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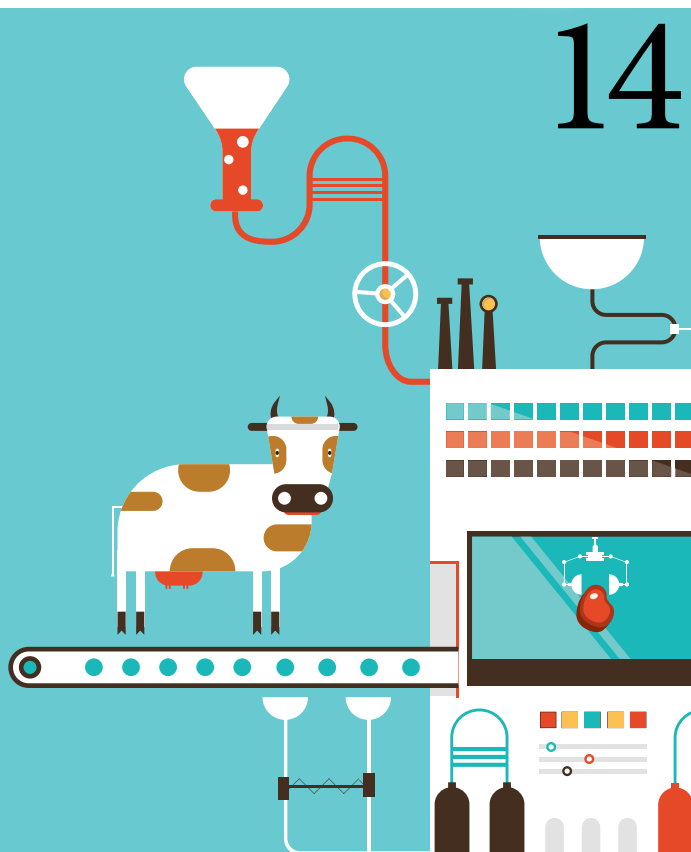
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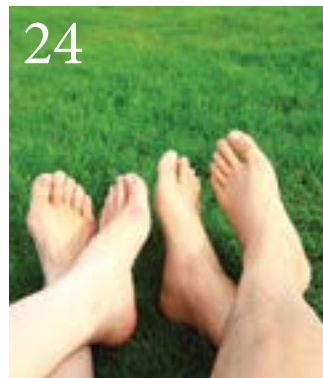
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## letter from publisher

**D**ear Readers,  
As always, my intention for this issue is to provide a source of inspiration for your health, wellness, and environment. To be a source of empowerment. The thing is, many struggle to feel empowered when the ground buckles beneath our feet. And we all have witnessed the buckling, courtesy of the year 2020.

Full disclosure: I'm a Scorpio. I live in the murky, dark waters and will go as deep as I can. Sometimes the speaking of love, light and togetherness doesn't quite reach me. Meaning, it's not my natural way of being. This allows me to see from a different perspective. Personally and professionally, I've been rather quiet, in observation of world events. Our world is a mirror—that means what we see outside is what's happening inside. And what I observe is a world re-evaluating its identity. Shifting to an entirely new one; shedding the old, yet still anticipating the new. It feels chaotic but is a requirement to uplevel. Where some see problems, I see growth.

Recently my life experiences compelled me to evaluate my own self-worth. I had to ask how much I valued myself and what was at risk if I remained in the situation. When I dug DEEP, the answer was the one I'd known all along. That I absolutely could not, under any circumstance, continue in the same manner. I stood my ground, holding to my values and self-worth without budging, without fear of the ground buckling beneath my feet. I gambled on ME, knowing that the fear didn't define me. That I'd be ok no matter what result.

I believe in every moment we're sending a signal to the universe that says "this is what I believe I'm worth." The universe is always listening, and always responding. However, the confusion lies in not really seeing the truth of the signal we're sending out. When we find ourselves in undesirable situations, it's often because we devalued ourselves. We've compromised, and the universe has responded accordingly.

I invite you to take a magnifying glass to every area of your life. Energy does not compartmentalize; what's happening in one area is absolutely affecting the others. In other words, a behavior present in your parenting, for example, will show up in your business. Growth and expansion are often messy and dark. But so worth it. When I stood my ground, believing in myself and all that I am, I got everything I wanted. And more.

Love,

*Donna*



HEALTHY LIVING HEALTHY PLANET

**natural**  
awakenings

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*Location: 301 Turner St., Clearwater. For more information or to make an appointment, call 727-466-6789 or visit [LifeWorksWellnessCenter.com](http://LifeWorksWellnessCenter.com). See ad page 20.*

## news briefs



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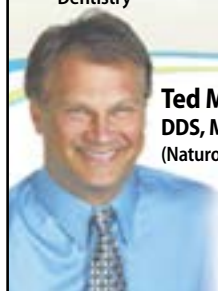
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## IndyPL Begins Phased Reopening of Branches to Patrons

The first phase of resuming in-branch patron services began on Monday, June 15 at select Indianapolis Public Library locations, with certain limitations to ensure the safety of patrons and staff in regards to the Covid-19 crisis.

Curbside pickup of materials, which began on May 18, will continue each day between 12-5 pm. Book drops are the preferred method for returning materials. The InfoZone, located within The Children's Museum, will remain closed until further notice. The Lawrence Branch continues to be closed for major renovations.

All patrons over two years old are required to wear masks, and a library staff member will be present at building entrances to monitor capacity. Plexiglass barriers will be present at transaction points, and social distancing of six feet is to be maintained. There will be a one-hour time limit on public computers, and regular cleaning of all facilities. Patrons will be asked to maintain proper hygiene and to keep visits brief. The Library will continue to evaluate its environment for staff and patrons. Safety standards will be subject to change as necessary.

For more information and specific details for library locations and services, please visit [IndyPL.org](http://IndyPL.org).



## Safety First at Indianapolis Center for Implant and Cosmetic Dentistry

Dr. Ted Reese, DDS, MAGD, NMD is serving his patients in a covid-19 safe environment. Vollara and Surgically Clean Air medical air purifiers are being utilized in the reception and treatment rooms throughout the office. These NASA-certified purifiers are proven effective against virus-based pathogens like the coronavirus. Most notably, the purifiers kill 99.6% of all viruses.

The Indy office also utilizes ozone in water lines, serving as an antibacterial/antifungal agent for healing purposes. Prior to appointments, patients use a molecular iodine pre-procedure rinse to kill bacteria and throughout the office, a hypochlorous acid is used for disinfectant. When it comes to safety, no expense is spared!

At Dr. Reese's office, new patients seeking a holistic approach to dental care are always welcome. Insurance is accepted. Office hours are Monday—Thursday 8am-5pm by appointment.

Location: 7218 US 31 S, Indianapolis. For more information or to schedule an appointment, visit [CalmingFears.com](http://CalmingFears.com), email [ReeseOffice@gmail.com](mailto:ReeseOffice@gmail.com) or call the office at 317-882-0228. See ad on pg 5.



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## Blooming Life Yoga Studio + School's FREE Yoga Event Series in Zionsville

Don't miss this fantastic FREE Summer Event hosted by Blooming Life Yoga Studio + School every Saturday morning beginning June 27th, from 9-10 am, weather permitting. Meet in front of the park gazebo at Lions Club Park, located at 11053 Sycamore St. Zionsville.

Bring the family, enjoy some fresh air, and move the body through a beginner-friendly yoga flow. All ages and levels are welcome! Be sure to bring your yoga mat, water bottle, and sunscreen.

The studio is now open, offering in-studio + live stream classes and workshops. Check out the BLY website for all the details, including the studio's safety action plan to keep all participants safe.

*Location: Blooming Life Yoga Studio + School, 30 S. Elm St, Zionsville. Free yoga series is at 11053 Sycamore St. Zionsville. For more information or to register for classes, visit [BloomingLifeYoga.com](http://BloomingLifeYoga.com). Email: [Info@BloomingLifeYoga.com](mailto:Info@BloomingLifeYoga.com). See ad on pg 12.*

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## health briefs

### Reduce Cognitive Decline with Tai Chi

In good news for the 10 to 20 percent of people over age 65 that suffer with mild cognitive impairment, research from China's Central South University, in Hunan, shows that practicing the gentle ancient martial art of tai chi can significantly improve memory, learning, mental speed and attention, the ability to formulate abstract ideas, mental flexibility and visuospatial perception. The research analyzed data from 10 studies that included 1,061 people with symptoms such as forgetting conversations and names, and having difficulty with complex tasks. "As it emphasizes mental concentration, physical balance, full-body stretching and relaxation, and relaxed breathing, tai chi has a great potential for becoming widely integrated into rehabilitation interventions for various medical and psychological conditions," write the study's authors.

### Eat More Citrus for a Thinner Waistline

Research published in the *Phytotherapy Research Journal* analyzed 13 studies from around the world involving 921 people. The studies showed that eating citrus fruits or their extract can significantly reduce body weight. The research data found that citrus and its extracts reduced body weight by an average of 2.8 pounds per person and almost an inch of waist and hip circumference. It also reduced body mass index among those studied.

### Reduce Artery Plaque Risk with Berberine

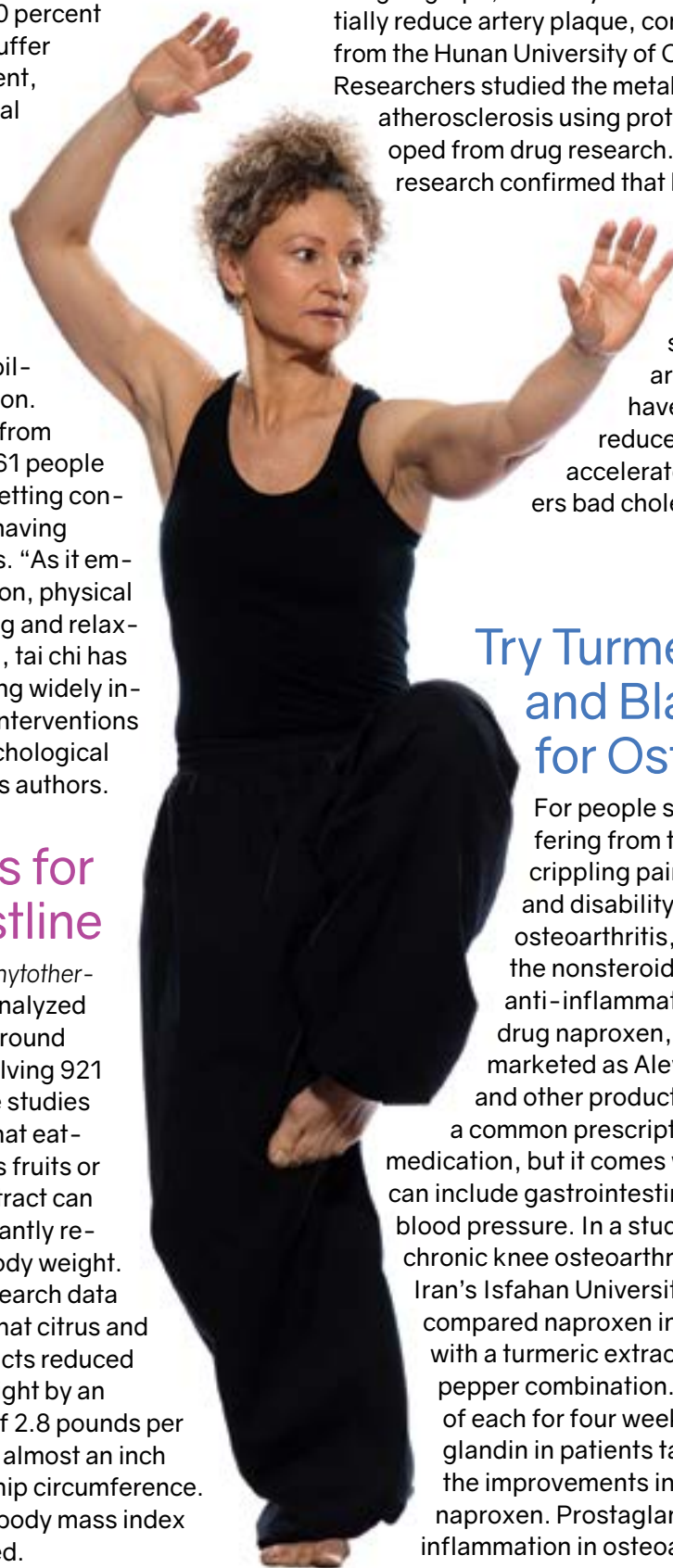
Berberine, an alkaloid compound found in goldenseal, Oregon grape, barberry and other herbs, can potentially reduce artery plaque, concludes a new study from the Hunan University of Chinese Medicine.

Researchers studied the metabolic pathways for atherosclerosis using protein interactions developed from drug research. The database-driven research confirmed that berberine reduces artery inflammation and the thickening of blood vessel walls that can lead to atherosclerosis—the hardening of the arteries. Previous studies have found that berberine reduces blood sugar levels, accelerates weight loss and lowers bad cholesterol levels.

### Try Turmeric, Ginger and Black Pepper for Osteoarthritis

For people suffering from the crippling pain and disability of osteoarthritis, the nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drug naproxen, marketed as Aleve and other products, is

a common prescription or over-the-counter medication, but it comes with side effects that can include gastrointestinal distress and higher blood pressure. In a study of 60 patients with chronic knee osteoarthritis, researchers at Iran's Isfahan University of Medical Sciences compared naproxen in a double-blind trial with a turmeric extract, ginger and black pepper combination. After two doses a day of each for four weeks, the levels of prostaglandin in patients taking the herbs matched the improvements in those patients taking naproxen. Prostaglandin levels gauge joint inflammation in osteoarthritis.







## Help Recover from Stroke with Ear Acupuncture

Acupuncture in the ear can help speed rehabilitation of stroke patients, researchers from the Nanjing University of Chinese Medicine have found. In a study of 42 stroke patients, those treated with auricular acupuncture for just six days showed significant improvements in range of motion for arms and legs compared to those given standard acupuncture treatments and conventional rehabilitation.

## Avoid Chlorhexidine Mouthwash to Reduce Cavity Risk

Chlorhexidine gluconate, a mouthwash commonly prescribed by dentists to treat the swelling, redness and bleeding gums of gingivitis, actually increases acidic levels in the mouth, leading to an increase in cavity-causing bacteria, reports a new study from the UK University of Plymouth, published in the journal *Scientific Reports*. The researchers analyzed saliva and blood samples of 36 healthy people that used the chlorhexidine twice a day for seven days and compared the results to using a placebo for the same amount of time. Other recent research has found that the germicidal mouthwash disrupted the ability of oral bacteria to turn nitrate into nitrite, a key molecule for reducing blood pressure, increasing the risk of higher systolic blood pressure. Chlorhexidine has been used increasingly as a pre-rinse before dental procedures due to COVID-19 concerns.



## Boost Motivation with Ayurvedic Bacopa



Feeling a lack of motivation and finding it difficult to find pleasure in life has a clinical name—anhedonia—and researchers from the University of Florence have found a promising treatment for it in *Bacopa monnieri*, also known as Brahmi, an Ayurvedic herb used for centuries to boost

memory and cognitive performance. Dividing 42 patients with anhedonia into two groups, the researchers gave half of them the antidepressant medication citalopram (Calexa) plus 300 milligrams of Bacopa; the control group was given only the medication. After four weeks, the Bacopa group had significant improvements in symptoms and were able to experience pleasure more easily than the control group.

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### Tree Believers

#### Forest Loss Leads to Spread of Human Disease

A new Stanford University study published in *Landscape Ecology* reveals viruses like COVID-19 that jump from animals to people will likely become more

common as people continue to transform natural habitats into agricultural land. Researchers found the loss of tropical forests in Uganda put people at greater risk of physical interactions with wild primates and the viruses they carry, with implications for the emergence and spread of infectious animal-to-human diseases in other parts of the world. People have converted nearly half of the world's land into agriculture. Tropical forests have suffered the most, with some of the highest rates of conversion occurring during the last few decades. Study co-author Tyler McIntosh says, "At the end of the day, land conservation and the reduction of forest fragmentation is our best bet to reduce human [to] wild animal interactions."

### Healthy Glow

#### Ultraviolet Radiation Suppresses Skin Inflammation

In research that could help target new treatments for skin cancer, British scientists have identified how human skin suppresses inflammation after exposure to ultraviolet radiation (UVR). In the study at the NIHR Manchester Biomedical Research Centre, healthy volunteers agreed for their skin to be safely exposed to a single, inflammation-causing dose of UVR. Skin samples were taken and researchers examined their immune profile and skin composition over time.

Results showed that the T-cells CD4+GATA3+ and CD8+GATA3+, which help the skin repair itself after UVR exposure, altered skin composition for 14 days. "They could be there to prevent abnormal skin growth or potentially to act as gatekeepers against further inflammation," says lead author Nathan Hawkshaw, Ph.D.

### Natural Thinking

#### Spending Time in Nature Increases Cognitive Performance

More of our time is spent indoors than ever before. One of the ways by which nature may improve cognitive function (i.e., the acquisition of and goal-oriented use of knowledge) is by improving memory formation and recall, specifically that of short-term or working memory, and goal-oriented or directed attention; the kind that requires focused effort. By comparing and contrasting 13 studies, a team of researchers has shed light on this complex interaction in research published in *Frontiers in Psychology*.

The studies used the backward digit span task, which requires participants to invert a series of numbers and repeat them back. All demonstrated significantly improved cognition in nature as compared to urban environments. The benefits of studies like this are two-fold: not only are we learning more about how the brain interacts with its environment, but also how to leverage this interaction to lead healthier, more productive and happier lives.





## Sweet Serenade

### Music as Medicine

A simple strategy—listening to music for 30 minutes a day—can lower post-heart attack anxiety and significantly reduce future cardiac risks, reports a new study from the University of Belgrade School of Medicine, in Serbia, presented at the American College of Cardiology Annual Scientific Session and World Congress of Cardiology. The researchers recruited 350 patients diagnosed with heart attacks and early post-infarction angina at a medical center. Half were randomly assigned to receive standard treatment while half were assigned to regular music sessions in addition to standard treatment. In a follow-up seven years later, the patients with music therapy on average had anxiety scores one-third lower than those on standard treatment and reported lower angina symptoms by about one-quarter. They also had an 18 percent reduction in the rate of heart failure; a 23 percent lower rate of subsequent heart attack; a 20 percent lower rate of needing coronary artery bypass graft surgery; and a 16 percent lower rate of cardiac death.



## Happy Thoughts

### Mindfulness and Meditation May Promote Longevity



In addition to reducing stress and improving general health, mindfulness and meditation techniques have been linked to longevity, as marked by longer telomere length, a biomarker of human aging. In a new research paper in *Scientific Reports*, Spanish researchers at the Navarra Institute for Health Research, in Pamplona, reported that aging, which typically shortens telomere length, showed no association with that marker in a group of long-term meditators. They theorized that long-term meditation could be related to epigenetic mechanisms, in particular, gene-specific DNA methylation changes at distinct sub-telomeric regions. Lead author Maite Mendioroz, M.D., Ph.D., suggests that yoga practice and meditation are related to longer telomere length in blood cells, writing, “Leukocyte telomere shortening has been associated with several age-related conditions such as cardiovascular events, including stroke, myocardial infarction and cognitive performance.”

## COVID Kids

### Stress Can Impact Sperm and Future Offspring

Prolonged fear and anxiety brought on by major stressors such as the COVID-19 pandemic can not only take a toll on a person’s mental health, but may also have a lasting impact on a man’s sperm composition that could affect future offspring, reports a new study in the journal *Nature Communications*. University of Maryland School of Medicine researchers found that the effects of paternal stress can be transferred to offspring through changes in the extracellular vesicles; small, membrane-bound particles that transport proteins, lipids and nucleic acids between cells and interact with maturing sperm. They are produced in large amounts in the reproductive tract and play an integral role in sperm maturation. “Connecting with our friends and loved ones by high-tech means or through simple phone calls can help us maintain ties during stressful days ahead,” advises Joshua Gordon, M.D., Ph.D., director of the National Institute of Mental Health.



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# CULTIVATING CONTENTMENT

## The Spiritual Discipline of Evoking Joy

by Marlaina Donato

Our four-legged friends—from pampered pooch to stray cat—have the inborn ability to seize the moment. No matter what chaotic circumstances may swirl around them, they have a knee-jerk response to spring into playful action or curl up in a patch of inviting sunlight.

As humans, we tend to postpone the smallest of joys and avoid emotional self-care, opting for that extra glass of wine or spending more than usual to feel better for a brief period of time. Tending to our own happiness begins by seeing joy not as a mood dependent upon circumstances, but as a spiritual discipline like any other. Emotional well-being is a garden we must weed and water daily, and in turn, our physical health can't help but be well-nourished by the harvest. Studies through the years have shown that certain sites and organs in the body, including the thymus, immune cells and bone marrow, have receptors for neurotransmitters like serotonin, which could explain why cultivating contentment might boost our natural defenses.

Seasoned yogis and meditators often speak of an inner wellspring of joy that can be accessed through a committed practice. Perhaps joy is less of a

mood and more of a frequency that is accessible to all of us when we're willing to align with its bandwidth. Making it a habit to step outside for 10 minutes to witness a sunset or greet the twilight while dinner cooks can be a beautiful way to advance felicity.

Taking five-minute joy breaks during the workday to listen to a favorite piece of music with earbuds, read a few pages of an inspiring book or notice the clouds is another easy way to tend to happiness. Filling a "joy jar" with lovely memories written on scraps of colorful paper can prompt a spontaneous smile any time of day. Taking a half-hour drive on a pretty back road instead of scrolling through social media can reset depleted emotional reserves.

Today, we can shift our thinking and see contentment as a precious, deserving loved one that needs nourishment like any other. Feeding joy in our lives can pave the daily humdrum road with jewels. In the end, perhaps fostering inner happiness by example is the greatest legacy we can leave behind.

*Marlaina Donato is the author of Spiritual Famine in the Age of Plenty: Baby Steps to Bliss. Connect at AutumnEmbersMusic.com.*



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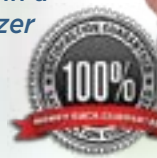
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# BEYOND FACTORY FARMS

## ‘Big Meat’ Comes at High Cost

by Melinda Hemmelgarn

**K**evin Walker, a Michigan State University professor and author of *The Grand Food Bargain and the Mindless Drive for More*, says, “Meat is the poster child of industrial food gone awry.” Independent animal farmers are disappearing while factory farms are getting bigger, causing more air, soil and water pollution in rural communities nationwide, reports the Center for a Livable Future (CLF) at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health.

Large industrialized farms known as concentrated animal feeding operations (CAFO) rely on the routine use of antibiotics to both prevent the spread of disease and promote animal growth and weight gain—a practice known to fuel antibiotic resistance and compromise human health.

### High Cost of Cheap Meat

According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, a push toward greater efficiency

created the shift to industrial livestock production. However, attempts to maximize production for higher returns at minimal cost come at a price.

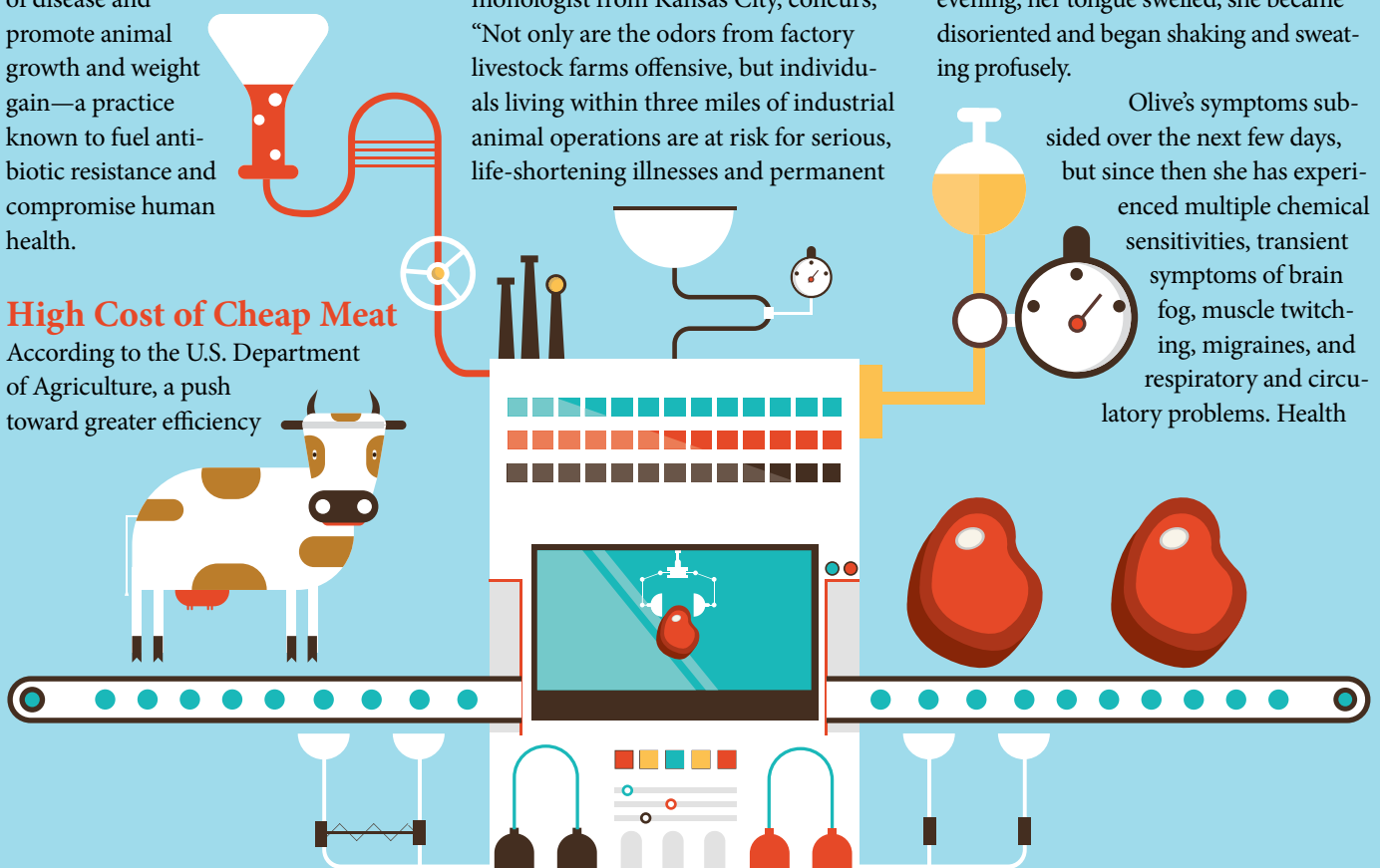
For example, a growing body of evidence shows that CAFO leads to the social and economic decline of rural communities. “Research has consistently found that living near a CAFO is associated with an array of negative health impacts, including respiratory disease, mental health problems and certain types of infections,” says Keeve Nachman, Ph.D., director of the CLF Food Production and Public Health Program.

Everett Murphy, M.D., a retired pulmonologist from Kansas City, concurs, “Not only are the odors from factory livestock farms offensive, but individuals living within three miles of industrial animal operations are at risk for serious, life-shortening illnesses and permanent

disabilities.” Concrete reservoirs designed to hold manure present a problem as well, he adds, “They always leak into the groundwater, spreading antibiotic-resistant bacteria and making the source of water to neighboring communities unusable and toxic.”

Joan Olive says she is living proof that exposure to air pollution from factory farms is every bit as harmful as scientists and health experts have warned about for years. On one fateful December day 16 years ago, Olive was outdoors on her family farm near Spencer, Iowa, when she noticed a strong, sickening odor. Feeling nauseous, she went inside, but later that evening, her tongue swelled, she became disoriented and began shaking and sweating profusely.

Olive’s symptoms subsided over the next few days, but since then she has experienced multiple chemical sensitivities, transient symptoms of brain fog, muscle twitching, migraines, and respiratory and circulatory problems. Health





experts at the University of Iowa identified the source of the sickening odor as toxic hydrogen sulfide from liquid CAFO waste that had been sprayed on farmland one mile from Olive's home. In addition to the region's concentration of hog CAFO, her home sat two miles from 1.5 million chickens.

Today, Olive drinks filtered water and eats organic food to protect her health, but she notices that her symptoms return when triggered by exposure to CAFO air pollution and pesticides. In March, Olive moved to Spearfish, South Dakota, where she's breathing easier and enjoying time outdoors. But she believes she left behind "thousands of rural residents who are having their lives and health destroyed by Big Ag."

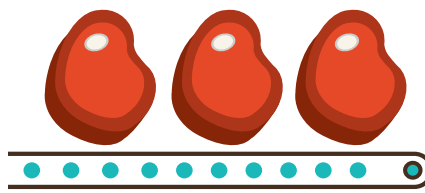
## There Ought to be a Law

"Government oversight and policies designed to safeguard the health of individuals and the environment from these operations have been inadequate," says Bob Martin, director of the CLF Food System Policy Program.

Citing environmental and public health hazards, the American Public Health Association issued a new policy statement last November calling for a precautionary moratorium on all new and expanding CAFO. It advises a complete halt until additional scientific data has been collected and public health concerns addressed.

## Bypassing Industrial Eating

Many consumers don't realize that the majority of beef, pork and chicken sold in supermarkets, served in restaurants and distributed to institutions nationwide comes from the industrial food system. According to the Public Justice Food Project, 85 percent of the meat Americans



Once you learn how our modern industrial food system has transformed what most Americans eat, you become highly motivated to eat something else.

~Eric Schlosser, author of *Fast Food Nation*, *Chew on This* and co-producer of *Food, Inc.*

consume is produced by four corporate giants—Tyson, Smithfield, Cargill and JBS—each accused of hiding labor, animal or environmental abuses behind folksy brand names and packaging images.

To shed light on abuses and steer consumers away from industrial meat, the Center for Food Safety created a website that pulls back the curtain on CAFO. It recommends replacing half of the meat we eat with humane, sustainably raised, grass-fed and organic meat, while replacing the other half with plant-based sources of protein such as beans, peas, lentils, nuts and seeds—a dietary approach that benefits our gut microbes and protects us against a host of chronic diseases.

## Meat Alternatives

As concerns mount about the health, ethical and environmental impact of animal products, the food industry has responded with more plant-based, lab-grown meat alternatives. Yet, according to the *Food and Technology 2019* report by the market research firm The Hartman Group, many meat replacements rely on

highly sophisticated technologies that hardly meet consumers' definitions of "natural".

"It's all about what isn't on the label," says Urvashi Rangan, Ph.D., chief science advisor of the GRACE Communications Foundation. According to Rangan, many plant-based and fake meat products are actually ultra-processed foods that contain genetically engineered ingredients and rely on petroleum-based chemicals that are not required to be listed on the label.

"The Impossible Burger introduces over 48 new proteins to the human diet without a thorough safety investigation," warns Rangan. She questions whether these new meat alternatives are better than meat from animals raised on pasture without routine drugs and synthetic fertilizers.

There's a big difference between the health and environmental impact of meat from animals raised in feed lots versus those raised with regenerative agricultural practices. "Industrial agriculture is absolutely harmful," reports A Greener World, a nonprofit certifier of the trustworthy Animal Welfare Approved label. But thinking we have to go vegan or purchase fake meat to protect our health or the planet is misguided.

## Eating Less, But Better Meat

"Our bodies are designed to be omnivores, and animal products are part of a diverse, real food diet," says Rebecca Thistlethwaite, director of the Niche Meat Processor Assistance Network at Oregon State University. Thistlethwaite, author of *Farms with a Future* and *The New Livestock Farmer: The Business of Raising and Selling Ethical Meat*, believes in ancestral eating and eating as close to nature as possible. She is mindful of por-

# Critical Questions to Find and Support Good Food

Where does my food come from? Who produced it and under what conditions? Were workers treated fairly and animals humanely? What's in or on my food? Were pesticides, antibiotics, hormones, genetically modified ingredients or additives used in producing it? Is it rich or poor in nutrients? What might be the unintended consequences of my food and farming choices? How might those choices affect our environment and future generations?

# Take Action to Stop Factory Farms



The COVID-19 health crisis highlights inequalities in how we produce and distribute food. A new bill, the Farm System Reform

Act (FSRA), will help to create a more healthy, sustainable and equitable model, by placing a moratorium on new Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations (commonly known as factory farms), cracking down on the monopolistic practices of multinational meat corporations and supporting farmers to transition to healthier, pasture-based models and organic farming. To support the FSRA, the Sierra Club has made it easy to contact members of Congress at [Tinyurl.com/BlockFactoryFarms](https://Tinyurl.com/BlockFactoryFarms).

tion size and eats only organic and pasture-raised animal foods to avoid synthetic chemicals and pharmaceuticals.

Will Harris, owner of White Oak Pastures, in Bluffton, Georgia, declares, "It's not the cow, it's the how." Harris transitioned his livestock operation from the industrial model to certified humane animal husbandry and sustainable practices that emulate nature. The switch to a pasture-based system yields healthier animals, he explains, and helps take carbon out of the atmosphere and back into the soil.

In *Cows Save the Planet and Other Improbable Ways of Restoring Soil to Heal the Earth*, author Judith Schwartz describes how grazing animals play a key role in restoring soil health, and therefore human health. "Well-managed pastures and grasslands with ruminant animals can sequester more carbon than they emit, improve soil health and increase groundwater recharge," explains Thistlethwaite. Plus, both livestock and poultry can make use of inedible feeds that humans don't consume, such as grass and sagebrush.

## Power To the People

Rangan and Harris emphasize that the power of consumer spending can shift the market. However, Thistlethwaite says, "We cannot just vote with our forks, as many people don't have that luxury." She urges change at both personal and political

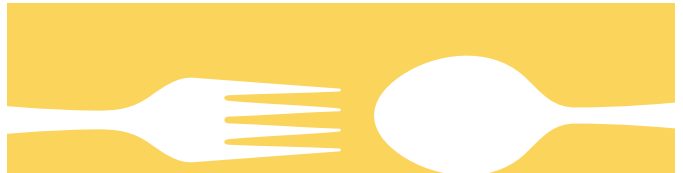
levels, favoring incentive-based approaches with fewer subsidies going to the industrial system.

"We need more farmers raising high-quality animals in a humane, ecologically responsible manner," says Thistlethwaite. But we also need more small-scale slaughterhouses and meat processors throughout the country to get quality meat to more of our tables.

In addition to farmers' markets, cooperatives and community supported agriculture, organizations such as the American Grassfed Association and Local Harvest connect consumers directly to farmers using sustainable practices to help rebuild regional food hubs and networks.

"Start with small steps," suggests Thistlethwaite. "Buy milk from a local creamery, eggs from a farmer in your community or one-quarter cow to fill your freezer from a local, grass-fed beef producer. Reward the farms and ranches that are doing it right by purchasing from them, promoting them, supporting them."

*Melinda Hemmelgarn is an award-winning registered dietitian, writer and nationally syndicated radio host based in Columbia, MO. Reach her at [FoodSleuth@gmail.com](mailto:FoodSleuth@gmail.com). Tune into Food Sleuth Radio at [kopn.org](http://kopn.org).*



## Learn More, Eat Smarter

**Center for Food Safety:** [EndIndustrialMeat.org](http://EndIndustrialMeat.org)

**Consumer Reports:** [Tinyurl.com/MeatGetsMakeover](https://Tinyurl.com/MeatGetsMakeover)

**Food Print:** [Tinyurl.com/WhatIsFoodPrint](https://Tinyurl.com/WhatIsFoodPrint)

**Friends of the Earth:** [foe.org/resources/from-lab-to-fork](http://foe.org/resources/from-lab-to-fork)

**A Greener World:** [AGreenerWorld.org](http://AGreenerWorld.org)

**10 Things You Can Do for the Planet Instead of Giving Up On Animal Agriculture:** [AGreenerWorld.org/a-greener-world/10-things-you-can-do](http://AGreenerWorld.org/a-greener-world/10-things-you-can-do)

**Humane Society Food Industry Scorecard:**

[HumaneSociety.org/resources/food-industry-scorecard](http://HumaneSociety.org/resources/food-industry-scorecard)

**Keep Antibiotics Working:** [KeepAntibioticsWorking.org](http://KeepAntibioticsWorking.org)

**Public Justice Food Project:** [Food.PublicJustice.net/communityresources](http://Food.PublicJustice.net/communityresources)

**Right to Harm film and resources:** [RightToHarm.film](http://RightToHarm.film)

**One Hundred Thousand Beating Hearts film:**  
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## Expressing Your Inner Truth with the Throat Chakra

By Laura Baker

**W**ithin our body resides multiple energy fields called chakras. Although each chakra has its own unique purpose, together they play an important role in the body's energetic system. When chakras are open and clear, the mind, body, and spirit will feel harmonious and in balance. When the chakras are disrupted by daily stress, toxins, or illness, we may feel fatigue, anxious, depressed, and/or general dis-ease.

The fifth chakra is called the throat or Vishuddha. It sits at the pit of our throat and is connected to our ability to communicate our needs in a confident, clear, and truthful way. When the throat chakra is in balance, it allows us to express ourselves diplomatically, and we are able to listen deeply and with compassion.

When the throat chakra is blocked, we are unable to listen to our own needs and the needs of those in our life. We may feel anxious or depressed, and as if we lack a life purpose. We may believe we are misunderstood by others, and that we cannot be our true authentic self. Exercises to Balance and Restore the Throat Chakra

Expression of self is vital to the health and wellbeing of the throat chakra. Here are three exercises to practice unblocking and opening the throat chakra:

■ **Talk it out.** Set the intention to be open and honest in your communication. Express yourself fully and genuinely with close friends and family.

■ **Listen with Compassion.** Most of us listen to others with the intention to speak or share our perspective. Instead, instead of truly listening, we are preparing our own response. To open the throat chakra, practice listening. Train your mind to listen to the other person speak and not to prepare a response. When your response is needed, be authentic.

■ **Journal.** Journaling our uncensored thoughts and feelings is a powerful method of expression. It allows us to see our authentic self and provides an outlet when we do not feel safe to express our truth.

*Laura Baker is an intuitive energy healer and reiki master in the Indianapolis area. Connect with her at SacredSoul444.com. See ad on page 23.*





fears separation until they fall asleep. These actions may not be a problem in the short term or in tough times, but when used repeatedly, the child often becomes more fearful, less confident and unable to function in a normal manner.

In a new study published in the *Journal of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry*, parents learned in 12 weekly sessions how to slowly pull back from accommodating actions while validating the child's emotions and conveying confidence in their ability to handle challenges. Notably, a parent-focused program, Supportive Parenting for Anxious Childhood Emotions, produced better results than the control group, in which the children underwent 12 sessions of cognitive behavioral therapy learning to replace negative thoughts with positive ones. More information on this program for parents and therapists can be found at [SpaceTreatment.net](http://SpaceTreatment.net).

# CALMING KIDS

## Ways to Turn Anxiety Around

by Ronica O'Hara

**I**t is difficult for children to make sense of what's happening in response to COVID-19 as schools close, sports and extracurricular activities stop and many people wear masks. Before these unsettling circumstances took place, one in eight children experienced anxiety disorders, but now parents are reporting that even happy-go-lucky children that skipped through life have turned clingy; regressing to playing with old toys or becoming withdrawn. "The dramatic change in schedules, reduced social contact and worry about the illness itself can all contribute to the anxiety," says Eli Lebowitz, Ph.D., director of the Program for Anxiety Disorders at the Yale Child Study Center. "Some children will also have relatives or friends directly impacted by the virus."

As the situation improves, so should children's emotional well-being, but if

anxiety lingers, parents can take heart in new research from the center that shows how childhood anxiety can be reversed before it becomes a crippling adult condition. The study of 124 children aged 7 to 14 with anxiety disorders found that when parents made simple behavior changes, their kids' symptoms sharply decreased 87.5 percent of the time and disappeared completely 60 percent of the time. Parents drew closer to their children and felt less stressed themselves, and the kids continued to improve even after the study ended.

According to Lebowitz, lead author of the study, the key is to reduce parental accommodation—actions that parents take to soothe and protect their anxious children, like texting to provide constant reassurances, speaking for a child with social fears or staying with a child that

### Everyday Anxiety-Busters

Here are some other straightforward strategies that can lower childhood anxiety.

**Getting physical.** "Encourage your child to do any kind of exercise: jumping, swinging, running, catch, tag, hopscotch, biking, hiking, skateboarding. These activities are all considered weight-bearing because they place deep pressure on the joints and muscles, which calms their sensory systems that help regulate emotions," advises Brittany Ferri, a Rochester, New York, occupational therapist specializing in pediatrics and mental health.

**Getting outdoors.** Sunlight stimulates the production of vitamin D and mood-boosting serotonin, and studies show that even brief nature walks can lower anxiety and improve focus in kids.

### Giving them seeds and a shovel.

Planning and working in their own garden give kids a healthy dose of fresh air, physical activity and a sense of accomplishment, and growing their own vegetables makes them more likely to enjoy eating them.

**Breathing deep.** “Parents can teach children coping skills such as relaxing their body or taking slow deep breaths to help them regulate their anxiety,” says Lebowitz. For example, a child can lie on their back and pretend to blow up a balloon. Or using a fresh flower, a child can breathe in the scent through the nose for a count of four, hold the breath for the same amount of time and then breathe out slowly through the mouth.

**Playing it out.** “Parents can help a child role-play what they could do in a situation that they’re nervous about,” says Leigh Ellen Watts Magness, a clinical social worker and play therapist, in Athens, Georgia. “They can create a puppet show where the characters have a similar problem, create a poster about some strategies they might use to relax or have their figurines talk to other toys about how they feel. All of these things help kids process feelings of anxiety.”

Ronica A. O'Hara is a Denver-based health writer. Connect at [OHaraRonica@gmail.com](mailto:OHaraRonica@gmail.com).

## Words Have Consequences

Some words don't help anxious kids, says University of Minnesota psychology professor Abigail Gewirtz, author of *When the World Feels Like a Scary Place: Essential Conversations for Anxious Parents and Worried Kids*. “These kinds of statements dismiss, minimize or even punish children for their anxiety, and they teach children that anxiety isn't important, or worse, is damaging and should be ignored or stuffed away,” she says.

Amanda Walker, a Los Angeles clinical psychologist, advises, “It is important to try and respond to the anxiety with loving kindness, with compassion and openness. Asking ‘What happened?’ instead of ‘What's wrong?’ changes the way that a challenge is viewed. Other approaches are, ‘I can see why you might feel that way,’ or, ‘It's okay to be scared; lots of kids feel that way.’”

To reinforce a child's confidence, “The key is reminding a child of past

things they were afraid of that never came to pass or bringing to the attention of a child the ways that the child was able to face their fear and overcome it,” says Bruce L. Thiessen, a San Diego clinical psychologist. “Past reminders can increase self-efficacy and build self-confidence, which are powerful anxiety buffers. “Children find it all the more difficult to cope with anxiety if they feel that they are alone in their struggle,” he adds. “It is important to reassure them by saying something like, ‘We are in this together. I am here for you.’ It may be important to add, ‘No matter what happens, you and I are going to find a way to be okay.’”

Statements to avoid: “You don't need to worry. You have nothing to worry about. I'm the adult, let me do the worrying. When I was your age, I had much bigger things to worry about.”



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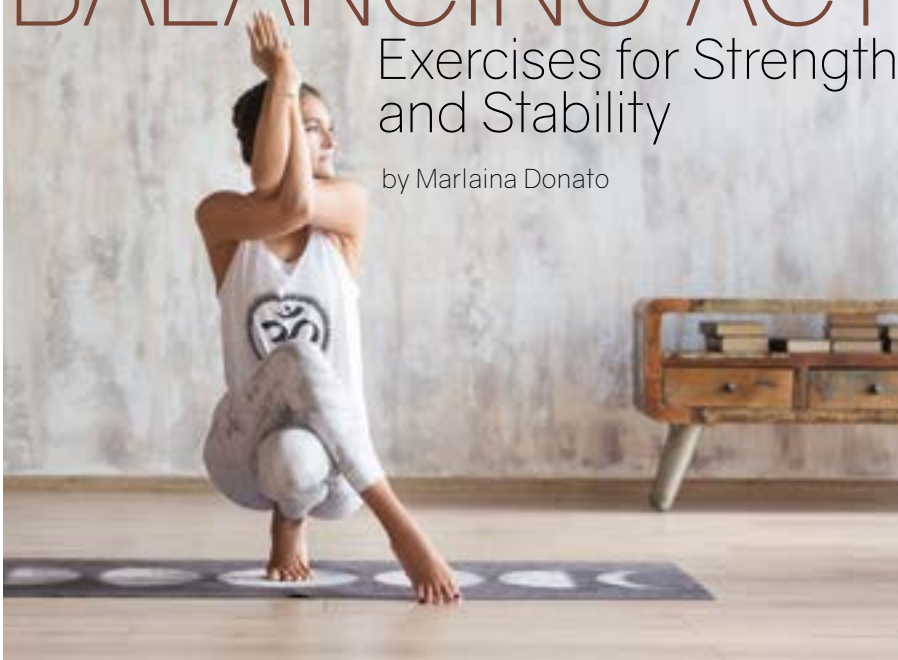
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# BALANCING ACT

## Exercises for Strength and Stability

by Marlaina Donato



Good balance is something we may take for granted until an unexpected fall brings our attention to a brewing problem. Slower reflexes, unconditioned muscles and changes in eyesight can all compromise balance. Statistics show at least one in three people over the age of 65 suffer from injuries related to falls, but regular core-strengthening balance training, yoga and tai chi can lower the risk considerably.

Marching in place and simple exercises added to a customary after-dinner walk on summer evenings can also go a long way. According to a 2013 study of senior women published in the *British Journal of Sports Medicine*, exercising not only reduces the likelihood of falls by 37 percent, but also the severity of injuries such as broken bones by 61 percent.

"Balance is a skill, and like any skill, it gets better with practice," says Mike Ross, a Chicago-based performance enhancement specialist and author of *The Balance Manual*. "The problem is people gradually spend less and less time standing and moving around—chasing kids or doing yard work—and spend more time watching television or sitting in front of the computer."

### Whole Body Equilibrium

Balance training for all ages helps the body to move fluidly as a singular, balanced unit. Stephanie Mansour, a Chicago fitness expert and host of the PBS weekly *Step it Up with Steph* show, says, "Some people who have hip or back pain may have an imbalance: One side is more developed than the other. Other people may feel wobbly during workouts or walking upstairs, or less agile while getting in and out of cars; doing everyday movements. Balance training will help improve those everyday activities."

Full-body exercises engage core muscles to stabilize movement. "You'll be surprised by some muscles that are triggered that are otherwise less engaged during traditional exercises. No matter where you start, it only takes a few minutes of balance work a day to make a difference," says Los Angeles fitness trainer Kollins Ezekh, emphasizing the added benefit of improved posture that naturally reduces lower back stress and resulting chronic pain.

Balance training also packs a positive punch for brain health by focusing the mind and improving cognitive function while lowering stress levels.

### Everyday Activity

Being proactive throughout the day and adopting simple habits have far-reaching effects. "Start in the morning when you're getting dressed for the day and pay attention to which foot you balance on first to put your legs in your pants. Consciously do the opposite. When you're drying your hair or brushing your teeth, balance on your tip toes," suggests Mansour.

Ross recommends staying active in the daily routines. "Make a point of breaking up long periods of sitting like desk work and [watching] television. Get up and play with the kids instead of watching them. If you can, do your own housecleaning and yard work instead of hiring someone. Find a sport that you can engage in as you age. For instance, you might play tennis in your 20s and 30s and then pickleball and Ping-Pong in your 50s."

No matter what type of training we choose, there's a way to fit in balance elements. "You can try yoga, where the different poses really challenge your balance strength," says Ezekh. "When doing weight training, you can do lateral exercises with dumbbells on your shoulders or even squatting movements. You need to use your balance strength to prevent yourself from swaying or toppling over. Even exercises like walking down steps require proper levels of balance."

### A Steady Diet

Vitamin B<sub>12</sub>-rich foods, including whole-grain cereals, plant-sourced milks, eggs, sardines and nutritional yeast, as well as resveratrol-rich fruits like grapes or blueberries, can help improve coordination and motor function. A 2016 study published in the *Journal of Physical Therapy Science* reveals that women over 60 with higher serum vitamin D levels exhibit better stability and strength in their lower extremities.

Overall, fostering good balance pays off in the long run. Ross notes, "Ideally, the time to start proactively doing activities that stimulate your balance is way before that first fall in your 50s and 60s."

*Marlaina Donato is the author of several books and a recording artist. Connect at [AutumnEmbersMusic.com](http://AutumnEmbersMusic.com).*



# GUT TALK

## TIPS FOR A HEALTHY MICROBIOME

by Melinda Hemmelgarn

It's hard to imagine surrendering control of our minds and bodies to trillions of microorganisms, but an ever-growing body of research from the Human Microbiome Project shows how microbes living in and on our bodies affect and even predict our physical and mental health.

The majority of these microorganisms, or microbiota, live within our large intestine. According to Kelly Tappenden, Ph.D., a registered dietitian and head of the Department of Kinesiology and Nutrition at the University of Illinois–Chicago, we have more microbial cells within our gut than we have human cells in our body.

These microbes help digest food, regulate appetite, produce certain vitamins, synthesize chemicals such as serotonin, metabolize carcinogens and regulate our immune system. She suggests that we think of them collectively as an organ that develops and changes as we age.

“A huge proportion of your immune system is actually in your GI tract,” says Dan Peterson, assistant professor of pathology at the Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine. Taking care of our gut microbes is paramount during times of stress and risk of infection. In their book, *The Good Gut: Taking Control of Your Weight, Your Mood, and Your*

*Long-Term Health*, Stanford researchers Justin and Erica Sonnenburg explain how healthy gut bacteria are essential for both metabolic health and strong immunity, adding that the chemicals our gut microbes synthesize behave like drugs—they are absorbed into our bloodstream and influence our biology. Seattle-based biologist Ann Bikle refers to the colon as an “onboard medicine chest”. Unfortunately, warns Sonnenburg, physicians too often prescribe antibiotics, which wreak havoc on our microbiota, leaving us susceptible to disease-causing organisms.

### Fiber for a Strong Defense

The Sonnenburgs define a microbiota-friendly diet as rich in plant-based, high-fiber foods and limited in meat and saturated animal fats. Low-fiber diets contribute to a decline in gut microbe diversity, resulting in a weakened immune system. “Fiber is fuel for the gut,” says Joanne Slavin, Ph.D., a registered dietitian and professor of food science and nutrition at the University of Minnesota–St. Paul. It's naturally found in fruits, vegetables, beans, peas, whole grains, nuts and seeds.

Fermentable fibers such as fruit pectin, beta-glucans in barley and oats, and oligosaccharides in beans are metabolized by gut bacteria to produce short-chain fatty acids that provide energy to cells in the colon. Many fermentable fibers are called “prebiotics” because they promote the growth of beneficial gut bacteria. Inulin, for example, is a prebiotic fiber found naturally in onions, garlic, leeks, asparagus, wheat and oats.

Teresa Martin, a registered dietitian based in Bend, Oregon, who researches gut health and disease prevention, recommends 35 to 50 grams of fiber per day to promote diverse, abundant and resilient gut microbes. For those over 50 years of age, the Institute of Medicine recommends 30 grams of dietary fiber per day for men and 21 grams for women. Most Americans get half the recommended amounts because highly processed, low-fiber foods are ubiquitous. Plus, popular gluten-free, keto and paleo diets limit whole grains. When buying packaged foods, check labels

## LEARN MORE

- The connection between both soil and human health: [Dig2Grow.com](http://Dig2Grow.com)
- Comparing the human digestive system to plant roots in the soil: [Tinyurl.com/SoilHealthAndHumanHealth](http://Tinyurl.com/SoilHealthAndHumanHealth)
- Human Microbiome Project: [hmpdacc.org/hmp/overview](http://hmpdacc.org/hmp/overview)
- The Microbiome Report Podcast: [TheMicrobiomeReport.libsyn.com](http://TheMicrobiomeReport.libsyn.com)
- [WorldMicrobiomeDay.com](http://WorldMicrobiomeDay.com)
- Best sources of dietary fiber: [Tinyurl.com/FoodSourcesOfDietaryFiber](http://Tinyurl.com/FoodSourcesOfDietaryFiber)
- Best probiotics: [USProbioticGuide.com](http://USProbioticGuide.com)



carefully and choose those providing at least three grams of fiber per serving.

## A Healthy Microbiome for Life

Martin shares the following strategies for developing and preserving gut health:

- Choose a vaginal birth, if pregnant; and breastfeed to help establish a healthy microbiome in the baby.
- Choose an organic, plant-based diet. Aim for a variety of different plant species each day.
- Enjoy fermented foods such as yogurt, kefir and sauerkraut, but be cautious with probiotic supplements. Only use those with proven safety and effectiveness.
- Limit “microbial assassins”. Artificial sweeteners and emulsifiers such as polysorbate 80, carageenan and car-

boxymethylcellulose, typically found in processed foods, can lead to bloating, irritable bowel and inflammation.

- Enjoy physical activity; avoid sitting for more than 30 to 60 minutes.
- Go outside, enjoy fresh air and play in the dirt.
- Reduce stress. Try yoga, meditation and mindfulness.
- Sleep six to eight hours each night.
- Think about gut microbiota every day, advises Martin. “Anything you can do to help fuel healthy microbes, no matter how small, will make a difference to your health.”

*Melinda Hemmelgarn, the Food Sleuth, is an award-winning registered dietitian, writer and nationally syndicated radio host based in Columbia, MO. Reach her at FoodSleuth@gmail.com.*

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# Greener Green Grass

## Why Organic Lawns Make Eco-Sense

by Julie Peterson

**W**ith its dependence on synthetic fertilizers and pesticides, America's 63,000 square miles of lawns rely on fossil fuels, put pressure on water supplies and devastate soil, watersheds, animals and people.

Fortunately, green turf can be attained organically, with important benefits. "In addition to protecting public health, eliminating our use of pesticides and fertilizers will allow us to build healthy soil and sequester more carbon as we face climate chaos," says Mackenzie Feldman, executive director of Herbicide-Free Campus, a San Francisco organization working to transition colleges nationwide to organic lawns.

### The Harm Done

Homeowner desire for lush swaths of monoculture grass has been fueled by lawn chemical ads equating model families with flawless lawns. Unfortunately, the "green grass of home" isn't an ideal dream, it's a nightmare. Research shows

that it exposes people to cancer-causing, reproductive-harming and endocrine-disrupting chemicals, many of which are deemed safe by government agencies. The Pesticide-Induced Diseases database at *BeyondPesticides.org* holds myriad studies linking chemicals to asthma, diabetes, autism, lupus, arthritis, Parkinson's disease, Alzheimer's disease and cancer. Children are particularly vulnerable to the effects of toxins due to their developing organs.

Exposure to lawn chemicals also comes through the air, on indoor surfaces and in water. A U.S. Geological Survey report found pesticides in 99 percent of urban streams. In mixed land use areas, 100 percent of major rivers and 33 percent of major aquifers were tainted.

While the culture around the aesthetics of landscapes is strong, the tipping point has arrived.

"People are becoming more aware that their children are at elevated risk and that there are deficiencies in the laws that govern toxic chemical use," says Jay

Feldman, executive director of Beyond Pesticides, in Washington, D.C.

Lawn chemicals are also feeding climate change. "Not only are they fossil-fuel intensive to produce, they harm the biology in the soil and destroy its ability to sequester carbon," says Diana Carpinone, president of Non Toxic Communities, a pesticide reform nonprofit, and founder of Non Toxic Dover, in New Hampshire.

### Front Yard Activists

Recent lawsuits and climate change have given activists more power to effect sweeping changes in policy. "This isn't just a niche idea. We have a mandate, given looming environmental crises, to transform our current chemical intensive systems to organic," says Jay Feldman.

Organic turf experts have devised methods to grow monoculture grass. According to Ryan Anderson, a community outreach specialist at the Integrated Pest Management Institute of North America and leader of Midwest Grows Green, "Homeowners can keep their lawns organic by increasing cultural controls." These include aerating, over seeding and mowing high to build the soil, turf and plant system.

While pristine lawns are possible, reconsidering aesthetics is another option. "We could let native plants grow and embrace plant diversity as fundamental to ecosystem resilience," says Mackenzie Feldman.

Indeed, "weeds" are beneficial. Clover feeds nitrogen to grass, benefits soil organisms and stays green long after turf. Dandelions were once considered a source of food and medicine, and all parts of it are edible, including flowers, roots and leaves.

Instead of living with weeds, some homeowners are choosing to tear out lawns and put in indigenous plants to attract pollinators and other wildlife. But it takes time for society to adopt new views and front yards can be polarizing.





"You can't go from zero to hippie in a day. People need realistic goals," says Carpinone.

Whether someone rents, owns or only has access to shared green spaces, Shaina Rico, founder of The Generation Ground, an Austin-based organization helping farmers launch regenerative businesses, feels everyone must "take ownership of our green spaces. If you are not the one managing the land, ask questions of those that are. What are we doing to support the soil biology? Can we achieve the goal without using chemicals? How can we increase soil organic matter?"

## Greener Communities

Concerned citizens are asking local governments and school districts to eliminate chemical turf management protocols at parks and schools. Nonprofit campaigns such as Beyond Pesticides,

Non Toxic Communities and Herbicide-Free Campus can sometimes send a spokesperson and provide ample data to overcome common objections. "We can show that organic is viable and economical. Organic systems end up reducing costs over time," says Jay Feldman, who helps install community pilot sites.

Transitioning to organic practices requires a focus on soil health, building up microbial life and organic matter, understanding the ecosystem and creating a balanced ecology. Once in place, it's a functioning system that doesn't need much management.

"You can have a beautiful, organic, green lawn that's safe for all living things," says Carpinone.

*Julie Peterson writes about wellness and environmental issues from rural Wisconsin. Reach her at JuliePeterson2222@gmail.com.*



## Make a Difference

Offset climate change and improve health for people and the planet by reaching out to the community or finding helpful experts to assist with local efforts.

**Non Toxic Communities** ([NonToxicCommunities.com](http://NonToxicCommunities.com)) offers resources to create healthier schools, lawns and landscapes throughout the country.

**Beyond Pesticides** ([BeyondPesticides.org](http://BeyondPesticides.org)) has a database of pest management and lawn service companies that don't use dangerous pesticides, lawn signs for the organic yard and a sign-up for The Action of the Week to contact elected officials about current issues.

**The Integrated Pest Management Institute of North America** ([ipminstitute.org](http://ipminstitute.org)) provides low-risk pest management solutions for farms, greenhouses, facilities and homes.

**Herbicide-Free Campus** ([HerbicideFreeCampus.org](http://HerbicideFreeCampus.org)) is working to transition every campus in the country to organic.

**The Great Healthy Yard Project** ([tghyp.com/downloads](http://tghyp.com/downloads)) has downloads on how to grow without gunk and encouraging others to do the same.

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*Why are the largest demonstrations in our history against racial discrimination not only an issue for Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC), but also for all of humanity?*

Living in a culture that accepts oppression of others holds back the development of everyone. It increases fear, decreases compassion and leads us to think more of personal safety than the good of the whole. If we are to move toward being a global society that honors the sanctity of all life, racism and the effects of racism must stop. Doing so creates a context in which we can all raise conscious children, and black, indigenous and other people of color can have the opportunity to make their full creative contribution to the whole as well.

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## wise words

# STEPHEN DINAN ON A SACRED VISION FOR AMERICA

by Linda Sechrist



Stephen Dinan, founder and CEO of The Shift Network, is committed to creating a healthy, sustainable, peaceful and prosperous world, as are the 200,000 members of his worldwide organization. Interested in personal growth and spirituality since his early 20s, Dinan's core passion has been to shift society, not just the individual. In his book *Sacred America, Sacred World: Fulfilling Our Mission in Service to All*, Dinan harvests the world's wisdom and his own experiences to show how humans can grow, evolve and mature psychologically and spiritually, laying out an envisioning process for what's possible when America achieves its full potential.

Positing that envisioning is not only the work of leaders but of all of America's citizens, Dinan sheds light on a new sacred conversation and overriding vision that can guide us to finding the will and the way to midwife a new chapter in American history.

### *What is a sacred worldview?*

We have a lot of forces pulling us into our separate identities, whether this is as Americans, Democrats, Republicans or identifying as counterculture or mainstream culture. Bifurcations, which happen when we identify with a part of reality and make the rest wrong, bad or problematic, keep us in a state of suffering.

A sacred worldview means living in reverence for all humanity and all life; seeing divinity in all people and things, not just in a few people, a group or political party; seeing the higher, nobler and deeper dimension to all manifest reality that



is expressed in humanity's spiritual and religious impulses. A different way of engaging each other and designing how life works flows out of seeing life as the great mystics do; from a higher vantage point of interconnectedness.

### ***At its heart, what is Sacred America about?***

*Sacred America, Sacred World* is about recognizing our role within the larger whole. It's about our unity as one human family. When we can redesign our society from this standpoint, we're fulfilling the deepest principles upon which this country was based. Part of the fulfillment of a sacred vision for our country is building upon our most ancient principles. For example, "*E pluribus unum*" is a deep metaphysical concept meaning out of many, one. It's not that all is oneness. This principle tells us that we evolve out of our "manyness" into our oneness, with each of us having a different role. Our manyness, our individuality, the unique flavors of life, different cultures and languages, is not something we want to erase. We do want to remember that we share this unitive ground and vision, as well as the powerful founding code of liberty, equality and justice for all.

Our country is coded with a mission to lean toward unity, to lean toward oneness. As the melting pot for the world, we integrate more cultures than any other country, creating unity from a great diversity of traditions, cultures, philosophies and religions. This is our shared inheritance.

Ultimately, *Sacred America, Sacred World* is about building a movement of awake, conscious and caring citizens who are powerfully committed to building a new era for America.

### ***How do we do this?***

America can fulfill its higher potential and promise in the way that parallels how an individual matures to his or her next level of development. I believe that America's next level of expression is within each of us, but it requires that we do some internal housecleaning, clearing out the past, letting go of our different political polarizations, being

more solutions-focused and more focused on fulfilling our larger mission in service to the globe, rather than just in service to ourselves.

We have to go beyond partisan warfare to embrace those with other political views as our deepest allies. They are also part of the team that is here to help America shine; yes, even the people you can't stand. In short, we need to open to a vision of possibility for our country, one in which we successfully navigate the crises,

polarizations and political warfare of today to create a country that reflects our highest ideals and that truly serves the birth of a new, global era for humanity, one that is peaceful, sustainable, healthy and prosperous.

*Linda Sechrist is a senior staff writer for Natural Awakenings. Connect at Linda Sechrist.com. To listen to the full interview, visit [Tinyurl.com/SDinanInterview](http://Tinyurl.com/SDinanInterview). See ad on page 7.*

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# OUTDOOR FEASTS

## Inspired Picnics and Healthy Grills

by Marlaina Donato

Nothing defines the summer season quite like firing up the grill or escaping with a picnic basket to a favorite hideaway. From luscious fruits to gorgeous greens, enjoying a meal outdoors inspires us to eat what is in season and invites us to sip the moment. Most of all, it gives us special time with loved ones or with ourselves.

Ashley English, of Candler, North Carolina, author of *A Year of Picnics: Recipes for Dining Well in the Great Outdoors*, sees picnics as a delicious excuse to eat healthy and in sync with the seasons. “No matter what time of year you’re picnicking, there’s always going to be something ripe and in season to showcase. We all know that foods eaten at their peak time of ripeness simply taste better, so use your summertime picnic as an opportunity to bite into a ripe watermelon or your autumn picnic as the ideal time to bake an apple crisp.”

### Portable Pleasures

Thinking outside the box can jazz up the ordinary. English sings the praises of picnicking not only in woodlands and

on beaches, but on rooftops. Being open to different times of the day welcomes a shift in mood. “I’m particularly fond of breakfast picnics. They’re an excellent way to clear your head and get motivated, as they’re an activity fully engaging all of the senses. Twilight picnics are another favorite. As the sun begins to set, the light is less harsh and the mood outdoors becomes decidedly quieter. I find picnics during this time of day to be especially relaxing,” says English.

Simple tasks like washing salad greens or whipping up a quick hummus dip the night before a picnic can save considerable time. Traditional picnic baskets are not required, and English recommends vintage suitcases, wooden crates or a backpack, especially if the picnic destination involves an uphill trek. She also emphasizes simplicity: “While a lavish spread with myriad options is quite fun, a simple picnic can be equally enjoyable. A grazing board to-go is quite easy. Pack up a medley of fruits, veggies, charcuterie or cheeses, crackers, spreads and pickles and a little something sweet, and you’ve got all you need to create a

memorable meal outdoors.”

Robyn Lindars, of Fort Myers, Florida, author *The Healthy Electric Smoker Cookbook: 100 Recipes with All-Natural Ingredients and Fewer Carbs*, says, “I love grilled veggies paired with goat cheese and fresh herbs on French or Italian bread. You can add capicola or just stick to veggies for tasty sandwiches that do well in a cooler.”

### Great Grilling

Grilling “adds a ton of flavor to food without needing to add additional fat or calories. Cooking over fire is also the oldest method of cooking,” says Lindars. Happily, the health risks associated with barbecuing meat over hot coals can be reduced by using flavorful marinades or opting to go vegan.

Reducing temperature decreases carcinogenic compounds associated with grilling meats and can be best accomplished by waiting until charcoal turns to embers or turning the gas grill down a notch or two. Grilling further from the flame on an elevated rack is also a good option. Citrusy or balsamic vinegar-based marinades naturally minimize toxic potential by reducing the formation of unhealthy compounds, studies show.

“You are what you eat and what you eat was eating. Opt for the highest-quality protein possible—grass-fed beef, organic, humanely raised protein,” suggests Lindars. “Make your own marinades and rubs to avoid ingredients like soybean oil and corn syrup. You can easily make your own with simple ingredients like olive oil, fresh herbs, vinegars, sea salt and spices. Fresh rosemary, lemon zest, juice, sea salt, pepper and garlic with a splash of olive oil makes for an amazing marinade, and can even be paired with grass-fed butter to put on chicken. A basic rub of smoked paprika, sea salt, fresh ground pepper and dash of garlic powder is great on just about anything.”

*Marlaina Donato is the author of several books and a recording artist. Connect at AutumnEmbersMusic.com.*





# Earth-Friendly Pets

## Our Animals Can Go Green, Too

by Julie Peterson

**A**lthough cats and dogs don't require much more than food, a cozy napping spot and human attention, U.S. pet owners spent \$95.7 billion last year on their furry companions, according to the 2019 National Pet Owners Survey Statistics produced by the American Pet Products Association. That's a lot of products, all of which require packaging, shipping, shopping, consumption and waste that the environment must bear. Finding eco-friendly alternatives is key to having a pet that doesn't inadvertently harm the planet.

### Proper Playthings

Pet toys can be costly to the wallet and the environment. Dogs can destroy flimsy items in seconds and the growing number of cat toys under the couch is money out the window. When choosing a toy, consider the pet's play style. Look for non-toxic natural fiber, recycled, upcycled and locally sourced products. Reject plastic and other toxic materials that degrade and leach harmful sub-

stances into the pet. Purchase toys that have minimal packaging and remember that it won't be any fun to play with if it is constantly stuck under the furniture or falls to pieces during the first roughhouse session.

Soft toys can be salvaged. Tie them in knots, sew them together or braid them into tug toys. Make soft or tug toys by upcycling old towels or T-shirts. Stuff some catnip in an old sock and let the playing begin. Cats can have as much fun with a paper bag as with an expensive toy. Consider simplicity.

### Homeopathic Remedies

Many chemicals and pharmaceuticals can be replaced with simple, natural products. Essential-oil-based insect repellants are safer for pets and people. Apple cider vinegar contains nutrients, vitamins, minerals and enzymes that can be helpful for the treatment of allergies, urinary tract problems, hot spots, dandruff, ear discharge, eczema and stiff joints in dogs, according to

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*Organic Pet Digest.* Dr. Marc Smith, a veterinarian at Natchez Trace Veterinary Services, in Nashville, advises, "Apple cider vinegar is a good source of potassium and has excellent antibacterial and antifungal properties to boost the immune system."

A veterinarian trained in traditional Chinese veterinary medicine can often provide natural treatments and preventatives using herbs, essential oils and other natural substances. Find such a practitioner at [tcvm.com](http://tcvm.com).

## Green Grooming

Taking a bath in chemicals seems wrong for both humans and pets. Eco-friendly alternatives are available. "We use shampoos without chemicals, preservatives or phosphates," says Kim Molnar, owner of Salon Fido LLC, in Cross Plains, Wisconsin. "It keeps the dog from inhaling or absorbing hazardous chemicals and keeps the same from washing down the drain."



## Natural Nourishment

A quality diet is good for the health of pets and the Earth. Many companies use local ingredients, sustainable manufacturing and recyclable packaging. Avoid artificial dyes, preservatives, fillers and chemicals.

According to the Association for Pet Obesity Prevention, an estimated 56 million cats and 50 million dogs in the U.S. were overweight or obese in 2018. Judicious feeding will trim a pet's waistline and reduce the amount of packaging and bodily waste a pet produces.

"You can reduce the number of products you need by sharing your food with pets. Saving whole-food leftovers reduces waste and helps move pets away from processed food," says Molnar. "There's so much common sense involved. Feed them food." Dogs love cooked sweet potatoes, pumpkin, carrots, broccoli and eggs. Cats can have cooked eggs, rice, spinach, pumpkin, salmon and

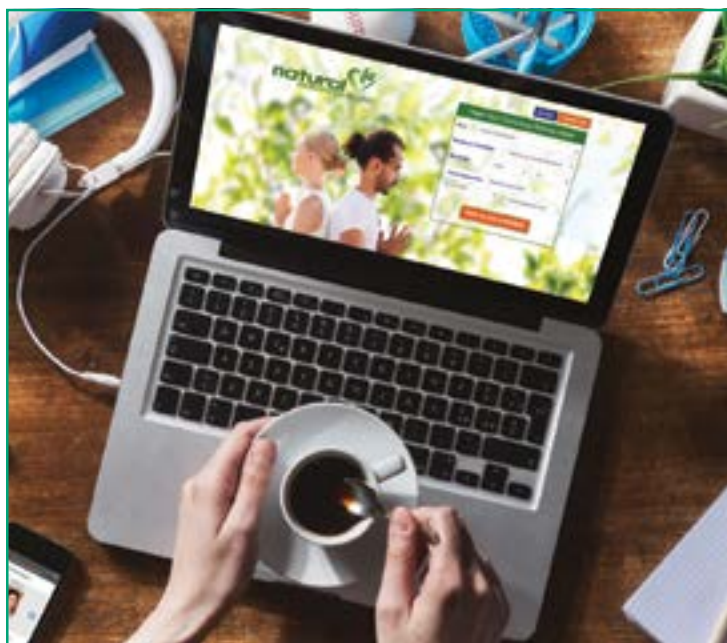
chicken. Be aware of which foods are unsafe for pets. Some examples include onions, chocolate, bones, avocado and grapes.

## Pooper Scoopers

Poop happens. Clean it up right. Kitty's litter can be nontoxic and kept fresh with regular scooping. Picking up after the pup keeps green spaces clean and limits excess nutrients going to waterways. "If your dog is harboring any type of intestinal parasites such as hookworms, roundworms or whipworms, then the eggs of those parasites can be present in poo and spread worms to other dogs and people," says Sarah J. Wooten, DVM, CVJ, in Greeley, Colorado.

Dogs and cats may seem to tread lightly on the Earth, but their carbon footprint can be heavy. Help them get green by evaluating what they consume and getting them in step with Mother Nature.

*Julie Peterson writes about wellness and environmental issues. Reach out at [JuliePeterson2222@gmail.com](mailto:JuliePeterson2222@gmail.com).*



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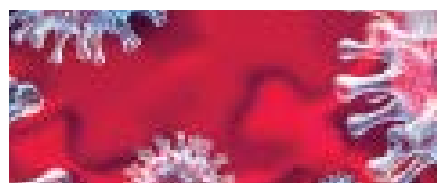
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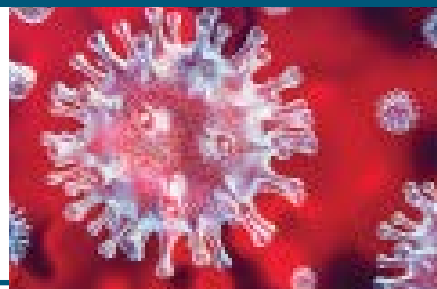
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