

Dr. Joseph Mercola on SIMPLE STEPS TO WELL-BEING

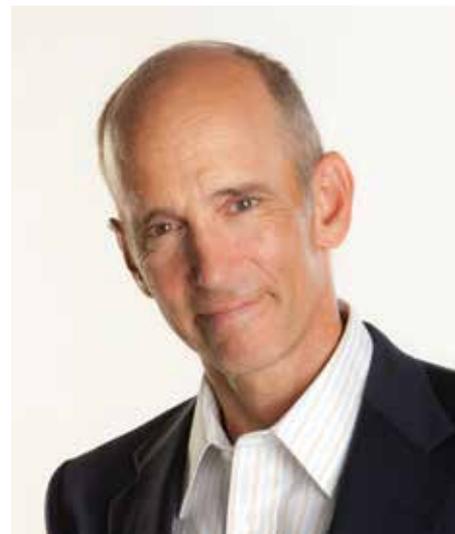
by Judith Fertig

Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine Joseph Mercola has practiced as a board-certified family physician for more than 30 years. His educational website, *Mercola.com*, has been the most visited natural health site for the past 12 years, with 12 million unique visitors each month. His three *New York Times* bestsellers include *Effortless Healing*.

With today's overload of conflicting health information—and the temptation to self-diagnose—how can we accurately assess our status in terms of optimal wellness?

One of the major principles I strongly embrace is to listen to your body and

adjust your lifestyle based on the feedback it's providing you. The seven clinically proven gauges I advise you to assess now and continue to monitor every six months or so are fasting insulin level (normal is less than five micro-international units per milliliter of blood; ideal is less than three); vitamin D level (normal is 40 to 60 nanograms per milliliter); waist-to-hip ratio (ideal for men, 0.8; for women, 0.7); body fat percentage (fitness level for women is 21 to 24 percent; for men, 14 to 17 percent); HDL to total cholesterol ratio (ideally 24 to 30 percent or higher); blood pressure (ideal numbers are 120 over 80 systolic/diastolic without medication); and uric acid level (ideal is three to five milligrams per deciliter).



It is important to get these levels checked, because it is impossible to know without testing.

In your opinion, what is the greatest health risk Americans face today and what can we do about it right now?

I'm convinced that for the typical American, the most important health step to take is to stop drinking soda, sports drinks, fruit juices or artificially flavored and sweetened waters and replace them with pure water.

Most people are now aware that sodas are laced with processed sugars like high-fructose corn syrup and artificial sweeteners, but many don't know that their favorite sport and vitamin drinks contain these sweeteners plus a host of frightening extras, including toxic chemicals like chlorine, fluoride, phthalates, BPA [bisphenol A] and disinfection byproducts.

What role do carbohydrates play?

Carbs are a far dirtier fuel than fat and generate far more reactive oxygen species than fat. Some 70 years of following low-fat diet recommendations has resulted in the vast majority of dieters losing the ability to burn fat as their primary fuel.

One of the most powerful strategies to regain this ability is to start a practice of regular intermittent fasting, restricting your eating window to six

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Of course, you will want to replace a high net carb intake, or total carbs minus fiber, with healthy fats such as those in avocados, coconut oil, seeds and nuts. Avoid industrially processed omega-6 vegetable oils like corn, soy and canola.

Because an indoor, climate-controlled, sedentary lifestyle may lead to slowly developing chronic disease, what changes do you suggest we make?

Spending time outside with bare feet in contact with the ground even for short periods can yield significant benefits. It's even better to do it with the sun shining on your bare skin.

The Earth is an abundant source of free electrons, and when the sun shines on your skin a vital biological

circuit forms that helps transfer energy to water throughout the body, which serves as a cellular battery. Albert Einstein won a Nobel Prize for describing this process, called the photoelectric effect.

Reducing the length of time sitting each day and regularly moving is even more important for most of us than getting regular exercise. A good rule of thumb is to stand up every 15 minutes or so.

What can we do better to maintain optimal health?

Two-thirds of Americans are overweight. The problems with carrying excess weight are more than aesthetic. At the root of obesity is mitochondrial metabolic dysfunction. Metabolic disorders go hand-in-hand with many of the chronic diseases plaguing Americans in record numbers—including

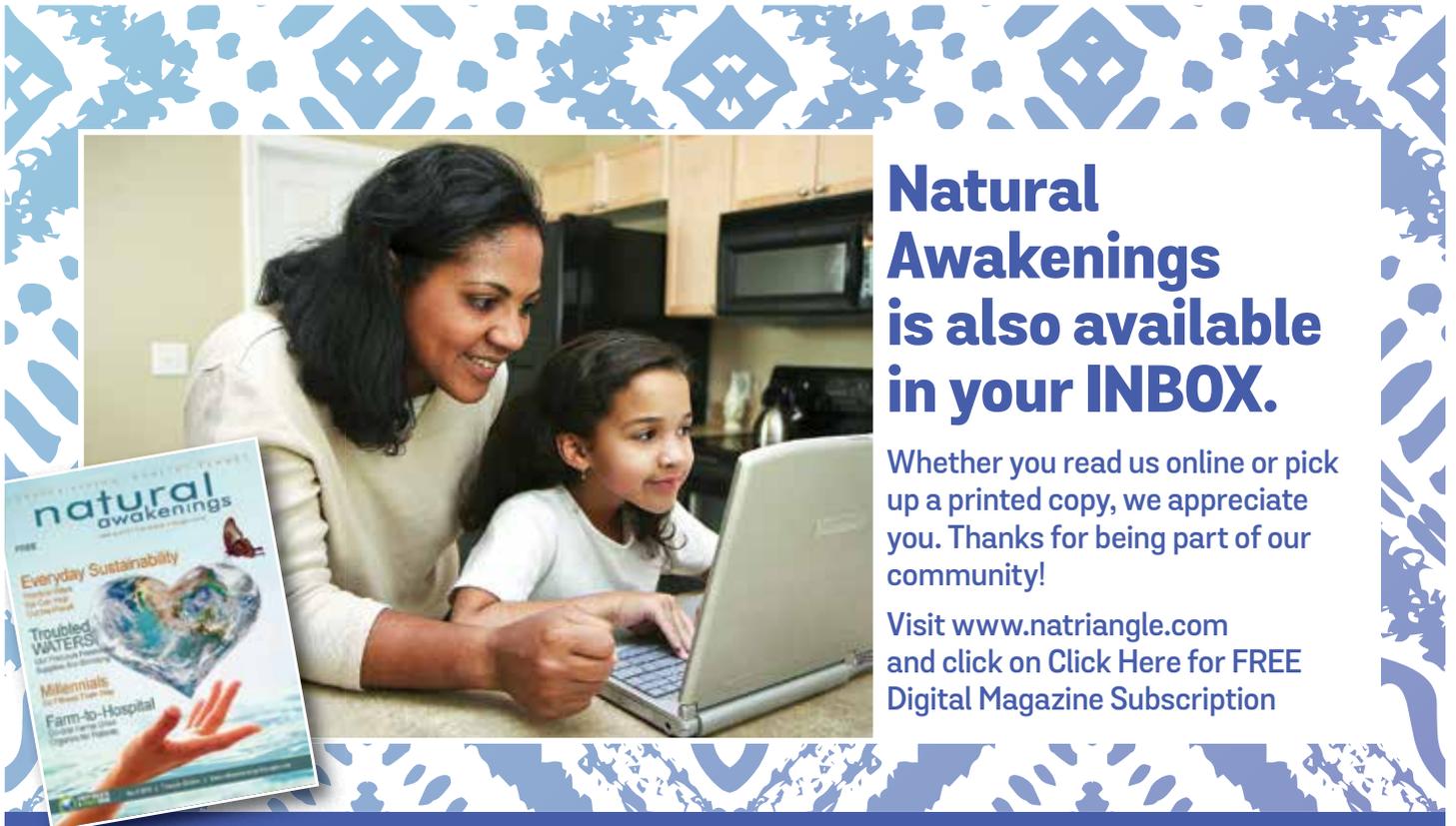
diabetes, heart disease, high blood pressure, dementia and cancer—according to numerous studies such as research by the Centers for Disease Control and the Center for the Study of Chronic Metabolic and Rare Diseases, at George Mason University.

The most potent strategy to address such metabolic dysfunction is to make a strong commitment to reaching and maintaining a personally healthy level of body fat.

Judith Fertig writes food health articles and cookbooks from Overland Park, KS (JudithFertig.com).

The real growth is letting go.

—MICHAEL SINGER



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