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# Health

# pulse magazine



## *HCOWA Association*

**A New Dawn In West Africa's  
Healthcare Revolution**





## HCOWAA: Advancing Healthcare Standards in West Africa

The Health Community of West Africa Association (HCOWAA), based in Ghana, is a non-governmental organization dedicated to advancing healthcare across West Africa. Addressing the uneven distribution of medical resources, HCOWAA advocates for regional cooperation through a Health Alliance that unites healthcare stakeholders to create a cohesive health community. With a mission to improve health outcomes in West Africa, HCOWAA facilitates collaboration, innovation, and research among professionals, leveraging collective resources to enhance healthcare services, policies, and access.

HCOWA envisions a resilient West African healthcare system where institutions and professionals lead groundbreaking research, foster innovation, and influence policies that elevate regional healthcare. Through initiatives like establishing a regional healthcare database, launching research projects, and hosting policy roundtables, HCOWA builds strong networks to drive healthcare advancements. Advocacy efforts focus on equitable access, supporting vulnerable populations, and addressing healthcare disparities.

The organization's objectives include fostering research and innovation, supporting health policy reforms, and integrating medical equipment manufacturers with healthcare facilities. HCOWA

also facilitates training programs, academic exchanges, and research grants, ensuring members are equipped with knowledge and skills to address regional health challenges effectively. Networking events like the HCOWA Medical and Health Industry Investment Summit & Expo connect professionals, offering a platform for partnership and knowledge sharing.

HCOWAA's commitment extends to partnerships with international health organizations and academic institutions, which amplify its impact by introducing global best practices and strengthening West African healthcare infrastructure. Collaborative efforts with international partners promote training, research, and infrastructure upgrades for health facilities, pharmaceutical establishments, and clinics. In addition, HCOWAA's magazine partnerships, including an MoU with Health Pulse Magazine, provide platforms to publish relevant content, share insights, and enhance visibility for ongoing initiatives.

Through these combined efforts, HCOWAA aims to foster a collaborative healthcare environment that not only addresses urgent health challenges but also builds a sustainable, inclusive healthcare future for West Africa.

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# Healthcare Systems Must Be Strengthened for Improved Health

In today's rapidly evolving world, the importance of a robust healthcare system cannot be overstated. Across the globe, the COVID-19 pandemic laid bare the weaknesses and strengths of various healthcare systems, serving as a critical reminder that the foundation of a nation's well-being hinges on the strength of its healthcare infrastructure.

A strong healthcare system is not just about having hospitals and clinics; it's about ensuring accessibility, affordability, and quality care for all. This means investing in well-trained healthcare professionals, modern medical facilities, and efficient supply chains for essential medicines and equipment. Moreover, it involves creating a responsive and resilient system capable of addressing both everyday health needs and unexpected public health emergencies.

Strengthening healthcare systems also requires a focus on preventive care. By prioritizing public health education, vaccination programs, and routine screenings, we can reduce the burden of diseases before they become critical. Preventive care not only saves lives but also reduces the long-term costs associated with treating advanced illnesses.

Furthermore, the integration of technology in healthcare delivery is essential for modernizing systems. Telemedicine, electronic health records, and data analytics can improve patient outcomes and streamline operations, making healthcare more efficient and accessible, especially in remote or underserved areas.

However, the responsibility of strengthening healthcare systems does not lie solely with governments. Private sector partnerships, community involvement, and international cooperation are crucial in pooling resources, sharing knowledge, and implementing best practices.

In conclusion, a strong healthcare system is the backbone of a healthy society. By investing in and strengthening our healthcare systems, we ensure that everyone, regardless of their socioeconomic status, has the opportunity to live a healthy and fulfilling life. The time to act is now—our future depends on it.





# Windows to the Soul

## Understanding Eye Anatomy and Function

By Yosua Domedjui

**T**he human eye, is an intricately designed organ, that is very important for vision, to perceive and interact with our environment. It consists of several key components that work together to convert light into visual information that the brain can interpret.

The eye is composed of several parts:

**Cornea:** The transparent, dome-shaped surface that covers the front of the eye, aiding in the focusing of light.

**Iris and Pupil:** The iris is the colored part of the eye that controls the size of the pupil, the opening that regulates the amount of light entering the eye.

**Lens:** Situated behind the iris, the lens adjusts its shape to focus light onto the retina.

**Retina:** A thin layer of tissue at the back of the eye containing photoreceptor cells (rods and cones) that convert light into electrical signals.

**Optic Nerve:** Carries these electrical signals from the retina to the brain, where they are interpreted as visual images

The eye's intricate structure and function allow it to perform various critical tasks. For instance, rods and cones in the retina enable us to see in different lighting conditions and perceive color. The eye also adjusts to changing light conditions, ensuring that we can see clearly in both bright and dim environments. Moreover, the eye's ability to focus on objects at varying distances is vital for activities such as reading and driving.

Early diagnosis and proper management are essential for controlling eye conditions and minimizing their impact on vision. Treatments may include corrective lenses to improve vision, medications to manage conditions like glaucoma, or surgical procedures to remove cataracts or repair retinal damage.

The eye is a vital organ with far-reaching effects on the body's ability to perceive and interact with the world. Eye diseases can significantly impact quality of life, but with early detection and appropriate treatment, many of these conditions can be effectively managed. It is important to stay vigilant for signs of eye problems and seek medical advice if symptoms arise.





# WHO to Consult Health Community on COP29 Special Report on Climate Change and Health

**O**n September 4, 2024, from 14:00 to 15:30 UTC, the World Health Organization (WHO) hosted an online consultation with the global health community on the forthcoming COP29 Special Report on Climate Change and Health. This significant report, to be delivered to the Azerbaijan Presidency of the 29th Conference of the Parties (COP29) under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), is a key initiative in addressing the intertwined crises of climate change and public health.



The COP29 Special Report aims to outline a series of priority actions that the global health community will urge governments and policymakers to adopt. These actions are designed to prompt a swift and effective response to the escalating threats posed by climate change on public health. Accompanying these recommendations will be resources and case studies, offering practical guidance to policymakers and health practitioners on implementing the proposed solutions. The report will stress the critical importance of prioritizing health and equity within the broader context of the international climate movement and the sustainable development agenda.

This online event provides an invaluable opportunity for health professionals and stakeholders to contribute their insights to the COP29 Special Report. Participants will not only help shape the future of global health and climate policy but will also gain a deeper understanding of their role in climate action. Additionally, the event will highlight successful initiatives at both national and international

levels, equipping attendees with the knowledge to foster a resilient and sustainable healthcare future.

As the world faces the dual challenges of climate change and health crises, the WHO's commitment to integrating health into the climate conversation through this Special Report underscores the urgent need for collective action. The outcomes of this consultation will be pivotal in guiding global efforts to safeguard health in the face of a changing climate.

# Demystifying Miscarriage

By Gloria Addo

**T**he confirmation of a growing foetus always brings joy and contentment among couples and to a certain degree the extended family, but what happens when there is an unexpected loss? A phenomenon that occurs in 1 out of every 4 pregnancies according to global statistics.

Let's take a glance at Miscarriage.

Miscarriage is the sudden loss of a pregnancy before the 20th week of gestation. After experiencing a miscarriage, most women blame themselves, believing that they lost the pregnancy because they fell, experienced a severe shock, or other personal reasons. However, most miscarriages are caused by an unanticipated incident that is beyond anyone's control.

They are primarily caused by chromosome issues, with rare cases linked to the mother's or father's genes. Other potential causes include drug or alcohol use, blood clotting disorders, environmental toxins, hormone issues, infection, obesity, and physical reproductive organ issues.

Vaginal bleeding is a prevalent indicator of miscarriage, ranging from faint spotting to severe bleeding. Other symptoms include cramping, fluid passing, and the passage of blood clots or pregnancy tissue.

Risk factors for miscarriage include age, previous miscarriage, and health conditions. Age-related miscarriages are 12% to 15% in 20s, rising to 25% by age 40. Previous miscarriages have a 25% chance of another miscarriage. Health conditions like unmanaged diabetes, infections, or uterine issues increase the risk of miscarriage.



The different types of miscarriages that can be diagnosed by a pregnancy care specialist include; Recurrent and Threatened miscarriage. Recurrent miscarriages occur when there have being 3 previous miscarriages while threatened miscarriage occurs when the cervix remains closed yet there is bleeding and pelvic discomfort.

Losing a pregnancy may be frustrating, leaving you with a variety of feelings and many questions. Emotional recovery after a miscarriage is typically more difficult and time-consuming than physical healing. Allow yourself enough time to grieve your loss. Talk to your spouse, friends, and family about your thoughts, or better yet, seek professional counselling to help you cope with your loss.



# Dialysis Machine

**D**ialysis is a therapeutic intervention used to artificially eliminate waste materials and extra fluid from the circulation when the kidneys are unable to carry out this vital task. Haemodialysis and peritoneal dialysis are the two main forms of dialysis. Peritoneal dialysis utilises the lining of the abdomen to filter blood inside, whereas haemodialysis uses a machine to filter blood outside the body.

## How Does a Dialysis Machine Work

- In hemodialysis, the machine plays a crucial role in filtering the blood. Here's a step-by-step overview:
1. **Access Creation:** Before dialysis, a vascular access point is created, usually through a fistula (an artificial connection between an artery and vein) or a catheter inserted into a large vein. This access allows blood to flow out of the body and into the dialysis machine.
  2. **Blood Circulation:** The dialysis machine pumps the patient's blood through a filter called a dialyzer, or artificial kidney. The dialyzer has a semi-permeable membrane that allows waste products and excess fluids to pass through while retaining essential blood components.
  3. **Filtration Process:** Inside the dialyzer, the blood flows through the membrane and comes into contact with a dialysis fluid (dialysate) that absorbs the waste products and excess fluids. The clean blood is then returned to the patient's body.
  4. **Monitoring:** The machine continuously monitors and adjusts blood flow, pressure, and the composition of the dialysate to ensure optimal filtration and patient safety.

## Significance of Dialysis Machines

Patients with severe kidney impairment or end-stage renal disease (ESRD) require dialysis devices. They assist in blood pressure regulation, fluid balance maintenance, and the avoidance of consequences from renal failure. For those with impaired renal function, regular dialysis treatments are essential to extending life and increasing quality of life.

Dialysis is an essential therapy for kidney illness, but it is not a cure. As such, individuals can still need medication, kidney transplants, or lifestyle modifications. For people in need of renal assistance, dialysis machines are a lifeline and a beacon of hope in the field of medical technology.



# hines:

## A Lifeline for Kidney Health

By Pavel Chamabe





HCOWA ASSOCIATION  
MEETING THE



# HCOWA Association Launched to Transform Healthcare in West Africa

By Yosua Domedjui

The Health Community of West Africa (HCOWA) has officially launched its first non-profit organization, the HCOWA Association, in a ceremony at the Essence Medical Laboratory in Accra.

The event, which marked a significant milestone in the region's healthcare landscape, aimed to unite medical practitioners, hospitals, and key stakeholders to address healthcare disparities across West Africa.

The launch brought together prominent figures in the medical and pharmaceutical industries, including the Chairman of the Ghana National Chamber of Pharmacy, Pharm. Harrison Abutiate, and the CEO of HCOWA, Anna Jiang.

Speaking through her assistant and interpreter, Lixia Zhu, Anna Jiang emphasized the association's goal of enhancing healthcare delivery in Africa by fostering collaboration among key stakeholders.

"The establishment of the HCOWA Association represents a significant step forward in our mission to improve healthcare across the continent. By bringing together industry leaders and experts, we aim to create a robust network that can drive meaningful change in healthcare practices," Jiang stated.

Ms. Gloria Addo, a staff member of HCOWA Ghana, provided further insight into the motivation behind forming the association, highlighting its role in bridging gaps within the healthcare sector.

She noted that the association's efforts would focus on providing medical equipment, resources, and support to healthcare facilities in Ghana and beyond.

The event also served as a platform to promote the upcoming 2024 HCOWA Medical Summit and Expo, scheduled to take place from August 26th to 28th at the Grand Arena of the Accra International Conference Centre.

The expo aims to showcase medical products, foster collaboration, and encourage networking between local health institutions and international manufacturers.

In his address, Pharm. Harrison Abutiate underscored the importance of collaboration in advancing healthcare, expressing the Ghana National Chamber of Pharmacy's commitment to partnering with HCOWA on future initiatives.

The event concluded with a question-and-answer session, followed by a tour of the Essence Medical Laboratory, highlighting HCOWA's dedication to supporting the healthcare sector in Ghana.



# Cortisol Face; Trend or Malady?

By Gloria Addo

**E**ver wondered what is causing the increase of facial bloating and puffiness currently trending on TikTok? With most content creators naming the situation as Cortisol Face and attributing it to high stress levels on the skin while offering tips on reducing it, health professionals seem to argue otherwise.

Medical experts argue that stress is unlikely to cause noticeable swelling or puffiness but rather can be attributed to a medical condition known as Cushing's Syndrome.

Cushing's syndrome is a rare condition that primarily affects people who have used steroid medications, particularly steroid tablets. It is caused by an overproduction of cortisol, which is frequently caused by benign tumours in the pituitary or adrenal glands.

Symptoms of Cushing's syndrome can start suddenly or gradually. They tend to get slowly worse if not treated. The condition is characterized by sudden or gradual weight gain and increased body fat, often accompanied by a "buffalo hump" and a puffy, rounded face. Symptoms include easily bruising skin, large purple stretch marks, weakness in upper arms and thighs, reduced sex drive, fertility issues, depression, mood swings, and high blood pressure, which can become serious if untreated.

If you do not use steroids, identifying it might be difficult because the symptoms are similar to those of other diseases. The level of cortisol in your body can be assessed in your urine, blood, or saliva. If these tests reveal a high cortisol level, you may be sent to an endocrinologist to confirm or rule out Cushing's syndrome.

Cushing's syndrome typically improves with treatment, but recovery may be delayed. Treatment depends on the cause, such as steroid use or tumour-related issues. Treatment may involve surgery, radiotherapy, or medications to reduce cortisol effects. Consult a doctor about the benefits and risks of each treatment option.



**+** Health Myth Buster

# Detox Diets: Do They Really Cleanse Your Body?

By Chance Iradukunda

In recent years, detox diets have surged in popularity, promising to cleanse the body of toxins and promote overall health. With claims ranging from weight loss to improved energy levels, many individuals find themselves drawn to these quick-fix solutions. However, the question remains: do detox diets truly cleanse your body? Let's explore the science behind these diets and the realities of detoxification.

Detox diets typically involve a period of restrictive eating, focusing on juices, smoothies, and specific food groups while eliminating processed

foods, sugar, caffeine, and sometimes even solid foods altogether. These diets often claim to "flush out" toxins accumulated from environmental pollutants, unhealthy eating habits, or other lifestyle factors.

The human body is remarkably equipped to detoxify itself. Major organs such as the liver, kidneys, lungs, and skin continuously work to filter and eliminate toxins. The liver metabolizes harmful substances, the kidneys remove waste products through urine, and the lungs expel carbon dioxide. In essence, our bodies have built-in detox systems

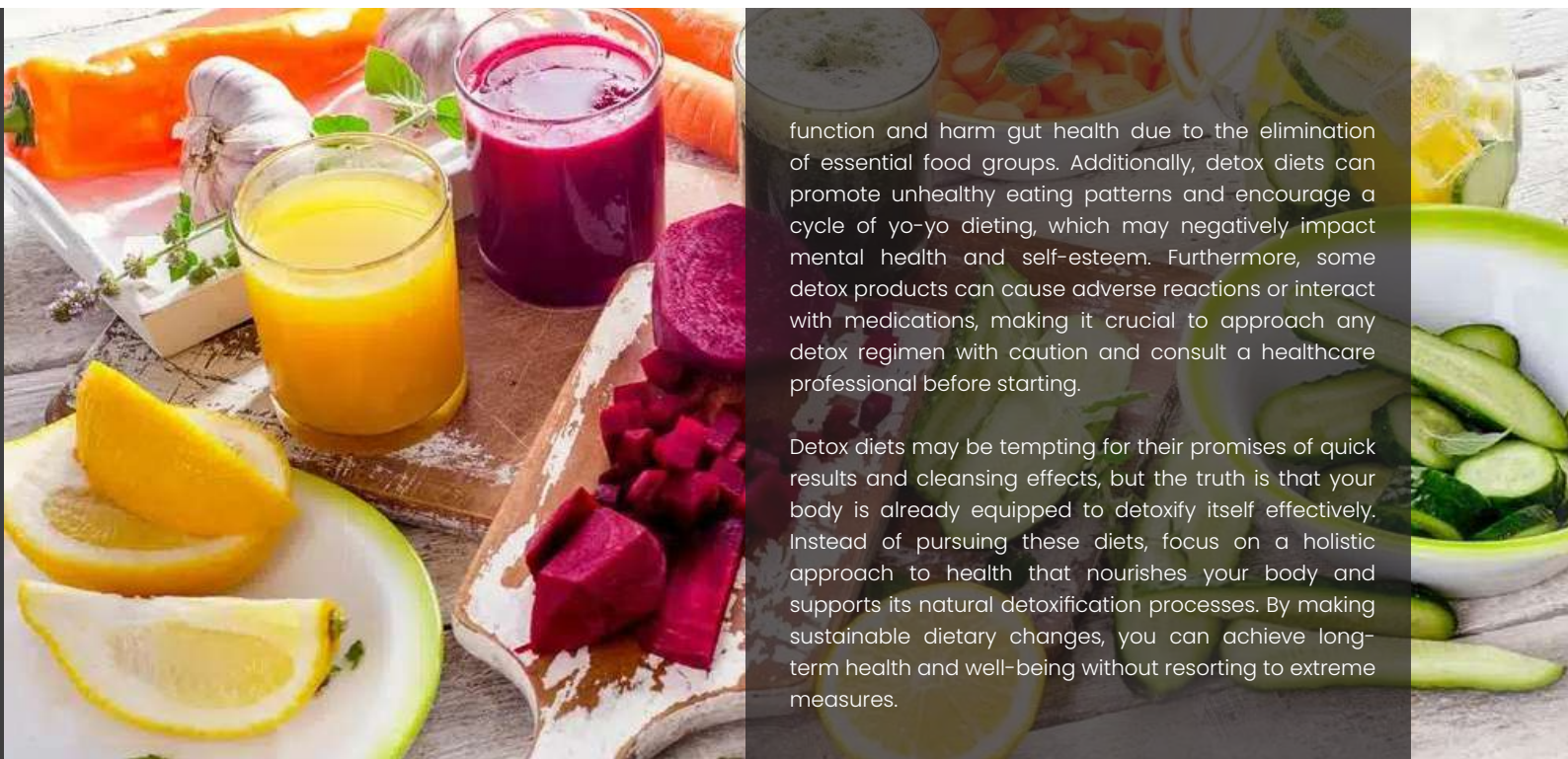
that function effectively without the need for restrictive diets.

The term "toxins" is often misunderstood, but healthy individuals can manage environmental exposures through a balanced diet, hydration, and a healthy lifestyle, rather than resorting to extreme detox diets.

Detox diets often promise quick weight loss and improved health, but they can pose several risks. Many of these diets are excessively restrictive, leading to

function and harm gut health due to the elimination of essential food groups. Additionally, detox diets can promote unhealthy eating patterns and encourage a cycle of yo-yo dieting, which may negatively impact mental health and self-esteem. Furthermore, some detox products can cause adverse reactions or interact with medications, making it crucial to approach any detox regimen with caution and consult a healthcare professional before starting.

Detox diets may be tempting for their promises of quick results and cleansing effects, but the truth is that your body is already equipped to detoxify itself effectively. Instead of pursuing these diets, focus on a holistic approach to health that nourishes your body and supports its natural detoxification processes. By making sustainable dietary changes, you can achieve long-term health and well-being without resorting to extreme measures.






**AFRICA**

in focus

# Processed Red Meat Linked to Higher Dementia Risk

By Yosua Domedjui

**P**reliminary research suggests that consuming higher amounts of processed red meat, such as hot dogs, sausages, and bacon, is associated with an increased risk of dementia.

Study participants who consumed 0.25 or more servings of processed meat per day, or roughly two servings per week, had a 15% higher risk of developing dementia compared to those who consumed less than 0.10 servings per day, or about three servings per month.

According to Yuhan Li, MHS, a research assistant at the Channing Division of Network Medicine, Brigham and Women's Hospital, Boston, "We found that consuming more red meat, especially processed red meat, was linked to a higher risk of dementia and worse cognition." Li shared these findings with Medscape Medical News.

However, the study also noted that substituting processed red meat with legumes and nuts might help mitigate this elevated risk. The researchers evaluated data from two significant long-term studies: the Nurses' Health Study and the Health Professionals Follow-Up Study. The Nurses' Health Study recruited female registered nurses aged 30-55 in 1976, while the Health Professionals Follow-Up Study recruited male health professionals aged 40-75 in 1986.

To assess the association between food intake and dementia, the researchers used validated semi-quantitative food frequency questionnaires to measure the intake of processed red meat every two to four years. Participants were asked how frequently they consumed dishes containing processed red meat.

Li emphasized the findings, stating, "We found that a higher intake of red meat, particularly processed red meat, was associated with a higher risk of developing dementia, as well as worse cognition." These results underscore the potential health risks of consuming processed red meat and highlight the importance of dietary choices in maintaining cognitive health.

In summary, the research indicates a clear link between higher consumption of processed red meat and an increased risk of dementia. Substituting processed red meat with healthier alternatives such as legumes and nuts may help reduce this risk, promoting better long-term cognitive health.

Source: NBC NEWS

# Why Basic First Aid Knowledge is Essential for Emergencies

By Prince Opoku Dogbey

**F**irst aid knowledge is an essential skill that can make a significant difference in emergency situations. It involves providing immediate care to individuals who are injured or ill before professional medical help arrives. Mastering basic first aid skills not only helps in managing everyday accidents and health crises but can also be life-saving in critical moments.

## Understanding Basic First Aid

First aid encompasses a range of skills that can address various emergencies. Key techniques include cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR), which can revive someone who has stopped breathing or whose heart has stopped beating. Learning how to perform CPR correctly can increase the chances of survival for individuals experiencing cardiac arrest. Another crucial skill is how to manage wounds and bleeding. Knowing how to apply pressure to a bleeding wound, clean it properly, and use bandages can prevent infections and control blood loss.

## Handling Common Emergencies

First aid knowledge also covers how to handle common emergencies such as choking, burns, and fractures. In the case of choking, performing the Heimlich maneuver can help clear the airway and restore breathing. For burns, it's important to know how to cool the burn with water and avoid using ice or greasy substances. Recognizing and immobilizing fractures or suspected broken bones can prevent further injury and pain.

## Importance of Training

Basic first aid training provides individuals with the confidence and competence to act effectively in emergencies. Many organizations offer first aid courses, often certified by bodies like the Red Cross, which equip participants with practical skills and knowledge. Regular refreshers are also recommended to keep skills current and effective.





### **Conclusion**

In essence, first aid knowledge is a crucial life skill that empowers individuals to respond effectively in emergencies. By mastering basic first aid techniques, you can play a vital role in preserving health, reducing the severity of injuries, and potentially saving lives. Being prepared with these skills ensures that you are ready to help in critical moments, making a significant impact on the well-being of those around you.



A successful skincare regimen customised to your individual needs requires an understanding of your skin type. Knowing what type of skin, you have will help you select the proper products and prevent needless aggravation. Different skin types respond differently to products and environmental variables.

#### 1. Normal Skin

Neither too dry nor too oily, normal skin is well-balanced. It has a silky texture, feels comfy, and has few flaws. Your skin type is probably normal if there aren't any obvious dry spots, excessive oiliness, or sensitivity on it. This skin type often has a pH balance and a radiant, healthy appearance.

#### 2. Oily Skin

Particularly in the T-zone (forehead, nose, and chin), oily skin has a glossy appearance and is more likely to get acne and enlarged pores. You may have oily skin if you often get blackheads or breakouts and notice that your skin seems greasy right after cleaning. Regular exfoliation and mattifying treatments are beneficial for oily skin types as they help control excess oil and avoid plugged pores.

#### 3. Dry Skin

Dry skin might seem drab and frequently feels tight, scratchy, or flaky. It might be prone to redness or inflammation and lacks moisture. Your skin is probably dry if it peels easily or feels parched even after using moisturiser. For this type, products that rebuild the skin barrier and offer high hydration are crucial.

#### 4. Combination Skin

Combination skin has traits from many skin types; it is usually dry or normal in certain regions and oily in the T-zone. You may find that certain areas of your

face, such your cheeks, are dry, while your nose and forehead are greasy. For mixed skin, balancing treatments that target both oiliness and dryness are essential.

#### 5. Sensitive Skin

Sensitive skin reacts significantly to specific products or changes in the environment, and it is more likely to be red, itchy, burning, or dry. You probably have sensitive skin if you frequently get

irritated by new items or have reactions to them. Choose soft, fragrance-free products that are meant to calm and shield.

Identifying your skin type helps in selecting the right products and treatments, ensuring your skincare routine is both effective and comfortable. Regular assessment of your skin can also guide adjustments as your skin's needs change over time.

# Understanding Your Skin Type: A Key to Effective Skincare

By Pavel Chamabe







# Asthma

## A Patient's Guide to Causes and Coping Strategies

By Chance Iradukunda

**A**sthma is a chronic respiratory condition that affects millions of people worldwide, characterized by inflammation and narrowing of the airways, leading to difficulty in breathing. While asthma can develop at any age, it often begins in childhood. Asthma is a chronic condition that causes the airways in the lungs to become inflamed and hyperreactive. This inflammation can lead to periodic episodes of wheezing, shortness of breath, chest tightness, and coughing. Asthma symptoms can vary in frequency and intensity, and they may worsen at night or during physical activity.

### Causes and Triggers

Asthma is caused by a combination of genetic and environmental factors. Genetic predisposition increases the likelihood of developing the disease, while environmental

factors like allergens and respiratory infections can trigger symptoms. Common triggers include smoke, air pollution, strong odors, and weather changes. Physical activity, especially in cold or dry conditions, can also trigger symptoms. Emotional stress and anxiety can also trigger hyperventilation, causing asthma attacks. Recognizing and avoiding these triggers is crucial for effective asthma management, allowing individuals to maintain control and reduce the frequency and severity of asthma attacks.

### Management and Treatment

Asthma is caused by a combination of genetic and environmental factors. Genetic predisposition increases the likelihood of developing the disease, while environmental factors like allergens and respiratory infections can trigger symptoms. Common triggers include smoke, air pollution, strong odors, and weather changes. Physical activity, especially in cold or dry conditions, can also trigger symptoms. Emotional stress and anxiety can also trigger hyperventilation, causing asthma attacks. Recognizing and avoiding these triggers is crucial for effective asthma management, allowing individuals to maintain control and reduce the frequency and severity of asthma attacks.



# Hemoglobinometers

By Yosua Domedjui,

**A** hemoglobinometer is a medical device designed to measure the concentration of haemoglobin in the blood. Haemoglobin, a protein found in red blood cells, is crucial for oxygen transport throughout the body. Accurate measurement of haemoglobin is vital for diagnosing and monitoring various blood disorders, such as anaemia, polycythaemia, and chronic diseases.

## Working Principle

Hemoglobinometers typically operate on the principle of photometry. The device emits light through a blood sample and measures the light absorption by the haemoglobin present. The concentration of haemoglobin is then calculated based on this absorption.

## Types of Hemoglobinometers

**Bench-top Hemoglobinometers:** Primarily used in laboratories and hospitals, these devices offer high precision and can process a large number of samples quickly.

**Portable Hemoglobinometers:** Lightweight and easy to transport, they are ideal for home visits, mobile clinics, and rural areas. They provide good accuracy and allow for quick analysis in the field.

**Finger-Prick Hemoglobinometers:** These devices are used for rapid point-of-care testing. They require a small drop of blood obtained via a finger prick and deliver results in a few seconds.

## Advantages and Uses

Hemoglobinometers offer several advantages:

**Speed:** Results are obtained within minutes, allowing for rapid clinical decision-making.

**Accuracy:** Modern technology ensures precise measurements, essential for correct diagnosis.

**Ease of Use:** Most devices are user-friendly and require minimal training.

These devices are widely used in various settings:

**General Medicine:** For screening and monitoring anaemia.

**Paediatrics:** To monitor children at risk of iron deficiency.

**Prenatal Care:** To monitor haemoglobin levels in pregnant women.

**Sports and Performance:** To assess athletes' physical condition.

## Conclusion

The hemoglobinometer is an indispensable tool in the medical field for the accurate and rapid measurement of haemoglobin. Its use allows for the effective diagnosis and monitoring of various pathologies, improving patient care quality. Technological advancements continue to enhance these devices, making their use even more reliable and accessible.







# Baked Chicken and Vegetable Casserole

By Pavel Chamabe

## Ingredients:

- 2 chicken thighs (or chicken breasts)
- 2 cups of broccoli, cut into small florets
- 1 cup of carrots, sliced
- 1 cup of zucchini, sliced
- 1 cup of potatoes, diced
- 2 tablespoons of olive oil
- 1 teaspoon of paprika
- 1 teaspoon of garlic powder
- 1 teaspoon of Herbes de Provence
- Salt and pepper to taste

## Instructions:

- Preheat the oven to 200°C (400°F).
- Prepare the chicken: Season the chicken thighs with paprika, garlic powder, herbes de Provence, salt, and pepper.
- Prepare the vegetables: In a large bowl, toss the broccoli, carrots, zucchini, and potatoes with olive oil. Season with salt and pepper.
- Assemble the casserole: In an ovenproof dish, layer the vegetables evenly. Place the chicken thighs on top.
- Cook: Bake for 35-40 minutes, or until the chicken is cooked through and the vegetables are tender. Check the chicken's doneness with a thermometer (internal temperature should reach 75°C or 165°F).
- Serve: Let rest for a few minutes before serving.

*This recipe is a complete meal that provides a good dose of protein, fiber, and vitamins.*





# The Benefits of Kegel Exercises for Men's Sexual Health

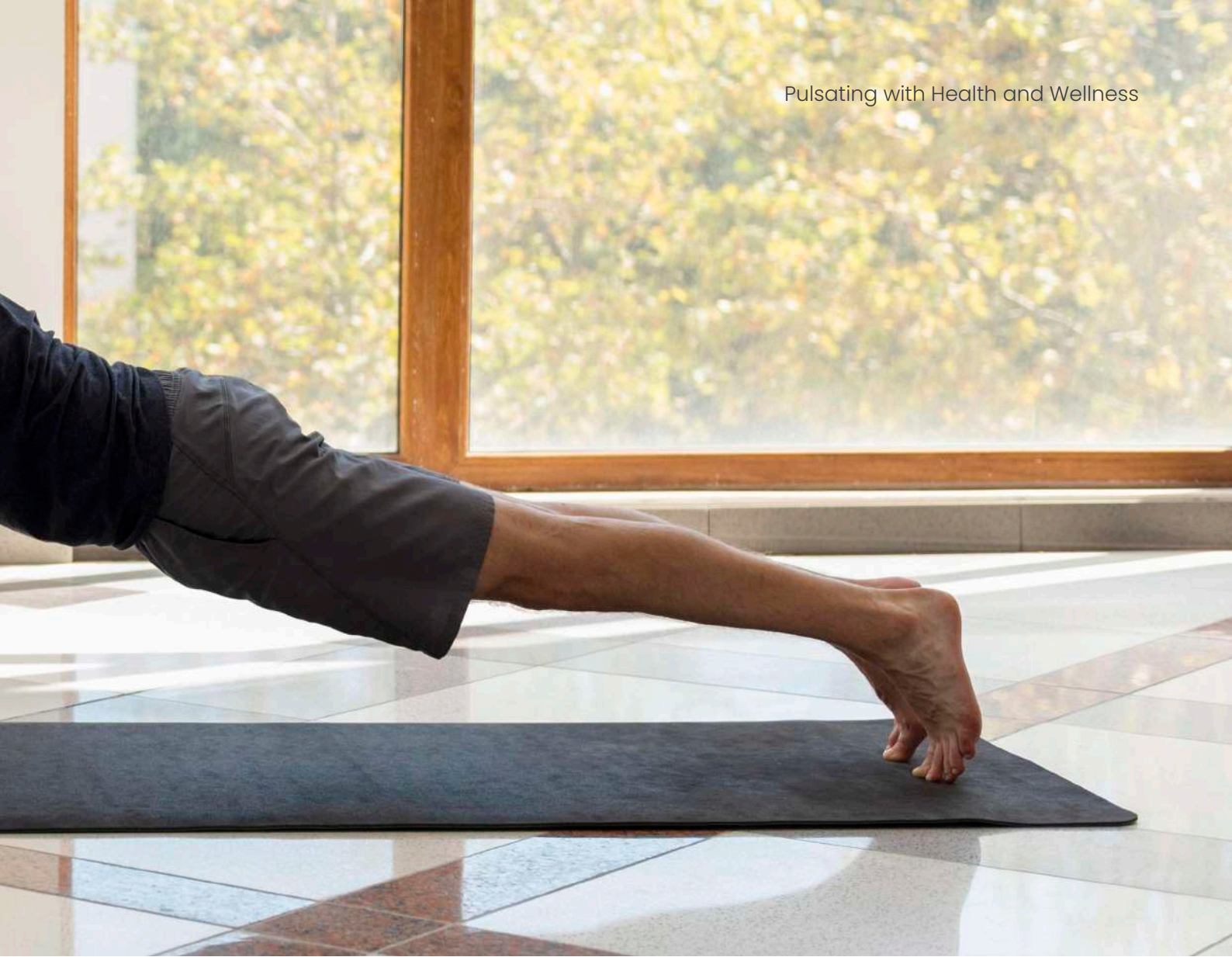
By Prince Opoku Dogbey

Kegel exercises, often associated with women, have significant benefits for men, particularly in enhancing sexual health. These simple yet effective exercises strengthen the pelvic floor muscles, which play a crucial role in urinary control, sexual function, and overall well-being.

The pelvic floor muscles support the bladder and bowel and affect sexual function by controlling blood flow to the penis. Regular Kegel exercises can lead to stronger erections, improved stamina, and better control during ejaculation. For men experiencing premature ejaculation or erectile dysfunction, Kegel exercises can be a natural and effective solution.

Performing Kegel exercises is straightforward. The first step is to identify the pelvic floor muscles, which can be done by stopping urination midstream or tightening the muscles that prevent passing gas. Once identified, these muscles can be contracted and held for a few seconds, then released. Repeating this action in sets of 10-15 contractions several times a day can lead to noticeable improvements over time.





The impact of Kegel exercises on sexual health goes beyond just physical benefits. For many men, the improved control and enhanced sexual performance that result from regular practice can boost confidence and reduce anxiety related to sexual activity. This, in turn, can lead to a more satisfying and fulfilling sexual experience for both partners.

Moreover, Kegel exercises can also help with urinary incontinence, which can be an embarrassing issue for men, especially as they age. Strengthening the pelvic floor muscles can help regain control over urinary functions, adding another layer of benefit to these exercises.

In conclusion, Kegel exercises are a simple, cost-free, and effective way for men to enhance their sexual health, improve erectile function, and gain better control over ejaculation. With consistent practice, men can experience significant improvements in their sexual performance and overall quality of life.





# Dementia and Its Effects on Daily Life

By Chance Iradukunda

supportive environment. Therapeutic approaches like music therapy can promote joy and purpose. Dementia significantly impacts an individual's physical health, leading to challenges in daily activities, weight gain, muscle weakness, and reduced mobility. It also affects

the body's regulation of functions, causing sleep disturbances and increased susceptibility to infections. Coexisting medical conditions can exacerbate these issues. Therefore, comprehensive care is crucial for dementia patients.

**D**ementia is a general term that describes a range of symptoms associated with a decline in cognitive function severe enough to interfere with daily life. It encompasses various conditions, including Alzheimer's disease, vascular dementia, and frontotemporal dementia. As dementia progresses, it significantly impacts not only the individuals diagnosed but also their families and caregivers. Dementia's cognitive decline impacts daily tasks, communication, and independence. It leads to frustration, confusion, and increased risk of accidents and falls. This decline requires increased support from caregivers and family members, emphasizing the need for strategies to promote safety, enhance cognitive engagement, and encourage independence. Tailored interventions can improve daily functioning and quality of life for dementia patients.

## Emotional Well-Being

Dementia significantly impacts the emotional well-being of individuals, causing confusion, frustration, sadness, and anxiety. Cognitive decline can lead to feelings of helplessness and identity loss. Caregivers and family members also experience stress and grief. Maintaining emotional well-being involves engaging in meaningful activities, fostering social connections, and providing a

## Impact on Relationships and Social Engagement

Dementia affects relationships and social engagement, causing communication issues, emotional strain, and misunderstandings. It can lead to grief, loss, and helplessness for loved ones. Social engagement may decrease, causing isolation. To maintain connections, foster understanding, patience, and adaptability, focusing on meaningful interactions and supportive environments.

## Strategies for Enhancing Well-Being

To improve the well-being of individuals with dementia, a comprehensive approach is needed. This includes promoting cognitive stimulation through memory games, establishing a consistent daily routine, encouraging social interaction through group activities, physical activity, and sensory experiences. Education and support for caregivers and family members are also crucial to ensure they can provide compassionate care and understand the unique needs of dementia patients.



# The Impact of Vacation and Relaxation on Family Health



In today's fast-paced world, the importance of taking time off for vacation and relaxation cannot be overstated, especially when it comes to family health. While work, school, and daily routines often take priority, setting aside time for family vacations can have profound and lasting effects on both physical and mental well-being.

First and foremost, vacations provide a much-needed break from the stresses of daily life. For parents, work-related pressures can lead to burnout, while children may feel overwhelmed by schoolwork and extracurricular activities. A

family vacation offers an opportunity to disconnect from these stressors and recharge. The time spent together away from the usual environment helps to reduce stress levels, which can improve overall health. Lower stress levels are associated with better immune function, reduced risk of chronic diseases, and improved mental health.

Additionally, vacations often encourage families to engage in physical activities that they might not usually

participate in during their regular routines. Whether it's hiking, swimming, or simply exploring a new city on foot, these activities promote physical fitness and help maintain a healthy lifestyle. The shared experience of trying new activities can also strengthen family bonds, creating lasting memories and a sense of unity.

Moreover, vacations and relaxation time allow for improved family communication. In the hustle and bustle of everyday life, meaningful conversations can often be neglected. A relaxed vacation setting provides the perfect backdrop for family members to reconnect, discuss their thoughts and feelings, and deepen their relationships. This improved communication is vital for emotional well-being and can lead to a more harmonious family dynamic.

In conclusion, taking time off for vacation and relaxation is not just a luxury but a necessity for maintaining family health. The benefits extend beyond just physical health; they encompass mental and emotional well-being, stronger family bonds, and a more balanced and fulfilling life. Prioritizing vacation time is an investment in the overall health and happiness of the family.

# Erectile Dysfunction

By Chance Iradukunda

**E**rectile dysfunction (ED) is a common condition that affects millions of men worldwide, characterized by the persistent inability to achieve or maintain an erection sufficient for satisfactory sexual performance. While occasional difficulties with erections can happen to any man, chronic ED can lead to significant emotional distress and affect relationships. For individuals with erectile dysfunction and their partners, it is essential to comprehend the origins, symptoms, and available treatments.

## Causes of Erectile Dysfunction

Erectile dysfunction can arise from a variety of physical and psychological factors, including:

### Physical Causes

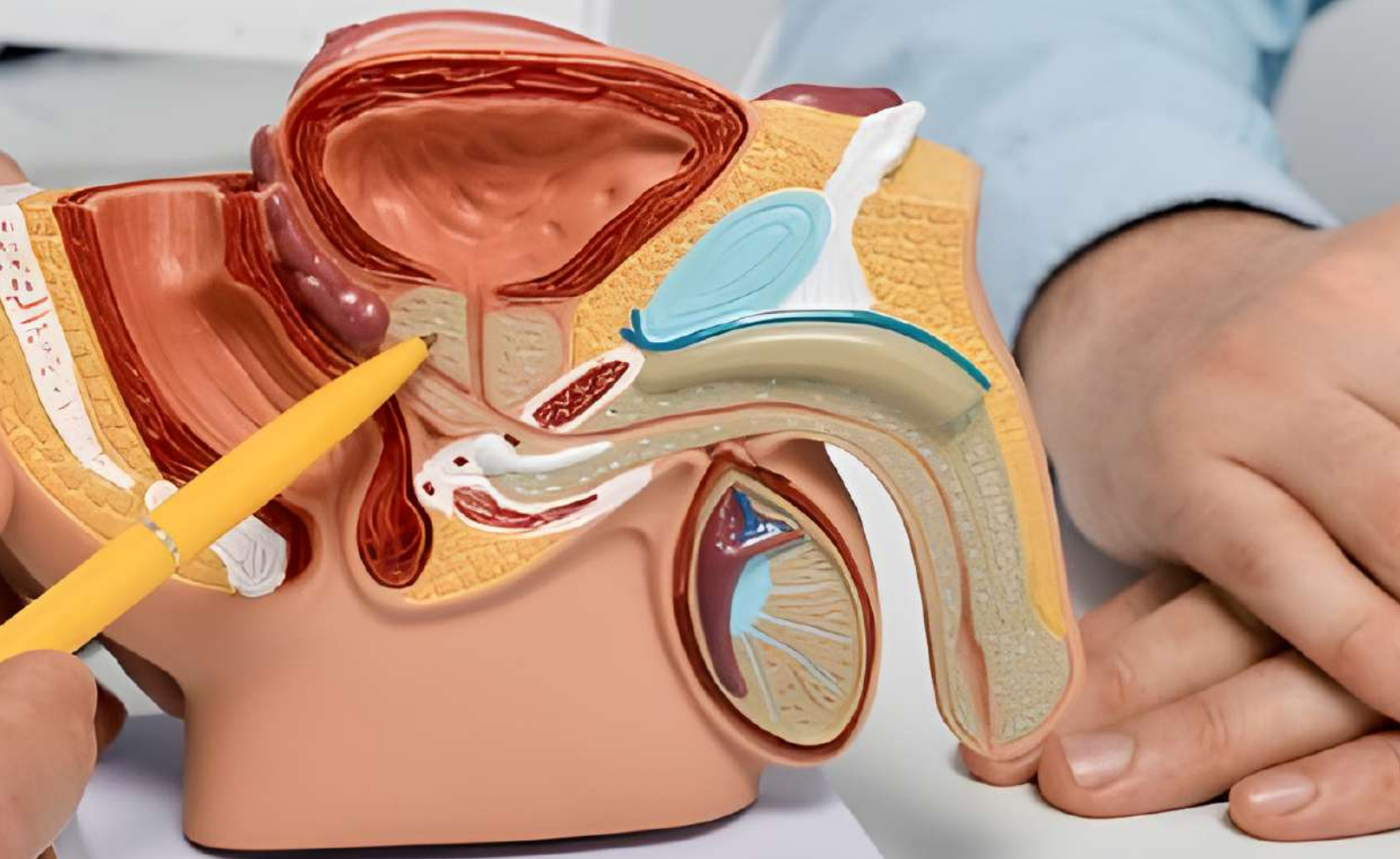
Erectile dysfunction (ED) is caused by various physical factors, including cardiovascular diseases, diabetes, hormonal imbalances, obesity, metabolic syndrome, and neurological disorders. Lifestyle choices like smoking and excessive alcohol consumption exacerbate these issues, making it crucial to address both health and lifestyle factors in managing ED.

### Psychological Causes

Erectile dysfunction (ED) is caused by psychological factors such as anxiety, depression, relationship issues, and past traumas. These factors can inhibit sexual performance and desire, leading to fear, stress, and emotional disconnection. Addressing these issues through therapy, counseling, and open communication is crucial for overall sexual health.







### **Symptoms of Erectile Dysfunction**

ED symptoms involve difficulties in achieving or maintaining an erection for sexual performance, including infrequent or inconsistent erections, loss of rigidity, and decreased sexual desire. These symptoms can lead to frustration, embarrassment, and anxiety, impacting relationships and quality of life.

### **Diagnosis of Erectile Dysfunction**

Erectile dysfunction (ED) diagnosis involves a comprehensive medical history and physical examination by a healthcare professional. The doctor will assess the patient's sexual history, erectile difficulties, and underlying medical conditions. Physical examinations may include blood tests to assess hormone levels and cholesterol. NPT studies may be used to differentiate between psychological and physical causes.

### **Treatment Options**

Erectile dysfunction (ED) treatment involves non-invasive and medical interventions. Common treatments include oral medications like Viagra, Cialis, and Levitra, lifestyle modifications like exercise, weight management, smoking cessation, and alcohol reduction, psychological counseling, and surgical options like vacuum erection devices, penile injections, or penile implants.

# The Crucial Role of Hydration in Maintaining Health

By Prince Opoku Dogbey

Proper hydration is essential for maintaining overall health and well-being. Water is a fundamental component of the human body, making up about 60% of our total body weight. It plays a critical role in nearly every bodily function, from regulating body temperature to aiding digestion and transporting nutrients. Despite its importance, many people overlook the need to stay adequately hydrated, which can lead to various health issues.

One of the primary benefits of staying hydrated is its impact on energy levels and brain function. Dehydration, even in mild forms, can lead to fatigue, reduced concentration, and impaired cognitive function. When the body lacks sufficient water, it struggles to perform at its best, leading to feelings of lethargy and difficulty in focusing on tasks.

Hydration also plays a vital role in maintaining healthy skin. Water helps to keep the skin hydrated, promoting elasticity and reducing the appearance of wrinkles. Proper hydration can also aid in detoxifying the skin, helping to flush out toxins that can cause breakouts and other skin issues. For those looking to maintain a youthful, glowing complexion, drinking enough water is a simple yet effective solution.

Moreover, water is crucial for the digestive system. It helps break down food, making it easier for the body to absorb nutrients. Staying hydrated can prevent constipation and support regular bowel movements. For those struggling with digestive issues, increasing water intake can often provide significant relief.

In addition to these benefits, hydration supports kidney function by helping to flush out waste products from the

body. This reduces the risk of kidney stones and urinary tract infections. Regular water consumption ensures that the kidneys can effectively filter out toxins, contributing to overall health.

In conclusion, staying properly hydrated is vital for maintaining energy, brain function, skin health, digestion, and kidney function. Making a conscious effort to drink enough water each day can significantly improve your overall health and well-being.



# Effective Management of Fibromyalgia: Movement is Key

By Yosua Domedjui

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**W**eariness, anxiety, diffuse pain, and cognitive issues—fibromyalgia is a debilitating condition affecting approximately 1.7 million people in France.

This invisible illness presents numerous symptoms, including exhaustion, anxiety, generalized pain, and cognitive problems.

Recognized as a pathology by the World Health Organization (WHO) in 1990, there is currently no approved medication specifically for its treatment.

The medications that are prescribed are primarily intended for other

conditions and serve as secondary measures. This includes some antidepressants and anti-epileptic medications with analgesic properties.

"A combination of multiple approaches is the most effective treatment," emphasizes Dr. Caroline Maindet, a pain specialist at Grenoble University Hospital (Isère). These approaches include electrical neuromodulation of painful areas, spa treatments, psychological support, and therapeutic education. Ultimately, she says, "movement is the key."

According to a 2020 Inserm expert study, adapted physical activity should be the cornerstone of

fibromyalgia treatment. However, individuals with chronic pain often lead sedentary lifestyles, which exacerbates their discomfort and makes movement more difficult.

Breaking this vicious cycle and encouraging physical activity is crucial. To achieve this, physical activity must be gradual, gentle, and guided by a qualified professional experienced in exercise reconditioning, such as a sports coach or physiotherapist.

The goal is not to engage in strenuous activities like sprinting laps around a stadium but to carefully and patiently re-engage the body, considering each individual's strengths and limitations.



# Can Sudden Weather Changes and Night Bathing Increase the Risk of Stroke?

Yosua Domedjui

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In recent years, sudden weather changes in some European countries have shown a notable trend: as temperatures drop and cold winds arrive, the number of stroke cases rises compared to the warmer months. This observation suggests a potential link between weather and stroke risk.

When temperatures drop rapidly, the body often reacts in ways that may make individuals more susceptible to strokes, particularly when engaging in nighttime activities like bathing. The body's response to sudden cold—such as taking a cold shower—can

induce stress on the cardiovascular system, possibly increasing the likelihood of a stroke in vulnerable individuals.

Strokes are generally categorized into two main types: brain hemorrhages, where a blood vessel within the brain bursts, and cerebral vascular occlusions (cerebral infarctions), where blood flow to the brain is blocked. However, while factors like sudden temperature changes, cold weather, and nighttime bathing may not directly cause a stroke, they can indirectly contribute by affecting overall health and putting additional

stress on the body. This can lead some to mistakenly associate strokes directly with activities like cold showers or bathing at night.

The truth is that poor habits, combined with sudden environmental changes, may increase stroke risk indirectly. Therefore, maintaining a consistent body temperature and avoiding extreme cold exposure, especially at night, can be beneficial. Further research could help clarify the exact relationship between these factors, offering insights into how people can reduce their risk of stroke amidst unpredictable weather patterns.







# What Are the Necessary Tests and Procedures to Confirm a Medical Diagnosis?

By Yosua Domedjui

**C**onfirming a diagnosis in medical practice involves a structured approach that typically includes a combination of patient history, physical examination, and various diagnostic tests or procedures. The choice of tests or procedures depends on the suspected condition and the initial findings from the history and physical exam.

## Patient History and Physical Examination

The diagnostic process begins with a thorough patient history, including the onset, duration, and characteristics of symptoms, as well as any relevant medical, family, and social history. The physical examination helps to identify signs that might point towards specific conditions. For instance, heart murmurs detected during a cardiac exam might suggest valvular heart disease.

## Laboratory Tests

Laboratory tests are fundamental in confirming many diagnoses. Complete blood counts (CBC) can detect infections, anaemia, or other hematological conditions. Biochemical tests, such as liver function tests or renal panels, provide information about the functioning of vital organs. For example, elevated levels of liver enzymes might indicate liver disease.

## Imaging Studies

Imaging studies offer a visual assessment of internal structures and



are crucial in diagnosing a range of conditions. X-rays are commonly used for bone fractures, while ultrasound is helpful in evaluating soft tissues and organs like the liver or kidneys. More advanced imaging, such as CT scans or MRI, provides detailed views of the body's internal structures and can help in diagnosing complex conditions like tumors or neurological disorders.

## Specialized Tests and Procedures

Certain conditions require specialized tests for confirmation. For example, an electrocardiogram (ECG) is essential for diagnosing arrhythmias and other heart conditions. Endoscopic procedures, like colonoscopy or gastroscopy, allow direct visualization and biopsy of the gastrointestinal tract, aiding in the diagnosis of conditions like colorectal cancer or peptic ulcers.

## Genetic and Molecular Testing

With advancements in medical

science, genetic and molecular tests are increasingly used to confirm diagnoses, especially for hereditary diseases and cancers. These tests can identify specific genetic mutations or biomarkers that are indicative of particular conditions.

## Conclusion

Accurate diagnosis is a multi-step process that integrates information from patient history, physical examination, and a range of diagnostic tests and procedures. The selection of appropriate tests is critical and depends on the initial clinical findings and the suspected condition, ensuring a tailored and precise diagnostic approach.





# Medical Jargons You Need to Know

Here are medical jargons and their meanings:

**Acute:** A condition that comes on suddenly and is severe in nature, but typically short-lived. For example, an acute infection might develop rapidly and require immediate medical attention.

**Chronic:** A health condition that persists over a long period, often for the rest of a person's life. Chronic diseases include conditions like diabetes and heart disease.

**Diagnosis:** The process of identifying a disease or condition based on a patient's symptoms, medical history, and diagnostic tests.

**Metabolism:** The set of life-sustaining chemical reactions in organisms that convert food into energy and build cellular structures.

**Rehabilitation:** A set of therapeutic practices designed to help individuals recover from illness or injury and regain their maximum functional ability.

**Comorbidity:** The presence of one or more additional conditions or diseases that occur alongside a primary condition, such as diabetes and hypertension.



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