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E. EXCEL'S WORLD



July – September 2021

## Opportunities Are Reserved for Those Who Are Prepared Thanks to *PlusO2*, I Can Support My Family

Diamond Master Tseng Lu-Chen



Tseng Lu-Chen

**From:** Taiwan

**Strengths and Hobbies:**

Singing

**Dream:** Take mom and mother-in-law to travel around the world with E. Excel; live an extraordinary and unique life with freedom

Besides owning two Japanese sushi shops, Lu-Chen is also a Diamond Master in E. Excel. This is no mean feat considering that she attained E. Excel's highest rank within a mere two years of joining. Her success may seem quick and abrupt to some. But in reality, she has been working hard all the while, continuously learning in E. Excel to be well prepared for opportunities that come her way.

"I worked in a factory for my first job. There were conflicts among employees and senior workers would bully rookies. Continuing to work in a place like that would only make me hate myself more. I also didn't like to be controlled. Hence, I quit, and I started learning how to become my own boss by running my own business—a snack bar. In the beginning, I fought through a lot of ups and downs, but I could still make ends meet," Lu-Chen recalled. "I first encountered E. Excel products when my eldest son was hospitalized due to an enterovirus infection over a decade ago. His entire mouth was covered with painful sores and he could only consume liquid food." Initially, Lu-Chen was cautious in trusting E. Excel products. After all, the products were food, and one ought to be careful about what one ate. Hence she sought to learn more about them. After gaining a better understanding of the products, she realized the importance of plant-based nutrition, and that many diseases could, in fact, be prevented. Since then, her children have thrived with E. Excel products.

Even though Lu-Chen had come in contact with E. Excel over 10 years ago, she did not start an E. Excel career immediately. Instead, she was just a consumer of E. Excel products. She and her family have supported E. Excel products throughout the years. However, those years were not lost on her. Besides gaining valuable personal experience about the products, she also attended E. Excel events and listened to Dr. Jau-Fei Chen's lectures on health to learn about Nutritional Immunology whenever she could. She gradually fell in love with E. Excel's environment—a place of positivity.

Asked about the pivotal moment when she decided to take up the E. Excel career, Lu-Chen shared, "It's because I saw with my own eyes how one of my relatives suffered while fighting terminal cancer. That was a wake-up call for me. I realized that if I had shared Nutritional Immunology with my loved ones earlier, it would probably have saved them from the misery of illnesses. I also deeply realized that one can do nothing without one's health." Her Japanese sushi shop was doing so well that she set up a branch, but she still felt unfulfilled; she was living a life in pursuit of only money.



Hoping to help more people regain health, she joined E. Excel in 2019.

Upon joining, Lu-Chen set a goal for herself: to become a Jade Master within one year. The goal was practical and clear. But, how was she going to achieve it? She knew that she had to work harder than others if she wanted success within a year. Therefore, she started her mornings bright and early, and right after breakfast, began listening to Dr. Chen's speeches over and over again to really learn Nutritional Immunology. She shared Nutritional Immunology with family members, relatives, friends, and anyone else she met. By doing this every day, she solidified her basic skills, and they became a part of her daily life.

Apart from building a firm foundation with solid basic skills, Lu-Chen also took advantage of online tools. She created various groups, providing fellow E. Excellers with professional knowledge about health as well as inspirational articles, and managed each group differently based on its level. Every day, she would guide them earnestly, in the hope of helping more people to regain their health and cultivate in them a habit of positive thinking. When everyone is positive and supportive of each other, they can all achieve success together!

It only took Lu-Chen slightly over a year to not only reach her goal of becoming Jade Master, but to also have gone beyond—she was promoted to the highest rank: Diamond Master! She demands of herself and her teammates to establish a firm foundation of solid basic skills; she also advises new E. Excellers to infuse Nutritional Immunology into their day-to-day lives. Only when those are in place, will one not waver against external factors. Eventually, as they develop positive thinking and follow the footsteps of the team, they will see their income multiply. "The recent launch of the new *PlusO2* became an invisible force that helped me rise through the ranks." Lu-Chen said proudly, "When I demonstrated and shared *PlusO2* on site, nearly everyone bought it." With wonderful charisma and persuasiveness, she sold nearly 500 bottles of *PlusO2* within two months; the sales from this product alone greatly contributed to her becoming a Diamond Master.

Lu-Chen's mantra, "set a goal and spare no effort," follows her throughout her journey. "Opportunities are reserved for those who are prepared. Build your basic skills, follow successful examples with ease, incorporate the sharing of Nutritional Immunology into your daily life, and you'll find success within reach." Lu-Chen seeks to further progress with her fellow E. Excellers. She also feels enormously blessed because of E. Excel. "E. Excel enables me to have both good health and a good career. What's more, I'm able to take good care of my family and make my dreams come true." In the future, she hopes to lead more people into falling in love with E. Excel.

Life Motto—"Keep your promise. Stand firm in your faith. Achieve your dream."



# Choose E. Excel—Persist in My Chosen Path

## E. Excellers Yang Ming-Chang and Li Wan-Hsuan



**Yang Ming-Chang and  
Li Wan-Hsuan**

**From:** Taiwan

**Strengths and Hobbies:**

Studying Buddhist doctrine

**Dream:** Set up a charity  
foundation

**Traveled with E. Excel to:** Bali,  
Phuket, Bintan Island, Malaysia,  
the Philippines, Singapore, Hong  
Kong, Macau, Vietnam, Thailand,  
Indonesia, South Korea, India,  
Suzhou, Hangzhou, Shanghai,  
Beijing, Sanya, Kyushu, Hokkaido,  
Tokyo, Osaka, Nagoya, Okinawa,  
Australia, New Zealand, USA,  
Canada, Germany, Switzerland,  
France, Italy, Rome, Vatican City,  
Spain, the Czech Republic, the  
United Kingdom, Hawaii, Turkey,  
Austria, Egypt, Dubai, Royal  
Caribbean Cruise

Yang Ming-Chang and his wife Li Wan-Hsuan attained the highest rank in E. Excel before the age of 30, setting a new record for themselves! Wan-Hsuan even challenged herself again in 2016 and successfully rewrote history!

Reaching the pinnacle of one's career before 30 years old, and being free to live life as one wishes by age 40, would be a dream come true for many young people! But how does one take that difficult first step towards realizing this dream? "Begin by helping those who have the same needs as you," Ming-Chang said firmly.

"It's funny how the acne on my face that troubled me so much when I was younger became the starting point of my life transformation!" Ming-Chang's acne led him to Nutritional Immunology, which enabled him to improve his health with the proper nutrition. After his skin went through incredible changes, he just so happened to meet a girl with acne all over her face. Her name was Wan-Hsuan.

"I was shy and not good with words, but I saw how her skin was just as bad as mine used to be. I couldn't help but want to rescue her!" He asked her without any hesitation, "Have you heard of Nutritional Immunology?" Although it was a direct and unpolished approach, he touched her with his earnestness. One month later, she decided to join E. Excel and is now Ming-Chang's lifelong companion. They work side by side as they strive for a better life together, becoming a much talked-about happy story in E. Excel.

To those who are just starting their E. Excel careers, Ming-Chang's advice is "The simplest first step is to use your own experience to help others who have the same needs as you. The more you give, and the more people you help, the more life rewards you in the best way possible. Such is the E. Excel career. Of course, that reward does not necessarily include finding yourself a wife." Ming-Chang chuckled.

After joining E. Excel, Ming-Chang observed and learned, and merely half a year in, made E. Excel his full-time career. He recalled, "I still remember clearly that in May 1993, at a Nutritional Immunology event on the eve of Mother's Day, Dr. Jau-Fei Chen said that she was the mother of two kids. But she wasn't satisfied staying at home as a mother just looking after her kids. People out there were losing their lives because they could not fight against viruses and cancer—she needed to share Nutritional Immunology with more people across the globe. In fact, she spent most of her time traveling around the world to give talks on Nutritional Immunology.





"Dr. Chen's words shook me to the core, and made me feel the urgency of taking action right away! In addition, a job can be more than a means to earn money. Even an ordinary person like me can help change the world! Therefore, I told myself very quickly that this was the path I wanted to embark on."

Ming-Chang has been a pious Buddhist since young. He once consulted a head monk about his career choice and was enlightened, "The thought of helping others is, in itself, a form of giving alms. Sharing the teachings of Buddha doesn't necessarily have to be done in religious settings. Taking up a career that helps others can better help you generate good karma with everyone."

Ming-Chang said gratefully, "The E. Excel career not only can protect people from suffering poor health, it can also help relieve their financial burden. Following Dr. Chen's footsteps to share the gifts of health and knowledge with mankind is the best form of giving alms."

When asked how to guide hesitant E. Excellers, he answered with a smile, "It's never too late to start. But I hope they can honestly ask themselves: how many decades do they have in a lifetime to waste on waiting? People often wonder how I accomplished the feat of being *the youngest* to reach the highest rank in E. Excel. Well, undoubtedly, it's better to get started while you're young, and the sooner the better!"

Ming-Chang and Wan-Hsuan are financially free now at the current stage of their life. When asked if they ever thought about early retirement, Wan-Hsuan replied, "We used to think that we would retire around the age of 40. However, we've gradually come to realize that retirement means living a life that one desires. But as E. Excellers, we have already been living our dream lives!"

"The E. Excel career allows us to have enough time to devote ourselves to Buddhist practices. We're also able to spend time with fellow E. Excellers, solving problems together, growing and maturing together, and traveling with E. Excel together. We don't have children of our own, but we have enough money to adopt more children who need help through the Taiwan Fund for Children and Families. Following our head monk's advice, we can improve ourselves as Buddhists by helping others through E. Excel. Hence it doesn't matter if we retire or not. We are already living our dream lives here in E. Excel!"

When asked what he would say to his past self if he could turn back time, Ming-Chang replied without hesitation, "Thank God I met E. Excel; thank God I met Buddhism; thank God I met Wan-Hsuan."

Life Motto—"You create your own reality!"

# A Career to Guard for Future Generations

## E. Excellers Kek Wei Seng and Siow Lee Yuen



**Kek Wei Seng and  
Siow Lee Yuen**

**From:** Malaysia

**Strengths and Hobbies:**

Sharing and learning

**Dream:** To do things beneficial to the public; to help and guide others

**Traveled with E. Excel to:**

the United Kingdom, France, Switzerland, the Czech Republic, the Netherlands, Austria, Australia, Tokyo, Kyushu, Hokkaido, South Korea, Thailand, Singapore, China, Hong Kong, Taiwan

It was truly serendipity that led Siow Lee Yuen into the world of E. Excel. How else do you explain seemingly random events happening one after another—listening to Dr. Jau-Fei Chen's radio interview by chance, coming across a report about her in the newspaper, and discovering your sister is a fan of E. Excel's products?

"I lost my beloved mother to cancer. Since then, I've never wanted to celebrate Mother's Day," Lee Yuen said. "After I became a mother myself, I was so afraid that my children would lose me to cancer too." The regret and fear buried deep within her heart made her hold onto every word of cancer prevention.

"It was only after attending a lecture on Nutritional Immunology that I realized how nutrition is of great significance to health and immunity! I was shocked, and I recalled how my thrifty mother often ate meals consisting of only salted fish, pickles, and rice. At that moment, I really hated myself for not knowing better earlier! I told myself that I definitely would not let my children carry the same regret that I do!"

Lee Yuen, spurred by motivation, took up the E. Excel career on a full-time basis without hesitation. These two decades have seen her dare to dream big and pursue those dreams. Lee Yuen recalled, "The E. Excel career is a career that makes you want to delve in deeper. The deeper you go, the more passionate about it you become! If you ask me why I can keep going, it's because I see how Dr. Chen has never stopped her research and sharing of knowledge, even until today. We have such confidence in E. Excel that we have no reason to give it up."

What advice would Lee Yuen give to those who are just starting out on their E. Excel careers? "My heartiest congratulations! It's a real blessing to encounter E. Excel. A success in E. Excel means a lifetime success. Contemplate on the life you truly want, work hard and persevere, and your life will be completely transformed for the better."

Aside from being a successful E. Exceler, Lee Yuen is also a compassionate volunteer in the Tzu Chi Foundation. After attaining both health and wealth in E. Excel, she has more proactively devoted herself to giving back to society.

Lee Yuen continued gratefully, "I became a Tzu Chi volunteer at the age of 47. And oftentimes people asked me, 'How were you able to retire at such a young age and come to Tzu Chi to volunteer?' I am very grateful for my E. Excel career, which enables me to enjoy financial and time freedom, and at the same time, to enrich my soul again.





"Whether becoming a Tzu Chi volunteer or sharing Nutritional Immunology, they are both right to me; if it's right, then just do it! Dr. Chen always hopes to 'build a disease-free world.' That type of kind aspiration and wish speaks of great benevolence! Although it is a long and challenging journey, as E. Excellers, we just follow through!"

As the COVID-19 pandemic swept around the world in early 2020, it forced people to change their lifestyle, and many people felt anxious about their future. Lee Yuen said with a feeling of relief, "I always tell my teammates that we are fortunate to have chosen the E. Excel career. We can easily change the way we work based on the ever-changing times and environment. Being able to take our work online—be it sharing, meeting, developing, or ordering—has helped ease our financial worries. Even Dr. Chen and Dr. EE were among the first to work online, conducting live webinars to share the latest true health knowledge and concepts and to help E. Excellers face the pandemic challenge with greater courage."

Lee Yuen continued, "The only pressing matter for me now is that I hope there will be more and more E. Excellers arising around the world. Our experience fighting the severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) epidemic and COVID-19 pandemic has further proven the value of Nutritional Immunology. There's so much real wisdom of health waiting for our E. Excellers to pass along—to spread from one to ten, ten to hundred, to reach more people, helping them through tough times."

Today, Lee Yuen not only has a large team, but also has a brilliant successor who works side by side with her. Speaking of her son Kek Yie Der, her eyes shone with happiness and a smile, "Yie Der used to be a computer engineer. After gaining a few years of working experience, he said to me of his own accord 'Since you love doing volunteer work, let me take charge of the E. Excel business and let me take care of you.' Within half a year, he took up the E. Excel career on a full-time basis. It's hard to put into words that feeling of comfort and joy when you see that your children have grown up."

"I still remember the first time Dr. Chen's three children stepped onto the stage as adults. As I sat offstage watching them, I couldn't help but shed tears, recalling the original promise—to pass on the E. Excel career to future generations. Dr. Chen did it, and so did I."

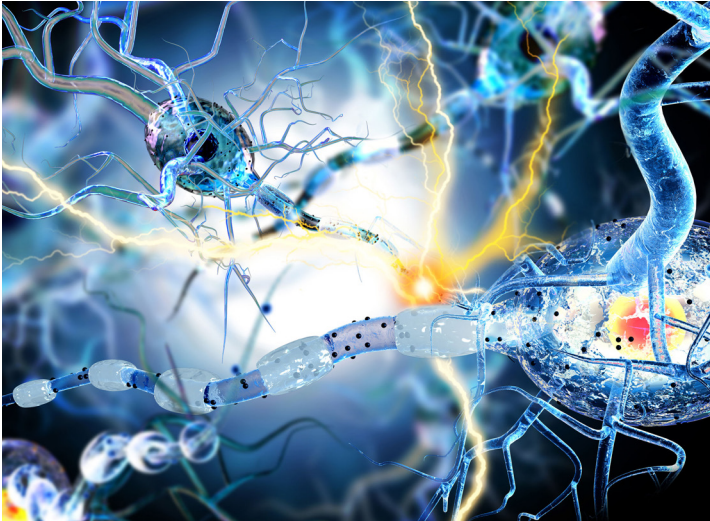
"Ever since my son Yie Der became my business partner, our relationship has taken on a new dimension. We have common topics to talk about, such as discussing how to manage the business, and we share everything that happens in our lives. We've become friends who keep no secrets from each other. I really appreciate what the E. Excel career has brought me. Building the close bond with my child again, understanding and cherishing each other, is a reward that money can't buy."

During a business sharing seminar, her son Yie Der said, "People probably only recognize me because I'm Lee Yuen's son. But I hope, one day in the future, everyone will say that she is Yie Der's mother!" That moment, Lee Yuen, who was among the audience, knew that E. Excel had not only brought her a perfect career, but also the pride of her life.

Life Motto—"As long as it is the right thing, just do it!"



# Autoimmune Diseases



We are constantly facing threats from the world outside of our body, and threats from within our body, yet, we keep on living. We eat, we interact, and we are exposed to all sorts of things that have the potential to kill us. We not only survive, but we often are not even aware of these threats because our immune system is excellent at defending our body against them. Our immune system is our superweapon, capable of eliminating threats before they cause problems. But if our immune system falters, then we have problems. When our immune system malfunctions, we are going to face many different diseases, such as autoimmune diseases.

## Autoimmune Diseases Are Becoming More Common

The incidence of autoimmune diseases is increasing. Researchers looked at the levels of antinuclear antibodies (ANA)—one of the most common biomarkers of autoimmune diseases—in the blood of more than 14,000 people over time. They found that the prevalence of ANA increased from 11% to 15.9% in the span of about 20 years. Epidemiological data also provide evidence of a steady increase in autoimmunity in Western societies over the last decades. Autoimmune diseases such as celiac disease, type 1 diabetes, rheumatoid arthritis, and myasthenia gravis are emerging more and more frequently in countries such as Canada, Israel, Denmark, the Netherlands, Sweden, and the USA. Research done in the UK shows that some of the autoimmune conditions are increasing in incidence by as much as 9% each year. Unfortunately, scientists do not know why.

## Autoimmune Diseases Are a Mystery

Autoimmune diseases occur when the immune system cannot distinguish what is self (safe) and what is foreign (dangerous). Since the immune system confuses the body's own cells with foreign invaders, it attacks the body's own cells, causing damage and leading to an autoimmune disease. Unfortunately, scientists still cannot answer the question: why does the body turn on itself? Scientists do not know what exactly triggers an autoimmune disease. They do not know why some people get it, and others do not. Autoimmune diseases can affect one part of the body, or they can affect the entire body. There are more than 100 different autoimmune diseases often causing long-term disability; some can even be life-threatening.





### There Is No Cure for Autoimmune Diseases

Not only do autoimmune diseases put people at greater risk of long-term disability, they also increase the risk of cancer due to the ongoing degradation of the body's tissues and dysregulation of the immune system. Currently, there is no cure for autoimmune diseases. Autoimmune diseases are chronic, and often progressive. The current management strategy focuses on controlling symptoms, and slowing the worsening of the disease. Oftentimes, the treatment itself can be harmful. Immunosuppressants are the mainstay of treatment. Although they can relieve symptoms, they carry their own risks, such as causing kidney and liver damage. The greatest risk of immunosuppressants is increasing the patient's risk of serious infections and cancer.

People on immunosuppressants have an increased risk of all infections, including infections that people normally do not get. They may also have reactivation of latent viruses within their body, such as the varicella-zoster virus, herpes simplex virus, cytomegalovirus, and hepatitis B and C viruses. These patients are at greater risk of being hospitalized due to serious infections throughout their body.

Transplant patients have to take immunosuppressants to keep their immune system from attacking the transplanted organs. Researchers found a twofold overall increased risk of cancer among transplant patients. In addition, they found that the risk increases for 32 different types of cancer. The most common cancers tend to be skin cancers, lymphomas, Kaposi's sarcoma, and cancers of the lung, kidney, and liver. A study published in the *New England Journal of Medicine* stated that, compared with healthy populations, after 20 years of being on immunosuppressants, 40% of the people receiving this therapy developed cancer.

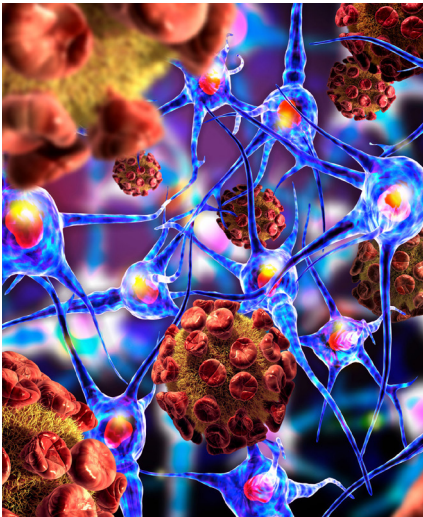
Types of Autoimmune Diseases	
Acute disseminated encephalomyelitis	Lichen planus
Alopecia areata	Membranoproliferative glomerulonephritis type 1
Aplastic anemia	Multiple sclerosis
Atrophic gastritis	Myasthenia gravis
Autoimmune polyendocrine syndrome	Pemphigus vulgaris
Autoimmune urticaria	Pernicious anemia
Bullous pemphigoid	Psoriasis
Celiac disease	Rheumatoid arthritis
Chronic inflammatory demyelinating polyneuropathy	Scleroderma
Crohn's disease	Sjögren's syndrome
Goodpasture's syndrome	Systemic lupus erythematosus
Grave's disease	Type 1 diabetes
Guillain-Barré syndrome	Ulcerative colitis
Hashimoto's thyroiditis	Vasculitis
Immune thrombocytopenic purpura	Vitiligo



## Risk Factors for Autoimmune Diseases

Although the cause of autoimmune diseases remains unknown, there are some risk factors:

- Gender—more common in women
- Genetics—some diseases, such as lupus, tend to run in families
- Having an autoimmune disease—increases the risk of getting another autoimmune disease
- Obesity
- Smoking
- Certain medications
- Certain infections
- Nutritional factors



## Autoimmune Diseases Must Be Triggered

Although autoimmune diseases can have a strong genetic component, merely inheriting the susceptibility for an autoimmune disease does not mean someone will definitely get it. Studies into twins have shown that two people having the same genetics does not mean they will get the same diseases. Environmental factors are more important than genetic susceptibility.

When it comes to autoimmune diseases, two things are required. The first is that the person must be susceptible to the disease. The second is that something must trigger the disease. Not only that, genes are not set in stone; some genes are active within the body, while others are not. However, environmental factors can “turn on” or “turn off” certain genes, including the genes that lead to autoimmune diseases. Avoiding the triggers that kick-start autoimmune diseases is the key to prevention.

Unfortunately, there is very little understanding on how and why some factors trigger autoimmune diseases. Here are some common triggers of autoimmune diseases:

- Bacterial and viral infections
- Exposure to toxins, such as solvents and other chemicals, heavy metals, tobacco, preservatives, and dyes
- Injuries
- Stress

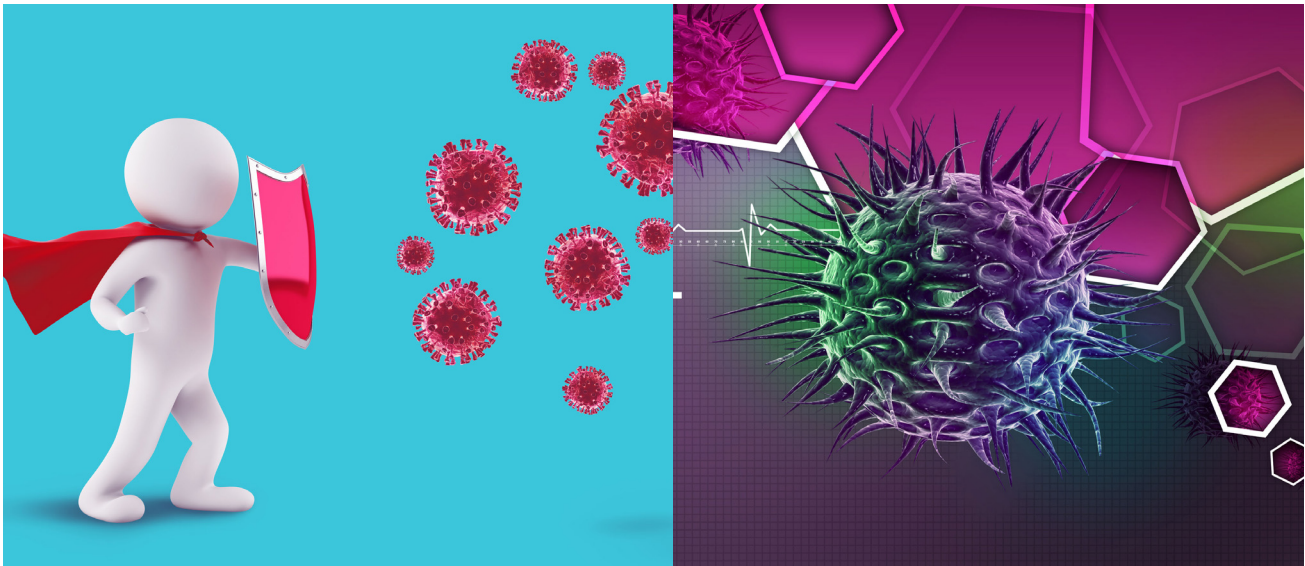
## Link Among Bad Diet, Inflammation, and Autoimmune Diseases

Autoimmune diseases are increasingly becoming more common around the world. In the United States, more than 24 million people suffer from autoimmune diseases. Since people have not changed much genetically, scientists believe this increase is due to environmental changes, such as those in lifestyle and diet.

Adopting a “Western diet” and a sedentary lifestyle can evoke a state of chronic inflammation in the body, which, in turn, can contribute to autoimmune diseases. A Western diet tends to be high in calories, and often consists of greasy, fatty foods as well as other unhealthy foods, such as animal products, particularly red meat.







Red meat and dairy products contain a molecule known as *N*-glycolylneuraminic acid (Neu5Gc). The presence of Neu5Gc in the body comes exclusively from the diet as human bodies cannot produce it on their own. Neu5Gc has been found concentrated within tumors and is thought to contribute to body-wide chronic inflammation.

Trimethylamine N-oxide (TMAO) is another compound that can contribute to chronic inflammation. This compound is released from the interaction of animal products with resident gut bacteria. Vegetarians, or people who eat less meat, produce less TMAO than people who eat meat. Studies have shown that high levels of TMAO may increase the risk of heart disease, stroke, and death. Our gut bacteria are closely linked to what we eat. Regular consumption of animal products can change the gut bacterial population in a way that leads to more TMAO in our body, thus increasing the risk of diseases.

### **Link Among Diet, Gut Microbiome, and Autoimmune Diseases**

Just as diets can worsen and contribute to disease, in the same vein, diets can also help protect our general health, as well as defend us against autoimmune diseases. Our immune system and our gut microbiota are closely linked. A healthy gut microbiota can help keep our immune system healthy. Although scientists still do not know what causes autoimmune diseases or how to cure them, scientists have found a link among diet, gut microbiome, and autoimmune diseases.

#### ***Crohn's Disease***

Crohn's disease is believed to be an autoimmune inflammatory disease of the gut. Currently, there is no cure. With the current treatments, only 10% of patients achieve long-term remission. In a case study, a patient with Crohn's disease achieved healing of the gut lining, with complete remission of his disease, after switching to a plant-based diet. Plant foods contain plenty of fiber, which is instrumental in keeping the gut microbiota healthy.



#### ***Multiple Sclerosis***

A diet high in fiber can help alleviate the symptoms of some autoimmune diseases, such as multiple sclerosis. Researchers have found that patients who eat plenty of fiber have lower levels of inflammatory markers in their blood. Not only can fiber help control symptoms, it can also help reduce the risk of getting an autoimmune disease to begin with. Researchers have suggested that a high-fiber diet can help prevent autoimmunity of the central nervous system.

## **Lupus**

An imbalance of the gut microbiota has been seen in autoimmune diseases such as lupus. There is a hypothesis that this imbalance can cause a leaky gut, triggering immune responses and worsening autoimmune diseases. A study published in the *Annals of the Rheumatic Diseases* has found that people with lupus have less diversity in their gut microbiota compared to people who do not have lupus. In fact, those who had more frequent or severe flare-ups had the fewest types of bacteria in their gut. The researchers also found that the lupus patients had an imbalance in their gut bacteria, with abnormally high amounts of a certain type of bacteria called *R. gnavus*. Moreover, studies found that lupus-prone mice had fewer species of friendly gut bacteria compared with healthy animals. Researchers suggest that a change in diet, for example, with the addition of dietary fiber, can help shift the gut microbiota towards a healthier direction.



## **Rheumatoid Arthritis**

Studies have found that people who consume more dietary fiber have lower levels of an inflammatory marker known as C-reactive protein (CRP) in their blood. Other studies have found a link between the gut microbiome and rheumatoid arthritis. An unhealthy gut microbiota may even act as a trigger for the disease. Dietary fiber has a proven impact on maintaining healthy populations of gut bacteria. Researchers found that rheumatoid arthritis patients

who had high-fiber diets had better physical functioning, improved quality of life, and less bone loss. A high-fiber diet also helps promote the production of short-chain fatty acids (SCFA) from the gut microbiome. This can help prevent inflammation, and has been shown to prevent knee damage and dysfunction in animal models with an inflammatory joint disease.

## **Food Is the Best “Medicine”**

More and more research into the link between the gut microbiota and general health is emerging with exciting results. On the surface, it may seem that gut health would primarily impact digestion, but research is showing that it can have an impact on a range of diseases too, such as autoimmune diseases, for which modern medicine currently has no real cure. Now, instead of waiting for the development of a cure, or relying on medications with side effects, we should take responsibility for our health and strive to prevent diseases through healthy eating habits, such as eating more dietary fiber. Food is truly the best “medicine.”



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

# Choose Life

When we look back at the past year of the pandemic, we see more than merely the failure of human health. The whole world has suffered greatly from the failure of human leadership—so concludes a comprehensive report on government responses to COVID-19, which is put together by an independent panel established by the World Health Organization (“WHO”).

## Talk the Talk

Governments around the world delayed or cut short measures that could have curtailed the pandemic. In the United States, with more than 30,000 confirmed cases of COVID-19, former U.S. President Trump kept businesses open, claiming: “We cannot let the cure be worse than the problem itself.” As of June 2021, the number of confirmed cases in the U.S. is over 33 million. Iran quickly became the second epicenter for the disease early last year due to the government’s failure to institute timely quarantines. India, for a long time, denied community transmission of COVID-19 and muddled its statistics. The total number of positive cases has reached over 29 million, as of June 2021, setting it right behind the U.S.

The above is just a small sample of the many men and women in leadership positions who have blatantly neglected their duty to protect our health and safety. They talk a good talk about the importance of good health and the sacrifices necessary to ensure it. But their actions make one thing clear: they have got no interest in walking the walk. We are rightfully outraged. After all, their decisions directly impact our health and the health of our loved ones. When they make wrong decisions, we suffer. Our parents, our brothers and sisters, and our children suffer.



## Walk the Walk

But what about you? Do you not make decisions every day that impact your health? Not only yours but also the health of your children, who watch you and imitate you? When you consider the poor decisions you make that threaten your health and safety and that of your family, do you feel the same outrage that you felt just moments ago at those politicians?

We all say we want good health. We all say we want our loved ones to be in good health and live long, healthy lives. But the truth is, not all of us *want* good

health—not even for our loved ones. You see, talk is cheap. Anybody can talk a good talk. But the walk is what proves the true desires of one’s heart.

You can say you want to be healthy all you want. But when afternoon comes and you reach for that bag of highly-processed “poison,” we hear you loud and clear: I want pleasure more than health.



You can say you want to be fit all you want, but when the time comes to get some exercise and you are all but glued to the screen, we hear you loud and clear: I would rather be comfortable than fit. Then, when you go and tell your children they have to eat right and exercise, they will look at you the same way you look at those politicians—and rightly so.



### Lifestyle Diseases

We have gone more than a year under the shadow of a worldwide pandemic. We have all seen the stories and counted the numbers of the dead. Tragic as it is, death from COVID-19 is still just a drop in the bucket of human death and suffering.

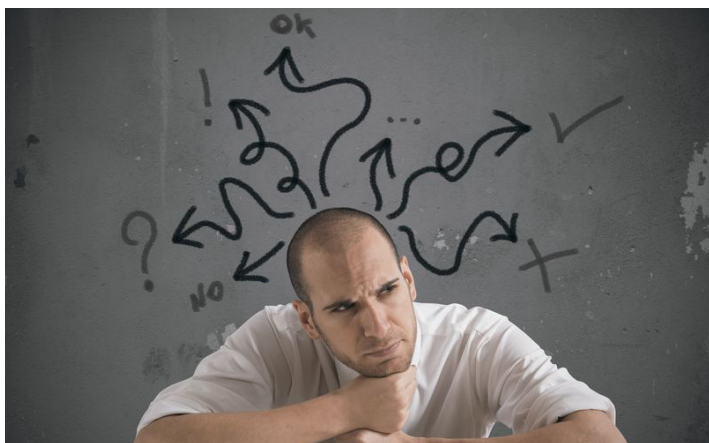
The leading cause of death worldwide has been, and still is, something we call “lifestyle diseases.” They are more technically known as chronic diseases, and include heart disease, stroke, diabetes, obesity, metabolic syndrome, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, and certain types of cancer. According to the latest data from the WHO, these diseases account for 71% of all deaths worldwide.

**The reason these diseases are called “lifestyle diseases” is simple—these are diseases you end up with as the direct result of your poor lifestyle choices.** There is a scientific consensus that a poor diet and physical inactivity, along with excess body weight and smoking, contribute greatly to developing these diseases. And there is much more to “lifestyle diseases” than mortality. The reason these are also called *chronic* diseases is that they usually creep into your life over time as the result of hundreds of bad choices you make along the way. In a way, it is inaccurate to call them “diseases.” It is simply various parts of your body breaking down over time due to lack of care.

### Choose Wisely

What does this all mean? It means that the greatest portion of people who die this year, would die because they refuse to make healthy choices. And this means that a large portion of the population would suffer ongoing pain and disability because they choose to. So here is the bad news: your choices matter. But here comes the good news: you *can* choose. You do not have to choose a life of poor health. You *can* choose what and how much to eat. You *can* choose to exercise regularly. You *can* choose to abstain from harmful habits like drinking and smoking. Consider the following illustrations.

**You are what you eat.** Your body is a physical system that operates according to physical inputs. For good or for bad, there is no way around it. Your body is a wonderfully designed machine that is intricate beyond understanding. Yet, it is subject to simple principles of reality. What goes in, is what comes out. Eating too much results in weight gain, eating less results in weight control, and eating even less results in weight loss. These are choices—personal choices that we all make day in, day out.





Excess body weight alone significantly increases the risk of many unpleasant and downright debilitating diseases, including the most serious lifestyle diseases. If you have excess body weight, the solution might be as simple as choosing to eat less. Of course, there is far more to a healthy diet than eating less.

A couple of hundred years ago, a mysterious but widespread illness afflicted sailors worldwide. Millions of sailors succumbed to this disease we

now know as scurvy between the 1500s and the 1800s. The sailors were physically active and eating adequate amounts of food, but they were missing one key nutrient: vitamin C. On long sea voyages, the diet of these sailors lacked the perishable fruits and vegetables rich in this important nutrient. Once this nutritional deficiency was cured, scurvy all but disappeared from the world. History is rife with accounts of captains desperately braving foreign lands in search of lemons and oranges to save their crews of sailors.

Your body has certain nutritional needs: the better you meet those needs, the healthier you will be. You can choose to meet those needs, or you can choose to ignore them in favor of the fleeting pleasure of bubble milk tea. Yes, E. Excel is built on the nutritional truth that there is more to eating right than counting calories and popping generic vitamin tablets. But are you *at least* counting calories? What and how you eat is a choice. Is it a choice for health or for sickness? It is your call!



**Your body is designed to move.** It was never meant to sit idle day after day with minimum exertion. Your lungs are designed to breathe, your heart to pump, and your blood to course through your body, nourishing and cleansing your organs. Your muscles are meant to push and to pull, to bend and to twist. Large parts of your brain are devoted not only to controlling physical movement, but also to a myriad of fine-tuning mechanisms that kick into gear to support vigorous physical activity.

The scientific literature on what physical activity does for your body is vast, and the list of benefits is oceanic in its scope. Yet the idea is simple. Your body is always meant to be active, and there are many extremely important tasks that your body simply WILL NOT perform without enough physical activity.

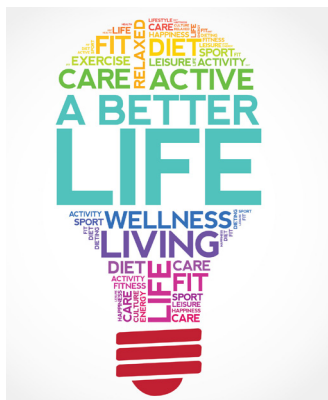
You do not need to be an Olympic athlete or a bodybuilder to benefit from exercise. Take some time off from your many screens and go for a walk in the park. Take the stairs up to your apartment or office. Grab a basket the next time you are at the grocery store instead of the cart. Do something small, daily.



For those of us who are able-bodied, an active lifestyle is a matter of choice: the choice between a wilting and weakening body or a vibrant and healthy body.

We are not pulling any punches today, because what is on the line is your health and your life. What do you have if you do not have life? What kind of life do you have if you are sickly, weak, and constantly in pain?

There are so many people who *do not have a choice* about their poor health. But the vast majority of us reading this have a choice to be healthy. Most of us have a choice to be fit. Yet many of us are going to throw those choices away for a moment of pleasure and comfort.



E. Excellers, do not dwell on choices you do not have. Do not dwell on the choices that you have already made. Tomorrow is a new day with new choices—choices that impact your health and life, and that of your family and friends. What will you choose to put into your body the next time you eat? What will you choose to do with your body the next time you have some free time?

E. Excel is a community of people who seek to attain and to share the joy and blessings of good health. The choices that make up your health are yours alone. We can educate you, warn you, and encourage you, but ultimately, you must make your choice. Strength or weakness? Health or illness? Life or death? Choose life.



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



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

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

## Magnetic Therapy



Magnets are popping up everywhere! You can find them in mattresses, blankets, shoe insoles, socks, slippers, bracelets, rings, and even headbands.

Marketers claim that these magnetic products can relieve pain, increase blood circulation, and promote healing for any disease and illness you can name.

An easy, non-invasive, and harmless way to relieve pain? It is easy to see where the attraction of magnetic therapy lies! But does it really work?

### What is magnetic therapy?

Magnetic therapy is an alternative therapy that uses magnets of various sizes and strengths to help relieve pain. It is also known as magnet therapy, biomagnetic therapy, and electromagnetic field therapy.

There are two main types of magnets: static magnet and electromagnet. The magnetic field of static magnets is generated by the spin of electrons within the material itself, unlike electromagnets, whose magnetic field is produced by an electric current.

In this article, we are referring to static magnets because they are the type of magnet used in magnetic devices commonly available on the market.

### How is magnetic therapy supposed to work?

Proponents believe that the molecules in the human body contain magnetic energy, and the human body has a natural magnetic field.





They claim that having a magnetic field near the body helps rebalance the body's magnetic energy to promote healing.

The magnets are placed directly on the skin and held in place with adhesive patches. They may also be inserted into mattresses or various wearables and worn or placed near the areas of pain.

The theory goes that magnets attract iron, and there is iron in blood. Therefore, the magnets will draw more blood to where

the magnetic devices are placed. The improved blood circulation will speed up wound healing and the removal of toxins from the body.

At first glance, this certainly sounds logical and plausible. But in reality, and thankfully, the iron in our blood is not attracted to magnets. Otherwise, we would have to be super careful around magnets!

Here is why. The hemoglobin in our red blood cells contains iron and oxygen. When hemoglobin molecules are attached to oxygen, they tend to repel from magnets. Oxygen-depleted hemoglobin molecules are only slightly attracted to magnets. Fortunately, the hemoglobin in our blood is mostly attached to oxygen.

Furthermore, blood is made up of mostly water, which tends to repel from magnets.

Our body contains only a tiny amount of iron, about 3 – 4 grams, and this iron is spread throughout the body. So the iron in our blood is not greatly affected by the pull of magnets.

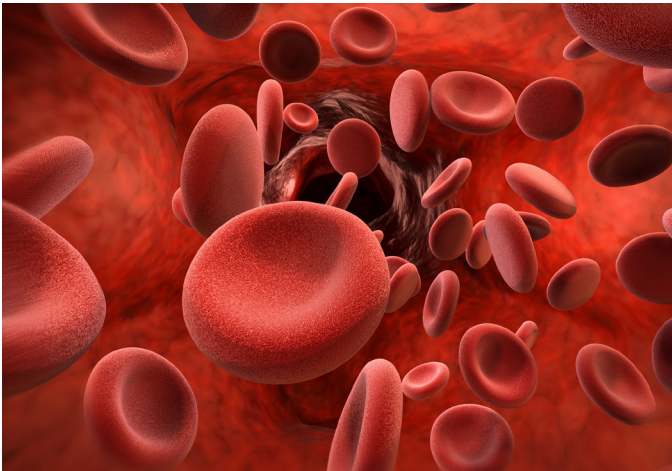
That is why it is safe to do a Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) scan, even though this device uses powerful magnetic fields.

### **What does the science say about using magnets for pain relief?**

Scientific evidence does not support the use of magnets for pain relief.

In a review of several studies on static magnets, including nine randomized placebo-controlled trials, the authors concluded that "The evidence does not support the use of static magnets for pain relief, and such magnets therefore cannot be recommended as an effective treatment."





Studies looking at using magnets for different types of pain—such as knee, hip, wrist, foot, back, and pelvic pain—have had mixed results. Many of these studies were too short, inadequately controlled, or had a small number of participants. Most of the rigorous trials did not find any effect on pain. Research suggests that the only effect static magnetic therapy devices have on users is a placebo effect.

In addition, the magnetic field that the magnetic wearables generate is generally too weak to have any health effect.

### What do the authorities say about using magnets for pain relief?

In the U.S., the FDA and state consumer protection agencies have prosecuted marketers of magnetic therapy and magnetic devices to stop them from making unsupported health claims.

"Research studies don't support the use of static magnets for any form of pain. Do not use static magnets or electromagnets that you can buy without a prescription to postpone seeing a health care provider about pain or any other medical problem." — The U.S. National Center for Complementary and Integrative Health

"Magnets may not be helpful... But one conclusion is certain: if you are still attracted to magnets, use them only in conjunction with the opposite pole, modern scientific medicine." — Harvard Health Publishing

"...National Science Foundation (NSF) survey respondents were asked whether or not they had heard of magnetic therapy, and if they had, whether they thought that it was *very scientific*, *sort of scientific*, or *not at all scientific*.... Only 25 percent of those surveyed answered correctly, that is, that it is not at all scientific." — A U.S. National Science Foundation report on public attitudes and understanding of science

### Does magnetic therapy have any side effects?

Possible side effects of magnetic therapy include pain (the irony!), nausea, and dizziness. A patient using a magnetic mattress developed a blistering skin condition known as bullous pemphigoid.







### Who should not use magnetic therapy?

Avoid magnetic therapy if you are pregnant or using a cardiac pacemaker or insulin pump. Children might accidentally swallow or inhale tiny magnets. Also remove all magnetic bracelets, necklaces, braces, or other devices from the body before having an X-ray or MRI.

### What is the takeaway message?

Magnetic therapy does not work but it is probably harmless. The only thing it relieves is likely the weight of our wallet.



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



## Aromatherapy

A dab, a rub, a deep breath, and voilà! Ailments from headaches to insomnia will magically disappear. Or so some people believe of essential oils. But do they actually work?

### Are essential oils safe?

Essential oils are oils made by steaming or pressing the flowers, fruits, leaves or bark of plants to capture the compounds that produce fragrance.

Essential oils are natural, and have a long history of use, but they are not risk-free.



- May irritate the skin  
Essential oils may cause skin irritation and provoke allergic reactions. Symptoms include redness, hives, itchiness, and rashes. Certain essential oils contain compounds that will react with ultraviolet light from the sun and cause a sensitivity reaction that leads to skin damage.
- May worsen respiratory allergies  
Some essential oils may release volatile organic compounds that have been linked to increased asthma symptoms.
- Not safe for consumption  
There are marketing claims that essential oils are natural and safe to consume. However, no one should actually consume essential oils meant for external use! If ingested, certain essential oils can cause digestive issues, seizures, liver damage or kidney damage.
- Keep out of reach of children and pets  
Children are still growing. Their skin is not fully matured and is typically thinner and more delicate than the skin of adults, and so should avoid essential oils. Lock up your bottles of essential oil, out of the sight and reach of children and pets to avoid poisoning caused by accidental ingestion.



### Caution!

"Sometimes people think that if an 'essential oil' or other ingredient comes from a plant, it must be safe. But many plants contain materials that are toxic, irritating, or likely to cause allergic reactions when applied to the skin." — The U.S. Food and Drug Administration

"Essential oils are not safe to consume and can cause significant poisoning even if small amounts are ingested." — Western Australian Department of Health

"Misuse of essential oils can cause serious poisoning." — The U.S. National Capital Poison Center

### Can essential oils cure?

The U.S. National Library of Medicine provides a thorough summary of research on the efficacy of essential oils. Currently, there is no evidence-backed research showing that essential oils or aromatherapy can cure illnesses.

Existing research on essential oils often consists of small, poorly designed studies, or studies done on animal models, such as mice. For most of the research, the methodology used is not of a good enough standard to be accepted by the rest of the scientific community.





### What are essential oils good for?

The one good thing about essential oils is their scent. Being exposed to certain scents may help people relax, stay calm, reduce stress, or even help them sleep. Pick an essential oil with a scent that is most appealing to you. Just do not expect it to have any healing effects.

Essential oils are not regulated by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, which means there is very little control over the marketing or claims of these products. It is up to the consumers to do their own research and decide if they believe the claims or not.

### Clearing the Air on Incense and Scented Candles

There are marketing claims that burning incense or scented candles can *clean* indoor air. We are incensed at this nonsense.

### Do incense and scented candles clean the air?

Sure, burning scented candles (be it made from paraffin wax, vegetable wax or beeswax) and incense in your house can make it smell nicer. But doing so introduces pollutants into indoor air.

"People think incense or candles are beneficial, but of course they're not. It's just combustion, and the smoke has the same health effects as cigarette smoke," said Dr. Kirk Smith, a professor of global environmental health at the University of California, Berkeley in an interview with *The New York Times*.



### What is in the smoke?

When there is smoke from burning incense and scented candles, there are:

- particulate matter, e.g. soot  
Particulate matter is so tiny that it can get deep into the lungs and cause lung and heart problems.

- gases  
These may include carbon monoxide (a poisonous gas), sulfur dioxide, and nitrogen dioxide. Exposure to the last two gases can lead to respiratory illnesses and worsening of existing cardiovascular diseases.
- organic compounds  
These may include cancer-causing substances (e.g. benzene) and substances that irritate the skin, eyes, and respiratory tract (e.g. toluene and aldehydes).

### **Will inhaling incense and scented candle smoke cause my health to go up in smoke?**

Inhaling too much of any type of smoke can harm your health.



Here are some health concerns about breathing in incense smoke and candle smoke over a prolonged period:

- A three-year study has found that elderly people who regularly burn incense indoors have poorer cognitive performance and fewer connections between different parts of the brain compared to their peers who do not.
- Research has shown a link between incense smoke and an increased risk of cancer, inflammation, heart disease, allergic contact dermatitis, high blood pressure, and triggering an asthma attack.
- Scented candles may trigger allergic reactions in some people. These symptoms may include sneezing, runny nose, and sinus blockage.



### **Can burning beeswax candles clean the air?**

There are online marketing claims that burning beeswax candles will clean the air by releasing negative ions that bind with the toxins in the air (which apparently are all positively charged) and help remove toxins from the air. But these claims are not backed by any published scientific evidence.

Just enjoy incense and scented candles for their scents. They do not “clean” the air. Keep the room well ventilated when burning incense or scented candles to help reduce your exposure to the smoke.





**Q1 Is the immune system made up of a single organ?**

No. The immune system is a network of many organs, specialized cells, tissues, and proteins working together to protect the body from foreign invaders and disease.

**Q2 Do scientists understand the immune system completely?**

No. The immune system is very complex. Till today, scientists do not know fully how it functions, not to mention "control" it. This is why there is still no cure for autoimmune diseases and allergies; doctors can only suppress the symptoms. This is also why doctors cannot prevent cytokine storms in COVID-19 patients, because no one knows why cytokine storms occur in some patients and not in others.

**Q3 What is the difference between innate immunity and adaptive immunity?**

To put it very simply, innate immunity is the immunity you are born with. Adaptive immunity is your immune system's learned response to invaders. Both innate immunity and adaptive immunity work together closely to protect you from invaders.

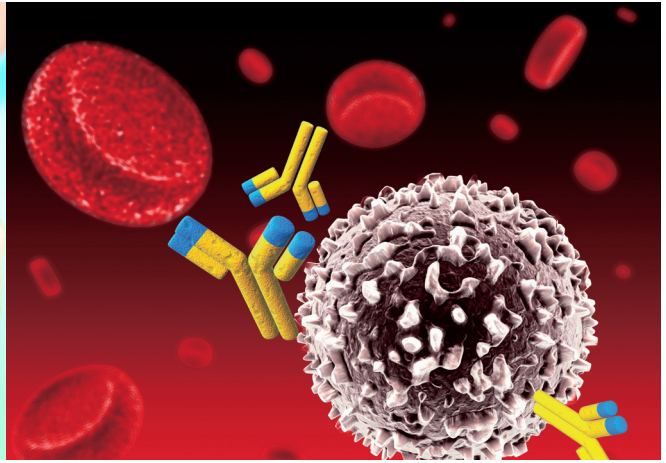
You are born with innate immunity. It is your body's first quick response to invaders. Your immune system cranks up a series of responses, from increasing temperature (fever), to producing extra mucus (running nose) to flush out invaders. Some immune cells involved in innate immunity are macrophages, basophils, mast cells, natural killer cells, and neutrophils.

Adaptive immunity is the immunity you gain throughout life as you are exposed to invaders. When your immune system meets an invader for the first time, it develops a memory of this invader and produces specific weapons (antibodies) against it. It may take about 5 to 10 days to produce antibodies. However, if your immune system meets the same invader again in future, it will be able to act quickly because it remembers this invader and can prevent it from causing sickness.

**Q4 What happens when the immune system malfunctions?**

When the immune system malfunctions, it can lead to the following:

- Immunodeficiency disorders: inherited from birth and caused by missing parts in the immune system, or the immune system can become compromised as a result of infection (HIV), chemotherapy, malnutrition, and severe burns.
- Allergies: occur when the immune system responds to harmless substances.
- Autoimmune diseases: occur when the immune system mistakenly attacks the body's own cells and tissues. Examples of autoimmune diseases include lupus, rheumatoid arthritis, multiple sclerosis, and type 1 diabetes.
- Infection and cancer: occur when the immune system is weak.



**Q5 There are products on the market that claim to activate macrophages. Is it good to activate macrophages or any other immune cell?**

Macrophages play a central role in innate immunity. And innate immunity should not be stimulated, as it will cause a person to feel unwell with a runny nose, fever, lethargy, and depression.

Immune cells should be activated only when there are invaders. By activating macrophages or any other types of immune cells, it is akin to declaring war and sending out soldiers when there is no enemy.

Furthermore, scientists do not fully understand the intricate workings of the immune system. They are still searching for the answers to these questions:

- What immune cells to boost? And to what number?  
Scientists know that the human body continually makes immune cells, and it generates more lymphocytes (a type of immune cell) than is needed. The excess cells destroy themselves through a process of natural cell death (apoptosis).

This means that there must be an optimal mix and number of immune cells for the immune system to work at its best. But scientists do not know what is this optimal mix and number.

- How will boosting a particular immune cell, or increasing a particular protein secreted by the immune cells, affect other immune cells? Scientists do not know if there are any harmful side effects.

Hence it is not advisable to try to “boost” or “stimulate” a particular immune cell or function.

What scientists do know is that the immune system requires balance and harmony to function well.

**Q6 What are some tips for maintaining a healthy and balanced immune system?**

Adopt a healthy lifestyle. It will benefit your entire body, including your immune system.

- Eat a diet rich in natural, wholesome plant foods.
- Exercise regularly, and maintain a healthy weight.
- Reduce stress and sleep well.







### Q7 What should I look for in a healthy cooking oil?

- 1:1 ratio of omega-6 to omega-3  
Omega-6 fatty acids and omega-3 fatty acids are essential fatty acids that our body needs. But too much of either one can affect how the other functions. Hence experts recommend a balanced 1:1 ratio of omega-6 to omega-3 for good health and weight management.
- High smoke point  
Smoke point is the temperature at which an oil starts to smoke. The oil starts to break down and produce carcinogens, such as malondialdehyde. A high smoke point allows you to cook foods at higher temperatures without the oil breaking down as easily.

### Q8 Why is too much omega-6 bad for us?

Too much omega-6 increases risk of many health concerns:

- Inflammation
- Autoimmune disorders
- Heart disease and stroke
- Cancer
- Asthma
- Depression
- Neurodegenerative disorders

### Q9 What are the health benefits of omega-3?

- Essential for making cell membranes
- Promotes heart health and helps prevent stroke
- Lowers blood pressure
- Reduces inflammation
- Helps control lupus, eczema, and rheumatoid arthritis
- Reduces allergic reactions
- Lowers risk of cancer, such as colorectal cancer and breast cancer
- Aids in learning and cognition
- Protects against Parkinson's disease and Alzheimer's disease
- Improves dry eye syndrome

### Q10 Why should I consider the smoke point when choosing a cooking oil?

The cooking temperatures of common Asian cooking methods like stir-frying in high heat, or deep frying, can be as high as 190°C. To avoid the production of cancer-causing substances, choose an oil with a smoke point higher than 190°C.

Here are the omega-6 to omega-3 ratio and the smoke point of common cooking oils:

Oil	Omega-6:Omega-3 Ratio	Smoke Point (°C)
Perilla seed oil	1:4	202 – 250
Macadamia nut oil	1:1	210
Canola oil	2:1	204
Soybean oil	8:1	160
Olive oil	13:1	160
Rice bran oil	21:1	254
Tea seed oil	31.8:1	252
Peanut oil	32:1	160
Corn oil	83:1	160
Safflower oil	133:1	266
Sesame oil	138:1	177
Cottonseed oil	257.5:1	216
Black seed oil	302:1	82
Grapeseed oil	676:1	216

A careful comparison shows that perilla seed oil and macadamia nut oil have ideal omega-6 to omega-3 ratios and their smoke points are suitable for the high temperatures of Asian cooking methods.

**Q11 Why is flaxseed oil not recommended for consumption?**

Flaxseeds contain small amounts of cyanide, which has the potential to contaminate the flaxseed oil and damage health.

**Q12 What else should I take note of when using a cooking oil?**

Do not reuse your cooking oil. Reusing your oil causes:

- The oil's smoke point to lower.
- Toxic substances to be produced more easily.





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