



# Dr. Frank Shallenberger's **SECOND OPINION**<sup>®</sup>

Vol. XXVII, No. 12

December 2017

## HEALTH NOTES

### **Do B-Vitamins Cause Cancer?**

The headline in an August 2017 article in *The Atlantic* was enough to get everyone's attention: "Vitamin B6 and B12 Supplements Appear to Cause Cancer in Men." The article went on to report that men taking even modest doses of the vitamins had three to four times the risk of getting a particular kind of lung cancer than men not taking the supplements. So, if you are like me and for the past 30 years have been taking fairly stiff doses of all the B-vitamins including B6 and B12, what should you do?

If you listen to this headline, it sounds like you might as well take up smoking! Well, hold on for a second, and don't immediately throw your vitamins under the bus. There's a lot more to this story.

For one, the so-called risk was only discovered in men. The study failed to show any increased risk in women. Now, that's really interesting because statistically, among non-smokers, women are *twice as likely to get lung cancer as men*. If the vitamins were really playing a role in why the men had an increased risk of lung cancer, it would mean that the vitamins protected the women against the same cancer that it caused in the men. And that's impossible. A much more likely answer is that either there are other factors that increased the risk in men or there was a flaw in the study. The reality is that the increase in lung cancer only in men is a self-contradictory finding.

Secondly, the increased risk found in men was seen only in certain cancers. Specifically, it was not seen in adenocarci-

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## ***This European Prescription Restores Hair and Nails – But You Don't Need Your Doctor to Buy It Here***

One of the most common and one of the most difficult problems that doctors deal with is hair loss. I'm not talking about the male pattern hair loss which is genetic, and for which there is no cure. I'm talking about the hair loss and hair thinning that millions of men and women experience as they get older. Up until a few years ago, I had no idea how to stop this kind of hair loss. And then, as fate would have it, I met Mariana.

Mariana was a beautiful young woman who came to see me with the following problem. She was visiting Carson City all the way from Italy. It turned out that several years before, although she was completely healthy, she started to lose hair. It was "coming out in buckets in my brush and when I washed it." She went to see various doctors and tried the different medications that they gave her to no avail. Finally, one of them prescribed her a medication that worked. Within four weeks of taking it, the hair loss stopped. But here was the problem. Not long after she arrived in the U.S., she lost her pills, and her hair was starting to fall out again. She wanted me to prescribe them for her.

At that point, she showed me the box that the pills had come in. The information on the box was entirely in Italian. So, I had to go to Google Translate to figure out what the medication was. Imagine my surprise when I found out that the pills didn't contain any medication at all. They simply contained one single amino acid called l-cysteine. Each capsule contained 500 mg of l-cysteine. She was taking two capsules a day. I told her that in the U.S. you don't need a prescription to get l-cysteine. It's available over the counter. In fact, I had some in the clinic. So, I gave her what she needed, and off she went out into the land of beautiful hair.

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noma lung cancers. If something really does cause lung cancer (like cigarettes, for example), the increase in cancer goes up across the board. The fact that it did not go up in what happens to be the most common lung cancer in non-smokers also indicates a probable flaw in the study.

Third, there are other studies that reach very different conclusions. For example, one study titled, "Cancer incidence and mortality after treatment with folic acid and vitamin B12" looked at over 3,000 men and women. Some of them were taking B12 and another B-vitamin folic acid, and some were not.

At the end of the study, there was an increase in lung cancer in the vitamin group, but it was nowhere close to three to four times the risk. It was only a 0.2 times increased risk. If either of these studies were anywhere close to valid, why do the results differ by a factor of 20? And then there's the study that appeared in the *Archives of Internal Medicine* in 2012.

That study looked at 2,501 men and women between the ages of 45 to 80 years. The researchers divided the participants into four groups. They supplemented group one with the B-vitamins folate, B6, and B12, group two with fish oils, group three with the same B-vitamins with fish

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**SECOND OPINION** (ISSN 1068-2953) is published monthly by Soundview Communication, Inc. **PUBLISHER:** Garret W. Wood; **EDITOR-IN-CHIEF:** Frank Shallenberger, MD; **COVER PRICE:** \$8 per issue, discounts available for one- and two-year subscriptions. Contact our **BUSINESS OFFICE:** P.O. Box 8051, Norcross, GA 30091-8051, 800-791-3445 or 770-399-5617. **SECOND OPINION** is a newsletter containing general comments on health, nutrition, and medicine. Readers are advised to consult with their own physician before implementing any health idea they read about, whether here or in any other publication. Copyright © 2017 by Soundview Communication, Inc. All rights reserved. Unauthorized reproduction of this newsletter or its contents by xerography, facsimile, or any other means is illegal.

But that was not the end of the story. Because now I wanted to know what was going on. I immediately went to the literature to learn more about l-cysteine and the nutritional aspects of hair loss in general. Here's what I found out.

A German research study from 2000 looked at the role of L-cysteine in hair loss and hair regrowth. The researchers divided people who were suffering from what they described as "massive" hair loss into two groups. They treated one group with a combination of l-cysteine, millet seed extract, and pantothenic acid (vitamin B5). They gave the other group a placebo. Within a matter of eight weeks, the people in the l-cysteine group stopped losing hair. And that's not all. Their hair also started to grow back. Not surprisingly, there was no improvement in hair loss or in hair regrowth in the placebo group. But why? What's the big deal about l-cysteine?

L-cysteine is an amino acid that's critical for the formation of the tissue-building proteins in the body. These proteins build muscle, bone, skin, and yes, hair. Your body gets l-cysteine in two ways. Certain foods are high in l-cysteine. These include soybeans, beef, lamb, sunflower seeds, chicken, oats, pork, fish, cheese, eggs, legumes, and kamut. The other way we get l-cysteine is that we can make it from another amino acid called methionine. But there are a few problems here.

One is that not everyone has a great diet, and some people just don't get enough l-cysteine or methionine in their diets. Another problem is that even when a person's diet is high in foods that have l-cysteine, the digestive system might not be able to digest the amino acid effectively. This is especially true for the over-50 crowd. Lastly, for genetic reasons, some people cannot effectively convert methionine into l-cysteine. And if any or all of these factors are present, hair loss can be the result. But why is l-cysteine so important for healthy hair?

It's because it is one of few amino acids that has the ability to form disulfide bonds in the body. These disulfide bonds hold together the keratin strands within the hair. This directly helps in maintaining the texture and thickness of hair.

Hair consists of three layers – the cuticle, the cortex, and the medulla. The outer layer is the cuticle. The middle layer is the cortex, and the inner layer is the medulla. The most prominent of these layers is the cortex. It makes up almost 80-90% of a single strand of hair. It's the cortex that's so abundantly supplied with the keratin molecules that bundle up to give strength to the hair fol-

licles. And get this. L-cysteine makes up a whopping 75% of each of these fibrous filament bundles. So, it's pretty easy to see how hair loss can occur when there is not enough l-cysteine around. But l-cysteine is not the only important substance for healthy hair and skin. Studies also show that the B-vitamin, biotin is critical.

Biotin is specifically needed for the production of keratin, the substance I just mentioned that makes hair follicles strong and healthy. And this is why it's so important for healthy hair growth. There are all kinds of reasons why people may be low in biotin besides just having a diet low in it. One is eating raw eggs. Eggs contain a protein called avidin, which cooking destroys. But when uncooked, avidin binds to biotin tightly and prevents your body from using it. Additionally, patients taking anticonvulsant medications, such as valproic acid, can also become deficient. Other causes of biotin deficiency include alcoholism, pregnancy, impaired digestion, and other medications (such as isotretinoin and antibiotics).

One recent review study looked at the effects of biotin supplementation on healthy hair and nails. To do the study, the researchers looked at all of the published literature that reported on biotin and hair growth. Here's what they concluded. "We found 18 reported cases of biotin use for hair and nail changes. In all cases, patients receiving biotin supplementation had an underlying pathology for poor hair or nail growth. All cases showed evidence of clinical improvement after receiving biotin." In addition to biotin, I found other studies showing that supplementing zinc and copper also can be helpful.

Well, armed with this information, several years ago, I started to give any of my patients complaining of hair loss and/or weak, fragile fingernails a combination of l-cysteine and biotin in pretty high doses, along with zinc, copper, and silica. Silica is a mineral found in various plants that has a long history of helping create strong, healthy hair and nails. In general, I found that about 8 out of 10 of my patients with hair loss were telling me that their hair stopped falling out within six weeks of starting the program. Once I determined that the combination was effective, instead of making my patients buy five different bottles of supplements, I asked Advanced Bionutritionals to manufacture a single product that contains the same nutrients and doses. They call it Healthy Hair & Nails.

If you are noticing that your hair is coming out in your brush or comb. Or if you are seeing your hair getting thinner as the years roll by. Especially if your

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oils, and group four with placebo. They were looking for any kind of increased cancer risk. Here's what the authors had to say about their results, "There was no association between cancer outcomes and supplementation with B vitamins." That seems pretty clear. No increase in cancer of any kind including, of course, every kind of lung cancer.

So, not only do the results of this new study appear self-contradictory, they also contradict at least two other studies looking at the same thing. And then there's always common sense. How could any substance, much less a natural one like a B-vitamin, cause lung cancer in men, but not in women? These are the reasons why I'm going to ignore the improbable results in this study and continue to take my B-vitamins.

Andreeva VA, Touvier M, et al. B vitamin and/or  $\omega$ -3 fatty acid supplementation and cancer: ancillary findings from the supplementation with folate, vitamins B6 and B12, and/or omega-3 fatty acids (SU.FOL.OM3) randomized trial. *Arch Intern Med.* 2012 Apr 9;172(7):540-7.

Brasky TM, White E, et al. Long-Term, Supplemental, One-Carbon Metabolism-Related Vitamin B Use in Relation to Lung Cancer Risk in the Vitamins and Lifestyle(VITAL) Cohort. *J Clin Oncol.* 2017 Aug 22;JCO2017727735.

Ebbing M, Bønaa KH, et al. Cancer incidence and mortality after treatment with folic acid and vitamin B12. *JAMA.* 2009 Nov 18;302(19):2119-26.

### Simple Treatment Eliminates Wrinkles – Even Crow's Feet

Wrinkles! Who likes them? While none of us do, not that many people want to go through surgery or other expensive and potentially dangerous efforts to get rid of them. So, what if there was a way to reduce wrinkles that was safe, easy, natural, and completely without side effects? Well, there is. At the last congress of The American Academy of Ozonotherapy (AAO) Dr. Nafysa Parpia, ND reported on a new technique that she has developed using ozone therapy that can help to make you look as good as you feel without breaking the bank.

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This new technique reduces the appearance of facial wrinkles. Specifically, she discussed her results treating crow's feet (the lines around the eyes), forehead wrinkles, frown lines, wrinkles around the upper and lower lips, and sagging jowls. She showed before and after pictures on four patients which clearly showed the treatments to be effective.

The procedure she developed was to inject a low concentration of ozone/oxygen mixture into and below the wrinkles. Typically, she would inject a given wrinkle in five to ten different areas. For superficial wrinkles, she repeats the procedure two to three times. Deeper wrinkles often require eight to ten treatments.

According to Dr. Parpia, the procedure works well because, "Ozone introduced subcutaneously stimulates natural healing processes in the skin rather than masking imperfections." You can see Dr. Parpia at work treating a variety of wrinkles at the following YouTube link: <https://youtu.be/HJUHXoDdrcI>. And, you can find Dr. Parpia's contact information as well as other practitioners who learned the procedure from her lecture at the AAO website ([www.aaot.us](http://www.aaot.us)).

### **Is This Vitamin Deficiency the Cause of Obesity?**

Could it be that a child's nutritional status just might have a little something to do with his risk of obesity, high blood pressure, cholesterol imbalances, and diabetes? The answer seems obvious to me. And it was also obvious to a team of researchers who were interested in look-

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For a complete listing of Dr. Shallenberger's recommended dietary supplements and nutraceuticals, please go to:

[www.AdvancedBionutritionals.com](http://www.AdvancedBionutritionals.com)

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24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

nails are starting to weaken, do yourself a favor and try this combination. Take five capsules a day. If it's going to work for you, you will see the hair loss completely stop within four to eight weeks. Once it has stopped, you can then reduce the dose to what is needed to keep it healthy and strong. That often amounts to only one to two capsules a day. To order Healthy Hair & Nails, call 800-791-3395 and give them special order code SOC317.

#### REFS:

Gehring, W., Gloor, M. Using phototrichogram analysis to evaluate preparations for hair growth stimulation in the example of a combination of sorghum extract, L-Cysteine, and calcium pantothenate. *Magazine for Skin Diseases* 2000; 75(7/8):419-423

Patel DP, Swink SM, et al. A Review of the Use of Biotin for Hair Loss. *Skin Appendage Disord.* 2017 Aug;3(3):166-169.

## **Relieve Prostatitis Symptoms Almost Immediately**

It's no secret that prostate-related symptoms are something that most men are going to have to deal with if they live long enough. The stats suggest that if you're 70 years old, you have a greater than 70% chance of having prostate symptoms. Once you hit the 80-year-old mark, your odds go up another 10%. But older guys aren't the only ones plagued by prostate problems. Studies show that between 10-20% of men aged 20-40 years have prostatitis. In fact, prostatitis is the most common reason young men go to the urologist. If you're any one of these guys and have prostate symptoms of any kind, I have some good news for you.

Most of the time symptoms from a swollen prostate can be easily prevented and treated with a specific combination of herbs. I have written about this before, and you can find those reports in the archives. But some men, particularly the younger group, don't adequately respond to these treatments. Recently, at the last meeting of The American Academy of Ozonotherapy (AAO) in Las Vegas, Dr. Cassie Tacheny, MD reported on a new procedure that she has developed using ozone therapy that might be just the thing for these difficult cases. But why ozone therapy?

As Dr. Tacheny explained, there's no clear cause for prostate symptoms. Some studies have indicated that bacterial and viral infections are to blame. These studies have shown that the infections lead to an over-production of pro-inflammatory cytokines by prostate stromal cells. Everyone knows that as men get older and their

prostates start to act up, their PSA levels usually go up as well. But why?

It's because PSA activates certain immune cells called CD4+ T cells. When CD4+ T cells are activated by PSA, they markedly increase the secretion of pro-inflammatory cytokines. So why am I telling you all this? It's because if that's the case, ozone is the perfect prescription. Ozone can not only eradicate even the most complex infections, it also decreases the effect of pro-inflammatory cytokines.

There are other theories about what causes prostate symptoms. But guess what – no one knows which one of these theories is correct. And who cares? Maybe they are all correct in different cases. At any rate, no matter what the cause is, ozone the perfect remedy. So, armed with this thinking, Dr. Tacheny developed a very special ozone treatment for men whose prostate symptoms just were not responding to anything. Here's what she did.

She reported on four men with recalcitrant prostate symptoms. And she evaluated them using the International Prostate Symptom Score (IPSS). This is a prostate symptom questionnaire developed by the American Urological Association. There are seven questions about the severity of the symptoms, and an eighth question about quality of life. Men with mild symptoms score between 1-7. Men with moderate symptoms score between 8-19. And men with severe symptoms score greater than 20.

The first case was a 64-year-old man whose major complaint was that for the past four years after he urinated, he kept on dribbling urine for four to five minutes. He also complained of having to urinate more frequently. Before Dr. Tacheny's treatment, his IPSS was 19, almost in the severe category. After several treatments, his score reduced to 9.

The next case was a 54-year-old man whose wife was complaining that for the past eight years he was taking more and more time in the bathroom. He had to admit to her that the only way he could effectively get the urine out was to push on his bladder. It just would not come out easily. His IPSS before treatment was 8. And that came down to an almost perfect score of 2. After the first treatment he said, "I'm not having to push to get it out in the morning. Once it's empty, it's basically done. I'd push a few times, but not anymore."

Case three was an 80-year-old man whose main problem was an inability to fully empty his bladder. This caused him to have to get up one to two times per night and to have to urinate at least eight times a day. His

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ing at the effects of just one vitamin on all of these disorders.

The study looked at 452 children and teenagers. Of these, 304 were overweight/obese, and 148 had a normal weight. The researchers started by measuring their vitamin D levels and compared the levels to their blood pressures, abdominal obesity, cholesterol levels, blood sugar and insulin levels. Here's what they found.

Not surprisingly, the higher the vitamin D levels were, the lower the chances of the kids having metabolic syndrome, high blood pressure, abdominal obesity, abnormal cholesterol levels, and insulin resistance. Specifically, the kids with the levels less than 17 ng/ml were 72% more likely to have high blood pressure and 230% more likely to have metabolic syndrome compared to kids with levels greater than 27 ng/ml.

To a large extent, vitamin D is made in the body in response to sunlight. So, if your child or grandchild is low in vitamin D, it may be because he is not getting outside enough. The other problem may be the overuse of sunscreens, which shield out the ultraviolet rays that stimulate vitamin D production. And, of course, eating the right foods is important. Foods especially high in vitamin D include fish, egg yolk, meat, butter, and milk.

REF: Pacifico L, Anania C, et al. Low 25(OH)D3 levels are associated with total adiposity, metabolic syndrome, and hypertension in Caucasian children and adolescents. *Eur J Endocrinol.* 2011 Oct;165(4):603-11.

### **Depressing Fact: Taking Antidepressants Is Deadly**

Here's something that's really depressing. The antidepressant medications that doctors so commonly prescribe to reduce depression and anxiety increase their patients' overall risk of death. This is according to new findings by a team of researchers from McMaster University.

The researchers reviewed studies involving hundreds of thousands of people

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and found that antidepressant users had a 33% higher chance of death than non-users. Antidepressant users also had a 14% higher risk of cardiovascular events, such as strokes and heart attacks.

According to the lead author of the study Paul Andrews, "We are very concerned by these results. They suggest that we shouldn't be taking antidepressant drugs without understanding precisely how they interact with the body."

Antidepressant drugs are probably the most over-prescribed unnecessary drugs in America. An unbelievable one in eight adult Americans is taking these drugs. Many times, they are prescribed by family doctors without a formal diagnosis of depression on the assumption they are safe. But, as this study shows, they are not safe. According to co-author Marta Maslej, "Our findings are important because they undermine this assumption. I think people would be much less willing to take these drugs if they were aware how little is known about their impact outside of the brain, and that what we do know points to an increased risk of death."

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initial IPSS was 21. After four treatments, it went all the way down to 5.

The fourth case was that of a young man – 21 years old. He had contracted a sexually transmitted infection of his prostate called Chlamydia when he was 16. He complained of chronic pain in the prostate. He was on narcotics and unable to work. He said he "feels like there's a baseball in there pushing against every nerve that it can." After the first treatment, he had less pain for three days, but then it started to come back. His IPSS went from 31 to 26, still in the severe area, but greatly improved.

So, what is this treatment that Dr. Tacheny has pioneered? It is an injection of ozone around the prostate. According to the doctor, "I typically do injections once per week. Usually after the third injection, I will see a decrease in the IPSS by half. I don't have any data as to whether it's a complete fix. The 12 different men I've treated tend to come back periodically." The injections are done once a week. The process is easy and can be done in any office in about five minutes. Dr. Tacheny has not seen any side effects. In addition, she made this observation, "I have had 25% of the men tell me that they noticed stronger erections after being treated with this ozone treatment."

Any doctor who uses ozone therapy in his/her practice, and who attended the last AAO meeting will be able to do the injection. You can find doctors who have been trained in ozone therapy at the AAO website ([www.aaot.us](http://www.aaot.us)). Just call their clinics and verify if they attended the last AAO congress, and know about Dr. Tacheny's protocol. I think that while an herbal and nutritional approach will solve most prostate problems, Dr. Tacheny has discovered a treatment that offers hope for all those men like these cases who have prostate symptoms that just will not respond to anything else.

## ***Why You May Have Diabetes and Not Know It***

The test that doctors typically rely on to diagnose type-2 diabetes is the A1c test. But is it accurate in everybody? New data is showing that in certain African populations, it can miss the diagnosis. And that means that up to 2% of all African Americans, 650,000 men and women, may have type-2 diabetes and still have a normal A1c test.

Just recently, an international team of more than 200 scientists reported on their studies of genetic variants in 160,000 people who were not known to have

type-2 diabetes. What they discovered is very important for the diagnosis of type-2 diabetes. They found 60 different genetic variants that affect the results of the A1c test. One genetic variant in particular, in the G6PD gene, significantly affects the results of the A1c test. This particular variant is almost exclusively found in people of African descent. At least one copy of the variant is found in about 11% of African Americans. How does it work?

The A1c test measures the amount of glucose (sugar) that's carried by the red blood cells in the body. Therefore, the high blood sugar levels that are typical of diabetes cause higher levels of A1c. Any level of A1c over 6% is considered positive for diabetes. But here's the problem.

The A1c test is based on the fact that red blood cells in most people have a three-month life span. But the research shows that in some people, this is not true. According to Dr. Eleanor Wheeler, one of the authors of the study, "The G6PD genetic variant shortens the three-month lifecycle of red blood cells. So, in African Americans who have this variant, their red blood cells don't live long enough to bind to the glucose in the blood. Therefore, these people will have a lower level of A1c, which won't show as a positive result for type-2 diabetes." Dr. Inês Barroso, a co-author in the study, went on to say, "We estimate that if we tested all Americans for diabetes using the A1c test, we would miss type-2 diabetes in around 650,000 African Americans."

So, if you are an African American and your A1c level is over 5.5%, even though it's below the 6% upper limit of normal, ask your doctor to check you for a G6PD genetic variant. If you have the variant, you should follow the instructions in my book *The Type-2 Diabetes Breakthrough*, and bring your A1c below 5.5%.

REF: Wheeler E, Leong A, et al. Impact of common genetic determinants of Hemoglobin A1c on type2 diabetes risk and diagnosis in ancestrally diverse populations: A transethnic genome-wide meta-analysis. *PLoS Med.* 2017 Sep 12;14(9):e1002383.

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- American Academy of Ozonotherapy — <http://www.aoot.us>
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Antidepressant drugs work by changing the chemistry and function of nerve cells. But nerve cells are not the only cells they affect. They also influence the function of every other cell in the body, including heart cells, immune cells, liver cells, etc. And just like the ad that reminds us that it's not wise to upset Mother Nature, abnormally altering the function of our cells is likely to cause a problem. The authors of the study point this basic principle out when they state that, "Antidepressant drugs disrupt multiple adaptive processes regulated by evolutionarily ancient biochemicals, potentially increasing mortality."

Of course, antidepressant drugs are not the only drugs that can have serious adverse effects. Another class of drugs that is being over-prescribed is the statins. Although people taking statin drugs die less from cardiovascular disease, their overall death rate is increased. And I maintain that dead is dead no matter what you die of.

Why would I say that these drugs are over prescribed? It's because there are so many drug free, effective, safe, and natural ways to treat depression and cardiovascular disease. In fact, in most cases, these drugs and their side effects are not needed. I talk about this every month in this newsletter. So, if you have been prescribed a long-term drug to take, do yourself a favor. Make sure to consult with a Naturopathic doctor or a medical doctor trained in natural therapies and get another opinion. As this study shows, it could save your life. Remember that the third leading cause of death in the United States is the drugs that doctors prescribe.

Maslej MM, Bolker BM, et al. The Mortality and Myocardial Effects of Antidepressants Are Moderated by Preexisting Cardiovascular Disease: A Meta-Analysis. *Psychother Psychosom.* 2017 Sep 14;86(5):268-282.

<https://medicalxpress.com/news/2017-09-antidepressants-significantly-elevated-death.html>.