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E. EXCEL'S WORLD



April – June 2021

## Excel in Life with E. Excel

### E. Excellers Alin Loo and Dave F. Kong



**Alin Loo and Dave F. Kong**

**From:** North America

**Strengths and Hobbies:**

Able to make decisions in critical moments

**Dream:** To see E. Excel become a leading brand worldwide

**Traveled with E. Excel to:**

Singapore, Malaysia, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Vietnam, Utah, the Caribbean

Even as a young boy, E. Excel Dave F. Kong understood the importance of disease prevention. "My family stayed in the countryside when I was a child. There was no doctor or hospital nearby. We couldn't afford to get sick!" he recalled with a smile. "I would often ask myself if there existed a magical remedy to keep us from getting sick, or turn us into geniuses," Dave continued with a mischievous grin.

Asked about how E. Excel entered his life, Dave said, "When I was in my late 30s, my friend introduced me to cactus juice. I was instantly intrigued by the science behind it. There must be something in a cactus that enables it to survive and thrive in the harshness of the desert. So, I bought a bottle to try. To my amazement, it was unbelievably delicious. I also noticed an improvement in my health. A week later, I ordered another bottle, and signed up as an E. Exceler.

"But the real turning point for me in committing to the E. Excel career happened a few weeks later. A Taiwanese marketing guru was in town that day conducting an entrepreneurship seminar. After the seminar, I realized that the most achievable way to make my dream a reality was through sharing and giving back to others. It was a wake-up call for me! So taken by E. Excel's mission to share the gifts of health and knowledge with mankind, I let go of my rent-to-own (rental-purchase) business and took up the E. Excel career on a full-time basis."

Dave's love for E. Excel and Nutritional Immunology is obvious and touching, "Before encountering E. Excel, I often ate unhealthy foods and drank too much. Everything about me changed for the better after I met E. Excel. E. Excel has helped me live a healthier life, and my health has improved tremendously. Now I know how to truly treasure life and the people around me," Dave said gratefully.

"I'm not the only one who has benefited from E. Excel; my whole family has been blessed by it. My mother-in-law was once in poor health. All I could do was to help improve her nutrition with a wide range of phytonutrients. Fortunately, her health improved so much with better nutrition. Now my mother-in-law is still kicking in her 80s!

"In all my years with E. Excel, I feel most accomplished about turning countless strangers into my friends. Today we are one big, happy E. Excel family!" Dave said with a beaming smile. Successful people typically share certain personality traits, such as being target-oriented, ambitious, and determined. They are doers. Dave is no exception. "If there is a target, I must hit it!" he said with determination.





"As a child, I had no idea what 'lose face' meant when my father and grandfather kept mentioning it. But I knew that I didn't like losing. So I studied very hard. When I was in primary school, the top pupils were all children of the school principal, director, etc., except for me."

This pursuit of excellence helped Dave achieve success later in his life. He is hardworking, strong, and never gives up. "I like the name 'Extra Excellence.' It inspires me to never settle for anything less than excellence. And I still remember that moment clearly when Dr. Jau-Fei Chen said that the word 'failure' does not exist in her dictionary, only 'result!'"

When asked how he has managed his E. Excel career so well, he answered humbly, "I often say two things to my teammates.

"No. 1: Don't be afraid of difficulties. As the song goes, 'There is a crack, a crack in everything. That's how the light gets in.' When you suffer from hardship or setbacks, stay positive! Whenever there is a crack, there is a ray of light and hope!

"No. 2: Be water, my friend. This is a saying by my idol Bruce Lee. The saying emphasizes the power of being adaptive. For example, when we are sharing Nutritional Immunology to those who have never heard of it, the same approach might not work for everyone. Learn to adapt to the situation and decide on the best approach."

For those thinking of joining E. Excel, Dave hopes that they can be honest with themselves and ask themselves these two questions, "Do you agree that nothing is more valuable in life than health and wisdom? Do you know anybody out there who might know people who are not happy with what they are doing for a living right now? YES or YES? Congrats! Welcome to our club of excellence!"

"Looking back at my past and all those years with E. Excel, I have received so much kindness from people around me. Not even the most beautiful words in this world can describe my gratitude to them. I'm very grateful to Dr. Jau-Fei Chen for her wisdom and self-sacrifice and for inspiring me to give it my all when managing my life and career. And I also owe a big thank you to all my teammates and fellow E. Excellers for their support and encouragement. Last but not least, I am most grateful to my wonderful wife, who chose to join me in E. Excel from the very beginning. She is always supportive and has my back all the time!"

Life Motto—"Don't worry. Be happy!"

# Persevere, Share, and Fulfill your Dreams

## E. Excellers Luo Wen Bin and Tian Xiao Ying



**Luo Wen Bin and  
Tian Xiao Ying**

**From:** China

**Strengths and Hobbies:**

Sharing health; investment and financial management

**Dream:** To set up a non-profit nursing home to give back to society (in the works)

**Traveled with E. Excel to:**

Malaysia, Singapore, the USA, France, Russia, South Korea, Portugal, Vietnam, Royal Caribbean Cruise, Hong Kong, Taiwan

"The advantage from disadvantage" is a Buddhist phrase that E. Exceller Luo Wen Bin mentions several times during the interview. It is also a belief that he has always held close to heart. Adversity and obstacles may seem to hold one back, but they actually propel one to advance. "Every experience in one's life is wealth!" Wen Bin said with a smile. "The greater the difficulty, the more it can motivate us to keep moving forward. In the meantime, it teaches us to be grateful while growing our compassion, empathy, and tolerance."

In the past, Wen Bin only cared about making money. He did not have any health awareness. Such negligence of his health led to six years of suffering from disease and pain. "My body would flip between feeling cold and feeling hot. I felt so cold at times in the summer that I had to wear a padded jacket. In the winter, sometimes I would be drenched in sweat! I kept visiting famous doctors and experts, and trying folk remedies. Like Shennong-shi, I ate numerous herbs. I tried everything, but nothing seemed to work!" Wen Bin described the painful past with a bit of humor.

His life changed when he met Nutritional Immunology. "For the first time in my life, I understood the intimate link between the immune system and health," Wen Bin said. E. Excel completely upended what Wen Bin and Xiao Ying knew about health. They were also blown away by Dr. Jau-Fei Chen's speech.

"Dr. Jau-Fei Chen imparts to the public thorough and comprehensive concepts, solid scientific research data, and research reports. One of my teammates is a doctor, and after listening to Dr. Chen's speech, even my teammate was full of praise for Dr. Chen, saying that she had never heard of such brilliant health concepts! Thereafter, oftentimes when she was treating patients in her own clinic, she would share the concept of preventive healthcare with them." Whenever Wen Bin spoke of things related to E. Excel, he would light up with passion and enthusiasm.

Wen Bin and Xiao Ying joined E. Excel officially in June 2012. They have since been running their E. Excel business, and it has been thriving. Speaking of management tips, Wen Bin shared, "An E. Exceller once told me that it is important to first manage one's character well before managing products. If you are sincere and honest with people, they will know that you can be trusted, and they will trust in your products. Xiao Ying and I do prioritize each other's health. We only share with others a product after we have personally used it, understand it, and think that it is truly good."





Someone in our neighborhood once remarked justly, 'The amazing transformation in Wen Bin's body in recent years proves that his health concepts are right!' When people around us see our transformation, they are more willing to learn more and to try to improve their own health."

In all these years of managing their E. Excel career, what impressed the couple the most was the 2013 E. Excel Convention in Malaysia, which they attended with their teammates. "That's the first time I saw such a grand annual convention, and also the first time I met fellow E. Excellers from around the world. Initially I was very surprised—why were so many people crazily in love with E. Excel and its products, so much so that they chose the E. Excel career as their lifelong career? I realized that they must have attained in E. Excel countless wonderful things, be it health-wise, career-wise, or life-wise." This further convinced Wen Bin that he made the right choice.

Since then, Wen Bin and Xiao Ying's family, friends, and teammates have all been benefiting from E. Excel, and changing in ways that seemed impossible at first! Feeling deeply touched, Wen Bin told Xiao Ying, "In this lifetime, we can give up on everything except E. Excel! We will spend the rest of our lives managing our E. Excel career." Wen Bin said firmly, "E. Excel meets all the requirements of my dream career. It is my top priority and nothing else will surpass it."

The COVID-19 pandemic made Wen Bin and Xiao Ying think deeply about life and the future. "Many people around us have lost their health and jobs. Many stores have closed down. Countless people cannot even live a normal life. But this does not apply to us E. Excellers! We can still maintain good contact with fellow E. Excellers through messaging apps and phone calls. The pandemic has pushed people to become more aware of their health and of the importance of strengthening their immunity. It has also made many E. Excellers realize the true meaning and value of their E. Excel career. This is a career that can help people to maintain and restore health, as well as help ensure their economic security. The E. Excel career is life's safeguard; it can withstand tests and is unaffected by the threats of changing times and environments," Wen Bin said deeply.

Wen Bin and Xiao Ying encourage all fellow E. Excellers, "If you want a different 'result,' work on the 'cause.' It is a worthy cause to strive to inspire others, help more people gain health and wisdom, and guide them towards a nontraditional career path! Do not become a slave to money, instead, try to create more value, and eventually, replace self-centered life goals with ones that benefit the whole of mankind. As Confucius once said, 'The elderly are provided and cared for, the adults are gainfully employed, and the young are developed and nurtured.'"

Life Motto—"Money is a tool to benefit people; a career is a platform to transform people. The E. Excel career shares the gifts of health and knowledge, and is a worthy lifelong career and legacy!"

# Meet Challenges Head-on

## E. Exceller Jeruel G. Zalameda



**Jeruel G. Zalameda**

**From:** The Philippines

**Strengths and Hobbies:**

Reading, golfing, nature photography, farming

**Dream:** To help more new E. Excellers achieve their big dreams in E. Excel

**Traveled with E. Excel to:**

USA, United Kingdom, France, Italy, Australia, China, Singapore, Malaysia, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Macau, Thailand, Star Cruises Singapore-Thailand, Royal Caribbean Cruise, South Korea

Sometimes, just a simple act of inviting someone can transform a life.

"In 1995, my uncle invited me to a seminar by Dr. Jau-Fei Chen. That was the first time I heard of the science of Nutritional Immunology," E. Exceller Jeruel G. Zalameda recalled with a smile. "I was mesmerized by how natural killer cells—a part of our immune system—could destroy the dreaded cancer cells in our body! I was instantly hooked!"

However, there was a sad reason behind Jeruel's excitement. At the young age of 23, he had already lost his beloved mother and several other family members to cancer. The deep pain and sorrow was something he would not wish on anyone.

Through that seminar, Jeruel grasped that "prevention is better than cure"—the very essence of Nutritional Immunology. From then on, he resolved to share Nutritional Immunology with his family and friends.

Without hesitation, Jeruel resigned from his Office Supervisor job and embarked on his E. Excel career, which has since spanned over 25 years and counting. His friendliness, wealth of experience, and generosity in sharing it came across easily in this interview.

When asked about his guiding principle for running a successful E. Excel career, Jeruel shared an anecdote.

"At Dr. Chen's first Master Training in the Philippines, she asked, 'Who among you here wants to join E. Excel to earn big money?' Of course, we all raised our hands up high! But then Dr. Chen continued, 'You are in the wrong company!' We quickly lowered our hands and stared daggers at our team leaders," Jeruel said with a laugh. "Luckily for our team leaders, Dr. Chen explained that we must care first, then everything else would follow."

Everyone starts somewhere. When Jeruel began his E. Excel career, he had zero knowledge and skills. But thanks to the training that E. Excel provided, he improved his confidence and skills and grew his business.

"Early on in my E. Excel career, a leader told me to 'open your mouth and be successful.' Open your mouth to EAT the Products. Open your mouth to TALK about the Science and the Opportunity."

Jeruel further explained, "When you eat the products, make sure there are people watching you. Before you share Nutritional Immunology, make sure your prospects are ready to listen to you."





"In the beginning, I would quickly set up my projector and give my best presentation on Nutritional Immunology only to draw blank stares from my audience. I realized that they did not need 'health' at the moment. So I changed tactics. I presented the business opportunity, and received the same response. They were not ready for the business either. I finally realized that I needed to establish rapport first by asking the right questions. Then I could properly customize my presentation to meet their needs. Always remember that people do not care how much you know, until they know how much you care."

Positivity, perseverance, and resilience—these qualities stood Jeruel and his team in good stead when the COVID-19 pandemic hit the Philippines and the government declared a lockdown. "Our sales dropped by 10% during the first month of the lockdown. We were anxious about the situation, but also excited about finding solutions to overcome this challenge."

"The lockdown might have imposed restrictions on movements, but on the Internet we were free. We immediately learned as quickly as we could how to conduct meetings on Zoom. It was hard the first few weeks. We had to catch up with the millennials on knowledge of online technologies, battle weak WiFi signals, and teach our beloved senior citizens how to use Zoom."

Jeruel and his team's hard work and tenacity during this challenging period has paid off. "Despite media reports on record losses for businesses, shops closing down, and an economic downturn, we actually had our best sales during the pandemic. People are interested in Nutritional Immunology. And we are reaching more people online."

The pandemic has also renewed Jeruel's passion for Nutritional Immunology. "I am grateful to have Nutritional Immunology as the backbone of my business. It is such a blessing that the science of Nutritional Immunology is still as relevant and important today as it was over 30 years ago. We should reach out to more people and share this science. This pandemic has taught us not to give up, to be resilient, and to be creative in finding ways to run and improve our business."

Asked about how E. Excel has transformed his life, Jeruel said, "I am forever grateful to E. Excel and Dr. Chen. E. Excel has given me the opportunity to live a life that some people can only dream about. It has given me the privilege of traveling to many countries for free and has helped me achieve my dreams. Because of E. Excel, I have been able to build a business that, for more than two decades now, still provides for my family's needs and wants. Most importantly, E. Excel has empowered me with life skills that I use in building this business. I am waiting for the day when my daughter can take over my business and expand it."

Jeruel would also like to offer his heartfelt thanks to his family and team for their love and support, his business mentors for introducing him to E. Excel and for their guidance, and the staff of E. Excel for their dedication in serving E. Excellers despite the challenges during the pandemic.

Life Motto—"You can accomplish by kindness what you cannot by force."

# The Art of Balance



We live, as all living things do, in balance. Our internal environment is carefully and closely controlled to remain stable. This stability is known as homeostasis. Homeostasis is a dynamic equilibrium, not a passive unchanging state. Each of our systems and cells work together, continually making adjustments to constantly changing conditions in order to maintain balance.

Imagine a three-legged stool. Remove one leg and the entire stool collapses. The same is true for the human body. All of our different systems work together to achieve homeostasis. If one system does not work, if it is disrupted, our entire body is affected.

## Everything Is Connected

We must think of our body's health as a whole and not as divided, isolated parts. All of our organs are connected together to create one functioning, balanced, human being.

Each individual system works in conjunction with the others. The cardiovascular system is a good example of this. The heart pumps blood through the complex network of blood vessels. As the blood circulates throughout the body, it picks up nutrients from the digestive system and oxygen from the lungs. It delivers these nutrients and oxygen to other cells of the body and collects waste products created by those cells, such as carbon dioxide. This carbon dioxide is taken to the lungs to be excreted, and the other waste products are taken to be dealt with by the liver and the kidneys. Everything works together; each organ system works in conjunction with the other systems in order to operate at the highest level. Even systems that do not seem connected at first glance are all connected. The lungs rely on the heart to deliver oxygen, while the muscles of the heart cannot survive without oxygen from the lungs. The bones protect certain organs, like the brain, but the brain controls how the bones are positioned. The heart and lungs deliver oxygen to the brain, but the brain controls the heart rate and the breathing rate. The skeletal system needs the kidneys to remove waste produced by bone cells, and creates new blood cells for the cardiovascular system and immune system.

Together, our organ systems maintain homeostasis. Disease in one system can have a cascading effect, leading to the failure of other systems. For example, lung disease can increase pressure on the heart and cause heart failure. Heart failure can cause liver failure. Liver failure can disrupt blood clotting and cognition, and cause kidney failure. Kidney failure can cause bone problems. It goes on and on.





## Homeostasis

Our body is excellent at maintaining homeostasis. It allocates certain nutrients to certain places, certain jobs to certain cells. Each cell, tissue, and organ supports other cells, tissues, and organs, and ultimately keeps us alive and well without conscious input from us. The process is very complex and although we have learned a lot over hundreds of years, we still know little about it. We cannot replicate it. The body makes constant minute adjustments. We have a general idea of what is happening, but whatever scientists can do will never be as good as the body's own methods of dealing with disruptions.



Our body keeps track of a million different factors, ranging from different levels of nutrients and chemicals to even our mood, and how they affect balance. For example, someone who is stressed will release hormones different from someone who is relaxed. Different levels of stress require different levels of hormones. The body constantly makes small changes, such as releasing tiny quantities of hormones, to keep the body in an optimal state. We can consume these hormones artificially but we do not know what the optimum dose is. We do not know exactly when to start or when to stop. If we do take something external, we usually take a constant dose at a constant time. This does not change; we are not able to take all the different factors into consideration to make adjustments in accordance with our body's needs. So, we suffer side effects.



## Disrupting the Balance

We should not disrupt the balance in our body by substituting different nutrients, chemicals, or hormones with external replacements. The balance is incredibly intricate. Even when we think we are helping, we are actually not.

For example, the body secretes insulin naturally. However, people with type 1 diabetes have no choice but to rely on insulin injections because their body does not produce it. Without insulin, diabetics will die. Despite best efforts from the medical community, they still cannot replicate how the body naturally secretes insulin to control blood sugar levels. As hard as one might try, injected

insulin will never have the right timing or exactly the right dose. As a result, a diabetic's control over his blood sugar levels will never be as good as someone who does not have diabetes—as someone whose body can naturally secrete insulin and control it on its own. Thus, people with type 1 diabetes tend to have multiple health problems.

It is the same case with enzyme supplements. The body secretes different amounts of enzymes in different combinations based on the food that is eaten and what the body requires. This combination changes by the second. No matter how hard someone tries, they will never be able to replicate the perfect combination with external enzyme supplements. Normal healthy people who are not suffering from a condition that affects their enzyme production have no need to take enzyme supplements; yet, some people still use enzymes supplements in a misguided attempt to support digestion. More enzymes will not help the body digest food any better. It can actually come with side effects, such as nausea, diarrhea, bloating, headache, swelling, high or low blood sugar, biliary tract stones, and inflammation of the stomach.



### Plant Foods vs. Manmade Substitutes

Because everything in our body is tightly interconnected, what we eat affects our entire body. We can eat to improve our overall health, or eat to impair our overall health. We cannot eat to “target” improve the functioning of only one organ; we also cannot eat to the detriment of only one organ. For example, we cannot drink alcohol without damaging not only our liver, but also our heart and our brain.

Our body is a whole, and accordingly, we must also think of our nutrition as a whole and not as divided, isolated parts. A wholesome food is very complex and created by nature. Like our organ systems, the nutrients in a food are connected and work together in synergy to create a greater whole and provide us with greater benefits. We do not know everything about it, much less recreate it. One isolated nutrient in something like a pill form does not give you the same benefit as the whole food.

For example, soy products chemically purified into forms such as isoflavone supplements may actually fuel the growth of breast cancer cells, whereas wholesome soy has a protective effect against breast cancer.



Even vitamins isolated, purified from fruits may actually be harmful to the body. Research published in the *Journal of American Medical Association* suggested that some vitamins can actually increase mortality, or even increase the rate of cancer. Different vitamin supplements can have different side effects, for example, vitamin A can cause osteoporosis, liver toxicity, fetal harm, and an increased risk of cancer. However, a wholesome source of vitamin A, such as the beta carotene in tomatoes and carrots, can

decrease the risk of cancers and eye diseases. Folic acid supplements may increase the risk of lung, colon, and prostate cancers. But broccoli and spinach, both wholesome sources of folic acid, can help prevent birth defects and help with fetal brain development. Artificially isolating or creating a certain nutrient in a lab in a highly concentrated form only works to disrupt the balance of our body and in the end, create negative side effects.





### Wholesome Is the Best

There is balance in nature. Nature flourishes with the right amount of sun and rain. If there is too little rain, drought occurs. If there is too little sun, plants cannot grow. Healthy soil has the ability to nurture life. Plants take root in this soil and grow with the sun and the rain. We, in turn, benefit from eating these plants, gathering energy and absorbing their nutrients. We are a part of nature, and we, too, have a balance. Our body is made up of trillions of cells that all work together to keep us healthy. Our body works constantly to maintain this balance. It is a delicate equilibrium, and when we unnecessarily interfere with it, we risk putting ourselves in danger.

Unfortunately, many people think advanced technologies, sophisticated names, or fancy extraction processes are better, safer, or more effective. Just because something is high-tech or has a name you cannot pronounce, does not mean that it is good. In fact, taking in manmade substances our body does not need can pose serious health risks. For our health and nutrition, technology still cannot beat nature. Wholesome fruits and vegetables are balanced, and they do not disrupt the balance of our body. Instead, they nourish us, and with balanced nutrition from plant foods, our body is capable of producing their own substances at exactly the right amount we need.

We should focus on living in harmony with nature. Nature has been perfected over millions of years, so let us get back to the basics. A healthy diet with wholesome plant foods, coupled with regular exercise and a happy attitude, is key for a long, healthy life.



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.*

## COVID-19 Vaccines



After a year of social distancing and wearing masks, the COVID-19 pandemic has an end in sight, thanks to the new vaccines. But despite a way to set life back to normal, many people still do not want to take the vaccines due to, at best, simple misunderstandings, and at worst, willful ignorance.

COVID-19 is such a new disease, and there is still much to learn about the possible long-term consequences. However, the vaccine is

a clear and easy way to hopefully avoid these consequences entirely. COVID-19 is not “just a flu.” What is scary about COVID-19 is not only the mortality rate, but also the potentially long-lasting side effects.

Anyone—be they young, old, healthy or with chronic conditions—can be left with long-term symptoms. Even those with asymptomatic infections can end up with long-lasting damage. COVID-19 survivors who experience lingering symptoms weeks or months after they were first infected are known as COVID-19 “long-haulers.” The experience of having persistent symptoms of COVID-19 is also referred to as “long COVID.” No one is safe. There does not seem to be a clear reason why it happens, but one thing is clear—a negative COVID-19 test does not equal a recovery.

What serious long-term complications do “long-haulers” suffer from?

- “brain fog” (difficulty with thinking and concentration)
- Inflammation of the heart
- Problems with lung function
- Acute kidney injury
- Rashes, hair loss
- Lasting loss of smell and taste



Doctors do not know if the damage will be permanent or not. Some people, especially those with severe COVID-19, have been left with scarring in their lungs visible on CT scans. Some of that damage might be permanent.



By taking a COVID-19 vaccine, we can protect not only ourselves, but also other people and curb the spread of the disease. To help people be more comfortable with the vaccines, let us set the record straight on some of the popular vaccine myths.

### **Myth: The COVID-19 vaccine can give you COVID-19**

There are many reasons why people mistakenly think vaccines can give them the disease it is supposed to prevent. However, vaccines, including the COVID-19 vaccine, do not give you the disease.



Vaccines can come with side effects, like fatigue, sore muscles, and feeling just generally unwell. This does not mean that the people who have taken the vaccine and feel such side effects are sick, though many people immediately assume so and blame the vaccine for it. Despite feeling unwell, they are not actually sick. The vaccine works by provoking an immune response. That immune response produces in some people these flu-like symptoms. The symptoms are normal and are an encouraging sign the immune system, together with the vaccine, is working properly. Side effects vary across people; some might experience more, some might experience less, and some none at all. If you do experience side effects, it does not mean your immune system is better or worse, it just means that it is working.

Vaccines are not 100% effective, and they are not effective immediately. Vaccines take a little bit of time (a couple of weeks) to actually kick in and protect you. They are not magic spells that instantly make someone immune. Some people are unlucky and catch the disease right before they get the vaccine, or right after they get the vaccine before their immunity has built up. Others, after getting a vaccine, are lulled into a false sense of security and start doing things they really should not be doing. Because of this, they increase their exposure and end up catching the disease they are trying to avoid. They then wrongly accuse the vaccine of making them sick.

Lastly, it is simply not possible for the vaccine to give someone the disease because there is no live SARS-CoV-2 virus (the virus that causes COVID-19) inside the vaccines.



### **Myth: The COVID-19 vaccine can affect fertility**

The COVID-19 vaccines have absolutely no effect on fertility. This myth arose when people mistook the spike protein on the coronavirus to be the same as another spike protein that is involved in the placenta during pregnancy. This misunderstanding, combined with a shallow understanding of how vaccines work, led to the wrong conclusion that the vaccines would affect fertility, which then spread like wildfire through social media. If it was so easy to render someone infertile, no one would have to go through surgeries to achieve the same effect.

### Myth: The mRNA COVID-19 vaccine changes your DNA

The Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro has stated that the COVID-19 vaccine might turn people into bearded ladies, crocodiles, or superhumans, as per media reports. A crocodile sounds far-fetched, but superhuman? Maybe that might convince more people to get the vaccine. Unfortunately, the closest we are getting to the X-Men universe are the movies.

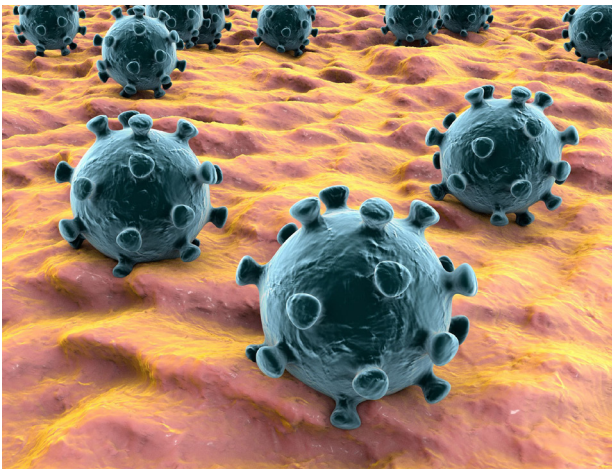


None of the COVID-19 vaccines will affect your DNA. It is not going to turn people into genetically modified organisms. It is not possible for mRNA to alter your DNA. mRNA cannot enter the nucleus of the cell, which is where all the DNA is stored. It cannot reach the DNA, and it definitely cannot change it. Furthermore, the injected mRNA is transient; our cells eventually break it down and get rid of it.

### Myth: More people will die as a result of the COVID-19 vaccine than the virus itself

Social media has again propagated another dangerous, and completely false, myth about the COVID-19 vaccine.

Mortality varies on an individual basis. For example, an elderly person with more than one illness or disease at the same time is more at risk from the virus.



On the other hand, the most serious side effect of the vaccine is anaphylaxis, and it is not always fatal. In fact, death from anaphylaxis is unusually rare. According to current estimates, the rate of anaphylaxis for the COVID-19 vaccine is 11.1 per million doses administered. Anaphylaxis-related deaths happen in about 0.65 – 2% of people who experience severe reactions. The overall mortality rates for anaphylaxis triggered by any cause is less than 1 per million population. Although anaphylactic reactions are potentially life-threatening, the probability of dying is lower than the odds of getting struck by lightning in a given year (1 in 500,000).

So far the USA has recorded 500,000 COVID-19-related deaths in the year 2020 alone. That is three times the number of people in the USA who died in accidents in 2019, and more than the number of deaths from strokes, diabetes, kidney disease, and Alzheimer's disease combined. COVID-19 has killed far more people than the vaccine ever will. COVID-19 may also leave people suffering from long-term symptoms even after they recover. Getting the vaccine is not just about protecting ourselves, it is also about protecting other people and preventing the spread of the virus.



### **Myth: Getting infected with COVID-19 gives better immunity compared to the vaccine**

Choosing to get infected over getting the vaccine is a bad choice. There are a lot of unknowns to getting infected. People with a mild illness, or who are asymptomatic, might only get weak immunity that lasts a few months. People with severe illness might get stronger immunity, but they run the risks of issues such as lung damage, or other lasting complications from the disease.



Some people think that since they are young and healthy, they are safe from severe COVID-19. But a study published by the *JAMA Internal Medicine* journal showed that of the more than 3,000 young adults aged 18 to 34 hospitalized with COVID-19 in the USA, 21% ended up in intensive care, 10% were placed on a breathing machine, and 2.7% died.

The American Lung Association shared about a healthy 17-year-old athlete in the USA who contracted a mild case of COVID-19. But after his supposed recovery, he suffered from inflammation and was eventually diagnosed with post-COVID myocarditis. He had to make sure his heart did not beat too fast or he could have an arrhythmia that may stop his heart.

No one is safe from severe disease. No one is safe from long-term complications. COVID-19 can cause serious illness with damaging long-term effects in young people, particularly if they are living with obesity, diabetes or high blood pressure.

The vaccine, on the other hand, is predictable, while showing great immunity against the virus. It is designed to generate an effective immune response with less risk involved.



### **Myth: The COVID-19 vaccine can lead to long-term effects**

Out of the millions of doses given, there have been no long-term adverse effects reported. With vaccines, there may be some short-term side effects that occur within minutes to hours of getting the vaccine. Side effects tend to happen quite quickly, not 15 years later. Ninety-five percent of adverse events happen within six weeks.

These are usually mild symptoms and will go away. If we are not seeing serious side effects by now, it is very unlikely that further down the road there will be problems. The serious side effects of the vaccines are very, very rare, and far rarer than the severe side effects from a COVID-19 infection.

### **Myth: The COVID-19 vaccine (or other vaccines) will cause autism**

The fear that vaccines cause autism is linked to a study that has been renounced by its authors, discredited, and disproved. Yet, people still believe it! The lead author has even lost his medical license. Since then, multiple other major studies have found no link whatsoever between vaccines and the risk of developing autism.



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



## Air Cleaning Devices



Does marketing hype have you believing that an air purifier can make all the nasties in indoor air vanish into thin air? Do not get suckered!

We are here to clear the air and share how different types of air cleaning devices fare.

### Air Purifiers

An air purifier usually consists of a fan that sucks in and circulates air, and a filter. As air moves through the filter, particles are captured and clean air is pushed back out.

Here are some factors to consider when choosing an air purifier:

- Room size  
The capacity of an air purifier must match the room size. For example, a small air purifier may take up less space. But it will not be effective for filtering the air in a large room.
- Rate at which the air purifier filters the air in a room  
Ideally, the air purifier should be able to filter the air in a room multiple times an hour.
- Air leakage  
Air purifiers work better in well-sealed rooms.

### Air Purifiers with HEPA Filters

Air purifiers with HEPA filters are one of the most common and popular air purifiers on the market. HEPA stands for "High Efficiency Particulate Air." HEPA filters can trap about 99.97% of airborne particles sized 0.3 micron or larger.

People associate HEPA filters with good due to the strict criteria for qualifying as HEPA filters. However, take note of the following factors when choosing an air purifier with HEPA filter:





- **Leakage**  
The designs of many air purifiers are not airtight. This means that air may pass through tiny cracks, openings, or space around the frame of the HEPA filter or between the frame and the purifier housing instead of going through the filter. So while HEPA filters can filter nearly 100% of the air that passes through them, the design of the air purifier might mean there is too much leakage for it to be efficient at filtering air.
- **Exclusions**  
HEPA filters do not remove chemicals, gases, and odors. So they will not eliminate smells, such as those from cigarette smoke.
- **Regular replacements**  
HEPA filters need to be replaced regularly as they become clogged with particles over time and their effectiveness drops.



### Ionizers

These are also known as negative ion air purifiers. Ionizers shoot out negatively charged ions into the air. These ions cause particles in the air to stick to nearby surfaces (e.g. wall, furniture, and floor). Over time, these particles can become loose and float in the air again.

Ionizers may remove small particles (e.g. those in tobacco smoke) from indoor air, but generally do not remove large particles (e.g. pollen and house dust allergens), gases, and odors. Most ionizers are too weak to have an effect.

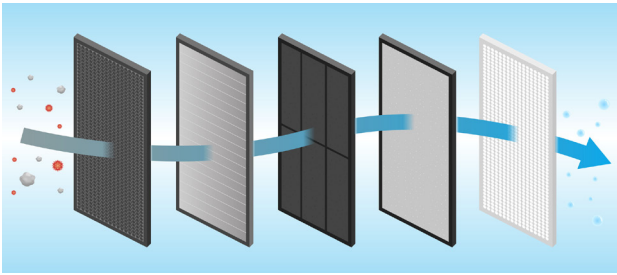
Some ionizers may indirectly produce ozone, a lung irritant.



### Ozone Generators

Ozone is a gas. When “ozone” is mentioned, do you think of the ozone layer? This protective layer of ozone at the Earth’s upper atmosphere helps filter out the sun’s harmful ultraviolet rays. But at ground level, ozone is a harmful air pollutant and the main ingredient in smog.

Or as the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) succinctly puts it, “Ozone: good up high, bad nearby.”



It is ironical, then, that ozone generators are used to intentionally release the gas ozone to control indoor air pollution.

Calling a spade a spade, the U.S. EPA states that "There is no difference, despite some marketers' claims, between ozone in smog outdoors and ozone produced by these devices."

Research shows that even when used at levels that are safe for humans, ozone does NOT effectively remove:

- indoor air contaminants
- particles from the air (e.g. dust and pollen)
- many chemicals that cause odors (e.g. formaldehyde); but ozone may mask odors of some pollutants by damaging a person's sense of smell
- viruses, bacteria, mold, or other biological pollutants in indoor air

Ozone is harmful to your health. It can worsen respiratory diseases like asthma, hinder the body's ability to fight off airway infections, cause chest pain, coughing, shortness of breath, throat irritation, and damage the sense of smell. Ozone is even fatal at high concentrations. In fact, the U.S. EPA has explicitly warned, "No, do not use ozone generators in occupied spaces."

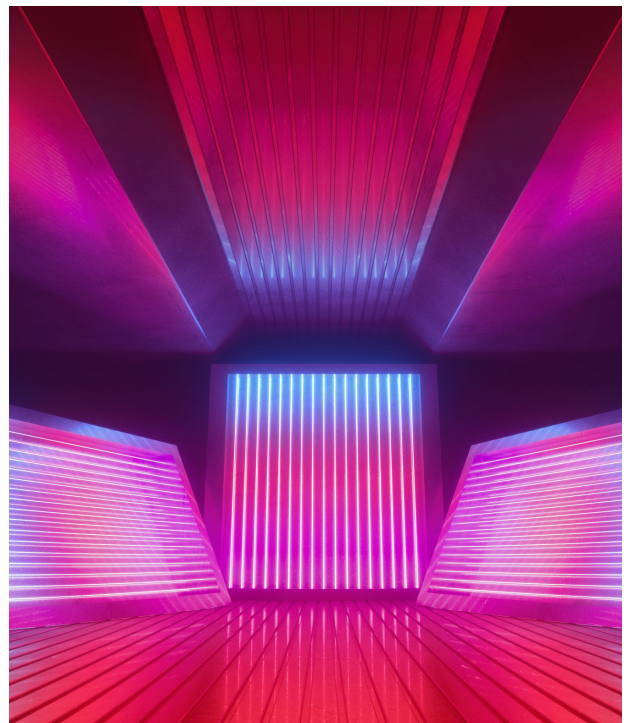
### UV Light Air Purifiers

Ultraviolet (UV) light can be used for disinfection and is often used in hospitals to disinfect surfaces and equipment.

Some manufacturers have added UV lights to air purifiers or even vacuum cleaners, with claims that they will disinfect the air. That is unlikely to happen.

Bacteria and viruses need to be exposed to UV light for a certain length of time in order for them to be killed or rendered harmless. Some strains of bacteria require several hours under direct UV light in order to be killed. Air passes through the air purifier in about 0.35 seconds. That is not long enough to have any effect.

Even if the air purifier holds the air long enough for the UV light to disinfect it, it would not be able to purify the air fast enough to keep up with normal air flow in and out of the room.





It is important to note that UV light cannot pass through ordinary glass or most plastics. Most UV light air purifiers also have HEPA filters. Because HEPA filters are a complex mat of pleated fibers, it is unlikely that a UV lamp shining on HEPA filter surfaces can disinfect the entire surface. The filter itself will block the light, and any particles trapped in the filter will block the UV light. Furthermore, UV light can damage HEPA filters.

If the UV light lamp in the air purifier is dusty, the air purifier would not be able to function properly because the UV light cannot penetrate the dust particles. So UV light air purifiers need regular cleaning.

If UV light is being used as a disinfecting agent, the area should be completely closed off as UV light is harmful to the eyes and the skin, even in small amounts or brief exposures.

### **Air Purifiers Are Not Enough**

Air purifiers are not able to remove all allergens. Even if just a few allergens are left behind, they may trigger asthma or allergy symptoms. Air purifiers designed to remove particles are not able to remove the odor and gaseous pollutants from tobacco smoke effectively.

To reduce asthma or allergy symptoms, the better option would be to:

- Clean regularly. Larger allergen particles will settle on surfaces, such as carpets, rather than circulate in the air, which means air purifiers will not remove them.
- Open windows if it is safe to do so to prevent allergens from being locked in with you.



When it comes to preventing disease, wearing a mask properly, maintaining social distancing, washing your hands regularly, and disinfecting surfaces can play a far more significant role in keeping you healthy.



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

# Unmasking Misinformation



“Pandemic.”

The word sits at the tip of our tongues, ready to leap out at any moment to wrap up the past year neatly in three syllables. Were it not for the pressing urgency of the present situation, the word might pull from the collective memory of mankind far greater calamities from centuries past.

For one moment, let us pull our attention away from the immediate, and look back at what has been. This is not mankind’s first encounter with a pandemic. Why bother looking backwards? History has a tendency to repeat itself, as the timeless proverb instructs us with prophetic certainty: the thing that has been, it is that which shall be. By studying the past, we learn valuable lessons that can help us proceed with greater clarity and wisdom in the present.

## **The Black Death**

In the 1300s, the Eurasian continent—the largest and most populous in the world—was rocked by a pandemic that has since defined the word in the collective psyche of mankind to this day. The “Black Death,” as it is most commonly known, is one of the deadliest in history. We will probably never know the exact death toll, but it is estimated that roughly 50% of the European population died within four years of the pandemic.

Curiously, there was one small segment of the population that seemed to do much better than just about anybody else: the Jews. The ancient Jewish holy text prescribed strict cleansing rituals that included regularly washing one’s hands and body with clean, running water. Today’s historians and epidemiologists believe this is the reason for the Jewish “immunity” to the Black Death that so relentlessly wiped out everyone around them.







Unfortunately for the Jews, the people of that time were ignorant of the relationship between the spread of disease and personal hygiene. The Jews were accused of causing the Black Death and massacred throughout Europe. Misinformation—based on desperation, panic, and popular folklore—prevailed over a simple truth that might have stemmed the tide of a pandemic that claimed millions of lives.

### **The Puerperal Fever**

Fast forward to the 1800s. The prevailing theory of disease during this time was the “miasma theory”—that corrupted odors in the air spread diseases to and between people. A Hungarian-

Jewish doctor by the name of Ignaz Semmelweis was engaged in a personal battle with a quiet pandemic. The enemy was “puerperal fever,” an infectious and often fatal disease that attacked mothers who had just given birth to a child.

Ignaz worked in the maternity clinic at the Vienna General Hospital, overseeing a team of medical students who helped mothers through childbirth. He noticed something troubling: the mothers who gave birth with the help of his medical students had a much higher mortality rate than the mothers who were helped by traditional midwives.

He eventually came to the conclusion that the disease was being spread by the hands of his medical students, who handled diseased corpses in the morning as part of their studies and delivered babies with the same hands later in the day. Though this conclusion conflicted with the “miasma theory” of the day, Ignaz nevertheless implemented a strict practice of rigorous and scheduled hand washing. As a result, the death rate of mothers that came through his clinic plummeted.



Though Ignaz had powerful data to back up his policies, he could not explain the science behind it. It was still decades before Louis Pasteur would discover the existence of disease-spreading germs, and Ignaz’s conclusions were rejected and suppressed by many of the most prominent doctors



and scientists. Broken by a combination of disappointment and frustration, Ignaz died alone in an insane asylum and his policies were never implemented. It took decades after Ignaz’s death for doctors and nurses to begin washing their hands to protect the health of their patients. True information was opposed once again by misinformation, this time endorsed by experts and leaders of the medical community.



### **Misinformation Kills**

In our brief look back to the pandemics of the past, one lesson stands out: health is not only a matter of practice, but of knowledge.

Bad knowledge in the form of misinformation can lead to unnecessary suffering and death, while good knowledge in the form of true information can save lives. This remains as true today as it was in the past; however, we face a special, different danger: today's pandemic afflicts a world that is drowning in a glut of information.

Panic and desperation create fertile grounds for misinformation, which spreads like wildfire through the internet, crossing oceans and borders to reach the entire world in an instant. Worse, much of this misinformation is perpetrated by supposed experts and leaders in the medical field, some of whom rely on their title or position to sell poisoned information to the masses—a poison that may very well be more deadly than COVID-19 itself.

In Iran, a boy is blind because his parents forced him to drink toxic methanol based on a rumor that drinking strong alcohol can cure or prevent COVID-19. This piece of misinformation killed hundreds of people and seriously harmed over a thousand more in Iran.

In India, a false rumor that hundreds of Muslims were infected and spreading the disease caused a violent riot that upended the lives of many.

In the UK, telecommunications engineers faced death threats based on the false belief that 5G technology was causing the COVID-19 pandemic.

In the USA, people have been reported to wash their food in bleach in order to “protect” their families.

### **How to be Discerning**

These tragedies and many others like them attest to a challenge particular to our time: the sheer difficulty of being able to discern between what is true and what is false. Discernment requires patience, dedication, and an eye for detail. Facts and evidence for and against a position must be carefully considered and weighed against one another.

There are also many competing sources of information with varying degrees of credibility and reliability, each of which should be vetted thoroughly before earning our trust. Scientists and experts are not to be blindly trusted. In this highly politicized climate, so-called “experts” often sell their authoritative voices to the highest bidder to further a political or social agenda. Therefore, we must also test the expert's objectivity and expertise, individually and in light of the current scientific consensus. A majority is not guaranteed to be right, but generally serves as a strong defense against the myriad of dangerous misinformation lurking on the internet.





Truth has never been easy to find in a world full of half-truths and outright lies; yet, it has never been more important to seek out the veins of true information like gold hidden in the midst of stone and gravel. After all, good health is the direct result of acting upon good information.

### **Share True Health Knowledge to Save Lives**

Health is the culmination of our daily decisions—the reflection of a lifestyle that has been cultivated over time. Knowledge informs and shapes these decisions, determining our lifestyle and as a result, our health.

What is at stake is not only our own health, but also the health of our friends, family, and neighbors. Just as misinformation can spread poor health, true information can empower us to make right decisions and live a healthier and happier life.

That is why E. Excel's mission is to share the gifts of health and knowledge with mankind. Respect for life has always been at the core of that mission—and respecting life means respecting the knowledge and information that sustains a healthy life. Thus, we are not in the business of selling products, but in the business of sharing knowledge.



Correct knowledge prevents suffering and saves lives. Knowledge is not something that is meant to be kept to ourselves, but to be shared with those we care about. Teaching our children how to take care of their health will benefit them much more than forcing them to make healthy choices they do not understand.

Education is the key to our business model and the primary means by which we achieve our mission. Fortunately, the same information network that spreads misinformation can be used to spread true information.

Good knowledge put into practice is the key to a healthy lifestyle—and there has never been a time where our knowledge of good health has been more needed. After all, if the COVID-19 pandemic has taught us anything, it is that our life and health come before profit, economy, or any other thing.

E. Excellers, it is time to get to work!



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

**Q1 What is the most important factor in choosing personal care and cosmetic products?**

Safety is the most important factor when choosing personal care and cosmetic products. Every day, you lather them up, breathe them in, and may accidentally swallow these products.

In the USA, the average person is exposed to more than 100 chemicals from cosmetics, soaps, and other personal care products daily. Although most people assume these products are safe, their chemical ingredients are mostly unregulated. Harmful chemicals linked to cancer, allergies, dermatitis, infertility, and other health issues have been found in some personal care and cosmetic products. The daily use of these products may lead to a buildup of toxins in the body and have a lasting adverse impact on health.

Little regulation by the U.S. FDA governs personal care and cosmetic products. Formaldehyde, triclosan, and phthalates—ingredients that have been linked to a variety of health problems—are still found in these products. What is more, companies are permitted to label products as organic, natural, or hospital/doctor-approved based on their own interpretation of the terms.

Thus, consumers have to be careful when choosing products, and pick products from reliable companies with good safety track records.

**Q2 Are more expensive products better and safer?**

Most skincare companies spend a bulk of their money on advertisements—hiring A-list movie stars and models to sell their products. These advertisements aim to make consumers think that, by using their products, they can look as good as the stars they see. However, much of these costs are passed down to the consumer. Yet, enticed by the idea of improving their own looks, many people still spend huge amounts of money on increasingly expensive products.

When choosing a product, we should keep in mind that neither fancy advertisements nor high prices are a reflection of how good or how safe a product is.

**Q3 Is U.S. FDA approval required before a personal care product can be marketed?**

Products intended to cleanse or beautify are generally regulated as cosmetics. Legally, cosmetic products and ingredients, with the exception of color additives, do not require U.S. FDA premarket approval. The FDA does not require any tests proving the safety of a cosmetic product before it can be sold. Product safety is the individual company's responsibility.



**Q4 Are ingredients with the same name the same thing?**

No. For example, many people think of the ingredient “alcohol” as the astringent-smelling rubbing alcohol. They might assume that all alcohols are of this type. However, the term “alcohol” actually refers to a large and diverse family of chemicals with different safety profiles and effects on the skin. While some alcohols, such as rubbing alcohols, can be damaging to the skin, others can be beneficial. For example, ethyl alcohol (also known as grain alcohol) is safe, while methyl alcohol or isopropyl alcohol can cause dryness, rash, dermatitis, or itchiness. But on the ingredient list, it may be listed as just “alcohol.”

**Q5 Do the chemical properties and quality of raw materials used in skincare products vary from supplier to supplier?**

Yes, depending on the type and quality of the starting materials, the chemical properties and quality of the raw materials used in skincare products vary from supplier to supplier. For example, methanol can be produced from the distillation of wood, or produced synthetically from fossil fuels. Ingredients used in cosmetic products may not be 100% pure, and may contain unwanted residual ingredients. The purity of the chemical is determined by how much residual ingredient is left during production.

**Q6 What are natural cosmetic ingredients?**

Many people think “natural cosmetic ingredients” refer to botanical ingredients. In reality, they refer to not just plant extracts, but also things like iron oxides, manganese, and coal tar. Products from animals are also considered natural ingredients. For example, many lipsticks contain a natural color referred to as carmine, or natural red 4, in the ingredient list. The color is made from crushed cochineal insects.

**Q7 Are there heavy metals in cosmetics or personal care products?**

Yes, there may be heavy metals in cosmetics or personal care products. While some countries regulate heavy metal contamination, many countries do not. Overall, regulations for personal care products are not as strict as the ones for food products.

There is concern that cosmetics and personal care products may be a possible source of daily, long-term exposure to heavy metals. For example, when we eat, we will inevitably eat off some of our lipstick or lip balm. Babies and young children often touch the lotion on our hands and arms, and the makeup on our faces, and then put their fingers in their mouths, thus consuming a small amount of product. Furthermore, despite the protective functions of the skin, some heavy metals still penetrate the skin. These heavy metals can accumulate in our body over time.





Heavy metals are known to cause chronic health issues such as cancer, dermatitis, neurological and reproductive disorders, as well as brittle hair and hair loss. Some heavy metals are respiratory toxins.

Regulations concerning the safety of personal care products should be rigorously assessed.

#### **Q8 How did asbestos end up inside cosmetic and personal care products?**

In March 2020, the U.S. FDA released data showing the carcinogen asbestos was found in approximately 20% of the cosmetic samples tested. Asbestos causes a type of cancer known as mesothelioma. Asbestos contamination likely originated from the contamination of other ingredients, such as talc. Asbestos and talc are naturally occurring minerals that may be found close together in the earth. This means that talc may be easily contaminated with asbestos. Talc is a common ingredient in cosmetic or personal care products as it creates a soft, silky texture, and it is known for its ability to absorb moisture, and reduce the appearance of oily skin. It is often used in products such as powder compacts, eye shadows, blushes, foundations, and creams. Talc that is free of asbestos is perfectly safe for use. However, talc contaminated with asbestos is not safe for use. There is no safe level of asbestos exposure. Thus, it is very important to test talc ingredients for asbestos contamination.

#### **Q9 Should we make our own personal care products?**

No, unless you are a chemist who understands the mystifying array of multi-syllabic chemicals on an ingredient list. There are more than 12,000 chemicals approved for use in skincare, personal care, and cosmetic products today. However, researchers have, for years, warned that while some chemicals are safe, others are unsafe. The incidence of cancer, infertility, and allergies are increasing, and researchers are concerned that there may be a link between personal care products and the rise of these illnesses. Suspected carcinogens, such as formaldehyde and coal tar, are often found in some hair and body care products. Heavy metals are found in lipsticks and other personal care products.

It takes a professional company with experts knowledgeable in the field to formulate a product.

1. Some chemicals are not safe for use. Even chemicals considered safe need to be tested for purity and ensure that they do not contain harmful contaminants.
2. Chemicals can interact with other chemicals to form new chemicals.
3. Certain chemicals can interact with water and air to create new chemicals.
4. Packaging materials can react with ingredients to release or create harmful chemicals.
5. Some chemicals can react with mixing containers to release harmful byproducts during the manufacturing process.
6. Certain chemicals are dose-dependent, with small doses being harmless and larger doses being harmful.



**Q10 Are more vitamins good for me?**

If something is good, people tend to want more of it. That holds doubly true for vitamins. Vitamins are good for you, but only in the amounts that your body requires. However, the danger comes when you get too much of a vitamin, something that is exceedingly easy to do with vitamin supplements.

**Q11 What happens if I overdose on vitamins?**

Overdosing on vitamins is easy when taken in concentrated doses in supplement form. This can cause various health problems, for example:

**Vitamin C** — kidney stones

**Vitamin A** — osteoporosis, liver damage, and birth defects

**Vitamin D** — heart arrhythmias, and hypercalcemia, which weakens bones and damages the heart and kidneys

**Vitamin A, D, and K** — toxicity (our body cannot get rid of these vitamins)

**Iron** — heart and liver damage

**Vitamin E** — higher risk of osteoporosis

**Q12 Can vitamin supplements reduce the risk of disease?**

Vitamin supplements do not reduce the risk for heart disease, cancer, mental decline, or an early death. They also do not replace or compensate for a bad diet.

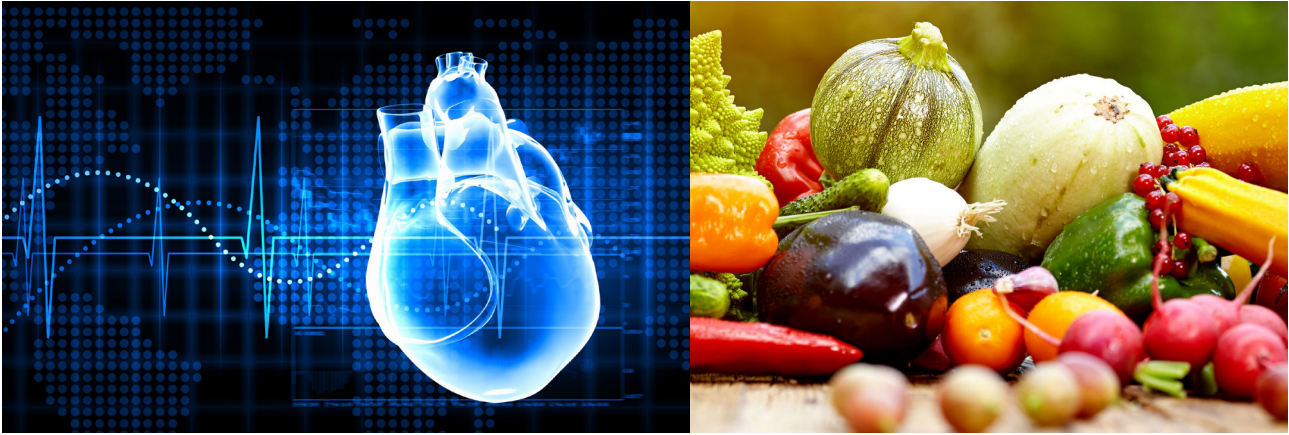
**Q13 Can vitamin C prevent or cure the common cold?**

It is a common myth that vitamin C can help prevent or even cure the common cold.

A Cochrane review, the most comprehensive analysis available, found that vitamin C does not prevent colds. In fact, in some of the clinical trials done, they used doses as high as 6 grams of vitamin C, and still found that it did not prevent colds. Six grams of vitamin C is equivalent to about 11 kilograms of oranges. There is also not enough evidence to support that vitamin C will help people recover from a cold faster, or reduce symptoms. There is also not enough evidence supporting the use of megadoses of vitamin C, or even vitamin C supplementation, to help boost immunity.

**Q14 Are there any natural vitamin supplements?**

Some vitamin supplements are extracted from natural sources. For example, vitamin C can be extracted from an orange.



But an extracted purified form of a vitamin will act differently when consumed than a vitamin in a fruit because it no longer co-exists with the other nutrients within the fruit.

What is more, the vitamins contained within vitamin supplements are often in forms that are different from the vitamins in natural foods. This means that they will act in different ways in the body.

For example, folic acid is a common supplement taken to help prevent a type of birth defect. Vegetables, such as spinach, do not contain folic acid. Instead, they contain folate. Folate is converted by the body into folic acid in the perfect amounts needed. Folic acid supplements are synthetic and they are not the same as the folate found in vegetables. Excessive intake of folic acid supplements is linked to increased risk of prostate cancer, lung cancer, and colorectal cancer.

**Q15 Since vitamins are nutrients, vitamin supplements will not interact with medications, right?**

Vitamin supplements may interact with medications. For example, vitamin C can reduce the effect of some antiviral drugs; iron can interact with antibiotics; vitamin D can interact with steroids; and vitamin E can interact with aspirin, increasing the risk of internal bleeding.

**Q16 Can vitamin supplements prevent heart disease?**

Research published in an American Heart Association journal, tracking more than 2 million people over 12 years, found that multivitamins do not prevent heart attacks, strokes, or death from heart disease. In fact, they are not even safe. Each year in America, these supplements send about 23,000 people to the emergency department.

**Q17 Are vitamin supplements the same as antioxidants?**

Vitamin C, E, and carotenoids are called antioxidants. However, vitamin supplements do not act in the same way as the antioxidants in natural foods. Research shows that vegetables and fruits will lower the risks of various diseases, including serious diseases such as cancer. On the other hand, vitamin supplements do not lower mortality rates or extend life. In fact, they might do the opposite.

Research published in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* (JAMA) showed that consumption of the antioxidant supplements—beta-carotene, vitamin E, and vitamin A—was linked to a higher risk of death. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and the UK Food Standards Agency (FSA) have published that frequent consumption of vitamin pills may pose detrimental health effects.





**Q18 Can patients on chemotherapy take antioxidants?**

Some patients on chemotherapy are told not to supplement their diet with antioxidants. In these cases, doctors are referring to antioxidant supplements such as vitamin supplements, not antioxidants in wholesome foods. There is no research showing that patients on chemotherapy should not eat wholesome, healthy foods full of antioxidants. In fact, it is the other way around! Research shows that people, even patients on chemotherapy, should be eating more fruits and vegetables!

**Q19 When looking at nutritional labels, are more vitamins better?**

Fruits and vegetables are natural products that vary in nutrition and thus do not have nutritional labels. Vitamin supplements, on the other hand, are manufactured foods and have specific values. People tend to look at the nutritional labels of a manufactured food to check that it contains a high level of vitamins, assuming that a higher number means it is healthier than eating a natural fruit or vegetable. That is not true.

The recommended dietary allowance for vitamin C is about 90 mg a day for men, and 75 mg a day for women. There is about 50 mg of vitamin C in every 100 g of oranges. This may seem low, but that is because people have become accustomed to seeing high values on vitamin supplement labels. Natural foods will not have values that high. Vitamin C supplements can contain 1,000 mg or more of vitamin C. That is far more than required. Getting too much of a vitamin can cause detrimental side effects.

**Q20 Are vitamins the most important nutrients inside wholesome foods?**

Vitamin C is often what comes to mind for most people when they think of nutrients within an orange. However, oranges contain many more other nutrients. For example, citrus fruits contain many health-promoting phytonutrients, such as flavonoids and carotenoids. Scientists still have not discovered all of the nutrients within an orange. So who is to say that vitamins are the most important nutrient in a food?

**Q21 Are nutritional labels accurate?**

Nutritional labels do not necessarily state what the product contains. There is no standardization of tests, so results can vary considerably from one lab to another. Vitamins also exist in multiple different forms. For example, retinol,  $\beta$ -carotene,  $\alpha$ -carotene, and  $\beta$ -cryptoxanthin are all different forms of vitamin A. Lab tests can measure a specific form, a combination, or all of them. However, scientists cannot distinguish most synthetic vitamins from natural ones.



Vitamins also degrade over time. The values on the nutritional label is the result of a lab test. Although a product may have had a certain amount of vitamins at the time of testing, there is no guarantee that the same amount of vitamins will remain after a period of time. For example, vitamin C is destroyed by heat, light, and oxygen. Orange juice kept in a warm storage area, or even in the open air refrigerators in a supermarket, is continually losing vitamin C. Polyethylene terephthalate (PET)—the plastic often used for bottles—will let oxygen through. Orange juice is also often stored in clear plastic bottles, letting light through. All of this means orange juice has already lost vitamin C before the consumer even opens the bottle.

## **Q22 How can I protect my health?**

It is estimated that about 7.8 million premature deaths worldwide could be prevented every year if people ate more vegetables and fruits. Research published in *The Lancet* showed that bad diets are responsible for about 11 million preventable deaths in 2017. However, the biggest issue was not people eating too much junk food, but people not eating enough of nutritious food.

Other than vitamins, there are other nutrients within wholesome fruits and vegetables, such as phytochemicals, polysaccharides, and antioxidants. Each of these different nutrients helps your health and your immune system in different ways. There are still plenty of different phytochemicals, polysaccharides, and antioxidants that scientists have not discovered yet. Simply eating more of wholesome fruits and vegetables is one of the easiest and most effective changes you can make to protect your health.

## **Q23 Can I maintain good health with vitamins alone?**

No, you cannot. Merely popping vitamin pills will not make you healthy. Vitamins alone are not enough. You need other nutrients as well.

When it comes to vitamins and other nutrients, the best source is a healthy diet. Plant foods have all the nutrients that you need. All you have to do is eat more. Plants created by nature have the perfect combination, amount, and balance of nutrients. They also contain a wide variety of nutrients, many of which scientists are only just becoming aware of.

■ Nature is always wiser than human scientists.



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