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E. EXCEL'S WORLD



恭贺新禧

HAPPY NEW YEAR

# Building the Best Life for Your Loved Ones

## Diamond Masters Chang Pei-Jung and Chou Chih-Hao



**Chang Pei-Jung and  
Chou Chih-Hao**

**From:** Taiwan

**Strengths and Hobbies:**

Handicraft, singing, and traveling

**Dream:** Owning a house

**Traveled with E. Excel to:**

Singapore, Malaysia, Austria, the  
Czech Republic, India

"I will never forget the day I first received my bonus from E. Excel; it was really cash! I thought to myself, 'Wow, now I have money that I can put to good use. From that day onwards, I became a mom who could also afford to satisfy her children!'" Newly promoted Diamond Master Pei-Jung said joyfully as she recalled that special day.

Pei-Jung cares most about her family; it is her biggest motivation to work hard and build her E. Excel career. Pei-Jung grew up with three brothers. She was the only girl in the family, and even as a child, she was aware of how hard her parents labored to support them. Thus, after graduating from junior high school, she took up part-time jobs while studying to help reduce her parents' burden.

Pei-Jung's parents always wished for her to be a good and obedient daughter. She did her best to meet those expectations. Nevertheless, a wonderful childhood dream still remains deep within her. "When I was little, I dreamed about becoming a superstar. I wanted to be on stage and bask in the glory of drawing the entire world's attention. I also thought about becoming a teacher, but that didn't happen because studying was not my forte," she reminisced with a smile. "The biggest factor was the lack of extra money, so I couldn't learn other skills even if I wanted to."

As a result, after getting married and having children, Pei-Jung sought to provide her children with a worry-free life that is free from financial cares, so that they did not have to bury their dreams because of harsh realities.

"My motive for taking up the E. Excel career is pretty simple—to give my three children a better life," she shared frankly. "Happy parents, happy kids. In the past, I was under a lot of financial stress, and I would get irritated easily. I often lost my temper and vented it out on my children. But, then I met many E. Excellers for whom raising children was not difficult at all. They were armed with knowledge gained in E. Excel—knowledge on how to treat people right and handle things properly. They take such good care of their family, raise their kids well without the need to scold or beat them, and, on top of it all, their E. Excel careers are thriving. I am inspired by them, and those goals are things I am working towards. I also realized that E. Excel not only brings health knowledge to the people, but also brings us precious wisdoms of life!" Pei-Jung said.



While managing her E. Excel career, Pei-Jung also fulfilled her childhood dreams along the way. She remembered what it was like when she first stepped onto the stage with a microphone in hand to share Nutritional Immunology. "My voice was trembling, and so was my body. But when I finished my speech, I was greeted with rapturous applause from below." Since then, she would seize every opportunity to get on stage and give her best. "Although I am not a school teacher, being an E. Exceler sharing Nutritional Immunology earns me even more affection and respect," she said. Furthermore, Pei-Jung's wish to be a superstar on stage has been fully realized time and again during E. Excel's Awards Presentations.

"E. Excel has become an indispensable part of my life. Thanks to E. Excel, I can live life the way I like. I can say with certainty that I can't live without E. Excel! Haha!" Pei-Jung said humorously. She shared an anecdote, "I became a stay-at-home mom for three years to raise my children. When I returned to the working world, I didn't expect to quit my job after less than three days. I realized that, while working, I was always thinking about my E. Excel career. Hence, I quitted my job and proceeded to manage my E. Excel career on a full-time basis."

By virtue of her diligence and perseverance, Pei-Jung won her entire family's support. In fact, several E. Excelers on her team were recommended by her mother-in-law. "Both my in-laws have been really supportive; they told me, 'just do whatever you should do.' My mother-in-law once even said, 'who else are we to support other than one's own family?' This has all touched me deeply. Sometimes, just a word or a gesture alone can encourage me to keep going!" Pei-Jung said gratefully. Her father and her husband are her biggest fans. They are the reason why she can go full throttle in her E. Excel career without worries, and it makes her cherish every second spent with her family. "Despite my busy schedule, I will never give up family time." This is the firm promise that Pei-Jung makes to herself. "The E. Excel career allows me to schedule my own working time. I'm able to strike a balance between looking after my family and my career, and I can put my family as my top priority," she analyzed.

"The biggest present E. Excel has given me is a better family life, and the ability to provide my children with a better quality of life. E. Excel helps me see things from different perspectives and broadens my horizons. I have always believed in the saying, 'If you work hard, the heavens will reward you.' In my days in E. Excel, I have achieved every one of my goals and dreams. The E. Excel career is my lifelong career. I will lead more people, along with my family, into this career. Believe to achieve!" Pei-Jung vows and declares.

Life Motto—"Experiencing and making breakthroughs constantly makes life complete."



# A Lifelong Career that Enriches Your Life

## Diamond Master Lin Pei-Ji



### Lin Pei-Ji

**From:** Taiwan

**Strengths and Hobbies:**

Real estate investments, singing, and dancing

**Dream:** Being happy every day; having no worries

**Traveled with E. Excel to:** Sanya

"The me of 20 years ago would have never dreamed, that after retiring, I would be living a completely different life! But now, I'm happier, more fulfilled, and more purpose-driven," newly promoted Diamond Master Lin Pei-Ji shared candidly at the start of the interview.

In the past, Pei-Ji did very well in his real estate career. He was even appointed as the Chief of Village and the Chairman of Chamber of Commerce. But when he approached middle age, he had a health crisis. His health deteriorated so much, that at one point, his doctor gave up on him. "The traditional line of thought is that 'a person who owns land owns wealth.' I threw my whole life into my work, and it took me decades to finally learn that health is, in fact, the greatest wealth. The greatest blessing and the greatest joy is to have caring and supportive fellow E. Excellers who are always there for you, no matter what."

Pei-Ji manages his E. Excel career not for money, but to give back to others. He has benefited a lot from Nutritional Immunology himself, and wants to share its goodness to help more people. "After encountering E. Excel, to live a life of service will be my motto for the rest of my life," Pei-Ji declared firmly.

"I deeply respect Dr. Jau-Fei Chen's sacrificial spirit—she left the laboratory to share Nutritional Immunology with the world. At this point, she could have simply chosen to move behind the scenes and taken a back seat. Instead, she still chooses to be deeply involved to this day. She does not let distance stand in her way when it comes to holding health and business trainings regularly. Even when she cannot come here in person because of the pandemic, she still conducts the online event *The Talk Room with Dr. Jau Fei Chen* every month, keeping us informed of the latest international research findings," Pei-Ji said in awe.

"As busy as she is, Dr. Chen has managed to present herself at every lecture with charisma and energy. She sets such a great example for us, so we should attend every training! We have no excuse to be lazy!" Pei-Ji encourages himself and fellow E. Excellers in this way. "E. Excel emphasizes the importance of education. When each of us first enters E. Excel, we are like blank pieces of paper or sponges that need to soak up over 30 years of research on Nutritional Immunology, and more knowledge about health, career, and life that E. Excel has prepared for us. Where else can we find such an opportunity that each of us can take seriously to develop ourselves to the fullest, regardless of age and background?"





Pei-Ji continued to speak frankly, pointing out the inherent laziness of human beings—people inevitably get comfortable and lazy from time to time. When this happens to fellow E. Excellers, Pei-Ji would use examples of student life to encourage them, “Everyone was a student once. Some students skip school because they think classes are held too early; others find that it’s tiring and bothersome to attend several classes in a day. However, has it ever occurred to anyone that no matter how early a class starts, or how long a class lasts, the teacher is never late, let alone absent? Students complain that their homes are too far from school, but not all teachers live near the school either, do they? Not to mention, during the class, it is the teacher who has to remain standing until the class ends, while students sit comfortably. Some students doze off during class, but teachers always keep their spirits up, giving their lectures energetically.

“Everyone, think about it: what do teachers have to lose when students skip classes, do not concentrate in class, or refuse to study? Nothing! Yet, teachers always earnestly wish their students to become greater than themselves, and they become resentful when students fail to live up to their expectations. Likewise, Dr. Chen and senior E. Excellers want us to succeed! Learning and growing is for our own benefit. When we slack off, we are the ones who lose out, so it’s not worth it!” he analyzed insightfully.

With an intense look, Pei-Ji emphasized, “Since you have already invested your time coming to E. Excel and learning to change yourself, you should put forth all of your effort to make your goals happen!” He added, “Nowadays, society is full of superficial ideas, but the E. Excel career is far from it; it is very practical, and not at all a load of empty promises. We might not be a medical institution, but we’re one step ahead of the medical industry because we specialize in Nutritional Immunology. After all, prevention is better than cure, even doctors and experts would undoubtedly agree with that.

“I am in my 70s. There are others in the E. Excel team who are also in their 70s. Most people think we should retire. The E. Excel career, however, makes us feel younger and more alive; we are full of vigor when we travel with E. Excellers from one end of Taiwan to the other end, sightseeing and sharing health knowledge on the way. Every day, we experience and enjoy life to the fullest. We are E. Excellers for life!” Pei-Ji declared with pride.

Life Motto—“Keep persevering, keep changing.”

# Share with Sincerity and Open Your Life to All the Possibilities

## E. Exceller Beh Gaik Chin



**Beh Gaik Chin**

**From:** Singapore

**Strengths and Hobbies:**

Reading, traveling, and watching movies

**Dream:** Travel around the world

**Traveled with E. Excel to:**

Japan, Switzerland, Phuket, Dubai, Club Med Cherating, Australia, Macau, India, Greece, Germany, Italy, USA, South Korea, Royal Caribbean Cruise, China, Vietnam, Austria, France, Portugal

"E. Excel provides you with more than just a five-figure income, E. Excel fulfills every aspect of your life!" For E. Exceller Beh Gaik Chin, these were the most inspirational words encouraging her to join E. Excel back in the day, and she has come to embody these words after managing her E. Excel career for almost 20 years!

Gaik Chin has a good educational background. After graduating from a polytechnic, she became a quantity surveyor and worked hard for a bright future in the construction industry. However, textbooks and lectures did not prepare her for the harsh realities of that job—daily deadlines forced her to race against time, but there was never enough of it; every day, she had to face fierce disputes. This completely shattered her expectations of a wonderful life. The work stress seriously jeopardized her everyday life. At one point, it even whittled her weight down to only 39 kilograms. "I wanted to change my career, but I did not know what to do. It wasn't until I met my former colleague who introduced me to the E. Excel career that I felt the dark cloud hanging over me lifting. I finally saw a ray of hope and another possibility for my life."

You would undoubtedly feel touched by this positive and optimistic E. Exceller whose every word sings like a happy note when you first make her acquaintance. As you converse with her further, you certainly could sense the genuineness emanating from her, like the word "Chin" in her name, representing "real, true, and genuine," which makes you feel comfortable around her and willing to speak from the heart to befriend her. When asked why she joined E. Excel, Gaik Chin gave an amazing but unsurprising answer. It also has something to do with "Chin!" She said, "E. Excel's products are great. Nonetheless, I think another important aspect of E. Excel is education. Most companies only care about selling their products; they don't bother to educate consumers very much. In contrast, E. Excel never places emphasis on 'profit.' It doesn't sell whatever is popular in the market. E. Excel truly cares about people, and it makes everyone's health its top priority. What's more, Dr. Jau-Fei Chen is a frank and truthful leader. I remembered once she said sincerely on the stage that 'although the ingredients of our cooking oil are great, it doesn't mean the more you consume the better; after all, the oil itself is high in calories.'"

What are the key factors of sharing products and promoting the health career? Gaik Chin put it this way, "The E. Excel career focuses on people. Aside from working hard, it's also important to show people your sincerity, and not just push products onto them. Only then will they voluntarily share the products with others and educate them about health and Nutritional Immunology."





She continued, "For instance, I would share some knowledge about Nutritional Immunology with my friends and tell them the benefits of eating wholesome vegetables and fruits as well as the potential harm of manmade vitamins. I think it is better to concentrate on introducing the ideas of health, instead of immediately introducing the products. In this way, the listener will feel less burdened and will be more receptive!" Gaik Chin believes that no one would ever turn his or her back on these genuine feelings. This is why she is getting better and better at sharing Nutritional Immunology, and why she is radiant with warmth and tenderness. It is also why she can share honestly and joyfully from the heart, and it is the main reason why people are so drawn to her!

In spite of being recognized as a successful fellow E. Exceller, Gaik Chin is still striving for her career. Let us take a look at what motivates her. "For so many years, I have never seen Dr. Chen being lazy. In fact, even now, she is working harder than before. Are we still looking for excuses not to follow her example and fully unleash the potential in our lives?" She continued, "I would seize the opportunity at every training session to learn and improve my professional skills. I think we need to understand, absorb and 'internalize' what Dr. Chen says, explaining it in our own words when sharing with others. Many people do not practice after learning. Therefore, what they've learned will never become something that belongs to them. After learning something, you must practice and apply it. Do it once, twice, thrice, and keep doing it until it feels natural—that's the very moment when your career can achieve a breakthrough."

It is hard to imagine that Gaik Chin, who once was surrounded by complaints and felt so stressed-out every single day at work that she became extremely thin when she toiled in a traditional business 20 years ago, is now someone who can happily share Nutritional Immunology with others and whom people are envious of and aspire to become! She said earnestly, "The E. Excel career provides a harmonious balance between daily life and work. It continuously helps me to grow and become more mature. It enables me to glean happiness from the good health and success of fellow E. Excellers, and to enjoy a carefree life." Gaik Chin also took this opportunity to express her enormous gratitude, "I am very grateful to Dr. Chen—you are the beacon in our life, illuminating the way for each one of us to work towards. I am also grateful to the Company and fellow E. Excellers. We are like a big family, striving towards our shared goal together."

"After enduring the unusual year of 2020, there is a seismic change in many people's health awareness. I hope that in the new year, we can do more to urge people to take care of their health and to share the knowledge of prevention and healthcare. Everyone should know that E. Excel can provide their life with a 'Plan B.' This 'Plan B' may safeguard you in years that are full of uncertainty, and is more likely to become the key to your success. As I am now, I can truly understand those words fellow E. Excellers shared with me at the start of my journey, 'E. Excel fulfills every aspect of your life!'" Gaik Chin shared as her eyes brimmed with emotion.



# Glucosamine and Chondroitin Sulfate Supplements



As people grow older, their bodies do not work as well as they used to. This happens with every part of the body, including cartilage (a rubbery tissue that acts as a cushion between the bones of joints).

With age comes degeneration of the joints, whether it be from rheumatoid arthritis or just normal wear and tear, also known as osteoarthritis. Some people, in an effort to reduce or repair the damage, turn to supplements such as glucosamine or chondroitin sulfate.

## What are these compounds?

Glucosamine is an amino sugar and the precursor to many different lipids and glycosylated proteins. It is involved in the creation of molecules that come together to form cartilage in your joints.

Glucosamine is not something that needs to be supplemented as the body is capable of synthesizing its own glucosamine. The compounds required to synthesize glucosamine are glucose and glutamine. The body always has plenty of these raw materials so if the body needs to synthesize cartilage, it can take what is already present to make it.

## Where do glucosamine and chondroitin sulfate come from?

When it comes to what we put into our body, it is important to know what it is, and where it comes from. These supplements can be created synthetically. Glucosamine is naturally present in the shells of shellfish, animal bones, and bone marrow. Most glucosamine available on the market in the form of supplements is made by processing the shells of these shellfish, including shrimp, crabs, and lobsters. This is usually done through chemical and biological treatments, for example, by adding lactic acid and bacteria for fermentation, or adding hydrochloric acid to the chitin from the shellfish.

As glucosamine is mainly made from shellfish, there is a chance of contamination from pollutants and other substances. The majority of shellfish are farmed. Industrial fish farming, also called aquaculture, is a fast-growing area of food production all around the world. Since fish are raised and farmed in such confined conditions, antibiotics are added to the water and sometimes injected directly into the fish. Pesticides and hormones are also sometimes used. On some farms, the fish pens are in the ocean, which means that the fish are also exposed to any pollutants in the ocean water.



Glucosamine supplements are often bundled with another supplement: chondroitin sulfate. It is formed from the cartilaginous tissues of various animals, including cows, pigs, shark, fish, and birds. These supplements are often not uniform and do not meet pharmaceutical standards. Due to the various sources, as well as other factors, such as the age of the animals, the composition and quality of the supplements vary greatly. In addition, the animals are also often kept in poor, confined conditions, which then requires the use of antibiotics, or even hormones to help the animals grow. Animal feed can also contain pesticides that the animals will then consume. This can contaminate any animal products.



### You Are What You Eat

Many people have the misconception that they need to eat what they are lacking. For example, if they want to replace or boost a part of their bodies, they will eat the corresponding part. If someone thinks they have a bad liver, they will eat liver. If someone thinks their joints are bad or damaged, then they will eat cartilage. This way of eating does not actually help. Merely eating cartilage will not replace or boost the cartilage in your body.

It is the same with glucosamine. Glucosamine supplements are treated in your body like anything else that you digest. They are broken down into the simplest components by your digestive system, and these individual components are absorbed and used by your body where they are needed. This means that when you consume glucosamine, it is not guaranteed your body will use it to build cartilage. It will first be broken down by your digestive system until it is no longer glucosamine. Your body then uses the small components as it sees fit. Imagine if a chair was broken down into different wooden parts. Those parts can now be used to make different things, and will not necessarily be used to build another chair—it could be used to build a table, or a cupboard, but not always a chair.



### Glucosamine Supplements May Increase Diabetes Risk

It is not just contamination that people need to worry about. It is widely reported that glucosamine supplements do not have any side effects, or are not harmful to your body. But newer research has shown that glucosamine can increase insulin resistance.

In a systematic review done of multiple studies, in patients taking glucosamine, researchers found decreased insulin sensitivity, or increased fasting glucose. In a different study, in subjects with no

history of diabetes, researchers found significant elevation of glucose levels after taking glucosamine. This suggests that glucosamine can affect glucose levels and how glucose is absorbed by the body. Other research has shown that too much glucosamine can damage pancreatic cells, which are the cells responsible for secreting insulin. This can increase the risk of developing diabetes.

People who are overweight tend to suffer joint pain because their joints have to bear more weight. Being overweight raises the risk of osteoarthritis (the most common form of arthritis, also known as degenerative arthritis) and type 2 diabetes. Being overweight *and* taking glucosamine supplements may further increase the risk of type 2 diabetes.

A more effective option for relieving joint pain is to lose weight, rather than taking supplements that do not work. Good health comes with effort, and it is impossible to just pop a pill and magically repair your cartilage.

### What the Research Shows

Multiple large-scale randomized trials have shown that in patients with knee or hip osteoarthritis, using glucosamine, chondroitin, or a combination of the two, did not have any clinically significant effect on their perceived joint pain.

#### *The BMJ*

A meta-analysis published in *The BMJ* concluded that “compared with placebo, glucosamine, chondroitin, and their combination do not reduce joint pain or have an impact on narrowing of joint space. Health authorities and health insurers should not cover the costs of these preparations, and new prescriptions to patients who have not received treatment should be discouraged.”

#### *The New English Journal of Medicine*

A randomized controlled trial looking at 1,583 patients found that glucosamine and chondroitin sulfate, alone or together, did not reduce pain in patients with osteoarthritis of the knee.

#### *Arthritis & Rheumatology*

A multicenter, randomized, double-blind, placebo-controlled study was done. The researchers found that not only did glucosamine or chondroitin sulfate supplements not work in reducing pain, but some of their patients taking the supplement actually experienced worse pain. Their study was stopped for that reason.



#### *American College of Rheumatology/Arthritis Foundation Guideline*

The American College of Rheumatology/Arthritis Foundation Guideline strongly recommends against using glucosamine or chondroitin sulfate in patients with knee and/or hip osteoarthritis in their latest guidelines.

#### *Australian Rheumatology Association and Arthritis Australia*

They have released a joint statement to highlight growing evidence that glucosamine does not help people with osteoarthritis and that people with shellfish allergy should not take glucosamine (which is commonly derived from shellfish).



### *National Health Service*

The National Health Service (NHS) of England states that these dietary supplements are not prescribed on the NHS as the evidence is not strong enough to warrant their use. It recommends that if patients want to take these supplements, they need to spend their own money to buy them.



### **What Will Actually Help**

#### *Lose weight*

In general, people tend to decrease their physical activity and exercise less as they grow older. This means it becomes harder to control their weight. Weight management is important to lower the risk of disease and reduce the stress on joints.

Your joints have to support your weight. The more you weigh, the more they have to support. Being only 4.5 kilograms (10 pounds) overweight increases the force on your knees by 13 – 27 kilograms (30 – 60 pounds) per step. Overweight

women have four times the risk of knee osteoarthritis while overweight men have five times the risk. All that force increases the risk of wear and tear and degrades the cartilage faster.

#### *Exercise and build muscle strength*

You can also help your joints by exercising and building muscle strength. Your joints are surrounded by tissue and muscle, which help support your joints. The weaker your muscles are, the more stress your joints are under. The stronger your muscles, the more you can help support your joints and take away some of that stress. Building muscle is not just doing cardio, but also doing exercises that increase your muscle strength, such as lifting weights. You do not have to worry too much about damaging your joints during exercise—you just have to ensure you do the exercises properly. If you do not know what you are doing, then find someone who does, like a personal trainer, a friend, or a family member, to help you do these exercises safely and efficiently.

#### *Improve your diet*

A healthier lifestyle needs to be paired with a healthier diet. If you want to build muscles, it is a good idea to eat a diet with more protein, and to pick healthier sources of protein, such as plant protein. There is no point working so hard in the gym if your diet does not support muscle growth!



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

*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.*

## The Non-existent Benefits of Plant Stem Cells in Skincare Products



The cosmetic and skincare industry is always coming up with new ways to entice customers to spend more money and buy more products. One of the latest “fads” is stem cells, particularly plant stem cells.

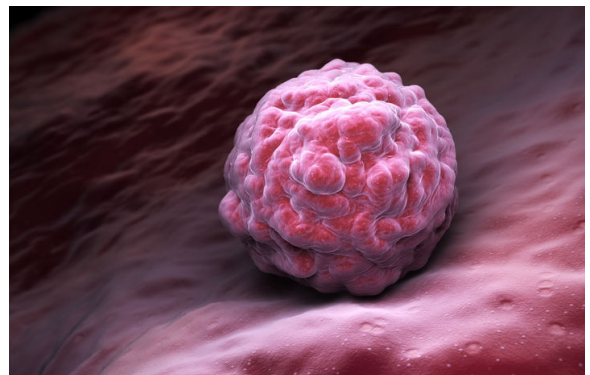
Clinics around the world offer stem cell-based treatments for pretty much every condition under the sun. There are creams, serums, toners, face masks, and even special facials that claim to harness the rejuvenating power of stem cells with promises to repair wrinkles and reverse aging.

Some plant stem cell beauty products even claim that they can reproduce human stem cells and growth factors! Using big scientific words like “micro-formulated,” “scientifically engineered,” and “cosmeceuticals,” they hope to bamboozle undiscerning customers into believing that their products are backed by science and evidence, when they are not.

### Plant Stem Cells Are Not Human Stem Cells

A depressing number of people will read marketing claims about plant stem cells and believe that plant stem cells have the same effect as human stem cells. They might believe that these plant cells can communicate and work together with human cells.

Let's put it clearly—plants are not humans; humans are not plants. Looking at the tree of life, we are not even on the same branch. Plant cells cannot replace human cells, and they cannot communicate with human cells. If stem cells are to work, communication is required. Without communication between cells, any sort of growth, regeneration, or repair of tissues will not happen. If a plant cell can communicate with human cells, then you would be able to photosynthesize and get your energy from standing under the sun.



## No Living Stem Cells in Skincare Products

There are many news articles about scientists growing hearts from stem cells in labs. This may give the impression that stem cells have the potential to be some sort of miracle cure, that they can solve all our medical problems and work magic like re-growing lost limbs. Reality is not quite so fabulous. In strictly controlled laboratory settings, it is true that human stem cells can regenerate certain human cells.



For any type of stem cell to perform its functions as a stem cell, it needs to be alive. But by the time these plant stem cells are processed and added to a skincare product, they are long dead. Even if the plant stem cells were alive when they were added, they would not be able to survive for long suspended in a skincare product. A dead cell is not going to function.

These plant stem cells in skincare products are nothing more than advertising gimmicks and an excuse to jack up the prices. To date, there has been no published scientific data showing the effectiveness of any plant stem cell skincare products.

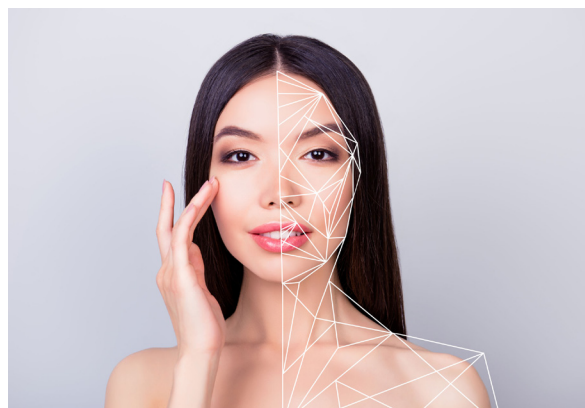
## Eat the Plants

Even if living plant stem cells are used, they are too large to make it through the layers of the human skin. Your money is better spent on wholesome plant foods for food, not smearing dead plant stem cells on your face.

There are simple steps you can take to improve the health of your skin. Firstly, protect your skin. The best way to do that is to use sunscreen. The sun is actually one of the largest contributors to skin damage and the visible signs of aging. After using sun protection, moisturize the skin to help keep it supple.

Secondly, adopt healthier dietary habits. Your skin is a mirror of what is going on inside of you, it is a reflection of your internal health. One nutrient that most people need more of is fiber. Most people do not get enough fiber in their diet. Increasing daily fiber intake can help the colon work better, and get rid of waste material on a timelier basis. This can improve your body's health, including your skin.

A healthy diet, in combination with regular exercise, can help you stay younger for longer, and hold off the visible signs of aging.



Good things come in pairs. So here's another Beyond article. Enjoy!





# The Truth About Labels

When you browse through the beauty section in department stores, you see all sorts of label claims, such as “natural,” “chemical-free,” “organic,” and “hypoallergenic.” These labels seem like good things, but they are not always 100% true, and they do not always mean what you might think. Let’s take a closer look at each of these misleading labels.

## Chemical-free

No beauty or skincare product is truly 100% chemical-free. We often perceive chemicals as something that is synthetically created, sitting in laboratory flasks and beakers, ready to be mixed into something else. We assume a chemical is automatically harmful or bad. In reality, everything is made up of chemicals.

Chemicals can be natural, chemicals can be good, and chemicals are necessary for life. All matter on earth is made up of chemicals. To claim otherwise is inaccurate. For example, vinegar, salt, lemon juice, even water are all chemicals. The implication that a “chemical-free” product is safer is a lie. “Chemical-free” products are not demonstrably better or safer than ones produced by people who have knowledge of chemistry and do not lie to you.



## Natural

We often see “natural” on a product label and assume the product is safe, clean, or better. That is not the case. Natural does not always mean botanical ingredients either. For example, your lipstick’s vibrant red color may have come from the pigment carmine, which is made from cochineal bugs. Just because something is natural does not mean that it is safe, nor does it mean that it is toxin-free or chemical-free. For example, some clays used in skincare products can be contaminated with heavy metals. Several essential oils, also commonly used, are potent allergens.

Despite widespread use of the label “natural,” in the USA, there is currently no legal definition of the term, and there are no regulations on its use. The U.S. Federal Trade Commission has also filed complaints against several companies that have marketed their products as “all natural” or “100% natural” when they are not. So what you expect the label to mean does not always match up to what is actually in the product.



### Organic

“Organic” beauty products are not any better or safer; they are neither all-natural nor free of contaminants. Chemically speaking, an organic compound is a compound that contains carbon. Because carbon is one of the building blocks of life, 90% of all chemicals contain carbon and are therefore “organic.” For products containing botanical ingredients, the term “organic” refers to how the ingredients are cultivated. There are some regulations governing the use of the term “organic” for food, but not for cosmetics or skincare. Products that wish to use the “organic” label should follow

the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) regulations by choice, but it is not required for cosmetic companies to adhere to those regulations before they plaster that label all over their products.

### Hypoallergenic/For Sensitive Skin

Products with this label claim to be kinder to the skin and produce fewer allergic reactions or redness. There is no standard or definition for the term “hypoallergenic.” In fact, “hypoallergenic” was a term coined by the skincare and cosmetic industry; it did not originate from medical or immunological science. It simply means whatever the cosmetic manufacturer wants it to mean. Cosmetic manufacturers do not need to submit proof that their product is “hypoallergenic.” This means that the term “hypoallergenic” has no real meaning in the marketplace.

A product cannot be guaranteed to never cause sensitivity or produce an allergic reaction in someone. Humans can have allergies to practically anything. Some people, unfortunately, have aquagenic urticaria, a type of water allergy, in which they get rashes when they come into contact with water. There are no universal ingredients that someone cannot be sensitive or allergic to. We need to put more effort into understanding ourselves and our health, rather than throwing money at the latest, trendiest phrases.



### **Dermatologically Tested**

A product that is “dermatologically tested” is not safer or more trustworthy. The label “dermatologically tested” is not approved or endorsed by organizations such as the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) or the American Academy of Dermatology. The product does not even have to go through any sort of testing. At its most basic, at least one dermatologist either looked at or was consulted for the product. The dermatologists may not be neutral parties. They could be biased and working for the company. The next step up would be product testing. But there are no standard tests, and the depths and details of tests vary. The test results might be unreliable or even highlight flaws in the product; the results could find people have negative reactions to the product. However, because the product was technically tested, many skincare companies will use the label anyway, while touting the fact that they tested their products. “Dermatologically tested” is nothing but a marketing phrase.



### **For Asian Skin/For Men/For Women**

General skin differences exist among ethnicities and genders. However, certain differences between individuals can be greater.

The main difference between ethnicities is skin tone and the amount of melanin present in the skin. Some studies suggest that Asian skin has a thinner stratum corneum, but the difference is minimal, and some studies say otherwise.

Men and women can have some differences in skin. Generally, men tend to have larger pores and rougher skin. This is due to genetics, hormones, and differences in skincare habits. But women can also have larger pores and rougher skin, due to a variety of factors. In the end, skincare does not have to split between genders. For most brands, the main differences between their men and women products are fragrance and packaging.

Skincare is very personalized. The differences between individuals is greater than the differences between ethnicities or genders. Rather than artificially limiting yourself by race or gender, tailor your skincare routine to meet your individual needs. You might need a lighter moisturizer if you live in a humid climate; or you might need a richer moisturizer because you take certain medications that dry out your skin; or you might need a gentle face wash because you are an avid athlete and you wash your face several times a day. Choose the skincare products you like best. Look beyond the labels “for Asian skin,” “for men,” or “for women.” We are all humans first and foremost.

### **Green**

There are no regulations controlling the use of this label, so there is no one definition for what “green” means. Some people think it means biodegradable or eco-friendly. Others think it means natural, recyclable, or sustainable. This is an umbrella term that does not have a specific meaning. It is up to the consumer to decipher what the “green” label means in each particular case.







### Preservative-free

Preservatives are necessary because microbes exist everywhere, even in the air we breathe. A world without preservatives is a world filled with mold, fungi, and microbial contamination and growth. If a product contains water, and it claims to be “preservative-free,” then the manufacturer is either lying or they do not know what they are doing. Without preservatives, the product will begin to spoil immediately after opening and coming into contact with air. Even if left in the refrigerator, the product’s risk

of bacteria or mold formation is high. Thus, the question is not whether preservatives should be used, but rather, *how* they are being used.

Preservatives used in safe amounts are much better than a preservative-free product that is a breeding ground for microbes. It goes without saying that using products festering with bacteria and mold can lead to all sorts of health and skin problems. Many brands have started removing all mention of preservatives from their labels to cater to consumers. Preservatives still exist, but they are just not listed. Some brands take extreme measures; they replace preservatives with harsh and damaging chemicals, such as disinfectants.

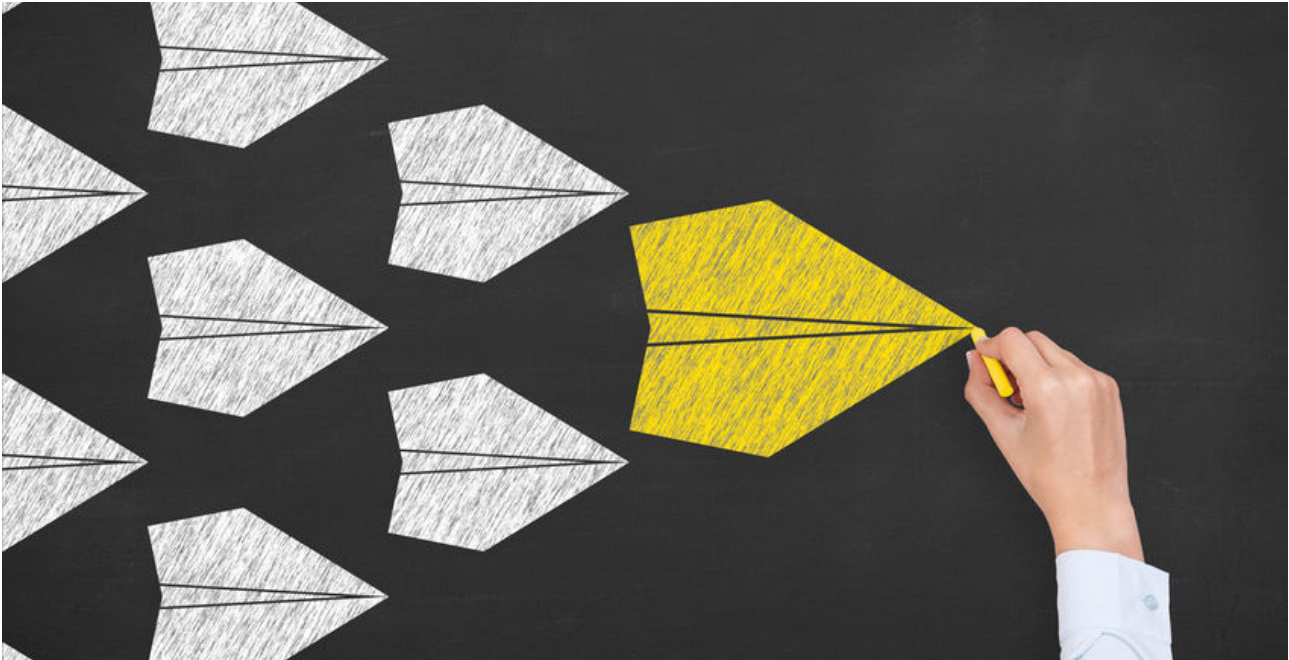


The cosmetic industry is one of the most poorly regulated industries. There are plenty of loopholes, which means a lot of claims do not mean anything at all. It is the Wild West out there! Do your research, arm yourself with knowledge, and leave the misinformation behind.



The Beyond articles are contributed by Dr. EE Zhang, MBChB.

# Quit Making Excuses



Increasing freedom and control over your destiny always come with increasing responsibilities. When you decide to work towards your goals, you plant and nourish a seed of promise—one you water and fertilize by taking responsibility and control over your life. But, too often, excuses poison the soil and smother the seed. Excuses rob you of your potential more than anything else in life. Excuses will leave you defeated.

## **Take responsibility for your dreams.**

It is easy to declare goals, such as to lose weight, get healthy, make more money, pay back debts, write a book, and so forth. The loftiest goals are easily declared by millions every day. But, dreams are a hefty responsibility to carry. Why is it that even the humblest ambitions so often fall by the wayside? Most people are not willing to take responsibility for their dreams. Instead, they dump their dreams into the closet with a simple but tragic excuse: "I'm doing fine;" "I don't really want that;" or "I'm contented."

Why dream and declare goals if you are contented? People often lie to themselves to pacify the burning desires they have for more. They are scared of the effort it will take to achieve their desires. The fire of many ambitions is quenched by the illusion of contentment. To move forward, stop lying to yourself. Own your dissatisfaction, and take responsibility for your dreams.

## **Take responsibility for your failures.**

Your main competitor is yourself. If you are not able to grow, you will never become the person you need to be. A necessary part of this process is learning from mistakes and failures. But oftentimes, people cheat themselves of the opportunity to learn by making excuses.



It is natural for the new and less experienced to slip up sometimes because they are timid, shy, or indecisive. Unfortunately, instead of taking responsibility and admitting their mistakes, they make excuses to justify their mistakes. “Timid” is excused as cautious, “shy” hides behind polite, and “indecisive” transforms to patient. Likewise, the rude thinks himself to be “courageous” and the uninformed defends his ignorance as “spontaneity.” Worse still, the more they cloud their vision with excuses, the harder it becomes to see the truth of the matter. Ultimately, they become so invested in their excuses that they

never correct themselves—after all, there is nothing to correct. Many fall deep into this trap, unwilling to get out.

The simple fact is, if you are not getting the results you are looking for, you are probably doing something wrong. If you continue to make excuses for yourself, you will never improve. Even the most successful people have made plenty of mistakes; the difference is that they consistently take responsibility, and therefore have control over their outcomes. It is not easy to be honest with yourself and bear the weight of your actions. But those with the courage and the integrity to do so will also take the necessary steps to correct their course. Success comes only by taking responsibility for your failures.

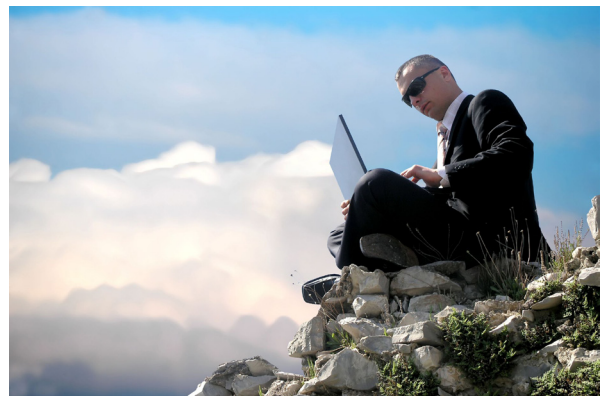
### **Stop making excuses for others’ successes.**

Sometimes, people avoid responsibility for their own fears and failures by making excuses for someone else’s success. Instead of focusing on what they can do to be more successful, they make excuses for why others are more successful than they are.

“He has more friends than I do because he is a suck-up.”  
 “She has a better team than me because she talks a lot.”

The truth is, it takes work to learn and show oneself to be friendly. It takes much care and effort to become a skilled conversationalist. The successful have plenty to teach others. They can serve as examples on which to model your efforts and provide valuable lessons on what it takes to succeed.

Unfortunately, few people take the opportunity to learn from successful people, because it takes a great deal of humility to admit that someone else is better. It is one of the most difficult things to do. So, they take the easy way out: they make excuses for other people’s successes, changing admirable traits one should strive for into negative ones.



*A hard worker who takes pride in his achievements.*  
 He makes more money because he is greedy.

*A team player who understands his team’s needs.*  
 He thinks he is a nice guy, but he is just a nosy guy.

*A knowledgeable speaker who has studied Nutritional Immunology inside out.*  
 People only like her because she is pretty.



In the bitterness of their pride, people reject skills and traits that have been proven to be key to success and exalt the excuses of their inability.



I cannot succeed because I am not greedy like he is.  
I cannot succeed because I do not want to be nosy like he is.  
I cannot succeed because I am not pretty like she is.

"I am a good, ordinary person and that is why I cannot succeed like those freaks!" But "those" are not freaks—they are also good, ordinary people. They, too, have unique strengths and weaknesses, advantages and disadvantages, and virtues and vices. All sorts of people succeed in this business. But they share one trait in common: they do not make excuses and they do not drag other people down. They take responsibility for their own lives, and respect the strengths of others. They continue to improve by learning from their failures, and learning from the

success of others.

Countless motivated individuals have traveled the same path that you are on right now, carrying with them hopes and dreams. Some blossom from seeds of potential into large towering trees bearing fruit: some thirtyfold, some sixty, and others a hundred. But, many other seeds, equally full of potential, sprout, wither, and fade without bearing so much as a leaf. What poison killed these saplings before their time? Excuses.

At every turn of opportunity that they had to take responsibility for their outcomes, they, instead, chose to make excuses. Excuses for their dreams being too big; excuses to not pursue their dreams seriously. Excuses for their own faults and shortcomings; excuses to not change and grow. Excuses to belittle others' successes; excuses to not learn from them. These are the deadliest and most common mistakes people make. On the other hand, where individuals take personal responsibility for their lives, some of the humblest people become the greatest success stories.



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



**Q1 There is a lot of bad publicity about sugar, or how sugar can cause cancer. Is sugar bad for you?**

Whether sugar is good or bad depends on the quantity and whether there are other nutrients besides sugar. All plant foods contain sugar, but the scientific community agrees that fruits and vegetables are healthy.

There are sensationalist media reports and articles on the Internet about the supposed link between sugar and cancer. However, these articles are merely spreading misinformation and anxiety.

Mayo Clinic has stated that "...giving more sugar to cancer cells doesn't make them grow faster."

**Mayo Clinic**

- Founded in 1864
- Not-for-profit academic medical center
- Over 4,500 physicians and scientists
- Mayo Clinic Alix School of Medicine ranked among the top 10 in the USA
- Mayo Clinic is ranked number 1 in the USA for 2020 – 2021

Cancer Research UK has also stated that "...there's no way of telling our bodies to let healthy cells have the glucose they need, but not give it to cancer cells. There's no evidence that following a 'sugar-free' diet lowers the risk of getting cancer, or boosts the chances of surviving if you are diagnosed."

The American Institute for Cancer Research has stated that "every cell in our bodies, including cancer cells, uses sugar (glucose) from our bloodstream for fuel. We get that blood sugar from foods we eat containing carbohydrates, including healthful vegetables, fruits, whole grains and low-fat dairy sources. Some glucose is even produced within our bodies from protein, but there's no clear evidence that the sugar in your diet preferentially feeds tumors over other cells."

The American Cancer Society notes that "This fact is often misinterpreted by people, who assume (incorrectly) that sugars in foods and beverages directly 'feed' cancer cells."

**Q2 Under what circumstances is sugar bad for us?**

When people recommend cutting down on sugar, or avoiding sugar, what they really mean is cut away empty calories. Empty calories are calories that only provide energy with no nutritional value. For example, soda contains empty calories as soda can be high in calories, but without any nutrients. Empty calories are bad because excessive calories lead to weight gain, which in turn increases the risk of multiple diseases.



According to research done by the American Cancer Society, being overweight or obese is thought to be responsible for about 11% of cancers in women and about 5% of cancers in men in the U.S., as well as 7% of all cancer deaths.

**Q3 Does our body need sugar?**

Humans need glucose to survive. Sugar works as the fuel for cells in the body to perform their necessary functions. Sugar fuels the growth of the cells in the body. Without their source of fuel, cells would starve to death.

**Q4 What happens when we eat whole grains, vegetables and fruits?**

Sugar occurs naturally in all foods that contain carbohydrates, which include whole grains, vegetables and fruits. It is also present in dairy products. When we eat these foods, for example, a slice of bread, a cup of spinach, an apple, a cup of milk—our digestive system will break them down into smaller components such as simple sugars for our cells to use.

**Q5 Can diabetics eat sweet foods?**

What diabetics really need to be concerned about is not the sweetness of a food but its glycemic index (GI).

The glycemic index is a rating of how foods will affect blood sugar levels on a scale of 0 – 100. Diabetics want to eat more foods with a low glycemic index, and avoid foods with a higher glycemic index.

For example, white rice is not sweet, yet it has a high GI of 89. This means that white rice will cause a spike in blood sugar levels—something diabetics want to avoid. Brown rice, on the other hand, only has a GI of 50, meaning it will cause a lower and slower increase in blood sugar levels. The difference is that brown rice contains more fiber, and fiber can often help temper this increase in blood sugar.

Another example is a boiled potato compared to apples. A boiled potato has a GI of about 87. An apple has a GI of about 34. An apple has more fiber than a potato does, and despite being much sweeter, it actually has a smaller effect on blood sugar than a potato!

Diabetics with a sweet tooth do not need to despair! They just need to plan out their diet with care.





**Q6 What is the glycemic index (GI) of different sugars, such as sucrose, fructose, and glucose?**

Different sugars have different glycemic indexes, with some having a very low glycemic index. Glucose has the highest glycemic index of 100. Sucrose, another type of sugar, has a glycemic index of 65. Fructose has a low glycemic index of only 19!

This means that although fructose is sweet, it does not have a large effect on blood sugar and will not cause a sharp spike in blood sugar levels.

**Q7 Why is the glycemic index not on food labels?**

Not all food labels list the glycemic index because it is difficult to measure. The glycemic index of foods is determined through tests done on humans, not a laboratory test.

**Q8 What will affect a diabetic's blood sugar levels?**

Other than diet, blood sugar is affected by multiple different factors, for example:

- Levels of physical activity
- Timing of meals
- Types of medication
- Severity of diabetes

For diabetics, it is not merely a case of what they can or cannot eat, but how well they plan their diet while taking into account their blood sugar levels as well as the dosage of their medications.

**Q9 What is one nutrient that diabetics should take in to help control blood sugar levels?**

Dietary fiber is one nutrient that most people are lacking in yet it is also really easy to get. It can help slow the absorption of sugar and aid in controlling blood sugar levels. For people without diabetes, a healthy diet that contains fiber can lower the risk of developing type 2 diabetes. Fiber is found only in plant foods, including vegetables, fruits, beans, seeds, and whole grains.

**Q10 For the Nutrition Facts label, does the sugar section refer to the amount of added sugar?**

The section for sugar commonly refers to the total amount of sugar in the product. It does not only refer to sugar that has been added. It also includes sugar that has not been added and is naturally present in the food.

**Q11 What is high fructose corn syrup?**

High fructose corn syrup (HFCS) is widely added to foods and drinks because it is one of the cheapest sweeteners. Contrary to its name, it is not pure fructose. It is either a mix of 42% fructose and 58% glucose, or a mix of 55% fructose and 45% glucose.



**Q12 Will highly nutritious foods (e.g. ginseng) make cancer cells grow faster?**

Rather than causing cancer cells to grow more, research has shown ginseng may actually have anticancer properties. A meta-analysis has found that ginseng consumption is associated with a decreased risk of cancer, and that the effect was not specific to a single organ. Several clinical trials have demonstrated that ginseng can reduce cancer-related fatigue and improve the quality of life of cancer patients.

Mayo Clinic Cancer Center led a study and found that high doses of American ginseng over two months reduced cancer-related fatigue in patients more effectively than a placebo. Vanderbilt-Ingram Cancer Center researchers found that ginseng may improve survival and quality of life after a diagnosis of breast cancer. Another study has revealed that ginseng may inhibit breast cancer cell growth by activation of the apoptotic pathway.

**Q13 Can we eat ginseng during the summer?**

Ginseng can be used irrespective of the season or the weather. Adequate nutrition is necessary during all seasons of the year.

**Q14 Are the ginsenosides in all types of ginseng the same?**

Each different species of ginseng has different ginsenosides. For example, American ginseng can have ginsenosides that are unique to it.

**Q15 Is ginseng only for the weak and elderly?**

Ginseng can be used by people of all ages. It is important to take care of our health starting from young.

Research has shown that ginseng may help delay signs of aging by reducing wrinkle formation and improving skin hydration. It can induce the formation of type 1 collagen in the skin and improve expression of components of the extracellular matrix that contribute to skin moisture, such as ceramide and hyaluronan.

Ginseng has multiple health effects that people of all ages can benefit from. For example, research has shown that ginseng has antioxidant, cardioprotective, anti-inflammatory, and immunoregulatory effects. It may also have a positive effect on certain brain functions as well!



## Q16 What research is there on ginseng?

### ***Antioxidation effects of ginseng***

Increase in oxygen-derived free radicals is closely related to the aging process.

- Ginseng can decrease lipid peroxidation and restore antioxidant potential by reducing oxidative stress.
- Can reduce oxidation-induced organ injury.
- Administration of panax ginseng to aged rats results in protective effects against oxidation-induced damage of the liver, kidneys, heart, and lungs.

### ***Cardiovascular effects***

Aging is associated with various complicated changes in cardiovascular structure and function.

- Ginseng is shown to be cardioprotective due to its antioxidative, anti-arrhythmic, calcium channel-antagonistic, anti-inflammatory, and anti-apoptotic properties.

### ***Anti-aging effect on nervous system and motor function***

There is a progressive loss of neural tissue with age, usually reflected by a gradual decline in cognitive function. Cognition is a fundamental action of the brain that will become disrupted with aging, and the capabilities of maintaining and processing information decline with age. Memory impairment is one of the most predominant downfalls of aging.

- Ginseng extracts and ginsenosides improve acquisition and retention of memory in aged rats.
- Ginseng may mediate improvement of memory-related brain functions.
- Research shows that ginsenosides have neuroprotective effects. Ginseng may also be able to protect against chemotherapy-induced cognitive impairment, of which there is no treatment at present. Researchers have found that ginsenoside Rb<sub>1</sub> can help reduce the loss of neurons, inhibit oxidative stress and inflammation in the brain, and restore the function of brain cells.

### ***Immunoregulatory and anti-inflammatory effects***

Adaptability of the immune system declines with age.

- Recent research has proposed chronic inflammation as a major risk factor for aging and age-related diseases, especially low-grade, unresolved, molecular inflammation which may be the deciding factor in the development of age-related pathologies.
- Polysaccharides from ginseng are shown to be immunomodulators that significantly increase natural killer cell cytotoxic activity and enhance phagocytic activity of peripheral blood cells.
- Ginsenosides stimulate the proliferation of lymphocytes, T cells, and B cells.
- American ginseng root polysaccharides can stimulate innate immune functions while inhibiting pro-inflammatory responses.





**Q17** **Is ginseng safe to eat?**

According to research, ginseng appears to be safe. Ginseng has been classified as GRAS (Generally Recognized As Safe) by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA). Moreover, the German Commission E Monographs and the World Health Organization (WHO) monographs on Selected Medicinal Plants state that there are no contraindications or side effects of ginseng.

Ginseng is a great root that can be consumed in a variety of different ways—from raw to cooked. It is a great food to add to a healthy diet.

**Q18** **Is Siberian ginseng a type of ginseng?**

No. Despite its name, Siberian ginseng is completely different from Asian ginseng and American ginseng, and has different active chemical components.



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