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The Incredible Link Between Gut Health, Serotonin, and Mood





Take this for example — the stunning fact that something as simple as eating the right foods can make all the difference in the world for prostate health. In this issue's cover story, you'll understand in simple terms why that is and how you or the men in your life can enjoy better

about simple, natural ingredients and lifestyle changes that

You'll also find out why something called insulin resistance is causing issues with health and weight loss for a third of all Americans, how music is being shown to protect the aging brain, and why your happiness levels may have more to do with your gut than your mind.

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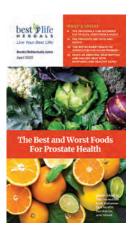






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Prostate Diet Do's and Don'ts: The Best &

COVER ARTICLE:

The Best & Worst Foods For Prostate Health

For men with common causes of a problematic prostate such as BPH or prostatitis, the idea of a specialized diet made up of foods that shrink the prostate sounds like a godsend.

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20 THE NOT-SO-SWEET REALITY OF AMERICA'S BLOOD SUGAR PROBLEM

One in three Americans are in dire straits when it comes to their blood sugar health. And yet, 80% of them don't even know it. Learn more about this American epidemic and what you can do to protect yourself.

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Most of us have experienced the joys that music can bring, but what does music do to the brain on a physical level?

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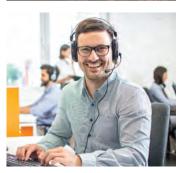






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We've all had "gut feelings" **before** about one thing or another, but we rarely think about gut health and mood being closely related to one another. However, the science shows that feelings we often write off as just being "butterflies" are actually a window into an intriguing connection that exists between our brains and our guts.

The "Happy" Bacteria Affecting Your Mood

The first step to understanding the link between gut health and mood is understanding what's really going on in the gut. You've probably heard the term "good bacteria" used in relation to digestive health. That's because there are an estimated 100 trillion bacteria that live in the gastrointestinal (GI) tract, and they're believed to be equal in number to the actual cells that make up your body!

In addition to aiding with digestion and immunity, the good bacteria in the gut are responsible for producing an incredible 95% of the body's serotonin, and 50% of dopamine. Both serotonin and dopamine are key neurotransmitters in regulating mood.

In fact, there's even an observable example that

illustrates this connection. Researchers examined the correlation between gastrointestinal disorders like irritable bowel syndrome (IBS) and ulcerative colitis (UC) and depression. They found that people with these GI disorders, which cause imbalances to gut bacteria, were 39% (for patients with IBS) and 33% (for patients with UC) more likely to suffer from depression than healthy controls.\(^1\) That bacterial impact on serotonin becomes very evident!

But, the close connection between the gut and the brain doesn't end here - there's more to this story.

The Gut Brain Connection: Serotonin Isn't the Only Factor

You probably know that neurons are cells in the brain that transmit information to other nerve cells, but did you know that there are roughly 100 million





neurons in the gut itself? It's no wonder that our GIs have earned the nickname "second brain".

A major nerve called the vagus nerve serves as a sort of information highway between the gut and the brain. A very interesting animal study helps highlight this: mice given probiotics (good bacteria) had lower levels of stress hormone in their blood, but, when the vagus nerve was severed, the probiotics no longer had any effect.² This has led scientists to infer that our gut bacteria and brains actually "talk" through the vagus nerve.

With this biological background of gut health and mood in mind, let's look at some of the ways that diet and supplementation affect your gut health, and what you can do to optimize yours.

Proven Ways to Boost Your Mood Through Your Gut

There's growing evidence to suggest that improving the make-up of your gut bacteria can result in better moods thanks to the serotonin connection we've talked about.

There are two main ways to improve your gut's *microbiome* — the miniature ecosystem of good bacteria living within it. The first is probiotics, which help introduce new good bacteria to the gut, and the second is prebiotics, which support and nourish the bacteria that are already there.

Probiotics

If you've ever been to the grocery store and seen fancy yogurt with impressive words



"Lactobacillus paracasei Shirota" on the package, you're already acquainted with probiotics. Yogurt is just one example of a food rich with probiotic cultures. Other foods you should include to bolster your gut biome are:

- **Kefir** A fermented, probiotic milk drink.
- Sauerkraut Fermented. finely shredded cabbage.
- Kimchi A cabbage-based. korean side dish.
- Kombucha Black or green tea that's been fermented.

Notice the common theme? Fermented foods often contain the most live cultures that can help improve your gut health. You can also find probiotic supplements that contain these good bacteria.

Prebiotics

Since the bacteria in your gut are living organisms just like the rest of us, they need to eat! A poor diet can damage the health of your microbiome, and lead to or exacerbate some of

the gut health and mood problems we've discussed. Foods that are rich in prebiotics to help stimulate good gut bacteria include:

Asparagus Celery Artichokes ■ Broccoli Onions Stalks Beans Carrots

Essentially, you're looking for foods rich in cellulose and oligosaccharides, which are both types of fiber. Similar to probiotics, you can also find multiple types of prebiotics available in supplement form.

It's incredible to think just how closely related the brain and the gut are. Equipped with simple facts like the correlation between gut health and mood, how good bacteria play a central role, and what types of foods nourish these bacteria, you can make huge strides in your own wellness journey.

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PROSTATE HEALTH



Prostate Diet Do's and Don'ts: The Best & Worst Foods for Prostate Health

BY: COREY KACUROV

or men with common causes of a problematic prostate such as BPH or prostatitis, the idea of a specialized diet made up of foods that shrink the prostate sounds like a godsend. Even though diet is one piece of a larger picture when it comes to an enlarged prostate, researchers have been able to point to a number of foods that help prostate health due to the specific nutrients they contain, while also identifying which foods are bad for the prostate.

By recognizing both the best and worst "prostate foods", you'll be well-equipped to try out your own diet changes informed by the science behind these different foods. To make it easy, here's a simple list: the do's and don'ts of an enlarged prostate diet.

Do: Eat More Tomatoes

Among the best foods for prostate health are tomatoes, thanks to their high content of a powerful antioxidant called lycopene. In addition to giving tomatoes their vibrant red color, lycopene's antioxidant properties help protect and strengthen cells in the prostate. While it can't be said that any one food shrinks the prostate gland, one study did find that lycopene helped slow the progression of an enlarged prostate.¹

To get the most out of tomatoes, it's best to eat them cooked. This enhances your body's ability to absorb the lycopene by weakening its bond to the tomato's cell walls.



Don't: Consume Too Much Red Meat

It's unfortunate to think that a juicy steak ranks as one of the worst foods for prostate health, but that does appear to be the case. Red meat's role in elevating the level of something called *arachidonic acid* in the body may be to blame, as it can worsen inflammation. Studies have ultimately found a correlation between red meat consumption and the development of an enlarged prostate.²

It's important to note that there is also evidence suggesting men with a higher total protein intake are less susceptible to prostate issues, meaning that replacing red meat with lean protein like chicken and fish is a healthier option for your prostate diet.

Do: Develop A Taste For Citrus Fruits

The Mayo Clinic specifically mentions citrus fruits in their own discussion of a prostate-friendly diet. A high vitamin C content is what makes citrus fruits another excellent choice, since vitamin C is believed to protect the prostate gland.

You have a colorful array of choices here, including lemons, limes, oranges, tangerines, and grapefruit. While you're at it, add more berries to the fruit basket, since their high antioxidant levels make them another great choice for prostate health.

Don't: Rely On Caffeine For An Energy Boost

The caffeine found in your morning cup of coffee or tea is a diuretic, meaning it can stimulate the urge to urinate and worsen some of the symptoms associated with an enlarged prostate. Along with alcohol, coffee is definitely a nono for prostate health.

A good trade-off is drinking green tea: it's lower in caffeine, and has the added benefit of packing a powerful antioxidant punch to nourish prostate cells.

Do: Pay Attention To The Types of Fats You Are Eating

Not all fats are created equal when it comes to their health implications. While the saturated fats found in things like red and processed meats may serve to worsen inflammation, healthy fats like Omega-3's may help to reduce it. Cutting out bad fats and increasing good ones is also important for maintaining a healthy weight, which is an important factor for prostate health as well as overall health.

Salmon and other fatty fish



are good sources of Omega-3's, as are walnuts, flax seeds, and canola oil.

Don't: Indulge In Dairy

No steak, no coffee, and no ice cream or milkshakes... this prostate diet may be starting to sound like a drag, but dairy truly is one of the worst foods for prostate health, and the study results that explain why are sobering.

Research has found that men consuming more than 2.5 servings of dairy per day face a higher risk of prostate cancer than those consuming a half serving or less.^{3,4} Full fat cheeses, full fat butter, and whole milk should be the most highly avoided, with the best alternatives being non-dairy options like flax, soy, or almond milk.

Do: Learn To Love Cruciferous Vegetables

Consisting of vegetables like broccoli, cauliflower, cabbage, kale, and brussel sprouts, cruciferous vegetables are incredible foods that should be the cornerstone of a healthy prostate diet (or any healthy diet, for that matter).

These vegetables are amazingly rich in vitamins, minerals, antioxidants, and sulforaphane, a special sulfurcontaining compound that gives these vegetables their scent and signature bitter taste. These compounds work as an incredible team, and are believed to protect cells, reduce inflammation, and maintain healthy DNA in the prostate.

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The Not-So-Sweet Reality of America's Blood Sugar Problem

BY JONATHAN VILARDI



In recent years, there has been growing concern amongst the medical and health communities in regard to Americans' blood sugar health. Many people may have a perception in their mind that diabetes is the binary consequence of blood sugar issues — either you have it or you don't. However, as you'll learn in this article, blood sugar

health is more like a continuum, with a shocking amount of Americans finding themselves on the wrong end of it.

So what is "insulin resistance"? Who is it affecting? How can you protect your own blood sugar health in the face of what's truly an American epidemic? Let's talk about it.

What is Insulin Resistance and Why Does It Matter?

At its simplest, insulin resistance is when the body's cells become resistant to insulin. Obvious, sure, but the ramifications are incredibly serious due to just how important insulin's function in the body actually is.

Insulin is a hormone that plays a crucial role in regulating blood sugar levels. Normally, when you eat a meal, the pancreas releases insulin to help the glucose in that food enter body cells, where it can be used as energy or stored for later use. However, when somebody is insulin resistant due to their body releasing insulin too often, the cells in the body no longer respond as effectively to the hormone. Suddenly, the sugar in the bloodstream isn't being absorbed, signaling the pancreas to release even more insulin, and a vicious cycle is underway.

While the primary risk of insulin resistance is the development of type 2 diabetes, there are many other health issues that can result from the imbalance of insulin and blood sug-

ar. Cardiovascular disease, high blood pressure, high cholester-ol and obesity are all more likely to happen when somebody is insulin resistant. This is bad news, of course, but the worst part is just how common insulin resistance has become.



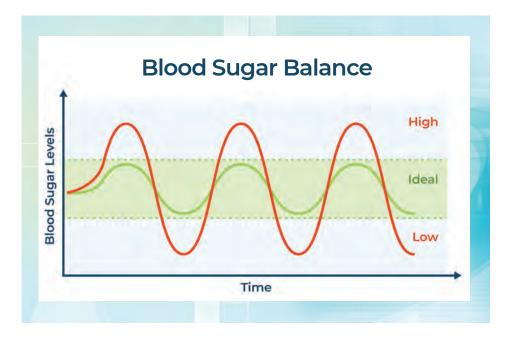
3 Ways Insulin Resistance Leads to Weight Gain

- Extra insulin in the blood tells fat cells to absorb sugar, where it's converted into triglycerides and stored as fat.
- Insulin resistance leads to increased hunger and food cravings, another vicious cycle in and of itself
- By interfering with enzymes responsible for fat metabolism, insulin resistance slows down the body's ability to burn off existing fat.

An American Epidemic: The Urgency of "1 in 3"

So, who does insulin resistance really affect? The answer is quite sobering, and shows that

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this condition is anything but rare.

The Centers for Disease Control keeps a toll on how many Americans have prediabetes, meaning they have higher blood sugar levels than normal. This goes hand in hand with insulin resistance since, as we just learned, these heightened blood sugar levels are indicative of cells' inability to respond to insulin.

Now, the numbers. According to the CDC, **96 million American adults** are pre-diabetic. That's more than 1 in every 3. What's more, **8 in 10** of these individuals don't even know that they are pre-diabetic. With insulin resistance being this prevalent, and flying this far under the radar, how is somebody even supposed to keep tabs on their own health and live a lifestyle that can help protect them?

The Best Defense Against Insulin Resistance

As with many things, knowledge is power here. Insulin resistance doesn't present itself in an obvious way, but, fortunately, it's not difficult to get a read on your blood sugar health with a simple visit to your healthcare provider. There's a number of signs they may look for, some of which you may be able to notice yourself as a signal to get to the doctor:

Some signs of insulin resistance are:

- High blood sugar, triglyceride, and cholesterol levels
- Excessive body fat
- Dark skin patches on the back of your neck or on your elbows, knees, knuckles or armpits known as acanthosis nigricans

Again, the most important thing to remember here is that your doctor is the person you want to talk to about blood sugar health. That being said, the CDC provides guidelines on how to improve insulin sensitivity to help you stay healthy. No, they're not the most fun lifestyle changes to make, but they're incredibly beneficial for all areas of wellness:

Physical Activity —

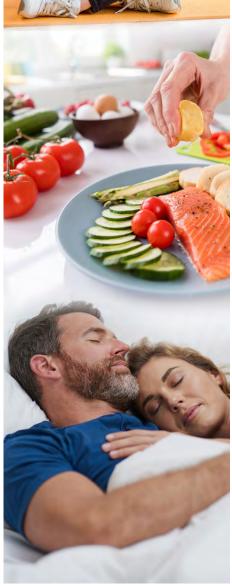
A cornerstone of blood sugar management, exercise does wonders to help make cells more sensitive to insulin so they can use up blood sugar correctly.

- Weight Loss and Proper Diet — The weight you carry and the foods you eat have a major bearing on blood sugar health. Cutting out processed sugars and increasing fiber intake are both important keys.
- Getting Ample Sleep

— Insufficient sleep is correlated with increased blood sugar levels; even one bad night can raise insulin resistance.

Look at it this way: these are cornerstones of a healthy lifestyle you've probably heard a thousand times. But, with the issue of insulin resistance coming into focus, there's one more very worthwhile reason to implement these sorts of





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14 of the BEST FOODS for Blood Sugar Balance

- Broccoli and Broccoli Sprouts:
 Sulforaphane is a type of isothiocyanate that has blood-sugar-reducing properties.
- 2. Seafood: including fish and shellfish offers a valuable source of protein, healthy fats, vitamins, minerals, and antioxidants that may help regulate blood sugar levels.
- Pumpkin and pumpkin seeds:
 Brightly colored and packed with fiber and antioxidants, pumpkin is a great choice for blood sugar regulation.
- 4. Nuts and nut butter: Research has shown that eating nuts may be an effective way to help regulate blood sugar levels.
- 5. Flax seeds: Flax seeds are rich in fiber and healthy fats and well known for their health benefits. Specifically, flax seeds may help reduce blood sugar levels.
- **6. Beans and lentils:** Beans and lentils are rich in nutrients, such as magnesium, fiber, and protein, that can help lower blood sugar.
- 7. Chia seeds: Eating chia seeds may help benefit blood sugar control. Studies have linked chia seed consumption to reductions in blood sugar levels and improvements in insulin sensitivity.

- 8. Kale: Kale is often described as a "superfood" and for good reason. It's packed with compounds that may help decrease blood sugar levels, including fiber and flavonoid antioxidants.
- Berries: Berries are loaded with fiber, vitamins, minerals, and antioxidants, and they make an excellent choice for people with blood sugar management issues.
- 10. Avocados: They're rich in healthy fats, fiber, vitamins, and minerals, and adding them to meals has been shown to improve blood sugar levels.
- 11. Oats and oat bran: Including oats and at bran in your diet may help improve your blood sugar levels due to their high content of soluble fiber.
- 12. Kefir and yogurt: Kefir and yogurt are fermented dairy products that may help regulate blood sugar.
 Research has linked kefir and yogurt intake to improved blood sugar control.
- 13. Eggs: Eggs are an exceptionally nutritious food, providing a concentrated source of protein, healthy fats, vitamins, minerals, and antioxidants.
- 14. Apples: Apples contain soluble fiber and plant compounds, including quercetin, chlorogenic acid, and gallic acid, all of which may help reduce blood sugar

Source: https://www.healthline.com/nutrition/foods-to-lower-blood-sugar#1.-Broccoli-and-broccoli-sprouts with the process of the process of

changes in your own life.

Seeing a third of all people in the United States on a dangerous path with their blood sugar is certainly alarming. At the same time, the fact that 80% of those people aren't even aware of the problem speaks

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to the fact that greater knowledge of the issue can go a long way toward resolving it.

Check with your doctor to get a read on your own sugar situation and, while it may be a chore at first, integrate healthy exercise, eating, and sleep habits to protect your health.

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 $1Yo koyama, H.\ et\ al.\ 2005.\ Findings\ on\ Prostatitis\ through\ the\ ``Pollen\ Extract\ G63''\ of\ Graminex\ Company.\ Kanda\ New\ Medical\ Clinic.$

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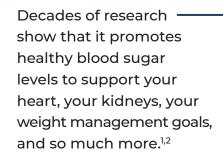
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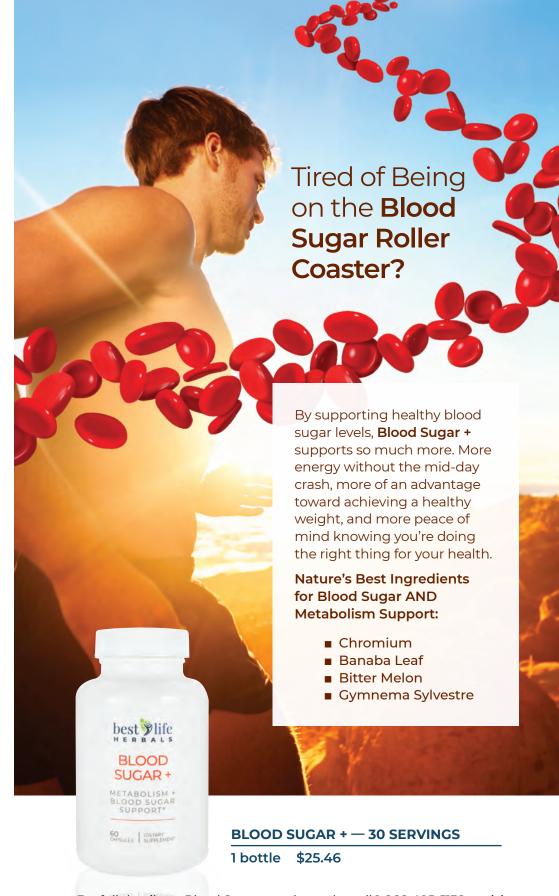
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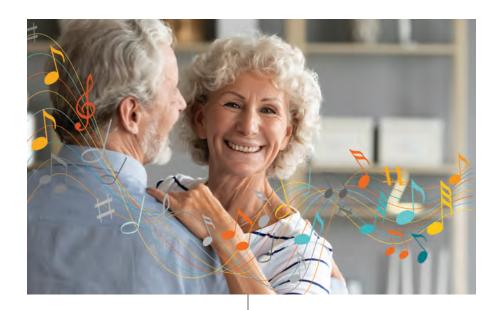
How Rhythm and Melody Help With Happiness and Healthy Aging

BY COREY KACUROV

Most of us have experienced the joys that music can bring, but what does music do to the brain on a physical level? Recently, researchers have taken a deeper look than ever at how







You've probably experienced some of the effects of music on an emotional level all throughout your life. A favorite song or happy tune can have an unmatched ability to raise your spirits, give you a much needed mood boost, or even have a healing effect of sorts.

When it comes to music and the brain, there's much more than meets the eye (or ear). The effects of music on the brain have become increasingly well studied in recent years, and the things researchers have learned are worth singing about. Get your headphones ready and throw on an old favorite as we dive into some of the amazing ways music is helping depression, mood, and even memory.

The Stunning Physical Effects Music Has on the Brain

In any other case, it might be less than thrilling to start out with a look at the science involved; but, in this case, the answers are nothing short of fascinating. So, what does music do to the brain? Well, think about what's really happening when you listen to a song. The sound waves travel through the air, vibrate your eardrums, become electrical signals your brain can decode and, like magic, transform into almost any emotion and feeling you can think of. It's almost poetic, but it's also thoroughly scientific.

Music activates the pleasure centers of the brain, triggering a release of the neurotransmitter dopamine and other endorphins that induce feelings of wellbeing and happiness. Moreover, it stimulates regions across the entire brain, including the frontal lobe, temporal lobe, cerebellum, and Broca's area, which control everything from mood, to speech, to memory. Over time, music's impact on the brain can actually strengthen the physical connection between these and other regions of the brain!

The effects of music on the brain aren't just observable in the lab, they have been well-documented in terms of real world impact. The kind of impact, in fact, that can make a difference in your day-to-day life.

Happy Tunes For a Happier You

There's a rapidly growing field of psychology simply called "music therapy". As you might expect, it consists of music being applied in a clinical setting to help those with depression and other issues feel relief from their symptoms. In fact, 4 out of 5 research studies examined in an analysis found that patients undergoing music therapy experienced a greater improvement in mental state than those undergoing standard care.¹

Of course, if you're experiencing depression, seeking professional help is always the best idea. However, if you're cu-

rious about what methods music therapy implements to help improve mood, here are some ideas:

- Listening to Music a
 New Way: Most of us listen to music quite often, if not daily. But, if you want to get more out of it, try the therapeutic technique of pairing music with meditative practices like deep breathing and progressive muscle relaxation (focusing on relaxing your whole body one muscle at a time).
- Learning to Play an Instrument: One of the best ways to strengthen the link between music and the brain is by playing some of your own! You don't have to be the next Chopin; an inexpensive guitar or drum are fantastic options, and learning to play makes



for an incredibly rewarding experience at any age. Even something as basic as drumming along on a table can help increase your positive brain activity.

■ Dancing or Singing Along:

As with learning an instrument, engaging with music firsthand by singing or even dancing further strengthens that mind-music connection, and is a method often chosen by therapists implementing music therapy.

Golden Oldies: Music's Benefits for an Aging Brain

As we age, so too do our brains. Those effects can be noticeable when it comes to things like memory and an overall feeling of being "sharp". Music's impact on the brain once again shines when looking at its effect on the aging mind. In fact, one study stated that older musicians exhibit "younger looking brains", but there are still plenty of benefits to be enjoyed if you don't play an instrument.²

We've discussed the way that music can stimulate neural activity and foster better connections between different brain regions. An organization called Music and Memory has been able to illustrate this effect in incredible ways by playing music for patients with dementia, who are suddenly able recall memories and better recognize loved ones as soon as they hear a favorite song from the past.

This benefit isn't limited to individuals with dementia. though. According to an article from Harvard, studies in both the U.S. and Japan have found that older adults scored better on memory and reasoning tests after performing physical exercise to musical accompaniment for several weeks. The ability to retrieve previous memories and form strong new ones are both aided by music, thanks to the fact that it reactivates areas of the brain associated with memory, reasoning, speech, and emotion. It may not be as simple as throwing on The Beatles the next time you lose your keys, but the evidence suggests that working music into your personal wellness regimen may indeed keep your brain feeling younger!

Whether it's music helping with depression or the effects it has on promoting longevity for the mind, the fact that something as straightforward as melodies and rhythms can have such a profound impact on wellness is truly amazing.

Have fun with it, and utilize some of the creative ways of enjoying music we talked about here into your own routine.

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1 Kranjčec, Bojana et al. "D-mannose powder for prophylaxis of recurrent urinary tract infections in women: a randomized clinical trial." World journal of urology vol. 32,1 (2014): 79-84. doi:10.1007/s00345-013-1091-6

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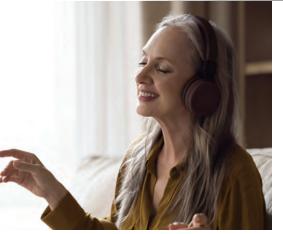
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