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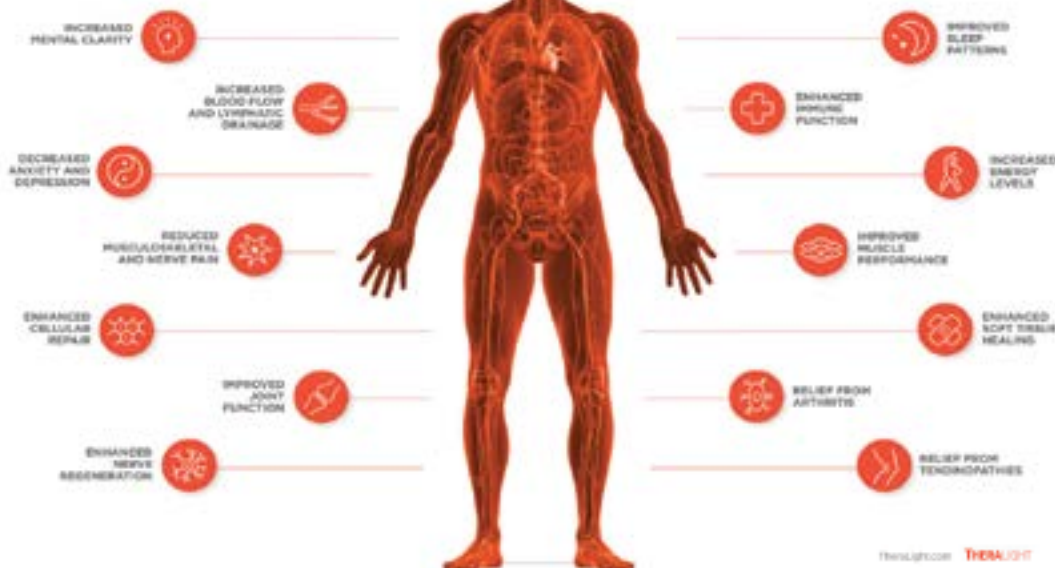


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Publisher's Letter



*Joe & Asta Dunne,
Publishers*

Today, communication is on my mind and how much we take for granted that people are hearing exactly what we are saying.

When we are trying to make a point, debate a topic or express a personal view, how well we communicate rests on understanding what will interfere or help set up success. Internal and external factors can affect the conversation positively and/or negatively. Simple phrasing can undermine what we assume is crystal-clear messaging.

Experience is teaching me how to use words that disarm rather than increase tension. These techniques aren't just to help other people open up to listen, to understand, and to hear. The process also helps me to do the same. Whether I am speaking with family, clarifying business issues, dealing with employees, delivering a speech, asking for a request—no matter who I am striving to communicate with—there are many factors that go into delivering and receiving messages so that neither side is distorted.

Taking time to think about what I want to say before I say it helps. The environment also matters. Tone matters. My choice of words matters. When I use words that are defensive or suggest blame, misunderstanding and tension will escalate. Voices get louder, the mood will shift, and it will be much harder to reach some kind of mutual understanding.

"What is said is not always what is heard."

Listening skills are crucial. Active listening is an act of attention, focus, getting outside our inner thinking to paying attention as we should. It is not easy. Bad habits interfere constantly. We speak over each other, we over talk, we interrupt. Is it any wonder how or why we get things wrong?

It is wise to remember that communication is an art—and good art requires patience. For me, it takes laser focus to remind myself to think before I speak, to slow down to acknowledge that I owe you the respect of listening. And, if asked to listen or participate, sometimes just listening is enough.

As I write, these thoughts come to mind: "texting is not talking" and "listening is not necessarily hearing". And what goes on between our ears is where paying attention really matters.

Hopefully, you heard my meaning, and I hope I was clear.

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Joe & Asta

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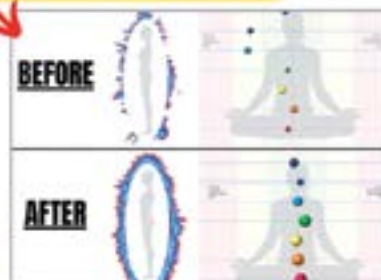
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In its 25th year, the Wise Traditions Annual Conference attracts attendees from across the U.S. and even from other countries. Some return each year to participate in its high-energy, intellectually satisfying, family-reunion type spirit. The common denominator for attendees is a thirst for learning from carefully chosen speakers and a hunger to spend time discussing interesting topics and enjoying specially prepared meals with like-minded people.

Based on the research of nutrition pioneer, Dr. Weston Price, The Weston A. Price Foundation is a member-supported organization dedicated to restoring nutrient-dense foods to the table through education. With 15,000 members, it connects local farms with health-conscious consumers.

Its annual conference will be in Salt Lake City, Utah, October 17-19, with 1,000 attendees, 40 speakers and 70 exhibits plus delicious farm-to-table meals. Reasonable rates, which include conference meals and special one-, two- or three-day passes, plus reduced rates for 20 and younger.

This is a conference that nourishes you in every way: enjoy nutritious food, learn healing wisdom, meet new friends, be inspired. Visit WiseTraditions.org for info and to register. See ad, page 31.

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To reserve your spot, call 732-695-2575, email info@mjkasliner.com, or visit mjkasliner.com/yoga-training. See ad, page 9.

Preconception Detox: Why 2025 May Be the Best Time to Prepare for a 2026 Pregnancy



On September 25 from 6 to 7 p.m., at New Jersey Natural Medicine, Dr. Olivia Shelton, ND, MPH, will share practical strategies and the latest science at this free community talk "Preconception Detox: Preparing for Pregnancy in 2026".

Modern life offers conveniences our grandparents never imagined — but also exposes us to an unprecedented mix of chemicals and toxins. From pesticides in produce and phthalates in plastics to heavy metals in water, flame retardants in furniture, and air pollutants from traffic, these invisible burdens add up.

Growing research shows that such exposures can affect fertility. Certain chemicals disrupt hormones, lower sperm quality, interfere with ovulation, and may even impact fetal development in ways that last into childhood.

That's why 2025 may be the perfect year to focus on preconception health. If you're planning to start or grow your family in 2026, consider one crucial step beyond baby gear and nursery colors: a preconception detox. Ideally started three to six months before trying to conceive, a detox supports the body's natural ability to eliminate stored toxins and creates a healthier environment for both egg and sperm. Even small, intentional changes during this window can boost fertility, support a healthier pregnancy, and lower long-term risks for your future child.

Location: New Jersey Natural Medicine, 2424 Lamington Rd., Bedminster. Registration is free, but space is limited. Call 973-267-2650 to reserve your spot. NJNaturalMedicine.com. See ad, page 19.

Mandala Coloring with Odile

Every third Wednesday of the month beginning September 17, join Odile Denizet of Harmony for Us for relaxing and creative Mandala Coloring class. This welcoming gathering is designed to help participants unwind, connect, and enjoy the meditative art of coloring.



Coloring mandalas has become a popular way to relieve stress and restore balance. It offers a simple yet powerful form of meditation that is

accessible to everyone—no artistic experience required. Participants often describe the experience as calming, playful, and uplifting.

The class fee is \$10, which includes tea and all materials. Seating is limited, so early reservation is encouraged.

Class begins at 6 p.m. For location details and to register, please contact Odile at odiled419@gmail.com. Visit HarmonyForUs.com for additional services offered by Odile. See ad, page 13.

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GLOBAL INTEGRATION OF TRADITIONAL MEDICINE

In May, the World Health Organization adopted the “WHO Traditional Medicine Strategy 2025-2034” with the objective of facilitating universal access to traditional, complementary and integrative medicine. The organization has committed to investing in the research of ancient healing practices and their integration into conventional healthcare systems over the next decade.

While representatives from Asia, Africa, the Middle East and South America supported this global strategy, the European Union raised concerns about quality and safety standards. To alleviate fears about counterfeit products or misleading claims, the plan stipulates that no practices would be endorsed without evidence-based research, and the modalities will be codified and integrated into a regulatory framework. The blueprint also acknowledges the rights of Indigenous peoples to their traditional medicines and emphasizes the importance of sharing the benefits when their knowledge leads to commercial products.

Traditional medicine employs nature-based remedies and holistic approaches to restore balance in the mind, body and environment. Certain practices such as Ayurveda or Traditional Chinese Medicine have been developed over millennia and codified in scholarly texts. Others can be characterized as non-codified folk medicine passed down orally from generation to generation. Whether formally documented or carried forward around the campfire or kitchen table, these practices serve as the primary healthcare option for substantial populations in low- to middle-income countries and are gaining popularity in wealthier countries as complementary care.



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YOUTH DEVELOPS HEART DISEASE DETECTOR

Heart disease is the leading cause of death globally, and most people do not know they have cardiovascular disease until they suffer a heart attack or stroke. Early detection currently relies on routine checkups, electrocardiograms, stress tests, echocardiograms and blood tests, but these diagnostic methods may not be universally accessible to low- and middle-income families.

Siddarth Nandyala, a 14-year-old from Texas, invented an application called Circadian AI for smartphones that can pinpoint cardiovascular abnormalities early in their development. To build the app, Nandyala collected data from various hospitals and institutions, thus constructing a robust artificial intelligence (AI) model.

App users are directed to place their smartphones near the heart so the device can record the sound of heartbeats. This real-time data is then compared to the AI model, leading to an analysis of the user's cardiac health and recommended medical interventions.

A pre-screening phase conducted on more than 18,000 patients in the United States and India yielded a remarkable 96 percent success rate in the detection of heart abnormalities. Nandyala is currently in the process of securing regulatory approvals in the U.S., India and other countries.



Science Photo Library/CanvaPro

HEAVY METALS IN RICE

A study conducted by Healthy Babies Bright Futures revealed that rice sold in stores across the United States contains toxic heavy metals. After analyzing rice samples from 145 brands across 20 metropolitan areas, arsenic was detected in all samples, and one in four exceeded the U.S. Food and Drug Administration's limit for infant rice cereal, which is set at 100 parts per billion. There is no established threshold for non-infant rice products.

Arsenic poses significant concerns for children under 2 years of age and pregnant mothers, and it has been linked to cancer and developmental brain damage, including lower IQ. Cadmium, lead and mercury were also found in the rice samples. Although the heavy metal levels are not high enough to cause acute poisoning, the concern is that consumption of these products over a long period of time could be harmful.

To lower exposure, the study suggests cooking rice in six to 10 cups of water and draining the excess liquid to reduce arsenic levels by up to 60 percent. Rice alternatives are also recommended, including quinoa, farro and barley, which exhibit a 69 percent lower heavy metal contamination than rice. Thai jasmine, Indian basmati and California-grown rices were also recommended as safer options.



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JenTheYogaLawyer.com/sacred-harvest-retreat/

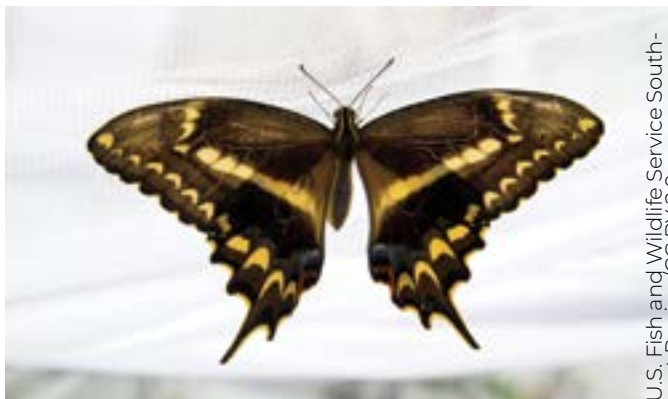




ENDANGERED BUTTERFLY BENEFITS FROM HURRICANES

The Schaus' swallowtail butterfly was one of the first insects to be listed under the U.S. Endangered Species Act in 1976, and their population hit an all-time low on Elliott Key, Florida, with an estimated 56 individuals in 2007, two years after Hurricane Wilma. Historically, Schaus' swallowtails lived throughout the Florida Keys and parts of the mainland. But habitat loss and urban development have forced them to live only on protected land on Elliott Key and Key Largo.

A study by scientists from the Florida Museum of Natural History examined 35 years of data on the butterfly and found that they unexpectedly benefit from hurricanes. The swallowtails rely on torchwood and wild lime plants for food and to lay their eggs. These plants live in the understory of the forest where there is little filtered light. However, when the branches and leaves on taller trees are temporarily knocked out after a hurricane, torchwood and wild lime experience a rapid growth of fresh leaves. The tender shoots and leaves mean more butterflies. The most recent estimate of the Schaus' swallowtail butterfly population on Elliott Key is 4,400 individuals.



U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Southeast Region/CC BY 2.0 commons.wikimedia.org 45513660

OUR UNIVERSE PROPOSED AS A COMPUTER SIMULATION

As technology advances, we have the potential to create increasingly sophisticated computer simulations or even the entire cosmos. This has led scientists to consider whether our own universe is a simulation, and to look for evidence to prove or disprove the hypothesis.

A study in *AIP Advances* suggests that gravity may not be a fundamental force but a property of massive computer simulation. Physicist Melvin Vopson proposes that the universe is like a computer trying to save space. In other words, what we perceive as gravity might be a result of the universe's tendency to optimize its informational structure, leading to the clumping of matter and the attraction of objects. If Vopson's theory were true, it would change our understanding of physics. However, the study emphasized the need for more scrutiny and experimentation to validate the hypothesis.



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ECO-FRIENDLY CATTLE

According to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, livestock accounts for approximately 12 percent of all greenhouse gas emissions, most of which is produced when cattle burp. Grazing bovines belch a greater amount of methane than feedlot or dairy cows because they consume more fiber from grass.

In a study published in *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, researchers at the University of California, Davis, found that feeding grazing cattle a seaweed supplement reduced methane emissions by almost 38 percent without affecting the animals' health or weight. The 10-week experiment on a ranch in Montana involved 24 steers divided into two groups—one was given a seaweed

supplement in pellet form, and the other was not. The findings offer a way to make cattle grazing more environmentally friendly.



Elisa Giaccaglia from Pexels/CanvaPro

ONLY ONE COUNTRY IS FOOD SECURE

Wars, pandemics, natural disasters and changes in trade policy can disrupt food supply chains around the world, potentially endangering the lives of millions of people. A study published in *Nature Food* evaluated the ability of 186 countries to achieve food self-sufficiency.

To identify deficiencies between domestic food production and the dietary needs of a country's population, the researchers relied on food production data by the United Nations, as well as the Live-well diet developed by the World Wildlife Fund, a sustainable, pre-dominantly plant-based eating plan that focuses on seven key food groups: vegetables, fruits, legumes, starchy foods, whole grains, lean meat and fish, and nuts.

Only Guyana was self-sufficient across the Livewell diet's seven food groups, while China and Vietnam were self-sufficient in six groups. Only one in seven countries, mostly in Europe and South America, achieved self-sufficiency in five or more food groups, and one-third of all countries were self-sufficient in only one or two groups. Six countries, primarily in the Middle East, did not meet the needs of any food group. When grouped as an economic region, the United States, Canada and Mexico were deemed self-sufficient in five food groups.



THE DIRTY SUITCASE

Travelers are exposed to potentially harmful bacteria, fungus and mold in airports, planes, hotel rooms and public restrooms. According to a study by Insure & Go Insurance Services Limited, a British travel insurance company, luggage may be the dirtiest item a traveler encounters during a trip. The company teamed up with a microbiologist to examine a sample of hard- and soft-shell suitcases at an airport train station. Swabs were taken from various surfaces of the suitcases and incubated for five days.

The study found that the suitcase wheels were the most contaminated with bad bacteria, including staph and *E.coli*, followed by the base and handle. The handle was found to carry 40 times more bacteria than a typical public toilet seat.

The study also identified the presence of black mold linked to musty odors, respiratory irritation and allergy triggers. Soft-shell luggage had higher fungal growth compared to hard-shelled luggage. To reduce exposure to harmful microbes on luggage, the study's microbiologist recommended that travelers keep it off beds and tables, clean the wheels and base after each trip, cover the wheels when indoors, wash hands after handling luggage and be mindful about where the luggage is wheeled.



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Ocean Harvests

Eco-Friendly Benefits of Seaweed

by Maya Whitman

Some may associate seaweed with giant kelp forests or savory sushi wraps, but these species of multicellular marine algae have become key players in the food, cosmetic and industrial arenas. Seaweed farming around the world, including more recently in the United States, shows promise as a natural solution to climate change, ocean acidification and the plastics crisis. Such crops provide not only nutritious food for humans and animals but also chemical-free fertilizers for backyard gardens and agriculture.

“When managed and cultivated ethically in cooperation with the natural laws, just like land farms, seaweed farms can be little vibrant plots of biodiversity and primary productivity, supporting all the powers of nature for good,” says Sarah Redmond, founder of Springtide Seaweed, in Gouldsboro, Maine, the largest organic seaweed company in the United States.



kerriekerr from Getty Images Signature/CanvaPro

ENVIRONMENTAL HERO

There are thousands of species of seaweed, and they thrive in areas where other marine life is failing due to ocean acidification. Their presence is a boon for the environment because they release nutrients into the ocean, while also sequestering carbon from the atmosphere, thereby reducing the effects of climate change.

As Redmond explains, “Ocean acidification is the lowering of overall pH in the oceans, which can impact all marine life, especially shell-forming organisms. Growing seaweed can help reduce the impacts of acidification locally, during the day, when the plants are taking in carbon for photosynthesis. Some of the carbon is remineralized back into inorganic forms, some is consumed as food, some is lost as dissolved or particulate organic carbon, and some is buried in sediments at sea. All of the algae—micro and macro seaweeds—drive the ocean’s carbon cycle.”

Seaweed is introduced in aquaculture because of its ability to boost water quality and convert fish waste into usable nutrients. According to Charles Yarish, professor emeritus of marine ecology at the University of Connecticut and chief scientist with GreenWave, a global nonprofit network of regenerative ocean farmers, “Seaweed farming in the United States is principally kelp farming, and we have nutrient-rich waters. Seaweeds can reduce carbon dioxide and nitrogen as they photosynthesize during daylight hours and take it into their biomass.”

Yarish highlights the cutting-edge efforts of Macro Oceans, in West Sacramento, California, which seeks to help the world transition away from petroleum-based products by developing eco-friendly biomaterials from seaweed for use in cosmetics, food and other industries.

NUTRITIONAL DYNAMO

“Seaweeds are very nutritious, with minerals, protein and vitamin C,” says Yarish. Rich in iodine, it has been a diet staple for coastal cultures since prehistoric times, and more than 145 varieties are consumed worldwide today. Across the United States, there are dozens of farms in New England, Alaska and the Pacific Northwest that specialize in the cultivation of bull kelp, dulse, ribbon kelp and sugar kelp used in sauces, salads, seasonings and Asian cuisine.



CampPhoto from Getty Images
Signature/CanvaPro

According to Redmond, “By replacing table salt with the natural, organic mineral salts from seaweeds, we can rebalance our sodium and potassium levels and add essential micronutrients to our diets.”

Common edible seaweeds like wakame, kelp, kombu, nori and dulse are tasty additions to soups and salads that can foster good thyroid health. According to 2018 findings published in the *Iranian Journal of Basic Medical Sciences*, extract of the seaweed variety *Sargassum oligocystum* offers anti-diabetic effects in rats and is worthy of further research. Japanese research published in 2021 in the *Journal of Atherosclerosis and Thrombosis* suggests that seaweed consumption might be valuable in preventing strokes in men.

CONSCIOUS PACKAGING

According to CleanHub, an organization dedicated to preventing plastic pollution in our oceans, it is estimated that 95 percent of all beauty industry packaging is thrown away every year. Companies like UK-based Notpla and Kelpi, as well as California-based Sway, are using biodegradable seaweed bioplastics to make a difference. Similarly, the restaurant and food industries are developing options to replace single-use plastics like containers and wraps with marine-based packages. Currently, seaweed packaging is more costly, but experts predict lower prices as technology advances.

Maya Whitman is a frequent writer for Natural Awakenings.

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Health & Wellness

February
Happy Heart

March
Food & Nutrition

April
People, Planet &
Purpose

May
Women's Wellness

June
Men's Health

July
The Great Outdoors

August
Harmonious Living


September
Gut Vitality

October
Brain Gain

November
Balancing Energy

December
Embrace Joy

natural
awakenings

Eco Tip ——— 

Packing School Lunch With Zero Waste

Families that rely on single-use plastics and prepackaged foods for their children's lunches often overlook the tremendous amount of daily waste they generate. With a few easy swaps, lunch packing routines can be fun, eco-friendly rituals for the back-to-school season. By replacing disposable plastics with reusable alternatives and adding a few homemade snacks, parents can save money and safeguard kids' health while reducing landfill waste. Here are some excellent options.

REUSABLE CONTAINERS, WRAPS AND CUTLERY

- Stainless steel lunchboxes



Gen AI/CanvaPro

- Compartmentalized bento boxes made of wood or stainless steel
- Leakproof and dishwasher-safe silicone pouches
- Cloth or compostable snack bags for dry goods such as nuts or pretzels
- Repurposed glass jars with lids for drinks, hummus or applesauce
- Stainless steel water bottles that keep liquids hot or cold for extended periods of time
- Beeswax wraps or soybean-based "wax" paper to secure sandwiches
- Reusable cutlery and chopsticks made of stainless steel and bamboo
- Biodegradable and compostable cutlery made of renewable starch sources such as corn or cassava

BULK FOODS AND HOMEMADE SNACKS

- Nuts and seeds, dried fruits, trail mix, crackers, healthy chips and granola from bulk bins
- Sandwiches on whole grain breads made from scratch with fresh, healthy ingredients
- Locally sourced, seasonal produce and bread from the farmers market for a



lighter carbon footprint

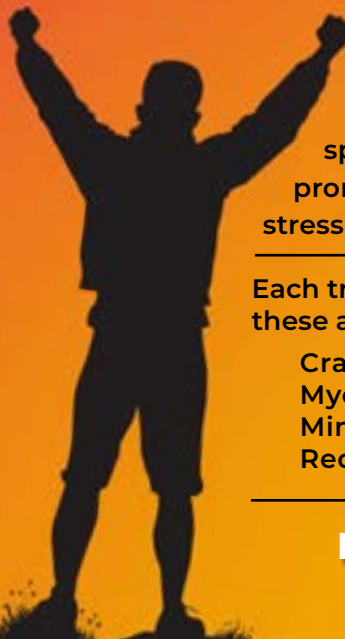
- Easy parfaits made with milk- or plant-based yogurt, chopped fruits, nuts, flax or chia seeds and a drizzle of local honey
- Wraps made with soft tortillas, lettuce or cabbage leaves, or nori sheets filled with yummy fresh ingredients such as sautéed or shredded raw vegetables, nut butters, bananas, Medjool dates, soft cheeses, olives or hummus
- Homemade energy bars packed with healthy ingredients, including oats, protein powder, dark chocolate chips, nuts, dried fruit and maple syrup

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Oral Health Benefits of Yoga

Surprising Ways to Improve a Smile

by Marlaina Donato

An estimated 42 percent of adults aged 30 and above are affected by periodontitis, commonly known as gum disease. For some, the condition manifests as mild, reversible gingivitis, while others experience a more progressive form that can lead to bone loss.

Beyond its effects in the mouth, gum disease is strongly associated with chronic inflammatory conditions such as cardiovascular disease, diabetes and arthritis. A study conducted by the University of Toronto in 2020 found that the body's immune response to gum disease can trigger a hyper-inflammatory response that can negatively impact healthy tissues and organs.

Good oral hygiene and regular cleanings with a dental professional are the principle ways to prevent and treat gum disease. However, new findings suggest that stress management techniques such as mindfulness and yogic practices, combined with conventional treatments, may be the future of whole-body periodontal care and another good reason to get on the yoga mat.

Research published this year in *BMC Oral Health* reported that elevated levels of the stress hormone cortisol may impact periodontal health by making the gums more susceptible to infection and inflammation. Stress may also lead to lapses in oral hygiene.



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BENEFITS OF YOGA

"In itself, inflammation isn't a bad thing—it's how the body protects and heals itself after injury, illness or exposure to harmful substances. But when that inflammatory response doesn't turn off due to physical or emotional stress, the body stays in a constant state of defense, even when there's no real threat present," explains yoga teacher Jamie LiCausi, owner of Empowered Alignment Holistic Healing Hub, in Hawley, Pennsylvania. "Many of us live in a constant state of low-grade stress without even realizing it. Yoga isn't just about finding your zen; it quite literally rewires your nervous system to help you handle stress differently."

A 2023 systemic review published in the *Journal of International Society of Preventive and Community Dentistry* found promising potential for yoga to improve periodontal health by reducing systemic stress reactions and periodontal disease risk factors such as diabetes and hypertension.

Dr. Amy Dayries, an integrative dentist in Roswell, Georgia, and host of KnoWEwell's monthly online show, *Healthcare From Your Dentist's Chair*, asserts that yoga can reduce stress-induced teeth grinding, mouth breathing and poor posture promoted by modern lifestyles. Relying on mouth breathing rather than nose breathing can lead to sleep apnea, dry mouth and a misaligned bite, which, if left untreated, may cause tooth decay and gum disease. "Dentally speaking, we see increases in gum inflammation and increased cavity risk because the oral microbiome changes as the body chemistry changes in a stressed state," she remarks, adding that stress chemicals can remain elevated for many years after the initial stressful event.

The tongue can also play a critical role. According to Dayries, we usually have a low tongue posture (resting on the floor of the mouth instead of the roof) when we slouch, and this bad habit can ramp up the sympathetic nervous system, thereby triggering stress. She recommends a variety of yoga exercises, including hatha yoga tongue exercises, as part of a patient's dental treatment plan to ease muscle and



ArtHouse Studio from Pexels/CanvaPro

emotional tension, support stronger posture and decrease mouth breathing. Such exercises may include placing the tip of the tongue against the roof of the mouth behind the top front teeth, suctioning the rest of the tongue flat against the roof of the mouth, closing the mouth and breathing through the nose.

THE POWER OF THE BREATH

Pranayama yoga and diaphragmatic breathing can reset the nervous system in a gentle way. “Many of us breathe shallowly into the chest, which means the lower parts of the lungs—the areas where air can become stagnant—don’t get fully ventilated. Over time, that stagnant air holds onto carbon dioxide and other waste gases,” says LiCausi. “When we breathe deeply using the diaphragm, we help move that stale air out. Fresh oxygen circulates through the lungs, nourishing the body, while each exhale clears out toxins and waste.”

Dayries advises that yoga helps us to counterbalance modern lifestyle activities that promote a forward posture. “This is because yoga is centered around one’s breath and holding postural stances, wringing out the lymphatic system through stretching, strengthening and asanas [body postures].” Most of all, she points out, even when oral health problems are in motion, such as gum disease, there is hope to halt things where they are, even if some bone loss is evident. “It is never too late to implement healthy changes,” she says.

Marlaina Donato is an author, musician and painter. Connect at WildflowersAndWoodSmoke.com.

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Balancing the Gut

Investing in Our Inner Ecosystem

by Hannah Tytus



Gema Ibarra/CanvaPro

“The gut is the first to encounter the universe, and it is the first line of defense between you and the universe,” says Dr. Madiha Saeed, a holistic, functional and integrative doctor in Naperville, Illinois, and director of education for Documenting Hope and KnoWEwell. Home to trillions of bacteria, fungi and other microbes, the digestive tract

forms a complex ecosystem known as the gut microbiome, which influences many aspects of health.

Microbes perform numerous functions. They help break down food, produce essential nutrients, support the immune system and influence mood, cognition and overall well-being. Diet, stress, sleep, medications and

environmental exposures shape the makeup of our gut microbiota, which, in turn, impact the body’s propensity for health or disease. Efforts to restore and nurture gut health offer opportunities for us to enhance our well-being through simple lifestyle changes.

GUT MICROBIOME BASICS

The intestinal environment is constantly changing, with new microbes entering and others disappearing daily, creating a dynamic community of tiny organisms that is unique to every individual. Different species have specialized roles. For instance, *Faecalibacterium prausnitzii* lowers inflammation by nourishing gut cells, while *Akkermansia muciniphila* maintains the gut lining by breaking down mucus and supporting helpful bacteria. Each person hosts approximately 1,000 distinct microbial species, while humanity collectively harbors more than 10,000 species.

Like a garden, the gut microbiome contains a mix of helpful and harmful organisms. Beneficial microbes behave like healthy plants, supporting digestion, nutrient absorption and immune function. When cared for, these helpful organisms thrive, while also helping to keep harmful microbes (weeds) under control.

Our intestinal garden is shaped by how it is tended. Fiber-rich foods, fermented products and exposure to natural environments help nourish the good microbes, much like water, sunlight and compost nourish plants. By contrast, processed foods, excessive sugar and unnecessary antibiotics can disrupt the balance and allow harmful microbes to take over.

Many people experience gut imbalance, or dysbiosis, without realizing it. The gut is highly sensitive to its environment, and everyday choices like processed foods, medications and chronic stress can quietly disrupt the inner balance, making it harder for beneficial microbes to thrive.



Katsiaryna Hatsak from Izobrazheniya pol'zovatelya Katsiaryna Hatsak/CanvaPro

Medications. “Though some medications can save your life, they do come with a side disadvantage, so you need to weigh your risks versus the benefits when it comes to taking any medications,” Saeed advises, noting that antibiotics, for example, reduce microbial diversity and richness, causing short-term changes in the microbiome. While most people recover within two months, their microbiota diversity and productivity may remain low, and some people may experience longer-lasting disruptions.

Common painkillers called nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) such as aspirin and ibuprofen can also interact with the composition and function of the gut microbiome. They inhibit microbial growth, induce microbial cell death and increase gut permeability. NSAIDs can also interact with gut microbes, thereby impacting how well the drug is absorbed.

Foods. The food we eat significantly impacts the microbiome’s composition and metabolism. “Real foods nourish the good bugs, while processed foods fuel the bad,” says Saeed. Diets high in processed foods, sugars and additives create a toxic load that disrupts bacterial balance and triggers inflammation, leading to chronic disease. Eating these kinds of ingredients on a consistent basis can slowly damage the gut, as harmful microbes crowd out beneficial species, weakening the intestinal ecosystem over time without immediate signs of distress.

Stress. Chronic stress is another gut health disruptor. Stress hormones can reduce beneficial bacteria such as *Akkermansia muciniphila*, which has been identified as a potential protector against obesity



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MEDICARE PATIENTS WELCOME

Repairing the Gut Lining

by Hannah Tytus

Dr. Madiha Saeed, a holistic, functional and integrative doctor in Naperville, Illinois, and director of education for Documenting Hope and KnoWEwell, stresses that repairing the gut lining is key for nutrient absorption. She recommends foods rich in zinc; vitamins A, C, and D; vitamin E; and selenium to reduce inflammation. Additionally, omega-3 fatty acids, often found in fish, help reduce inflammation and support the gut lining. Digestive enzymes found in fruits and vegetables such as avocados, pineapples, papayas, mangoes and bananas break down food, reducing intestinal inflammation. L-glutamine, found in bone broth, animal proteins, spinach, red cabbage and parsley, helps preserve the gut lining.



RossHelen/CanvaPro

By nourishing the microbiome with whole foods, managing stress, using supplements wisely and embracing small lifestyle changes, individuals can cultivate a resilient inner garden that supports well-being for life.

and Type 1 diabetes. Stress also encourages yeast overgrowth, leading to inflammation and intensifying the stress response in a vicious cycle. Studies also show that stress, whether physical or perceived, can alter overall microbial composition.

A 2018 narrative review published in *Frontiers in Microbiology* analyzed existing preclinical studies and found that various psychological, environmental and physical stressors can alter gut microbiota composition and function. Furthermore, a 2023 systematic review published in *Neuropsychobiology* found that higher perceived stress was associated with lower microbial diversity and decreased abundance of beneficial genera such as *Lachnospira*, *Veillonella* and *Phascolarctobacterium*. Harmful bacteria like *Methanobrevibacter* rose in relative abundance in stressed individuals.

SIGNS OF IMBALANCE

Indications of an unhealthy gut show up in various ways. Digestive issues such as bloating, gas and constipation often signal an imbalance. Fatigue, mood swings and skin conditions like acne or eczema may also be related to poor gut health. Unexplained weight changes, cognitive problems and food sensitivities may be caused by intestinal distress. A weakened immune system, trouble sleeping and bad breath can also indicate a need for gut support.

REPAIRING THE GUT

Environmental factors influence the microbiome more than genetics, but when the gut has been harmed, Saeed explains, restoration takes more than just a probiotic.

Eat organic whole foods. “Food is medicine. Every bite can either help or hurt,” counsels Saeed, emphasizing the importance of daily food choices. Like humans, gut microbes need nourishment to thrive. When they eat well, human health flourishes. The typical Western diet is high in simple carbohydrates and fat, but low in fiber, offering little



nataliagolubnychphotos/CanvaPro

nourishment for beneficial microbes.

On the other hand, microbiota-accessible carbohydrates (MACs) such as legumes, root vegetables, fruits, nuts and seeds are essential for a diverse and resilient microbial community. Because MACs are not broken down by digestive enzymes, they are fermented by gut microbes, feeding and promoting the growth and activity of beneficial bacteria.

Choosing organic produce helps avoid synthetic pesticides and herbicides sprayed on produce to eliminate pests and weeds. These chemicals have been shown to negatively affect the gut microbiome and human health. “It’s best to eat local food that is not sprayed,” advises Dr. Patrick Hanaway, a board-certified functional medicine family physician, educator and chief medical officer of KnoWEwell.

Supplement wisely. Probiotics and prebiotics are vital for healing the gut. Probiotics, whether found in foods like yogurt and other fermented products or taken as supplements, introduce live bacteria into the body. Prebiotics act like fertilizer, feeding good bacteria and helping restore overall balance. Fiber-rich foods such as asparagus, bananas, garlic, onions, oats, apples and legumes naturally support a thriving gut ecosystem.

As Hanaway explains, “A probiotic is a live bacteria that can be ingested and move into the stomach and populate the body. A prebiotic is a component that helps feed the

commensal [beneficial] bacteria in the gut. Probiotics are highly specific. They have great benefits for specific strains for specific diseases in specific doses. Yet, the probiotic is a tourist; it doesn't stay in the body. It's great to have tourists in the economy, but if an economy becomes entirely dependent on tourism, it becomes a problem."

When choosing supplements, quality matters. Due to limited regulations, it is best to purchase from reputable brands. Supplements in fillable capsules tend to have fewer fillers and more active ingredients. Vitamins and minerals are best absorbed from whole foods, so supplements should complement, not replace, a balanced diet.

Start a garden. Gardening increases the availability of fresh, fiber-rich, seasonal fruits and vegetables in the diet, but the very act of putting our hands in the dirt may also help increase the diversity of our gut microbiome. A 2022 cohort study of 19 families over one growing season by scientists at the University of Illinois and published in the journal *Nature* found that when compared to non-gardeners, families that grew plants and produce in their backyards had more gut bacteria linked to fiber fermentation, greater microbial diversity and even some microbes in their guts that appeared to come from the soil. Families that gardened also ate more fiber-rich foods.

Commit to small actions. Healthy microbiomes grow with consistent care—not perfection—and even small lifestyle changes can

build a more resilient ecosystem for better overall health. There is no magic bullet for healing the gut. The key is to commit one hour a week to health education and to small actions focused on rebuilding the inner ecosystem one change at a time.

"A strictly-diet approach isn't the answer; a lifestyle approach is," says Dr. Tom O'Bryan, an expert on food sensitivities, environmental toxins and the development of autoimmune diseases, as well as the host of the *Regenerative Whole Health Show* at KnoWEwell.com. "Dietary regimens can go only so far if something else persists, like mold in the house, high glyphosate levels or accumulated mercury in the body." Addressing the macrocosm around us helps fix the microcosm inside us.

Indoor air filtration and water purification measures might be necessary to counteract an unhealthy indoor environment. Small changes like storing leftover food in glass rather than plastic can help keep harmful

compounds out of the gut. Herbs such as chamomile and holy basil in diffusers and teas may aid the chronically stressed. Even simply chewing our food slowly, with mindfulness and gratitude, can help aid the digestion process.

The gut microbiome is a complex ecosystem that plays an essential role in overall health. Understanding what it is, what harms it and how to recognize signs of imbalance empowers us to take practical steps to restore and maintain gut health. By nourishing the microbiome with whole foods, managing stress, using supplements wisely and embracing small lifestyle changes, individuals can cultivate a resilient inner garden that supports well-being for life.

Hannah Tytus is a researcher and content creator for KnoWEwell, P.B.C. and former technical writer for the National Institutes of Health's National Center for Complementary and Integrative Health.



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Childhood Friendships

How To Support a Kid's Social Development

by Christina Connors

Supporting a child's social development today means setting aside outdated assumptions. What once felt simple, like walking up and saying "Hi" on the playground, may require emotional scaffolding today. Kids face a more complex and often emotionally charged social world, so the way we guide them needs to evolve, too.

Joanna Faber and Julie King, co-authors of the bestselling books *How to Talk So Little Kids Will Listen* and *How to Talk When Kids Won't Listen*, offer a compassionate framework for supporting children through friendship conflicts. "In the moment that a child is in distress over a social slight, the first thing we can do for them is to offer quiet sympathy instead of a game plan and a pep talk," they write. "Sometimes just a sympathetic sound is enough. Resist

the urge to lecture, ask questions, or give advice. ... Your restraint in not jumping in with questions and advice shows trust in your child's ability to manage her own relationships."

This gentle, emotionally attuned approach is backed by child mental health experts who emphasize that emotional safety is the foundation of healthy social development. "Children thrive when they feel seen and heard," says Dr. Roseann Capanna-Hodge, a clinical psychologist and integrative pediatric mental health expert. "Social skills don't grow in a vacuum—they're cultivated through repeated, safe interactions where kids feel supported, not judged or directed. When adults approach social challenges with calm empathy, they send the message that it's okay to have big feelings and that mistakes are a part of learning."

This doesn't mean stepping back entirely. While Capanna-Hodge warns against the temptation to micromanage social interactions, she does suggest alternative actions. "We have to stop swooping in to fix every peer conflict," she says. "When we do that, we unintentionally rob children of the chance to build problem-solving and coping skills. Instead, guide them gently and give them the language to express themselves. That's what truly sets the foundation for deeper, more meaningful relationships."

One key strategy Capanna-Hodge recommends is co-regulation, a powerful technique where adults model calm and emotional steadiness, especially when a child is dysregulated or distressed. "We talk a lot about self-regulation, but kids need co-regulation first," she explains. "That means being the calm in their storm—breathing with them, validating their feelings and staying present without judgment. That's how they learn to calm themselves and respond, rather than react, in social situations."

CONNECTION IS THE HEART OF GROWTH

Friendship is not just a social bonus; it is a developmental necessity. As caregivers, educators and parents, the focus is not to orchestrate every social moment but to create the conditions where trust, empathy and connection can flourish. By modeling emotional presence, offering tools for regulation and holding space for kids to navigate the ups and downs of friendship, we empower them to build lasting, meaningful



FatCamera from Getty Images Signature/CanvaPro



relationships. These moments of quiet support may seem small, but they build social wisdom that lasts a lifetime.

As Capanna-Hodge advises, “The best gift we can give our children is the belief that they can handle hard things, especially when it comes to friendships. When we trust them, support them and walk beside them instead of ahead, we teach them how to be kind, confident and resilient.”

As discussed in a 2017 research article published in the journal *Social Development*, children’s friendships and their ability to navigate them matter. Friends engage in more complicated social activities, talks, tasks, cooperation, negotiation, altruistic activities and effective conflict management. In a world that often feels fast and fragmented, the ability to build deep, authentic connections may be one of the greatest gifts we can offer the next generation.

Christina Connors is a writer, singer and creator of a YouTube series for children. Learn more at ChristinaConnors.com.



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Inspiration



A Gentler Grip on the Wheel of Life

by Marlaina Donato



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Life can be overwhelming at times. We diligently juggle work and personal commitments with outward precision while grappling with internal struggles, barely catching our breath, feeling off kilter and maybe a little ashamed that we can't do it all. Somewhere along the line, we bought into the idea that worry puts us in the driver's seat, granting us control over the road ahead.

We plan and strategize, convinced that holding the steering wheel in a white-knuckled grip will ensure the perfect outcome. We exhaust ourselves by running through an imagined maze and getting snagged on thorny what-ifs, too often investing precious energy into day-dreaming about what could go wrong

instead of wondering what could go right.

Professional dancers dedicated to their craft work six days a week and spend endless hours maintaining excellence. They attend classes even on performance days and undergo rigorous dress rehearsals before the curtain rises. Yet even these consummate professionals sometimes panic when the music begins, and they find themselves unable to recall a single nuance of their choreography. In such instances, when the mind is in lockdown, their bodies take over, moving fluidly on cue.

This seemingly miraculous phenomenon known as muscle memory serves as an inspiration for our daily lives. After hard

work and preparation, worry becomes an unnecessary mind game. The lecturer delivers their most compelling speech when they throw away their notes. The teacher connects to a challenging student when they think outside the box and embrace an unconventional approach. The soloist springs into the air as effortlessly as a bird.

As September takes the stage adorned in the sun's spotlight, let us take our hands off the wheel and allow the road to unfold into unforeseen magic. By ceasing relentless planning and embracing spontaneity, we just might live our best life. Now is the time to dance.

Marlaina Donato is an author, visionary painter and composer. Connect at WildflowersAndWoodSmoke.com.

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Sweet and Tart

The Joys of Homemade Fruit Shrubs

by Chloe Karydes Krecun

A fruit shrub is a sweet and tart syrup made by combining fruit, sugar and vinegar. Used for centuries as a way to keep nutrients alive, these tangy, fermented syrups are becoming popular again as irresistible additions to cocktails and mocktails, while also contributing to gut health.

Long before fruit shrubs became a trendy addition to modern beverages, fermenting fruits in alcohol or vinegar was one of humanity's oldest preservation techniques. Resourceful cooks combined seasonal fruits with vinegar and sugar to create potent elixirs that captured the fleeting abundance of summer harvests in shelf-stable form.

When winter's grip tightened and fresh produce became scarce, these preserved fruits provided delicious flavors and vital nutrients. Today's food enthusiasts celebrate fruit shrubs for their complexity and versatility in everything from sodas to salads and other inventive side dishes.

HEALTH BENEFITS

Each ingredient in a fruit shrub plays a distinct role in both preservation and nutrition. "The vinegar component in shrubs is what helps preserve the fruits and keep them from spoiling," explains Lea Ann Chen, M.D., assistant professor of gastroenterology at the Rutgers University Robert Wood Johnson Medical School. "However, the total amount of fruit in shrub recipes is relatively modest. Thus, the benefits of eating fresh fruits would be much higher. For example, fresh whole fruit contains fiber, which has many health benefits, but this is mostly missing in shrubs."

Chen notes that the fruit in shrubs is nevertheless a source of certain vitamins, such as vitamin C in citrus fruits, while berries are also high in polyphenols, which offer anti-inflammatory properties. A 2021 Stanford University study published in the journal *Cell* found that consuming fermented foods may increase gut microbiome diversity and decrease inflammation, so the fermentation of fruit shrubs may be part of a gut-healthy diet.

According to Kirsten Shockey, the author of several books on fermentation, including *Fermented Vegetables*, fruit shrubs and mocktails serve as a practical steppingstone toward healthier drink choices. They offer a middle ground for those seeking to improve their habits by steering away from soda and alcoholic beverages without making dramatic changes.

FERMENTING TIPS

Creating gut-friendly fruit shrubs at home requires nothing more than fresh fruit, sugar, vinegar and patience. Morgan Shortt, sales director at Pink House Alchemy, a maker of farm-to-table simple syrups, aromatic bitters and shrubs, explains that the sugar breaks down the fruit and naturally turns it into a thick, viscous syrup without having to smash the fruit. This natural maceration process allows the sugar to draw out fruit juices and flavors over the course of a couple of days.

Once macerated, the fruit is strained through cheesecloth or a coffee filter. The syrup can be used immediately as a topping on desserts or savory dishes. To make it last longer and add the tart taste, vinegar is incorporated. Almost any type can be used, depending on personal taste. White vinegar is intensely sharp; apple cider vinegar provides a mild, fruity flavor; and balsamic can add depth to berry shrubs with only a splash. The higher the quality of vinegar, the better the results, Shockey points out.

Although fruit shrubs are shelf stable, the shelf life varies depending on the ingredients. Shortt estimates that her shrubs have a shelf life of at least two years. Refrigeration can help maintain the quality and flavor for a longer period of time.



photobgy2000/CanvaPro



Rimma_Bondarenko from Getty Images/CanvaPro

ENJOYING THE RESULTS

Shrubs offer a practical solution for reducing food waste. They are a good way to use seasonal fruits that may be bruised or considered a farmer's seconds. "The key takeaway is that it's an easy and affordable way to consume a gut-healthy product, and it's delicious," says Shortt.

For those preferring convenience over homemade preparation, shrubs are increasingly available at farmers markets, health food stores and online. When purchasing, prioritize products containing raw, unpasteurized vinegar and minimal added sugar while checking for clean-ingredient labels. Premixed shrub drinks are also available in ready-to-consume cans or bottles for the ultimate in convenience.

Shrubs represent a delicious intersection of ancient preservation wisdom and modern wellness needs. Whether crafted at home or purchased ready-made, these tangy syrups offer a simple way to support gut health while adding flavor to drinks and recipes.

Chloe Karydes Krecun is a sophomore at University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign. Connect at [LinkedIn.com/in/chloe-karydes-krecun](https://www.linkedin.com/in/chloe-karydes-krecun).

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WILD RICE SIDE DISH

YIELD: 6 TO 8 SERVINGS

FOR THE VINAIGRETTE

2 Tbsp pomegranate shrub
2 Tbsp extra virgin olive oil
2 Tbsp shallots, finely chopped
1 tsp lemon zest
1 tsp honey or liquid sweetener
½ tsp fresh ginger, grated
½ tsp ground coriander

Kosher salt, to taste
Fresh ground black pepper, to taste
FOR THE SALAD

1½ cup cooked wild rice
1 cup pomegranate arils (about one large pomegranate)
1 cup pistachios, coarsely chopped
½ cup parsley, coarsely chopped

In a small bowl, combine pomegranate shrub, olive oil, shallots, lemon zest, honey, ginger, coriander, salt and black pepper. Set aside.

Combine wild rice, pomegranate arils, pistachios and parsley in a serving bowl. Add dressing and toss to combine. Taste and season with additional salt and pepper, if desired. Serve immediately or refrigerate for up to three days.

Recipe courtesy of Priscilla Koch, founder of The Urban Farmhouse Co., makers of organic shrub beverages.

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before



after

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MULLED APPLE CIDER

4 cups apple cider
Freshly squeezed juice of ½ orange
2 cinnamon sticks (crushed)
5 all-spice berries
4 whole cloves

Combine the apple cider, fresh orange juice, crushed cinnamon sticks, all-spice berries, and cloves in a saucepan and bring to a boil. Reduce heat and simmer uncovered for 25 minutes. Strain to remove spices and enjoy warm.

Recipe courtesy of Vanessa Young of Thirsty Radish.



Explore the link between cooking and mindfulness with Vanessa. For more recipes and to schedule a cooking class for yourself or organization, you can reach Vanessa

at vanessa@thirstyradish.com or visit ThirstyRadish.com.

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of September.*

—Voltaire



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Children's program

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Calendar of Events



Calendar events must be received via email or submitted online by the 10th of the month and adhere to our guidelines. Email kathy@NaturalAwakeningsNJ.com or NaturalAwakeningsNJ.com to submit online.

SUNDAY, SEPT 7

Akashic Records, Stone Path or Medium Reading – 1-6pm. During an Akashic Records reading, Cherise taps into your records, offering you channeled messages from your guides, masters, teachers and loved ones to help raise awareness of your spiritual path to help align with your highest good. Session is 45-60 minutes. \$145/pp; pre-registration req. A Year and a Day Mystical Shoppe 413 Bond Street, Asbury Park 848-217-2371 Web: AYearAndADayMysticalShoppe.com

WEDNESDAY, SEPT 10

Reiki Master Healer Teacher Training Meeting – 7-8pm; via Zoom. Learn mastery level awareness, healing, and teaching and experience all levels of Reiki from a mastery perspective as we work on one another. Led by Janet StraightArrow, Be The Medicine, Reserve by 973-647-2500 or Janet@Bethemedicine.com. BeTheMedicine.com/Events.

Personal Totem Pole Workshop – 8-9:30pm. There is a totem pole inside of each of us. What animal medicines make up your own personal totem pole? Let Medicine Woman Lauren Porter be your guide to see what animal medicine resides within your own chakra energy centers. \$35pp; pre-registration req. A Year and a Day Mystical Shoppe 413 Bond Street, Asbury Park 848-217-2371 Web: AYearAndADayMysticalShoppe.com

SATURDAY, SEPT 13

Past Life Regression & Sound Healing Meditation & Cacao/Fire Ceremonial Circle & Sound Bath – 10:30am-3pm. Leslee Penny's guided meditation to help see what previous lives your soul has experienced. Cacao/Fire Ceremonial Circle/Sound Healing Session follows. \$55. Mad Lavender Farm, 452 Co Rd 579, Milford. 908-310-5973. MadLavenderFarm.com/

past-life-regression-meditation-august-october.

Free Drumming Circle – 1:30-3pm - Circle to be led by Shaman, Lauren. Experience the uplifting energy vibrations of this Native American drumming. You may bring an instrument (drum, rattle, etc.), or just enjoy the experience. Free. A Year and a Day Mystical Shoppe 413 Bond Street, Asbury Park 848-217-2371 Web: AYearAndADayMysticalShoppe.com.

SUNDAY, SEPT 14

Elderberry Syrup, Fire Cider and Kitchen Medicine – 1-3pm. Winter herbal medicine cabinet with kitchen herbs, spices and roots that work as herbal allies for immune and respiratory systems. Plant medicine to relieve cough, sore throat, earache and congestion. Craft fire cider plus demo for making elderberry syrup. \$65. Mad Lavender Farm, 452 Co Rd 579, Milford. 908-310-5973. Register at MadLavenderFarm.com/workshops/workshops/

TUESDAY, SEPT 16

Reduce Stress with Hypnosis – 7pm; Zoom. Discover exciting new ways to approach and deal with stress in your life. \$50. For information and link to sessions, contact Barry at 908-303-7767 or barry@hypnosiscounselingcenter.com. HypnosisCounselingCenter.com.

WEDNESDAY, SEPT 17

Mandala Coloring with Odile Denizet – 6pm. Third Wednesday each month, join Odile Denizet of Harmony for Us for relaxing and creative Mandala Coloring. This welcoming gathering is designed to help participants unwind, connect, and enjoy the meditative art of coloring. \$10 includes tea and all materials. Seating is limited, so early reservation is encouraged. For location details and to register, please contact Odile at odiled419@gmail.com.

How Hypnosis Works – 7pm; Zoom. Join Barry Wolfson as he takes attendees on a journey of understanding the workings of hypnosis. Free, but please register to receive the Zoom link. For information and link to sessions, contact Barry at 908-303-7767 or barry@hypnosiscounselingcenter.com. HypnosisCounselingCenter.com.

THURSDAY, SEPT 18

Lose Weight with Hypnosis – 7pm; Zoom. Learn hypnotic techniques to help lose weight. \$50. For information and link to sessions, contact Barry at 908-303-7767 or barry@hypnosiscounselingcenter.com. HypnosisCounselingCenter.com.

SATURDAY, SEPT 20

Lavender in Vintage Bottles: Watercolor Class – 10am-noon. Learn to paint a still life of lavender in small, vintage glass jars and bottles. Embrace the old and the new in this mashup of the softness of the fresh lavender and the untold stories seen by vintage glass bottles. Early bird by 9/13 - \$45 (ART13); afterward \$55. Mad Lavender Farm, 452 Co Rd 579, Milford. 908-310-5973. MadLavenderFarm.com/lavender-in-vintage-bottles-watercolor-class-june.

SUNDAY, SEPT 21


Earth Medicine Day Retreat – 10am-3pm. Adrienne, Shannon and April bring a beautiful day of simple Earth Medicine practices to enhance well-being and give gratitude to Mother Earth. Herbal tea and cookies served. Bring picnic lunch. \$125-\$85; see event website for pricing. Mad Lavender Farm, 452 Co Rd 579, Milford. 908-310-5973. MadLavenderFarm.com/earth-medicine-day-retreat-sept

MONDAY, SEPT 22

Stop Smoking with Hypnosis – 7pm; Zoom. Learn how to address and eliminate the urge to smoke. \$50. For information and link to sessions, contact Barry at 908-303-7767 or barry@hypnosiscounselingcenter.com. HypnosisCounselingCenter.com.

WEDNESDAY, SEPT 24

Change Your Life with Hypnosis – 6-9pm; in person & virtual classes. 6-7pm: Quit Smoking; 7-8pm: Lose Weight; 8-9pm: Reduce Stress. \$50 each session. Hunterdon Polytech, 8 Bartles Corner Rd., Flemington. School contact is 908-788-1119 x2007. For more information, contact Barry at 908-303-7767 or barry@hypnosiscounselingcenter.com. HypnosisCounselingCenter.com.



Sacred Harvest Retreat

October 9-12, 2025
Himalayan Institute in Honesdale, PA

Enjoy the beauty of the Pocono Mountains in fall and embark on a journey of profound transformation led by Jennifer Mohamed. Whether you are new to the medicine wheel or seeking to deepen your understanding, this retreat, which also includes daily yoga and meditation, promises to be a life-changing experience.

Tuition is \$425.
Accommodations are booked separately through the institute.

For details and to register, visit
JenTheYogaLawyer.com/sacred-harvest-retreat/

THURSDAY, SEPT 25

Having Kids in a Toxic World: Prepare Your Body, Protect Your Future – 6-7pm. Are you planning to start a family or grow your existing one in 2026? Before embarking on your pregnancy journey, it's crucial to understand how environmental toxins can impact your fertility, pregnancy, and future baby's health. Join us for an eye-opening free lecture by Dr. Olivia Shelton, a naturopathic doctor and public health educator specializing in preconception care and fertility optimization. FREE (Registration required). New Jersey Natural Medicine, 2424 Lamington Road, Bedminster. 973-267-2650. NJNaturalMedicine.com.

Better Golf with Hypnosis – 7pm; Zoom. Maximize your skill and stroke through relaxation techniques and guided imagery and play better golf. \$50. For information and link to sessions, contact Barry at 908-303-7767 or barry@hypnosiscounselingcenter.com. HypnosisCounselingCenter.com.

SUNDAY, SEPT 28

2nd Annual MetaphysiFest™ – 12noon-5pm. MetaphysiFest™ is unique in that there is no replication of service, business promoted, or products vended. The fee for a service remains at \$45 for each practitioner whether one chooses a 15 minute or 1/2 hour session. Free admission. 10 vendors in all create a low key petite vibe that invites the curious, as well as the more seasoned seeker. In its second year, MetaphysiFest™ humbly calls for a looksee on this Sunday afternoon in September. Free admission. Long Hill Senior Center, 769 Valley Road, Gillette. JoaniesWhiteLightHealing.com/metaphysifest.

Meet Me In Morristown – 12noon-5pm. Find me at the Body in Mind Booth Fall Festival on Morristown Green, Park Place, Morristown. Sharing energy and information about Be The Medicine, helping through education and personal sessions since 1984: training healers and all to heal themselves since 1996. Free. Festival

PLAN AHEAD

FRI-SUN OCT 17-19

25th Annual Wise Traditions Conference sponsored by the Weston A. Price Foundation.

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Info & to Register visit
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October 17-19

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Guided by Shaman Janet StraightArrow.

For details
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Info Morristown-NJ.org. BeTheMedicine.com.

Botanical Candle Making Workshop – 1-3pm. Connect with the timeless art and valuable skill of candle making while cultivating a sense of calm, creativity, and mindfulness. \$80-\$60. See event for pricing. Mad Lavender Farm, 452 Co Rd 579, Milford. 908-310-5973. MadLavenderFarm.com/botanical-candle-making-workshop-july

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 9

Sacred Harvest Retreat – Oct. 9-12. Enjoy the beauty of the Pocono Mountains while you embark on a journey of profound transformation. Whether you are new to the medicine wheel or seeking to deepen your understanding, this retreat promises to be a life-changing experience held at the Himalayan Institute in Honesdale PA. \$425 tuition (accommodations booked separately through the institute). For details and to register, visit JenTheYogaLawyer.com/sacred-harvest-retreat/

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 10

The 10/10 Alignment Crystal Bowl Sound Bath – 7-8:15pm. The number 10 symbolizes new beginnings, divine order, and spiritual awakening. Doubled (10/10), it amplifies energy for personal transformation and alignment. October is a month of transitions and shedding — just like autumn leaves falling, it's a natural time for letting go. Early bird until 10/3: \$70, afterward \$85. RSVP req. Quantum Light Wellness Center, 170 Township Line Rd, Bldg B, Hillsborough. 908-328-

2112. For information and to RSVP, visit QuantumLightWellness.com/events.

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 17

Exploring Mastery For Healing Professionals Retreat – 10/17, 3pm-10/19, 1pm. Learn advanced ways to hold space for individuals and groups, how to work with challenges in myriad situations, and how to stay safe to avoid and also clear yourself from taking on energy and entities. A weekend of learning, healing, and raising your energy, awareness, and offering peaceful, confident solutions to your challenges as a healer. Guided by Shaman Janet StraightArrow. \$777 if pd by 10/1; \$827 thereafter. Art Farm in the Catskills. For details and to register call 973-647-2500 and visit BeTheMedicine.com.

Ongoing Events



Monday

Wu Ji Jing Gong Tai Chi - Beginners

– 11am-12noon. Learn a series of slow, gentle and meditative movements to help with your balance and reduce stress. No prereq req. Led by Patty Pagano. Series discounts: \$100/4-wk or drop in \$30. Private sessions also available. Martinsville Community Center, 1961 Washington Valley Rd., Martinsville. 908-392-1313 or pattyqigongforhealing@gmail.com. QiGongForHealing.org.

Wu Ji Jing Gong Qi Gong - Beyond Beginners

– 12noon-1pm, in person / 8-9pm on Zoom. Patty Pagano guides students into greater depth analysis and refinement of movements. Prerequisite Wu Ji Jing Gong Qi Gong for beginners. In-person or zoom series: \$100/4-wk or drop in \$30. Zoom series discounts \$80/4-wk or \$25 drop in. Martinsville Community Center, 1961 Washington Valley Rd., Martinsville.

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9am -2pm

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Patty Pagano@ 908-392-1313
pattyqigongforhealing@gmail.com or
Judy Bianco@ 908-902-0011
jlbianco.web@gmail.com

QiGongForHealing.org

Ongoing Events

908-392-1313 or pattyqigongforhealing@gmail.com. QiGongForHealing.org.

Tuesday

Wu Ji Jing Gong Tai Chi Beyond Beginners

- 5-6pm. Patty Pagano leads class focused on the healing aspect of the art with emphasis on developing tai chi self practice to gather and direct Qi within your body. Prereq: Wu Ji Jing Gong Tai Chi for Beginners. Led by Patty Pagano. Series

disc: \$100/4-wk or drop in \$30. Martinsville Community Center, 1961 Washington Valley Rd., Martinsville. Private sessions available. 908-392-1313 or pattyqigongforhealing@gmail.com. QiGongForHealing.org.

Wednesday

Swimming Dragon Practice - 11am-12noon. Lead by Patty Pagano. A ancient flowing and dynamic Qi Gong practice to enhance flexibility and energy circulation.

Prereq: swimming Dragon for Beginners. Series discounts: \$100/4-wk or drop in \$30. Martinsville Community Center, 1961 Washington Valley Rd., Martinsville. 908-392-1313 or pattyqigongforhealing@gmail.com. QiGongForHealing.org

Wednesday Sound Healing/Meditation -

6:45-7:45pm. Join our weekly group sound healing meditation. Enjoy unique sound healing meditations for mind, body and spirit. Using crystal bowls, gong, chimes, guided sounds, singing, chanting, etc. we'll facilitate your healing journey. Bring along a meditation mat, pillow, etc. \$25 per person; pre-registration req. Private sessions and Veteran Discounts available. A Year and a Day Mystical Shoppe 413 Bond Street, Asbury Park 848-217-2371 Web: AYearAndADayMysticalShoppe.com

Thursday

Rising Empress Women's Circle -

7-8pm; Thurs, 9/11-11/20. RISING EMPRESS Women's Circle. A safe, confidential, and welcoming space for women exploring or embracing life without alcohol. Whether you're confidently alcohol-free or just beginning to question your relationship with drinking, this circle offers connection, compassion, and a community of women walking this path together. Weekly themes include: Who am I becoming without alcohol? Rediscovering joy & playfulness Releasing guilt, shame, and self-criticism Reclaiming self-trust and intuition Cultivating self-compassion. Spiritual MaMa Healing Center, 55 Leonardville Road, Belford. 347-676-0091. SpiritualMaMa.org.

Wu Ji Jing Gong Qi Gong: Beginners

- 7:30-8:30pm. Learn 15 meditative and repeating movements that will help you relax and open your mind, body and Qi plus principles of alignment. No prereq required. Led by Patty Pagano. Series discounts: \$100/4-wk or drop in \$30. Private sessions also available. Martinsville Community Center, 1961 Washington Valley Rd., Martinsville. 908-392-1313 or pattyqigongforhealing@gmail.com. QiGongForHealing.org

Friday

Friday Psychic Readings and Energy Healings -

2-7pm. Need direction or an energy reboot? Get a 10-minute Reading or Energy Healing for only \$30. Walk-ins or appointments are welcome. A Year and a Day Mystical Shoppe, 413 Bond Street, Asbury Park. 848-217-2371. AYearandadaymystic.com. AYearAndADayMysticalShoppe.com.



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page 2.

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Holistic dental care that supports the body as well as teeth and gums. By treating the root cause, not just the symptoms, our team helps improve patients' quality of life through

dentistry that respects and honors whole-body health. See ad, page 40.

Holistic Chiropractors

SAMSARA CHIROPRACTIC WELLNESS CENTER

Dr Jennifer Redmond
153 N. Auten Ave., Unit 2, Somerville
908-300-8800
SamsaraChiropractic.com



The body is designed to heal itself but structural issues, toxins, lack of nutrients or an emotional component can affect overall health. We offer Whole-istic healing techniques including Neuroemotional Tech-

nique, Active Release techniques, Activator, Flexion Distraction and more! See ad, page 29.

Holistic Healing & Wellness Technologies

QUANTUM LIGHT WELLNESS CENTER

170 Township Line Rd, Bldg B, Hillsborough
908-328-2112
info@QuantumLightWellness.com
QuantumLightWellness.com



Quantum Light Wellness Center in beautiful Hillsborough, NJ offers amazing non-invasive holistic technologies that optimize wellness, balances energy, and promotes the

body's natural ability to heal itself in a nurturing and transformative environment. See ad, page 7.

Holistic Health / Functional Medicine

WHOLISTIC MD

Dr. Monica Sood
973-996-4496
support@wholisticmdmail.com
WholisticMD.io



Experience a powerful blend of science and soul. Wholistic MD offers virtual health solutions rooted in Functional Medicine and Quantum Human Design. Get your free personalized chart and discover the blueprint to healing, clarity, and aligned living. See ad, page 13.

Hypnosis/ Hypnotherapy

HYPNOSIS COUNSELING CENTER

Barry Wolfson
Offices: Flemington, Princeton, Livingston
908-303-7767
HypnosisCounselingCenter.com



Over 35 years of experience. We offer traditional counseling methods and the art of hypnotherapy in private and group settings, in person or virtual, for weight loss, stress, smoking, confidence building,

phobias, insomnia, test taking, sports improvement, public speaking, and more. See ad, page 9

Legal Services

LAW OFFICE OF JENNIFER MOHAMED LLC

Jennifer Mohamed, Esq
Office in Flemington
908-335-9242
Jennifer@jennifermohamedlaw.com
JenniferMohamedLaw.com



Provides trusted legal guidance to small wellness businesses and practitioners. From business formation and contracts to liability protection and compliance, Jen offers approachable one-on-one service, seasoned advice and big law quality at boutique firm pricing. See ad, page 11.

Light Therapy

ACUPUNCTURE WORKS CENTER

Kristin A. Dudley LAc & Herbalist
84 Park Ave, Ste G-103C, Flemington
973-979-1652 · Pointdoctor@aol.com
AcupunctureWorksCenter.com



New services include light therapy (red, yellow and blue rays), midroneedline and crystal mat infrared treatments. Reduce pain, increase energy, facial rejuvenation, etc. See ad, page 31.

Integrative Psychotherapy

BOBBIE LYNN EDWARDS LPC, NCC, M.ED

Licensed Psychotherapist
The Parry House, 12 Center St., Ste. #9
Clinton, NJ
908-892-8978 · HunterdonTherapist.com



Licensed psychotherapist for 35 years. Practicing integrating psychotherapy focusing on a broad spectrum of spiritual philosophies and practices to assist in your healing. Clinically trained to provide guidance and direction to individuals, couples and families. Goals

set within a mutual learning environment is the process. Meditation workshops for small and large groups are available. Call for free consultation and further information.

Meditation

THIRSTY RADISH

Vanessa Young
vanessa@thirstyradish.com
ThirstyRadish.com



Enhance well-being, stress resilience, inner peace, and clarity in custom meditation sessions guided toward your needs and intentions. Restorative sessions include expert coaching on how to meaningfully incorporate mindfulness and meditation into your life for positive

results.

Meditation/Spiritual

CENTER FOR HEALING AND EMPOWERMENT

Phyllis Livera
Somerville, NJ
732-882-9676
CenterForHealingAndEmpowerment.com



Are you seeking deeper meaning in your life? Are you stressed and ready for a change? Tired of being in both physical or emotional pain? We offer spiritual development, meditation and mini-me yoga

classes, which have been helping people live more productive, happier lives.

Mobile & inStudio Massage Service

UNA LUNA MASSAGE

Dania Vasquez, LMT
Serving Greater Hunterdon
908-440-1956
unalunamassage@gmail.com
UnaLunaMassage.com

A mobile massage service brings rejuvenating, therapeutic bodywork to your location. Now, offering in-studio massage too! With high quality and professionalism, every session is tailored to individual needs and preferences using top-tier massage techniques and premium products to ensure an optimally tranquil atmosphere. See ad, page 25.

Mystical Shoppe

A YEAR AND A DAY MYSTICAL SHOPPE

413 Bond Street, Asbury Park, NJ 07712
848-217-2371
ayearandadaymysticalshoppe@yahoo.com
AYearAndADayMysticalShoppe.com



Metaphysical retail store offering crystals, gemstones, incense, essential oils, books, Tarot and Oracle cards, specialty candles, smudge supplies and more! Psychics, Shamans, Ministers and Reiki/Energy/Crystal healers. Aura

photos with 3D imaging, meditations and in-store classes and workshops, and more.

COMING SOON

Natural Awakenings is planning a new section focused on a health and wellness community.

First up is....



The section will include:

Advertising Opportunities

Networking Events

Articles Highlighting Montclair's vibrant Health and Wellness Community and Businesses.

To learn more about advertising, how to contribute content or have a suggestion to offer

Contact Joe Dunne
908-405-1515 call/text
joe@naturalawakeningsnj.com

Community Resource Guide

Naturopathic Medicine

NEW JERSEY NATURAL MEDICINE

Dr. Jason Frigerio ND, LAC
 Dr. Olivia Shelton, ND
 2424 Lamington Road, Bedminster
 973-267-2650 • NJNaturalMedicine.com



Since 2004, NJNM has treated patients with naturopathic, Chinese, ayurvedic and biological medicine. Our guiding principle: to observe and treat the whole person, not just symptoms to identify and treat the root cause of illness, help restore balance and promote optimal health. See ad, page 19.

Qi Gong

QI GONG FOR HEALING

Patty Pagano
 908-392-1313
 pattyqigongforhealing@gmail.com
 QiGongForHealing.org



Experience Qi through the gentle movements of Tai Chi & Qi Gong with instructor Patty Pagano. Live classes in Martinsville and Chester. Private appointments and Zoom classes also. See ad, page 9

Rehab & Wellness

LIVE FULLY NOW REHAB & WELLNESS

Blake Schicker
 1001 County Rd. 517, Hackettstown
 862-244-5885
 LiveFullyNowRehab.com



A unique blend of science-based rehabilitation and traditional healing therapies designed to support deep, lasting wellness. Experience one-on-one care through services such as CranioSacral Therapy, Acupuncture, Myofascial Release, Manual Lymph Drainage, Reiki, and more. See ad, page 17.

Reiki & Hypnosis

ALICE RICH REIKI CENTER

Alice Rich, Certified Master Teacher
 Usui Reiki Ryoho, Karuna Reiki®, Crystal Healing, Certified Hypnotist
 732-501-7628
 alice@AliceRichReikiCenter.com
 AliceRichReikiCenter.com



Reiki, Crystal Healing and Integrated Energy Therapy® or Hypnosis sessions can help reduce pain physically, mentally and emotionally, promote a healthy lifestyle, achieve personal and professional goals, create balance and harmony and advance your spiritual journey. Private sessions and classes. Certification classes on Reiki, Crystal Healing and IET.

Reiki & Reflexology

HARMONY FOR US

Odile Denizet
 908-963-6417
 Odiled419@gmail.com
 HarmonyForUs.com



A certified Reiki Master and Reflexologist with a background in energy medicine and holistic wellness, Odile's sessions are gentle yet profound, creating space for release, clarity, and renewal. Odile works with both humans and animals, honoring the deep connections we share and the wisdom each being carries. See ad, page 13.

Spiritual Healing, Teaching

JANET STRAIGHTARROW

Shaman, Master Healer-Teacher, Mentor, Sage, Reiki Master, Astrologer
 973-647-2500
 Janet@BeTheMedicine.com
 BeTheMedicine.com



Mentoring Healers-Teachers-Therapists, Spiritual Seekers, Summer Retreats, Trainings, Classes, Profound Healing, Clearing, Reclaim yourself, Enjoy life. Shamanic and Intuitive Energy Sessions. Soul Retrievals. Past Life, Ancestral, Current life healing. Business, Home, and Land clearings. More. See ad, page 7.

Turn Your Passion Into a Business

Own Your Own Natural Awakenings Magazine!

Make a meaningful impact in your community by becoming the owner of a *Natural Awakenings* magazine. Empower others with current, valuable insights and resources to enhance their physical, mental, emotional and spiritual well-being.

As a franchise owner, you'll inspire positive change, provide readers with tools for healthier living and connect local businesses with an audience eager for transformation.

Why Own a *Natural Awakenings* Magazine?

- Create a Healthier Community: Be the go-to resource for wellness and personal growth in your area.
- Boost Your Income: Take control of your financial future with a proven business model.
- Enjoy a Flexible Lifestyle: Work from home while pursuing a fulfilling, dynamic career.

What We Offer:

- A proven business model with low startup costs.
- Comprehensive training and friendly, ongoing support.
- Flexible work schedule with many work-from-home opportunities.
- Access to a network of like-minded franchise owners.
- Financing Options Available.

Join a thriving network of passionate franchise owners reshaping the future of holistic health and wellness.

Call 239-206-2000 for a FREE evaluation of your community's potential. Learn more or apply today at:

Corp.NaturalAwakenings.com



Own a business that makes a difference.

Call for a free evaluation of your community's potential at 239-206-2000.
To apply or learn more, visit Corp.NaturalAwakenings.com.

Add Your Community to Where *Natural Awakenings* Is Now Publishing:

- Atlanta, GA
- Boston, MA
- Broward County, FL
- Bucks/Montgomery Counties, PA
- Central Florida/Greater Orlando, FL
- Central New Jersey
- Charlotte, NC
- Chicago, IL
- Columbia, SC
- Dallas, TX
- Daytona/Volusia/Flagler Counties, FL
- Detroit/Wayne County, MI
- Fairfield & Southern Litchfield Counties, CT
- Grand Traverse Region/Northern Michigan
- Greater Ann Arbor, MI
- Greater Lansing, MI
- Greater Oakland, Macomb, Livingston, Genesee, MI
- Gulf Coast, Alabama/Mississippi
- Houston, TX
- Jacksonville/St. Augustine, FL
- Lancaster/Berks, PA
- Lehigh Valley, PA
- Long Island, NY
- Milwaukee, WI
- Monmouth/Ocean Counties, NJ
- Naples/Fort Myers, FL
- New York City, NY
- North Central New Jersey
- North New Jersey
- Northwest Florida
- Palm Beach, FL
- Philadelphia, PA
- Phoenix, AZ
- Rhode Island
- Richmond, VA
- Sarasota, Manatee, Charlotte and DeSoto Counties, FL
- South Central Pennsylvania
- South Jersey, NJ
- Southeast North Carolina
- Space & Treasure Coast, FL
- Tampa, FL
- Tucson, AZ
- Twin Cities, MN
- Westchester/Putnam/Dutchess, NY
- Western Michigan



This information is not intended as an offer to sell, or the solicitation of an offer to buy, a franchise. It is for informational purposes only. Currently, the following states regulate the offer and sale of franchises: California, Hawaii, Illinois, Indiana, Maryland, Michigan, Minnesota, New York, North Dakota, Oregon, Rhode Island, South Dakota, Virginia, Washington and Wisconsin. If you are a resident of one of these states, we will not offer you a franchise unless and until we have complied with applicable pre-sale registration and disclosure requirements in your jurisdiction.

Natural Awakenings Readers!

Is Your Dentist TRULY Holistic?

Finding a holistic dentist that truly aligns with your wellness lifestyle can be a challenge. At Holistic Dental Center of NJ, we go beyond the basics to deliver a whole-body approach to oral health.



Holistic Dental Center of NJ	Other Holistic Offices
✓ SMART-Certified Mercury Removal: Comprehensive protection to prevent exposure to mercury vapor.	✗ Basic Mercury Removal: May not follow all or any of IAOMT's certified protocols for mercury safety.
✓ Meridian Analysis: We map and connect your teeth to your ENTIRE body for deeper health insights/analysis.	✗ Limited Whole-Body Focus: Sometimes holistic in name, but often limited in practice.
✓ Ozone Therapy: Naturally disinfects and promotes healing—chemical-free used alongside ALL treatment.	✗ Chemical Disinfection: May use fluoride or chemical rinses instead of ozone's natural, non-toxic properties.
✓ Oral Bacteria Checks & 3D Imaging: Early detection of hidden risks for true whole-body prevention.	✗ Minimal Oral Health Screenings: May not go beyond standard check-ups.
✓ Biocompatibility Testing: Personalized to your unique health needs—safe, non-toxic, and truly holistic.	✗ Limited Material Testing: Risks using materials that may cause sensitivities, allergies, or toxic reactions.

SPECIAL PROMOTION!

New Patients who place SDS Implants Get a FREE 3D Scan + Vitamin D Test!
Exclusions apply.
Call for details.

"I was seeing a dentist for over 30 years, and when I was invited to try the Holistic Dental Center for the first time, I was so impressed with the office. The best dental experience I have ever had in my life."

- Dr. Glenn Gero, Naturopathic Physician

"Amazing service!! In-depth explanation from digital x-ray to 3-D of your teeth to explaining oral hygiene and your own oral microbiome, good and bad bacteria."

- Katherine B.

With Over
700+
REVIEWS!

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NOW**

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SDS SWISS DENTAL SOLUTIONS

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IAABDM



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