and UVB.

UVA: These rays penetrate the skin deeply, leading to premature aging, wrinkles, and dark spots. They can even pass through clouds, with about 95% of UV rays reaching the ground being UVA.

UVB: Most windows block UVB rays, which have higher energy and can cause sunburn. UVB rays damage DNA and are thought to be the primary cause of skin cancers, also contributing to hyperpigmentation.

On sunscreen labels, the SPF (Sun Protection Factor) number indicates protection against UVB rays, while the PA (Protection Grade of UVA) rating, often represented by plus signs (+) in Asian countries, indicates protection against UVA rays. The UK uses a star rating that measures the amount of UVA protection. For both the star rating and the PA rating, the higher the rating, the better the protection. So, does a higher SPF number mean better protection? Yes, but the difference is not significant.

Approximate Total Protection:

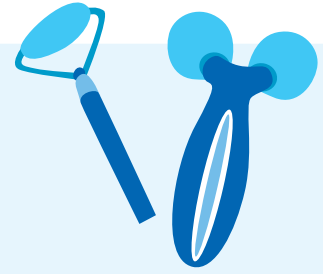
- SPF 10, PA+: 90%
- SPF 15, PA++: 93%
- SPF 30, PA+++: 97%
- SPF 50, PA++++/+ : 98%
- SPF 100, PA++++/+ : 99%



Make sure to use sunscreen with at least SPF 30 and PA+++ to shield your skin from both UVA and UVB rays. Remember to apply sunscreen every day, regardless of weather conditions, to safeguard your skin.

Myth

Facial massage can contour the face.



Truth:

Facial massage can have benefits, just not necessarily for your skin. The notion that facial massage, whether done with a jade roller, gua sha tool, or your fingers, can magically sculpt model-worthy bone structure is more myth than reality. Despite the grand promises often made on social media platforms, claiming benefits such as enhanced blood circulation, reduced puffiness, wrinkle and sagging skin reduction, or facial contour sculpting, scientists remain skeptical due to the lack of scientific evidence supporting these claims. The act of rolling or massaging simply does not address the underlying scientific processes of aging.



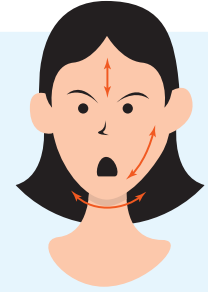
However, facial massage can visually appear to improve skin temporarily. In general, massage can stimulate blood flow, leading to a temporary, more “volumized” appearance that may give the impression of “fewer wrinkles” and a “glowy” complexion. Yet, these results are short-lived, with no scientific backing for long-lasting effects or significant changes in facial contour or wrinkle reduction. Whether you massage upwards, sideways, or downwards, even the “glowy” appearance is only temporary.

Nevertheless, while facial massage may not deliver significant skin benefits, it can still offer relaxation and potentially relieve stress. Additionally, it may provide relief for jaw pain and headaches by targeting the masseter muscles (towards the back part of cheeks) and the temporalis muscles (front part of the temples, side of the skull).



Myth

Facial exercises can tighten facial skin.



Truth:

If you are turning to at-home facial exercises to slim down your face, you might end up disappointed. Spot-reducing fat, or targeting a specific area of the body for weight loss, is simply not feasible. The



only effective way to slim down any area, including your face, is through overall weight loss, with the hope that the targeted spot will also decrease in size.

When it comes to wrinkles, it is important to understand that muscle movement causes creases and fine lines. Facial muscles form a complex network that involves the bone, each other, and the skin. Unlike bone, skin is elastic and offers minimal resistance; it behaves like an elastic band—stretching it out leads to laxity. Therefore, exercising facial

muscles pulls on the skin, potentially causing it to stretch rather than tighten. This phenomenon is evident in individuals who undergo significant weight loss, often resulting in loose skin that does not regain its tightness. Many facial wrinkles stem from excessive muscle activity rather than a lack thereof. Laugh lines, crow's feet, and forehead wrinkles all originate from the repetitive use of facial muscles. Attempting facial exercises to erase wrinkles can actually exacerbate the issue rather than alleviate it.

For wrinkle prevention, adopting simple measures such as using sun protection, staying hydrated, and moisturizing your skin can help significantly. Additionally, maintaining a balanced diet and regular exercise regimen can slow down the aging process, thereby reducing the formation of wrinkles in the long run.



There are treasure troves of mysteries in nature waiting to be discovered and explored. Countless scientists have devoted themselves to unraveling them in the hopes of improving human health and wellbeing. Their work is vital to understanding and treating disease.

We bring you their research findings in our goal to enrich and expand public knowledge.

Shiitake Mushroom (*Lentinula edodes*)



Shiitake Mushroom May Help Fight Obesity

This study found that adding a lot of shiitake mushrooms to a high-fat diet can help prevent rats from gaining too much fat and reduce certain fats in their blood. The more mushrooms they ate, the better the results. The study suggests that there is a specific quantity of shiitake mushrooms needed to stop weight gain effectively. In conclusion, the study encourages further research and human clinical trials to see if shiitake mushroom could be a useful food to prevent obesity and related health issues.

Handayani D, Chen J, Meyer BJ, Huang XF. Dietary shiitake mushroom (*Lentinus edodes*) prevents fat deposition and lowers triglyceride in rats fed a high-fat diet. *J Obes.* 2011;2011:258051. doi.org/10.1155/2011/258051

Immune-enhancing Effects of Shiitake Mushroom

Eating shiitake mushrooms for four weeks may boost the immune system by increasing certain immune cells and antibodies. Doing so also reduced inflammation, as indicated by lower C-reactive protein levels. The study showed changes in specific proteins related to immune response, suggesting that regularly eating shiitake mushrooms can improve immune function and decrease inflammation.

Dai X, Stanilka JM, Rowe CA, et al. Consuming *Lentinula edodes* (shiitake) mushrooms daily improves human immunity: a randomized dietary intervention in healthy young adults. *J Am Coll Nutr.* 2015;34(6):478–487. doi.org/10.1080/07315724.2014.950391

L2, a Polysaccharide in Shiitake Mushrooms, Has Positive Effects on the Immune System

A different study looks at the L2 polysaccharide in shiitake mushrooms and how it affects the immune system. The researchers found that L2 affects specific genes in various ways, suggesting it could be a potential therapy for cancer treatment. Some of these genes are linked to survival time in cancer patients. The study also discovered that L2 has different roles in different parts of the digestive system. Overall, the L2 polysaccharide in shiitake mushrooms seems to have immune-boosting properties.



Xu X, Yang J, Luo Z, Zhang X. *Lentinula edodes*-derived polysaccharide enhances systemic and mucosal immunity by spatial modulation of intestinal gene expression in mice. *Food Funct.* 2015;6(6):2068–2080. doi.org/10.1039/c4fo01192a

L2 May Improve Both Humoral and Cellular Immunity

Researchers tested L2 from shiitake mushrooms on old mice and found that it improved both the humoral (antibody-related) and cellular (cell-mediated) aspects of the immune system. They found that L2 treatment altered the composition of gut bacteria in a way that brought the microbiota of aged mice closer to that of younger adult mice. In summary, the authors stress that L2 has a significant positive impact on the immune system and gut microbiota of aged mice.

Xu X, Yang J, Ning Z, Zhang X. *Lentinula edodes*-derived polysaccharide rejuvenates mice in terms of immune responses and gut microbiota. *Food Funct.* 2015;6(8):2653–2663. doi.org/10.1039/c5fo00689a



Shiitake Mushrooms May Stop the Growth of Tumor Cells

A study has discovered that a part of shiitake mushrooms has the ability to stop the growth of human tumor cells. This effect depends on the concentration of the mushroom fraction, with around 50 mg/L concentration causing about half of the human tumor cells to undergo apoptosis (programmed cell death). The process seems to be related to an increase in a protein that promotes cell death. The mushroom fraction also arrests the cell cycle by slowing down a specific phase. Importantly, normal cells

are less affected by the mushroom fraction compared to cancer cells. Overall, the study suggests that substances in shiitake mushrooms, termed “mycochemicals,” might hinder tumor cell growth by promoting programmed cell death.

Fang N, Li Q, Yu S, et al. Inhibition of growth and induction of apoptosis in human cancer cell lines by an ethyl acetate fraction from shiitake mushrooms. *J Altern Complement Med.* 2006;12(2):125–132. doi.org/10.1089/acm.2006.12.125



Lentinan, a Polysaccharide in Shiitake Mushrooms, Helps Prevent Cancer in Multiple Ways

Lentinan is a polysaccharide in shiitake mushrooms. It helps prevent cancer, modulates the immune system, and directly inhibits tumors. Lentinan's anticarcinogenic activity is attributed to the suppression of CYP1A (a type of enzyme that plays a role in the metabolic activation of some carcinogenic compounds). Additionally, lentinan inhibits telomerase activity and prevents the increase of chromosomal damage induced by anticancer drugs.

Lentinan is also a T-cell-oriented immunopotentiator. It boosts T helper (Th) cell and macrophage production, stimulates acute phase proteins (proteins that contribute to the acute immune response) and affects host defense mechanisms. The antitumor activity of lentinan is contingent upon a functional T-cell component, and it mediates thymus-dependent immune mechanisms. Lentinan, along with other mushroom polysaccharides, can induce apoptosis in tumor cells. The cytotoxic activity is attributed to polysaccharides or polysaccharide-peptide complexes isolated from shiitake mushrooms.

Xu X, Yan H, Tang J, Chen J, Zhang X. Polysaccharides in *Lentinus edodes*: isolation, structure, immunomodulating activity and future prospective. *Crit Rev Food Sci Nutr*. 2014;54(4):474–487. doi.org/10.1080/10408398.2011.587616

Shiitake Mushroom Polysaccharides Can Enhance Cancer Therapies

Studies show that adding lentinan to chemotherapy significantly prolongs the survival of patients with recurrent gastric cancer or gastric cancer that cannot be completely removed by surgery. A retrospective examination of 78 patients receiving S-1-based chemotherapy revealed that chemo-immunotherapy with lentinan resulted in a significantly longer median overall survival compared to chemotherapy alone. The study also demonstrated improved one-, two-, and five-year survival rates in the group that received lentinan. Lentinan may also have a potential synergistic action with targeted therapies.

Ina K, Kataoka T, Ando T. The use of lentinan for treating gastric cancer. *Anticancer Agents Med Chem*. 2013;13(5):681–688. doi.org/10.2174/1871520611313050002

Lentinan May Help Prolong Survival Time and Quality of Life in Cancer Patients

Researchers have shown that application of lentinan in addition to chemotherapy led to prolongation of survival time, restoration of immunological parameters, and improvement of life quality in patients with stomach cancer, colon cancer, and other carcinomas in comparison to patients who had chemotherapy alone.

Lindequist U, Niedermeyer TH, Jülich WD. The pharmacological potential of mushrooms. *Evid Based Complement Alternat Med*. 2005;2(3):285–299. doi.org/10.1093/ecam/neh107



Lentinan May Improve Survival Time of Stomach Cancer Patients

In a study with 89 stomach cancer patients, the median survival time of the group using immunochemotherapy consisting of a combination of chemotherapy and lentinan was 189 days, compared to 109 days with chemotherapy alone.

Ochial T, Isono K, Suzuki T, et al. Effect of immunotherapy with lentinan on patients' survival and immunological parameters in patients with advanced gastric cancer: results of a multi-centre randomized controlled study. *Int J immunother*. 1992;8(3): 161–169.



Shiitake Mushroom May Help Lower Blood Pressure

A study found that rats fed mushrooms, such as shiitake mushrooms, had lower body weight than the control group of rats that were not fed mushrooms. Rats fed shiitake mushrooms had significantly lower levels of free cholesterol. Shiitake feeding resulted in a decrease in very-low-density lipoprotein (VLDL) cholesterol. Cholesterol plaque will narrow arteries and increase the blood pressure. Lower levels of free cholesterol and VLDL can reduce the risk of heart disease.

Kabir Y, Yamaguchi M, Kimura S. Effect of shiitake (*Lentinus edodes*) and maitake (*Grifola frondosa*) mushrooms on blood pressure and plasma lipids of spontaneously hypertensive rats. *J Nutr Sci Vitaminol (Tokyo)*. 1987;33(5):341–346. doi.org/10.3177/jnsv.33.341

Shiitake Mushroom May Help Lower Serum Lipid Levels

Researchers found that in rats with hypercholesterolemia (high levels of cholesterol in the blood), shiitake mushroom helped to lower serum lipid levels and to reduce hepatic fat accumulation and aortic atherosclerotic plaque formation. Eritadenine, a compound in shiitake mushrooms, demonstrated a similar effect and upregulated the expression of the CYP7A1 gene associated with cholesterol metabolism. The findings suggest that shiitake mushrooms and their compounds could be considered in the treatment of hypercholesterolemia.

Yang H, Hwang I, Kim S, Hong EJ, Jeung EB. *Lentinus edodes* promotes fat removal in hypercholesterolemic mice. *Exp Ther Med*. 2013;6(6):1409–1413. doi.org/10.3892/etm.2013.1333

Antimicrobial Effects of Shiitake Mushroom

Gingivitis—the earliest stage of gum disease—occurs when bacteria and plaque build up on the teeth and cause infection. The study compared the effectiveness of chlorhexidine (an active ingredient in gingivitis mouthwash) with a shiitake mushroom extract.

Results showed that while chlorhexidine reduced the numbers of harmful bacteria, it would also affect the “good” bacteria. The shiitake mushroom extract lowered the numbers of some pathogenic bacteria without affecting the “good” bacteria.

Ciric L, Tymon A, Zaura E, et al. In vitro assessment of shiitake mushroom (*Lentinula edodes*) extract for its antigingivitis activity. *J Biomed Biotechnol.* 2011;2011:507908. doi.org/10.1155/2011/507908



Scientific research requires judgments based on professional knowledge and rigorous implementation processes. These processes consist of complex methods, any small change in which can affect the results drastically. We have provided you short summations of the research for ease of understanding. Do not use this as a basis for self-diagnosis or self-treatment.



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