

I have been a proponent for integrative medicine for years. As a healing-oriented medicine that takes account of the whole person (body, mind, and spirit), I find it to be an effective way to address and even prevent specific health concerns. As it includes all aspects of lifestyle, such as diet and mental health, integrative medicine can be applied to anyone's daily life in a variety of ways.

This issue of *Balanced Living* takes a closer look at integrative medicine, from foods that can help



to lessen symptoms of diseases, to supplements that address prostate health, to a yoga pose that can help to balance your well-being. All are simple ways to start applying the principles of integrative medicine to your life.

Yours in health,

Andrew Weil, M.D.



Supplements For Prostate Health

Benign prostatic hyperplasia, or [BPH](#), is a common, noncancerous enlargement of the prostate gland, common in American and European men over the age of 50. While the actual cause is not completely understood, experts believe it is closely linked to hormone levels.

To support prostate health, start with a diet rich in soluble fiber — it has been linked to a lower risk of prostate cancer. Heart-healthy fiber can be found in fresh produce, oatmeal and [beans](#), so add these to your diet.

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Food As Medicine

A healthy diet can help the body in its efforts to heal itself, and in some cases, particular foods can lessen symptoms. Consider the following foods for these conditions:

Alzheimer's Disease: To help minimize your risk of [Alzheimer's disease](#), stick with the Dr. Weil-recommended [Anti-Inflammatory Diet](#). It is rich in omega-3 fatty acids and antioxidants - both of which can help address inflammation, which experts now consider a primary contributor to many diseases, including Alzheimer's. You can get started by eating plenty of fresh fruits and vegetables, and adding more omega-3 rich foods such as walnuts, wild Alaskan salmon, and freshly ground flaxseed to your diet.

Autoimmune Disorders: To address problems commonly associated with autoimmune disorders (such as rheumatoid arthritis and lupus), try decreasing protein toward 10 percent of daily caloric intake, and replace animal protein as much as possible with plant protein. Also eliminate milk and milk products, increasing other calcium sources like spinach and kale. If you'd like a milk substitute, try coconut milk or organic almond milk. Get more nutrition tips for [rheumatoid arthritis](#) and [lupus](#).

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Monthly Wellness Challenge



Connecting With Nature

This month's challenge is to spend more time in nature each day. Evidence shows that time spent in natural surroundings can increase attention span and reduce stress. Schedule 15 minutes to be outside each morning (drink a cup of [green tea](#) on the porch) and 15 each evening - take a walk, garden, or read outdoors.

Supplements For Prostate Health

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Nutrients, botanicals and other compounds may also help to prevent or lessen the risk of BPH and other prostate-related conditions – consider the following:

Saw Palmetto (*Serenoa repens*):

Support your prostate with [Saw Palmetto](#). The best form to use is a standardized extract. Although saw palmetto may not shrink the overall size of the prostate, it often helps promote healthy function.

Herbs and nutrients such as [stinging nettle root](#), zinc, [selenium](#), and pumpkin seed extract have been shown to help maintain and promote a healthy prostate.

Keep in mind that these treatments may take at least eight weeks before you see improvement of your symptoms. Be sure to consult your physician and discuss any medications you are taking - including supplements - to avoid interactions.

Food As Medicine

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Cancer: Want to minimize your risk of cancer? Start eating more mushrooms! Many Asian species are packed with health benefits, and contain unique polysaccharides which appear to boost both the activity and number of the body's natural-killer cells. Look for enoki, maitake, reishi, royal sun agaricus, shiitake, and zhu ling – all have been studied for their anticancer and immune-boosting properties.

Irritable Bowel Syndrome (IBS): To address problems commonly associated with [IBS](#), try the following:

- Eliminate milk and milk products
- Eliminate all caffeine sources
- Increase dietary fiber by eating more whole grains, fruits and vegetable
- Avoid products sweetened with sorbitol or xylitol (learn more about the dangers of [artificial sweeteners](#)).
- Reduce or eliminate alcohol
- Eat ginger regularly
- Consider eliminating FODMAP (Fermentable Oligo-, Di-, Mono-saccharides and Polyols) foods





Yoga Pose: The Tree Pose

One of Dr. Weil's favorite poses to promote relaxation and centering, the Tree Pose is a basic pose that strengthens and tones the leg muscles, ankles and feet as well as the groin and inner thigh. Additionally, this pose opens up the chest and shoulder muscles, as well as stabilizing the hips and spine.

A 2012 study published in the journal *Evidence-Based Complementary and Alternative Medicine* concluded that even though the Tree Pose is considered a simple pose, it places demands on the body that can lead to improved strength and balance.

What are the health benefits of this pose? It can:

- **Strengthen buttocks, thighs, calves and ankles, spine**
- **Stretch groin and inner thigh, chest and shoulders**
- **Improve balance**
- **Relieve sciatica**
- **Calm and relieve stress**

Get [step-by-step instruction](#) for practicing the Tree Pose. Beginners may have difficulty maintaining balance in this pose so it is advised to stand next to a wall or chair as a way of practicing the pose. More advanced practitioners can bring their hands together in front of the chest or lift their arms straight up above the head. If you have a history of low or high blood pressure, do not raise your arms above your head – doing so can negatively affect blood pressure.

Vitamins A to Zinc, courtesy of the Weil Vitamin Advisor

The Benefits Of Vitamin E

Vitamin E is a powerful, fat-soluble antioxidant that helps protect cell membranes against damage caused by free radicals. It may also have a positive effect on immune health, protect against the oxidative damage that can lead to heart disease, have preventive effects against cancer, and help relieve symptoms of Alzheimer's disease. [Learn more about vitamin E](#) and learn the symptoms of deficiency.



Seasonal Food: Carrots



Carrots aren't just for rabbits - these inexpensive root vegetables - carrots are a versatile, delicious and nutritious addition to a healthy diet, and are an excellent source of antioxidant compounds. Carrots (*Daucus carota*) are among the richest vegetable sources of beta-carotene. Vital for healthy vision, beta-carotene helps slow the progression of macular degeneration, helping to prevent cataracts and promote night vision.

With more [vitamin A](#) precursors than almost any other vegetable, carrots have high levels of biotin, vitamin K, vitamin B6, vitamin C, thiamine and [potassium](#). Carrots also provide a significant amount of dietary fiber. A member of the same family as parsnips, fennel and dill, carrots come in yellow, red and purple, as well as the common orange variety seen in most groceries.

Use these tasty snacks as a healthy alternative to potato chips and other unhealthy processed foods - add some to a salad, steam them as a side dish, and you might even try them as a low-calorie, nutritious treat for your canine companion! Carrots also travel well as a portable snack for road trips, picnics, or outdoor games.

Try carrots in these recipes:

- **Ginger-Carrot Soup**
- **Pickled Carrots**
- **Carrot, Beet, Coconut & Sesame**
- **Carrot Cake**
- **Carrot-Banana Muffins**