



Good Health Corner..

“Happiness lies, first of all, in health”

George William Curtis



Hi, and welcome to Luci's Good Health Corner. Here I'll regularly set out health facts that have caught my attention and helped me to improve my own well being and the health of my family. Enjoy... I hope you get something out of them,

Keep well, Luci.

Amazing Aloe Vera... soothes and heals.

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The ancient Egyptians discovered the healing power of the aloe plant's thick gel in the tropical jungles of Africa. They named it the plant of "immortality". This knowledge was passed onto the Greeks and Romans who used the gel to help heal sores and wounds.

Its properties derive from the fact that the aloe vera gel is rich in enzymes, vitamins, amino acids, proteins, steroids and minerals.

Recent research has shown that the gel extracted from Aloe barbadensis Miller has many properties. Aloe Vera gel...

Overuse of Antacids.

... may cause problems

if taken too regularly.

Antacids usually contain calcium, aluminium and magnesium. A **high intake of calcium** may increase the incidence of **kidney stones**.

High doses of aluminium may cause **brittle bones** and may be linked to **Alzheimer's disease**.

Too much magnesium may induce diarrhoea and complicate kidney disease.

Taken close to meal time, antacids can neutralize stomach acid so much that food isn't digested adequately.

So don't overdose on antacids!

Seek medical advice instead.

- Is anti-inflammatory
- Cleanses infected wounds
- Has antibacterial properties
- Inhibits scarring
- Is a coagulant
- Soothes and alleviates pain
- Is an astringent
- Helps irritable bowel and digestive problems
- Soothes burns and bites
- Is effective with skin problems from dandruff, acne, eczema to fungal infections.

Deep Vein Thrombosis may affect up to **one out of every 100** long distance plane travellers. That means up to 5 passengers on a jumbo aircraft may suffer blood clots.

Taking **aspirin** several days before flying may help prevent DVT (check with your doctor), as will special elastic stockings (from your chemist), avoiding alcohol, drinking plenty of water, and in-flight exercises during the voyage.





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Antibiotics *won't* help a **common cold ... common sense will.**

The common cold, flu, most sore throats and coughs are caused by viruses. **Antibiotics help fight bacterial infections but are ineffective against viruses... most viruses are attacked and eventually overcome by our body's immune system.**

Antibiotics... *won't* stop a cold from getting worse...*may* not be as effective when you really need them later if they've been taken unnecessarily too often... *won't* stop the infection from spreading to others...*may* cause side effects like thrush, diarrhoea and stomach upsets. Your doctor will know when antibiotics are necessary (and if secondary infection is present).

Ways to fight a cold... • Help your body fight the virus...**REST UP.**

Sex, Snoring & sleep

The British Snoring & Sleep Association found that **up to 70% of snoring couples sleep in separate rooms** leading to a **substantial reduction in love making.**

Meanwhile, a Birmingham study of 10,000 people found that **men often fell asleep within an average of three to four minutes after having sex.**

This is attributed to the muscles becoming depleted of glycogen (which produces energy) during the passionate exercise.

*Nothing personal ladies!....
The poor guys are just plain
tuckered out!*

• Drink plenty of fluids like water or juice.
• Paracetamol, ibuprofen (or aspirin for adults) may help relieve aches & pains & reduce fever.

• Nasal decongestants & throat lozenges may help.

If you are allergic to any of these medications, or suffer stomach ulcers, blood pressure or kidney disease... **check with your doctor first.**

• Vitamin C may help shorten a cold's duration.

• Practice good hygiene to stop it spreading.

• Use disposable paper tissues to blow your nose.

• Don't share cups, cutlery and glasses.

• Wash hands before preparing & eating food.

An **UNHEALTHY** partnership.

Over 80% of alcoholics smoke, and smokers are 10 times more likely to become alcoholics. Why do alcohol and cigarettes seem to go together so often? Scientists have found that **alcohol appears boost the pleasurable effects of nicotine considerably.** This link between alcohol and smoking makes it that much **harder** for people **trying to kick the habit.**





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Foods & Medicines that DON'T MIX!

- **Grapefruit juice** interacts with calcium blockers including **certain cholesterol lowering medications, oral contraceptives, estrogen, and some allergy medications and psychiatric drugs** by modifying the liver's ability to metabolise the drug.
- **Orange juice & milk** can **reduce the effectiveness of antibiotics**. Orange juice shouldn't be taken with antacids as its acidity increases the absorption of aluminum.
- Large amounts of green-leaf vegetables like **broccoli, brussel sprouts, spinach** as well as **liver & cranberry** can **counteract blood thinners** such as **warfarin and heparin**.
- **Aged cheeses (e.g. brie, Roquefort), sauerkraut, red wine, fava beans, & over ripe avocado** can send the **blood pressure soaring** in people on **MAO antidepressants**.

The good oil on **Olive oil**.

The **Mediterranean diet, rich in olive oil**, has long been held to be healthy. The Italians and their Roman ancestors first discovered the goodness of oil made from the first pressing of olives.

Research now confirms that **extra virgin olive oil (high in mono-unsaturated fats & antioxidants)** might **decrease Colon cancer** (the third most common). It can also prevent inflammation thanks to the main compound in the oil ...**oleocanthal**... which has properties similar to the pain killer **ibuprofen**.

Little wonder that olive oils outsell other cooking oils.

- **Black licorice** can cause irregular heart rhythms in people taking Digoxin (heart medication) and may interfere with fluid & blood pressure drugs.
- **Charbroiled meats/foods** produce chemicals that appear to interfere with some asthma medications increasing chances of an asthma attack.
- **Meat, fish, legumes and foods high in Vitamin C** reduce absorption of **Tricyclic antidepressants**.
- Large amounts of **oatmeal & high-fiber cereals** may interfere with the absorption of Digoxin.

If in doubt... always consult your physician!

Sweat it out *or* REST IN BED?

Over exertion while sick can do you more harm than good! Your immune system works better when not stressed so trying to “sweat it out” may slow down recovery. **Certain cough & cold medications can raise heart rate and blood pressure increasing the risk of irregular heart beat.** So rather than say “if it doesn't kill you it only makes you stronger” ...play smart...**stay in bed!**





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The GOOD OIL *on* Fish Oil.

In the 1970's scientists studying the Eskimos of Greenland were amazed to discover they were far healthier than Europeans. Despite a diet very high in fat from eating seal, whale & fish, Eskimos suffered far less coronary heart disease, diabetes, rheumatoid arthritis, breast cancer, psoriasis & depression.... thanks largely to their high intake of *Omega-3 fatty acids*.

Omega-3 fatty acids are essential for good health and are found primarily in oily cold-water fish like salmon, tuna, herring & mackerel and to a lesser extent in flaxseed & walnut oils & seaweed. Surprisingly, wild game meats like venison & buffalo are also rich in omega-3s. U.S. studies have shown that up to 85% of adults are deficient in dietary omega-3 fatty acids (which the body doesn't produce).

Allergic to your TOILETRIES ?

Multiple Chemical Sensitivity (MCS) is becoming much more prevalent in today's world. Chemicals released from perfume, makeup, shampoos, deodorants & air fresheners are known to affect the immune systems of many people of all age groups.

Symptoms range from skin rash, wheezing, breathing difficulties, headaches, and memory loss.

Use roll-ons instead of sprays to minimise chemical spread, try fragrance free shampoos & conditioners, and perfume that's dermatologically tested.

•Fish oil seems to increase serotonin levels resulting in fewer mood & anxiety problems among Eskimos even though they live through harsh winters with only an hour or two of sunlight.

•Omega-3 fatty acids decrease LDL or “bad” cholesterol thus minimising the risk of heart and vessel disease, and also act as a natural blood thinner to ward off stroke.

•Anti inflammatory properties aid against arthritis.

‡ The American Heart Association recommends that people eat oily fish at least twice a week...like salmon, tuna, mackerel, herring, sardines & pilchards. Otherwise, take fish oil capsules for that added protection.

When SIZE really does matter.

The *Journal of Clinical Oncology* found that with prostate cancer the size of the gland may be important. Duke University researchers believe cancers in smaller prostates are at greater risk of biochemical progression... and that men with small prostates need to be monitored more closely regardless of what treatment they're receiving for their cancer.





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MIND games... use it (your BRAIN) or lose it!

Until recently it was believed that brain cells were the only body cells to die and never regenerate. However, researchers now believe that nascent stem cells in adult brains can grow into new brain cells.

It is thought that each time we solve a problem, the brain gets a workout, be it in the area of decision making, maintaining our attention span, or helping us to enhance our memory. Problem solving might very well help protect against or slow down the ravages of *Alzheimer's disease*. Other ways of helping our brain stay as active as possible include:

1. Don't smoke...smokers are twice as likely to develop *Alzheimer's*. **2. Avoid excessive alcohol**... heavy drinkers can suffer permanent brain damage, memory loss & dementia.

Infant Cot Death.

Recent research in the U.S. points to a 90% reduction in the risk of cot death when pacifiers (or "dummies") are used by infants.

It is thought that sucking a pacifier may stop babies from sleeping too deeply so they're more likely to wake up if they're too hot & overheating, or having trouble breathing.

Making sure the child is put to sleep on its back, and not on overly soft bedding also seems to greatly lower the risk of cot death.

Infants shouldn't be allowed to share the bed of a parent who has been drinking, smoking or had medication that induces drowsiness

3. Eat colourful plants which are rich in **anti-oxidants**... lots of spinach, blueberries & other berries, prunes, and raisins. **Vitamin E is also a powerful anti-oxidant** and helps fight harmful free radicals.

4. Fish is brain food ... cold-water fish (salmon, tuna, mackerel, & herring are high in Omega-3 fatty acids which are essential in the brain's membranes. **5. Minimize stress** ... chronic stress releases hormones that can interfere with brain function. **6. Get plenty of sleep**... while you're asleep the brain processes new memories, problem solves, practises new skills & experiences creative insights...sleep deprivation only hinders your brain. **7. Exercise your body**...it increases blood flow & oxygen to the brain. **8. Exercise your mind!**

Mosquito repellent a problem?

Using a mosquito repellent with a high concentration of Deet (NN-diethyl-m-toluamide) may cause problems if used with some sun blockers. Sunscreens containing oxybenzone increase the absorption of Deet and may increase the risk of high blood pressure. Higher Deet concentrations have also been linked to dermatitis with long term use, and should not be used on babies. Unfortunately, natural repellents are nowhere near as effective as synthetic based ones (*Choice*).





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In search of **pearly, White TEETH.**

The desire to have that Hollywood smile has more people than ever scrubbing and bleaching their teeth, some to the point of addiction. The pursuit of a gleaming smile has turned some people into “bleachorexics” or “whitening junkies” as they take their obsession to extremes in search of teeth that almost glow in the dark.

A recent survey showed over 90% of respondents thought white teeth were a sign of good health and essential for an attractive appearance, and that yellow teeth were associated with ageing.

Since tooth whiteners contain hydrogen peroxide (as is used to bleach hair), dentists warn that their overuse or abuse can cause major problems. Some of which include;

CALCIUM pills...

Do they work?

Recent studies have cast doubt on how effective CALCIUM supplements alone are in reducing osteoporosis.

A study of 36,000 post-menopausal women found only a 1% improvement in hip-bone density, although there were 29% fewer hip fractures among long-time users.

Unfortunately, it was also discovered that taking extra CALCIUM also led to a 17% greater risk of developing kidney stones.

Weight-bearing exercises are also believed to be very beneficial in fighting osteoporosis.

- Using abrasive, whitening toothpastes (which don't whiten much anyway) more than twice a day can cause enamel loss.

- Over bleaching can make teeth opaque & less translucent, & may cause sensitivity.

- Overuse of peroxide can make gums recede & teeth brittle.

- Bleaching chemicals produce free radicals that may damage the nerves (the pulp) in teeth.

-Some “bleachorexics” become psychologically dependant on “life transforming” tooth whitening.

Ask your dentist for the best advice!

Marijuana linked to bladder cancer.

“Urology” journal reports that marijuana smoking seems to have a greater cancer causing effect in the bladder than cigarettes. It found that 40% of men suffering bladder cancer had smoked “joints” extensively versus 15% of the control group. It is thought marijuana is more carcinogenic than tobacco, is smoked without a filter, is held in the lungs longer, & increases urinary retention keeping metabolites in the bladder longer.





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Being **SHORT-SIGHTED** *may not be so bad after all....*

Recent studies have shown a correlation between myopia (short-sightedness) and higher intelligence. One professor of ophthalmology believes that short-sighted people are not so disadvantaged in today's world because so many of us are confined within four walls or in front of computer screens. In fact, there is a theory that evolution didn't cause myopic primitive man to disappear of the face of the earth for the same reason.

It's been suggested that while primitive males with good vision were scouring the plains looking for prey to kill, their short-sighted counter parts were assigned jobs back in the village like making spear heads, inventing writing, and whittling trade goods. Here's the killer...this also meant the myopes got to spend more time around the women in the village!

OBESE Kids...

are more likely to have **JOINT PROBLEMS & BROKEN BONES** than kids of regular weight.

Researchers presented evidence to the Obesity Society of Vancouver, British Columbia that heavier children put their weight-bearing joints under much more stress. Also, their bones were not as strong and healthy as leaner, more energetic & mobile children.

It seems a vicious cycle comes into play...as joints & bones fail to develop strength, kids tend to become less mobile & exercise less, soon putting on more weight.

This meant they had more opportunity to propagate their genes (they were back in the village making love, not war)... hence we still have one third of today's population that are short-sighted.

Professor Minas Coroneo (University of NSW) also has some concerns about the latest rush to refractive laser surgery to correct short-sightedness (e.g. LASIK). He acknowledges the short-term benefit, but worries the long-term effect may be to weaken the eye wall.

He asks “If you have refractive laser surgery at 20 years of age, can you be sure your eyes will hold out until you are 70?” But then again...what's that saying about “**women don't make passes at men who wear glasses?**”

Why HIGH-FAT foods taste SO GOOD!

French scientists have discovered a fat receptor (CD36) on the tongues of some mice that makes high-fat foods enjoyable and even addictive. This fat receptor is in addition to the classic basic 5 taste sensations of salty, sweet, sour, bitter & unami).

One day drug companies may have a pill that blocks the action of this fat taste receptor.





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Having a **BAD AIR** day?

The air inside your home may be up to twenty times more polluted than outside! World Health Organisation research has found that pollutants in the house are 1,000 times more likely to enter our lungs than pollutants outdoors...and most of us spend around 90% of our time inside.

It's been said that if the air was taken from a typical house in winter that used gas cooking & heating, and expanded it out to the air outside, you wouldn't be able to see even one kilometre! Health experts are convinced these invisible indoor pollutants are contributing to what is a multi-billion dollar health crisis. New homes & new materials are often the worst offenders in introducing a large load of chemicals. A few examples of these pollutants are:

YOUR phone may be Bugged!

British hospitals are considering banning mobile phones from hospitals after a study revealed many carried dangerous bacteria which could contribute to hospital infections among sick patients.

Swabs of doctor's & nurse's phones showed most were contaminated with bacteria, & 15% were inhabited by potentially deadly microbes such as the antibiotic-resistant MRSA (methicillin resistant staphylococcus aureus... or "golden staph").

• Vinyl & timber floors • floor varnishes • new cabinets • soft furnishings • paints • carpets ... most of which release a dangerous cocktail of Volatile Organic Compounds. Another problem area is the Brominated fire retardants found in most electrical equipment such as T.V.s & computers. These fire retardant chemicals have been found in dust samples & in the breast milk of mothers, and are linked to cancer, thyroid & reproductive damage. Sometimes, less toxic alternatives can be found by carefully shopping around. Otherwise...

Leafy indoor plants can help remove the harmful Volatile Organic Compounds.

TURN off the IDIOT BOX.

U.S. "Neurology" journal reports that cognitive impairment of the brain can be prevented by exercising the mind with crosswords, reading, writing, board games, group discussions & listening to music.

However, it was also shown that too much time spent as a "couch potato" watching television was associated with a 20% increased risk of developing impairment.





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Shopaholics *are* Driving Themselves **CRAZY!**

Recent scientific studies have found that some of today's shoppers are being swamped and overwhelmed by the huge range of various products found in large stores and super marts. Some shoppers, especially older ones, are so overwhelmed by all the comparisons they have to make in arriving at a buying decision that one third of them said they avoid the larger stores. Others admitted to often having left a store without making a purchase solely because the choice offered in mega stores was overwhelming and confusing.

A spokesperson for department stores Marks & Spencer confirmed that store sales had actually improved because they had reduced excessive choice, saying "if you keep adding to the range without managing it...it is a recipe for disaster."

SHYNESS... or **SOCIALPHOBIA** ?

Shyness is a common, often endearing, quality especially in young children. As youngsters grow up they usually become more self-confident & grow out of it.

However, an extreme form of shyness (i.e. *social phobia*) can develop in some people. Signs of this are; fear of being scrutinized in public; fear of being humiliated/ embarrassed in front of others; public speaking; meeting strangers.

Treatment may involve a combination of counselling (*cognitive therapy*), & drug (*anti-depressant*) therapy.

Computer **SCRIPT** errors.

When computer print outs and electronic prescribing replaced doctor's indecipherable hand writing scrawl, it was expected that fewer mistakes would result when it came to the dispensing of medications.

However, signs are now emerging that a whole new set of mistakes are occurring instead. It seems that doctors and hospitals now are experiencing problems where;
#Drug menus are clicked but the printouts not checked.
#Emails aren't seen properly due to wrong screen size.
#Not closing patient files/applying contents to other files.

TURNING off **BAD** genes.

More & more genes that cause disease are being discovered. Now the challenge is to find a way of neutralizing them. In animal studies, scientists have found a way to do this using "RNA Interference". It is hoped that, within the next decade, this may be used to fight viral diseases, some cancers, and certain illnesses like macular degeneration and high cholesterol.





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Acupuncture ... All in the HEAD?

Scientific studies were recently carried out in Germany to assess how effective acupuncture was in the treatment of Tension Headaches. One group of patients was treated with orthodox acupuncture, another group was treated with “sham” or “pretend” acupuncture (where needles were applied superficially to non-acupuncture points), while a third received no treatment at all.

The study found that both orthodox and “pretend” acupuncture helped reduce Tension Headaches quite markedly! Researchers concluded that this may mean that acupuncture may work mainly through a “placebo” effect (i.e. mentally rather than through any physical pathway). Patients probably don't care whether the effect is real or placebo.

Cruciferous vegetables?

This family includes broccoli, brussel sprouts and cauliflower. They contain mustard flavoured compounds which can smell unpleasant if cooked too long...that's why some people don't like them.

“I don't like broccoli...and haven't since I was a little kid & my mother made me eat it. And I'm President of the United States and I'm not going to eat anymore broccoli!”

George W. Bush, 1990.

Really though... they are high in fibre, vitamins A & C, as well as calcium, potassium & folate...they're good for you.

Cell Phones and mental GAMES.

Some people have reported getting headaches, tingling, dizziness, burning and fatigue which they associate with prolonged use of a cell phone.

This has resulted in a number of studies being carried out in an effort to identify whether or not there really *is* a risk involved. In one such recent study in the UK researchers tested a group who had complained of some of these symptoms against a group that hadn't, exposing both to various stimuli. They concluded the problems were “probably all in the mind”.

YOUR work Killing YOU?

Psychologists in Helsinki, Finland studying work-related stress concluded that the jobs most dangerous to employees health were those where • high demands were imposed • worker-feedback was ignored • rigid, inflexible practices existed • employees felt unappreciated... much more so than in jobs where there were physical (noise, heat or chemical) stressors.





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Living ALONE is tough on the HEART.

A Danish study of 140,000 people aged from 30 to 60 found that those living alone were twice as likely to have a heart disturbance as those living with a partner.

The risk went up dramatically for men over 50, while in women it didn't go up until over 60. Researchers concluded that people living alone were more likely to smoke, be obese, and have unhealthy diets & high cholesterol. They were also less likely to have had regular contact with a family doctor and found it harder to seek out help in an emergency.

Deaths were also one third higher in winter and peaked in the Northern hemisphere in December in what was called the “Merry Christmas Coronary” ...a phenomenon blamed on excessive drinking & eating, and the increased emotional stress of families & holidays.

“Light” smokers don't GIVE UP easily...

The American Journal of Public Health found that smokers of “light” cigarettes were 54% less likely to kick the habit than those smoking full strength brands.

This goes against the theory that changing to low-nicotine/low-tar cigarettes might make it easier for heavy smokers to give up. Making the switch to “lights” also doesn't reduce the health risks much either, if at all.

HITTING THE BOTTLE early...

45,000 Americans participated in a study that revealed that drinking early in life was linked to a higher lifetime risk of alcoholism.

It found that teens who started drinking at an early age were much more at risk of developing alcohol dependence more quickly, and were also at greater risk of suffering multiple episodes of alcoholism throughout their lives.

Archives of Pediatrics & Adolescent Medicine.

Deep Vein Thrombosis may affect up to one out of every 100 long distance plane travellers. That means up to 5 passengers on a jumbo aircraft may suffer blood clots.

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Overuse of **Antacids.**

... may cause problems if taken too regularly.

Antacids usually contain calcium, aluminium and magnesium. A **high intake of calcium** may increase the incidence of **kidney stones.**

High doses of aluminium may cause **brittle bones** and may be linked to **Alzheimer's disease.**

Too much magnesium may induce diarrhoea and complicate kidney disease.

Taken close to meal time, antacids can neutralize stomach acid so much that food isn't digested adequately.

So don't overdose on antacids!
Seek medical advice instead.

Steroid **ABUSE**... **the**

RISKS ARE HUGE!

More & more people are turning to drugs in their quest to look good and stay young.

Just as elite athletes have turned away from steroids in favour of more effective & less easily detected performance-enhancers, a growing band of ordinary people is upping their use. **Tempted by the lure of burning fat and increasing muscle mass more rapidly, many gym junkies are swallowing or injecting steroids, and ignoring the many side effects that often occur, such as:**

***Palpitations & sweating *Water retention *Sleeplessness
*High blood pressure *Deeper voice *Increased body hair
*Acne *Headaches *Smaller testicles in men *Ligament & tendon injuries *Aggressive behaviour (paranoia & fits of anger) *Increased appetite *Smaller breasts & irregular periods in women. A heavy price to pay for that newly acquired sexual confidence and improved body image.**

