

Health Pulse magazine



HCOWAA Ghana and GHS Engage with HCOWA China in Pre-Expo Mission to Catalyze West Africa's Health Future

Healthy Recipe Hack:
Potato, Asparagus &
Mushroom Hash
See page 25

Healthy Living:
The Science of
Healthy Eating Habits
in Children.....
See page 27





Contents

Editorial	3
Organ	4
Special Report	5 – 6
Health and Technology	7 – 8
Mental Health	9
Skin Care Health	14
Africa in focus	11
Health Myth Buster	12
Disease in Focus	13
Expo Preparation	14 – 21
Health and Wellness	22
Men's Health	23 – 24
Healthy Recipe Hack	25
Family Health	26
Healthy Living	27
Health News	28
Ask the Expert	29
Health Terms	30



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. HCOWAA 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, HCOWAA 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.

HCOWAA 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 HCOWAA 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.

EXECUTIVE PUBLISHERS

Mr. David Tai
Anna Jiang

DEPUTY PRESIDENT

Prince Opoku Dogbey

CONTENT DEVELOPERS

Yosua Kodjovi Domedjui
Gloria Addo
Priscilla Akorfa Fomevor

CHIEF EDITOR

Yosua Kodjovi Domedjui

BRAND ASSOCIATES

Emmanuel Lawoh Teleno
Banahene Kwame Osei-Assibey

DIGITAL MARKETER

Apedo Delali Asher

GROWTH AND STRATEGY TEAM

David Tai
Sihong Jiang
Prince Opoku Dogbey



A person wearing teal medical scrubs and a stethoscope around their neck is holding a large, heart-shaped sign with both hands. The sign is black with a white border and the word "DIABETES" written in white, bold, capital letters. The background is a solid teal color, matching the scrubs.

DIABETES

The Silent Surge of Type 2 Diabetes

A Society's Wake-Up Call

In a world increasingly shaped by fast food, sedentary lifestyles, and processed carbohydrates, a silent epidemic is surging beneath the surface: Type 2 diabetes. While many associate diabetes with sugar or genetics, the truth is far more complex—and far more troubling.

The human body relies on insulin, a hormone produced by the pancreas, to regulate blood sugar levels. In Type 1 diabetes, the pancreas fails to produce insulin, often due to an autoimmune response. Without insulin, sugar accumulates in the bloodstream, disrupting organ function and threatening life.

But while Type 1 diabetes is serious; it represents only a fraction of all cases.

Today, a staggering 90% of people living with diabetes suffer from Type 2 diabetes—a form directly linked to dietary habits, lifestyle, and environmental factors. When we consume excess starches and sugary foods, the pancreas is overworked and cells begin to resist insulin's effect. This resistance, combined with physical inactivity and rising obesity rates, leads to the chronic imbalance we call Type 2 diabetes.

And the numbers are alarming.

Global diabetes cases have skyrocketed from 50 million to over 430 million, an eightfold increase in just a few decades. Worse still, projections suggest a 150% increase by 2050, painting a bleak picture of public health in the near future. This isn't just a medical issue—it's a societal crisis.

Type 2 diabetes has earned its label as a "disease of civilization." It mirrors our modern excesses and reflects how convenience and neglect are quietly undermining our collective health. It is no longer enough to treat the symptoms; we must confront the root causes: our food systems, urban planning, and the cultural acceptance of sedentary routines. This editorial is not just a call for awareness. It is a call to rethink our choices, our environments, and our values. How long can we continue down a path where our children inherit not just our genes, but our unhealthy habits?

The rise of Type 2 diabetes is not inevitable—it is preventable. But prevention starts with reflection, education, and action. As a society, we must ask ourselves: are we nourishing life, or silently feeding disease?

The bladder

By Yosua K. Domedjui

The bladder is a hollow, muscular organ located in the lower abdomen, just behind the pubic bone. It connects to the kidneys via two tubes called ureters, and empties urine through the urethra. Though small, the bladder plays a vital role in your body's waste management system.

The Role and Importance of the Bladder

The bladder's main function is to store urine that comes from the kidneys and release it when it's full. On average, it can hold about 400–600 milliliters of urine in adults. When it's time to urinate, the bladder muscles contract while the sphincter muscles relax to allow urine to exit the body.

This simple process supports detoxification, helps regulate fluid balance, and prevents waste buildup. A healthy bladder is essential for comfort, hygiene, and quality of life.

What Can Affect the Bladder?

While the bladder is built to handle its job well, several factors can affect its performance:

1. Urinary Tract Infections (UTIs) – Bacteria can enter the bladder and cause inflammation, pain, and frequent urges to urinate.

2. Overactive Bladder (OAB) – This condition causes the bladder to contract unexpectedly, leading to urgency and possible leakage.

3. Bladder Stones – These form when minerals in the urine crystallize and can cause pain, bleeding, or infection.

4. Prostate Enlargement – In men, a swollen prostate can press on the bladder, disrupting normal flow.

5. Diabetes and Neurological Disorders – These can interfere with nerve signals that control the bladder.

6. Certain medications, caffeine, alcohol, and spicy foods can irritate the bladder lining.

When Should You Worry?

Frequent urination—more than 8–10 times a day or waking up several times at night—could signal a problem, especially if it's accompanied by:

- Pain or burning
- Blood in urine
- Sudden, urgent need to go
- Lower abdominal pressure

Ignoring bladder symptoms can lead to kidney damage or chronic infections.

Keep Your Bladder Healthy

- Drink water regularly, but don't overdo it.
- Limit bladder irritants like caffeine and alcohol.
- Empty your bladder completely and regularly.
- Do pelvic floor exercises (Kegels).





HCOWAA and Ghana's Ministry of Health Discuss Strategic AI Partnership

The Health Community of West Africa Association (HCOWAA), held a pivotal meeting with Ghana's Ministry of Health on 9th June, 2025 to explore a potential partnership centered on integrating advanced artificial intelligence (AI) solutions into the country's healthcare system. The discussions focused on HCOWAA's five AI-driven healthcare components, aimed at enhancing medical efficiency, disease control and traditional medicine practices.

During the meeting, HCOWAA outlined its vision for an AI-Powered Department in Medical Facilities, which would integrate smart diagnostic systems, big data analytics and computational infrastructure to improve accuracy and speed in patient care. The proposal also highlighted the potential deployment of surgical robots to support minimally invasive procedures, reducing recovery times and expanding access to advanced surgical treatments.

Another key focus was the AI-Powered Medical Imaging System, designed to assist hospitals with limited specialist staff. Through a centralized server, medical images can be analyzed remotely by experts, while AI-driven automation helps local doctors generate faster and more precise diagnostic reports.

The Ministry also expressed strong interest in HCOWAA's AI-Powered Traditional Medicine initiative, which seeks to blend Ghana's indigenous healing practices with AI-driven data analysis. This model, inspired by the successful integration of Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM), includes a big data learning center to enhance traditional diagnostics and treatment methodologies. Additionally, discussions covered the AI-Powered National Disease Control system, which enables real-time disease monitoring, predictive analytics,



and decentralized testing centers for faster response to health threats. The proposed AI Medical Supply Chain was also discussed as a means to optimize resource distribution, minimize waste, and ensure timely availability of critical medical supplies.

The Ministry of Health commended HCOWAA's innovative approach and affirmed its commitment to further discussions on formalizing a partnership. Both parties agreed to continue collaboration, with the goal of leveraging AI to strengthen Ghana's healthcare infrastructure and improve service

delivery nationwide.

This gathering which involved the Acting Chief Director for the Ministry of Health, Frank Raji and his Deputy, Chief Director of HCOWAA, David Tai and HCOWA's Secretary, Believe Domor represents a key step toward integrating cutting-edge technology into Ghana's health sector, laying the groundwork for a more efficient and data-driven medical sector.



X-Rays and the Truth:

Demystifying Common Myths in Ghana

X-rays have been used in hospitals for over 100 years, helping doctors diagnose injuries and diseases quickly and accurately. Yet even with all their benefits, many people in Ghana still fear them, often because of misinformation passed around in communities, markets, or even online. As a radiographer, I've seen how these myths can delay proper care, create unnecessary fear, and cause confusion. It's time we cleared things up.

One of the biggest concerns people have is that X-rays can shorten your life or slowly damage your health over time. This is a common myth, but not backed by science.



Meshach Kweku Galley
Diagnostic Radiographer

What most people don't realize is that radiation is part of everyday life. We are constantly exposed to small amounts of natural radiation from the sun, the soil, certain foods, building materials, and even from things like cooking gas and granite tiles. This is called background radiation, and we've all been exposed to it since birth.

A single X-ray at the hospital adds only a very small amount to this natural radiation often no more than what you'd get from a few days or weeks of normal life. In fact, doctors and radiographers only recommend X-rays when the benefit to your health clearly outweighs any tiny risk involved.

Another myth that causes concern is the idea that repeated X-rays can lead to cancer. While it's true that very high doses of radiation over a long time can increase risk, the kind of exposure you get from regular medical imaging is far below that level. Radiographers and doctors follow international safety guidelines and use the lowest possible dose needed for each scan. This is called the ALARA principle — keeping radiation “As Low As Reasonably Achievable.” Also, unnecessary scans are avoided. So, unless there's a valid medical reason, you will not be overexposed.

Many people also believe that X-rays can see everything inside the body — muscles, veins, internal organs, and even spiritual problems. This is false. X-rays are excellent for looking at bones and lungs, but they can't show everything. That's why doctors sometimes ask for other tests like ultrasound, CT, or MRI depending on what they're trying to diagnose. No scan is a one-size-fits-all tool.

There's also a widespread belief that radiographers become sterile or fall sick over time because they work near X-ray machines. This is not true. Radiographers are trained in radiation safety and do not stay in the room when scans are being taken. We use protective barriers, maintain distance, and wear monitoring badges that help track our exposure. Many radiographers in Ghana and around the world have families and live long, healthy lives.

It's also important to know that patients should not walk into a lab and request an X-ray on their own. Not all pain or illness needs imaging, and unnecessary scans expose you to radiation without reason. Only a qualified doctor should prescribe an X-ray after proper examination. This ensures your health concern is being handled correctly and safely.

When an X-ray is truly needed, radiographers take every step to protect patients. We ask important screening questions, especially for women who may be pregnant, and we use lead aprons and careful positioning to limit exposure. We only scan the part of the body that needs to be examined.

In conclusion, X-rays are safe, effective, and have been saving lives for over a century. The myths about cancer, infertility, and overexposure are simply not supported by evidence. When done properly, X-rays help doctors find answers and guide treatment quickly and safely. Trust the medical professionals, ask questions if you're unsure, and remember — your safety is always our top priority

Living With Trauma and Finding Peace After PTSD

By Priscilla Akorfa Fomevor

The human brain is strong—until it isn't. There aren't usually obvious scars from trauma. Sometimes it remains in the quiet moments: a memory that hits you like a tsunami you never saw coming, a nightmare that feels too real when you wake up, or a reflexive flinch at a loud noise. Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) is a syndrome that keeps people stuck in the past as the world around them changes.

Imagine walking through life with an invisible weight, one that tugs at you without warning. For those with PTSD, ordinary things—a scent, a sound, a phrase—can become a threat, detonating flashbacks that transport them back to the worst moments of their lives. It's not just "bad memories." It's the body reliving terror, the heart pounding as if the threat were still there, even when the rational mind knows it isn't.

Trauma rewires the brain. The amygdala, the brain's alarm system, goes into overdrive, while the prefrontal cortex—the part responsible for reasoning and calm—struggles to keep up. This isn't a choice or a weakness. It's biology. And for those living with it, the battle isn't just against the past; it's against the shame of feeling broken, the frustration of being misunderstood, and the exhaustion of pretending everything is fine.

One of the cruelest tricks of PTSD is how it isolates people. Some withdraw, avoiding anything that might trigger a memory. Others grow irritable, snapping at loved ones without knowing why. Relationships fray. Jobs become harder. The world moves on, but for those trapped in trauma's grip, time feels frozen.

But healing isn't just clinical. It's in the small victories: a full night's sleep, a deep breath instead of a panic attack, a moment of laughter that feels genuine again. It's in the support of those who don't try to fix you but simply stay beside you, patient and present. Recovery doesn't mean forgetting. It means no longer being ruled by the past. It means looking at trauma not as a life sentence but as a chapter one that reshaped you but doesn't define you.

For those living with PTSD, every day is an act of courage. And for those who love them, the greatest gift is simple: understanding that healing isn't about moving on. It's about moving forward, one step at a time.





Dry, Oily or Combination?

What You Need to Know.

By Priscilla Akorfa Fomevor

An individual's skin is as unique as they are. There are three skin types— it could be oily, combination or dry— each has specific requirements and difficulties. A glowing skin begins with an understanding of these distinctions.

Having a dry skin feels flaky, tight, or harsh, especially after bathing. Without the natural oils that keep you hydrated, your skin is prone to redness, fine wrinkles and a lifeless look. Your skin can get even more stripped by instances like cold temperatures, hot showers and harsh soaps, which can cause irritation or even bleeding cracks if addressed. In order to maintain a healthy skin, consider using heavier creams containing ceramides, hyaluronic acid and petrolatum instead of lightweight lotions. Another way to avoid moisture loss is to use mild, fragrance-free cleansers and avoid taking long, hot showers.

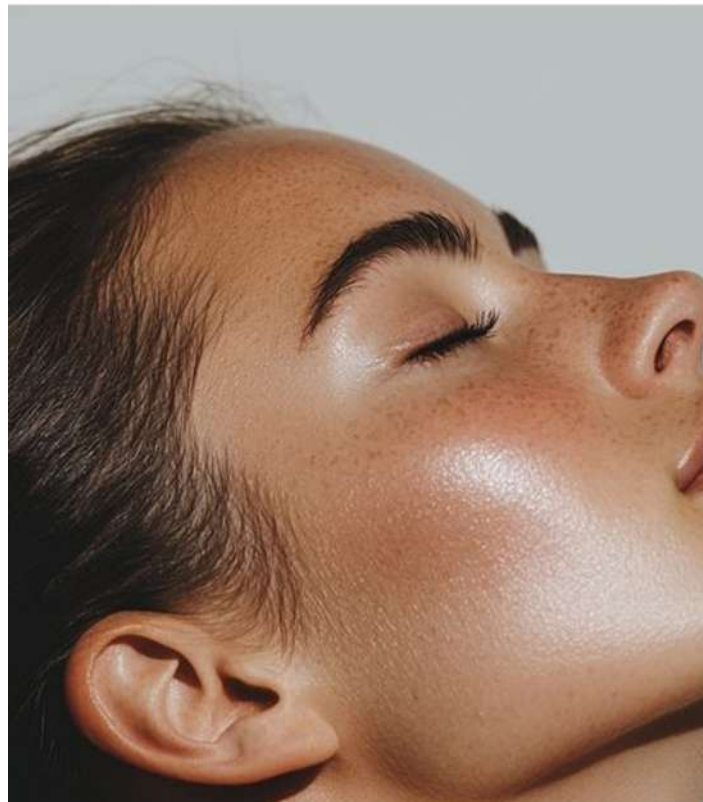
Excessive sebum production is a characteristic of oily skin, which causes larger pores, a persistent gloss and frequent breakouts. Although heredity might play a role, other factors include stress, humidity and hormone changes. Despite what many people assume, omitting moisturizer isn't the answer; actually, it may cause the skin to produce more oil in an attempt to make up for the dehydration. Oil-free, non-comedogenic products are preferable. While blotting sheets provide temporary solutions, ingredients like salicylic acid and niacinamide help control sebum without over-drying the skin.

An individual who exhibits the qualities of both scenarios is said to have a skin combination: it is dry in other areas and oily in the T-zone (forehead, nose, and chin). Because of this duality, it can be difficult to maintain because products designed to address oiliness might exacerbate dryness and vice versa.

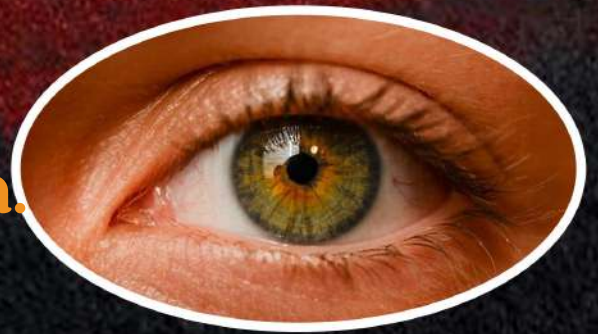
Approach for Every Skin Type:

The best approach is a customized routine. Lightweight gel moisturizers work well for oily zones, while richer creams can nourish dry patches. Double cleansing—using an oil-based cleanser followed by a gentle foaming wash—helps remove excess sebum without stripping moisture. Exfoliation should be moderate; overdoing it can disrupt the skin's natural balance.

No matter the skin type, some universal rules apply. Sunscreen is non-negotiable—UV damage accelerates aging, worsens dryness, and can even trigger excess oil production. A broad-spectrum SPF 30 or higher, applied daily, shields the skin from harm.



Mauritania Celebrates WHO Validation for Eliminating Trachoma.



The Islamic Republic of Mauritania has achieved a major public health milestone, earning validation from the World Health Organization (WHO) for eliminating trachoma as a public health problem. This victory marks Mauritania as the seventh African Union Member State following Benin, Ghana, Malawi, Mali, Morocco, Gambia, and Togo—to eliminate this debilitating disease.

Trachoma, the world's leading infectious cause of blindness, has historically affected millions, with Africa bearing the heaviest burden. Mauritania's triumph is particularly significant as it becomes the second neglected tropical disease (NTD) the country has eliminated, after being certified free of dracunculiasis (guinea-worm disease) in 2009.

Mauritania's battle against trachoma began in the 1960s, driven by strong government leadership, the tireless efforts of health workers, and the active participation of communities. Strategic partnerships and sustained investment in public health programs played a crucial role in reaching this milestone.

Mauritania's success reflects broader progress in Africa's fight against NTDs. Today, 20 African countries are working toward trachoma elimination, with the number of people requiring antibiotics for the disease dropping by 51%—from 189 million in 2014 to 93 million in 2024.

Globally, 56 countries have eliminated at least one NTD, with 23 of those in Africa. Mauritania's achievement strengthens momentum toward the WHO's 2030 target of eliminating at least one NTD in 100 countries and supports Africa's Continental Framework for NTD Control and Elimination.

This victory underscores what is possible through political commitment, sustained funding, and cross-sector collaboration—a model for other nations still fighting these preventable diseases. Mauritania's success is not just a national triumph but an inspiration for Africa and the world.

SOURCE: African Leaders Malaria Alliance.



Blood vessel

Stiff and sticky
sickle cells get stuck

Common Myths About Sickle Cell Disease

By Gloria Addo

Numerous myths about Sickle Cell Disease persist globally, leading to negative attitudes toward patients. As we mark World Sickle Cell Awareness Day 2025 on the theme "Global Action, Local Impact: Empowering Communities for Effective Self-Advocacy, a focus which highlights the necessity of bridging global health efforts with grassroots empowerment this feature throws a spotlight on common myths about Sickle Cell Disease.

Babies born with SCD do not survive to adulthood

Until the 1990s, many children born with SCD did not live to adulthood. Now, however, more than 90 percent of children born with SCD in the United States survive to adulthood. Every newborn in the United States is screened for SCD. Early diagnosis helps doctors prevent infections and stroke, which previously caused high mortality rates in children with SCD.³

The life expectancy of people with SCD in the United States is still shorter than for the average American. There is work to do to improve treatments and access to care for adults with SCD.

People with the disease are immune to malaria

Doctors sometimes tell people with SCD that they are immune to malaria and that they do not need anti-malarial drugs. This is not true and can be harmful to people in areas affected by malaria. In fact, malaria may contribute to higher mortality rates among people with SCD in Africa.

Many people believe this myth because SCD is an evolutionary response to malaria. This means that the sickle hemoglobin gene has naturally become common in areas affected by malaria. People who

have sickle cell trait (HbAS) are less likely to have severe forms of malaria. These are people who inherited an abnormal hemoglobin gene from 1 parent and a normal hemoglobin gene from the other parent. They are more likely to survive to reproductive age and pass on the abnormal hemoglobin gene to their kids.

People with SCD who inherit 2 abnormal hemoglobin genes (1 from each parent) do not have any protection against malaria.

People with the disease are immune to malaria

Doctors sometimes tell people with SCD that they are immune to malaria and that they do not need anti-malarial drugs. This is not true and can be harmful to people in areas affected by malaria. In fact, malaria may contribute to higher mortality rates among people with SCD in Africa.⁶

Many people believe this myth because SCD is an evolutionary response to malaria. This means that the sickle hemoglobin gene has naturally become common in areas affected by malaria. People who have sickle cell trait (HbAS) are less likely to have severe forms of malaria. These are people who inherited an abnormal hemoglobin gene from 1 parent and a normal hemoglobin gene from the other parent. They are more likely to survive to reproductive age and pass on the abnormal hemoglobin gene to their kids.

People with SCD who inherit 2 abnormal hemoglobin genes (1 from each parent) do not have any protection against malaria.

Trachoma:

A Public Health Crisis in the Shadows.

By Priscilla Akorfa Fomevor

A hidden threat lurks in the rural and remote communities of the developing world, silently robbing innocent victims of their sight. One of the main preventable causes of blindness in the world is trachoma, a bacterial infection of the eye. Even though this ancient disease has affected humanity for ages, it continues to be a major problem in many regions of the world.

Trachoma thrives in areas where poverty, poor sanitation, and limited access to clean water create an environment conducive to its spread.

The bacteria *Chlamydia trachomatis* spreads by direct contact with infected eye discharge, contaminated objects, and even flies that feed on it. This disease has the potential to spread quickly in places where facial cleanliness is not a priority and sanitary facilities are lacking.

At first, the symptoms of trachoma are benign in nature, including mild irritation, redness and some discharge. However, if an individual does not receive treatment, the infection can cause etching of the eyelid, which might cause the eyelashes to turn inward and rub against the cornea repeatedly, resulting in corneal ulcers, vision loss and blindness.

Trachoma has far-reaching consequences for the entire community, not just the affected individuals.

Women and children are highly impacted since they frequently shoulder the burden of caring for family members and getting supplies. In rural locations, trachoma may intensify a cycle of poverty as families struggle to bear the financial burden of blindness.

The fact that trachoma can be prevented and treated is a plus. In addition to using medicines to treat the infection, an affected person can stop the spread of the virus by practicing good hygiene, improve sanitation, and having access to clean water.

The World Health Organization (WHO) is leading global efforts to eliminate trachoma as a public health issue, with support from national health programs. These projects aim to provide medication, create awareness, and promote sustainable hygiene practices in afflicted areas in accordance with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG).

Together, we can eliminate trachoma and help ensure that no one loses their sight to a disease that can be prevented. Let's work toward a world where everyone has the right to see—clearly and without fear.



2025 EXPO

PREPARATION





HCOWAA and GHS Explore Medical Tech Partnerships in China.

On June 6, 2025, an important visit to Hefei focused on strengthening links between West African health authorities and Chinese medical technology developers. A high-level delegation, comprising officials of the Ghana Health Service (GHS) and the Health Community of West Africa Association (HCOWAA), examined major facilities at the Sino-Life Science and Technology Achievement Transformation Centre.

Led by the HCOWAA President Jiang Sihong and Gaetan Charles Adangabey, Deputy Director General of the GHS, the delegation engaged in

substantive discussions with representatives from the Big Health Research Institute of the Hefei National Comprehensive Science Center. The visit provided a platform for mutual learning and exploring potential partnerships.

A key focus was Sinopharm's advanced medical technologies. Following a tour, the Deputy Director General Adangabey expressed strong appreciation, particularly for Sinopharm's flow cytometer products, highlighting their technical strength and potential solutions for healthcare needs.

Health *pulse* (16)



HCOWAA Ghana and GHS Engage with HCOWA China in Pre-Expo Mission to Catalyze West Africa's Health Future

In a decisive move to accelerate healthcare transformation, high-level delegations from the Ghana Health Service (GHS) and the Health Community of West Africa Association (HCOWAA) are currently in China for intensive planning sessions with HCOWA China.

The mission is to finalize preparations for the upcoming 2025 HCOWA West Africa Medical Industry Investment Summit and Expo this August—a premier platform poised to unlock unprecedented

opportunities for medical innovation and cross-continental partnerships.

The Expo—hailed as West Africa's most significant healthcare industry gathering—aims to unite policymakers, investors and innovators to tackle critical challenges: from hospital infrastructure gaps to pharmaceutical manufacturing. Central to the dialogue is Ghana's pioneering role in bridging China's technological expertise with West Africa's growth ambitions.



Recent strides underscore this momentum:

- **Digital Health Revolution:** Ghana is actively partnering with HCOWA China to deploy AI diagnostics, telemedicine and e-pharmacy systems—accelerating universal health coverage targets.
- **Academic Synergy:** The newly launched China-Ghana Academic Medical Exchange Committee will assist to drive joint research, clinical innovation and knowledge transfer including Traditional Chinese Medicine integration.
- **Investment-Ready Infrastructure:** Over 100 projects—from vaccine cold-chain logistics to smart hospital networks—will be showcased to global investors at the Expo.

Negotiations for the EXPO are centered on gaining strategic sponsorships and commitments from leading Chinese medical technology enterprises. Curating B2B meetings to link hospital administrators with equipment makers seeking complete solutions. The Expo will position Accra as Africa's health innovation epicenter. We're not just hosting an event—we're igniting an ecosystem. The delegations' tour strategically coinci

des with the approaching Guangzhou's 33rd China International Health Industry Expo in June 2025, where HCOWA China hopes to present cutting-edge health innovations to West African delegates. This real-world exposure emphasizes operational models that are ready for change.

The upcoming 2025 HCOWA Expo will be more than just a conference; it will be an important turning point for the continent on the verge of becoming a global health actor. As delegations look forward to return from China with strengthened ties, one fact emerges: the future of West African healthcare will be written through collaboration rather than patronage.

Secure your spot and be a part of this event, when million Africans gain access to world-class care, humanity moves forward. This Expo is where that journey accelerates.



Ghana and China Join Forces to Transform Healthcare Education and Digital Health

Representatives from the Health Community of West Africa Association (HCOWAA) and the Ghana Health Service (GHS) visited the Sichuan Vocational College of Health and Rehabilitation in Zigong City, China, on June 9th, 2025 to discuss academic collaboration and strengthen bilateral ties in healthcare education and training.

The tour, which highlights Ghana and China's increasing medical partnership, intended to promote student and faculty exchanges, collaborative research efforts, and the sharing of best practices in nursing and healthcare education. The Ghanaian

delegation toured the college's cutting-edge facilities, which included a smart elderly care training base, a traditional Chinese medicine (TCM) culture popularization center, and sports rehabilitation training facilities. All of these facilities were praised for integrating industry and education.

During discussions from the launch of the HCOWAA Academic and Exchange Committee which occurred on Monday, 12th May, 2025, both sides emphasized the importance of cross-border knowledge exchange in addressing healthcare challenges in West Africa.



Dr. Lawrence Ofori-Boadu, Director of the Institutional Care Division of GHS, highlighted Ghana's commitment to digital healthcare transformation and expressed interest in adopting China's advancements in telemedicine, AI-assisted diagnostics, and nursing education models.

The Sichuan Vocational College of Health and Rehabilitation, with its century-long history in medical education, has been a pioneer in nursing and rehabilitation training, boasting a 92% employer satisfaction rate among its graduates.

The college's leadership, including Vice-President Li Qin, welcomed the opportunity to collaborate with Ghanaian institutions in areas such as maternal healthcare training, a field where China has previously supported Ghana through programs like

the 2015 Chengdu-based maternal health training for Ghanaian professionals.

This visit builds on existing Sino-Ghanaian healthcare collaborations, including North Sichuan Medical College's training programs for Ghanaian medical students and the newly launched HCOWAA Medical & Academic Exchange Committee, which seeks to integrate Chinese medical expertise with Ghana's healthcare system.

"This collaboration is not just about sharing knowledge—it's about building a sustainable future for healthcare in Ghana through innovation and mutual learning," said Mr. Prince Opoku Dogbey, the vice president of HCOWAA (Ghana), who represented HCOWAA during the visit.



Zhongshan Eye Centre Host HCOWA and Ghana Health Service Delegation

On June 14, 2025, a high-level delegation from the Health Community of West Africa Association (HCOWAA) and the Ghana Health Service (GHS) visited the Zhongshan Eye Center at Sun Yat-sen University, taking an important step toward strengthening ophthalmic medical cooperation between China and West Africa.

Led by the HCOWAA President Jiang Sihong and Vice President Prince Opoku Dogbey, alongside Ghana Health Service, Chief Physiotherapist, Gaetan Charles Adangabey, the delegation engaged in discussions aimed at improving eye care services in West Africa. The visit highlighted shared challenges in ophthalmic healthcare and explored potential solutions through technology exchange and capacity-building initiatives.

During the tour, the delegation observed the center's cutting-edge ophthalmic equipment, from diagnostic tools to high-precision imaging systems. Staff demonstrated the use of these technologies, emphasizing their role in accurate diagnosis and treatment. The Ghana Health Service Deputy Director personally underwent an optometry test, experiencing firsthand the efficiency and precision of the center's services.

The delegation acknowledged the stark contrast between the well-equipped Zhongshan Eye

Center and the limited resources in many West African regions. With shortages of specialists and inadequate infrastructure, patients in Ghana and neighboring countries often face barriers to quality eye care.

Both parties explored avenues for partnership, particularly in telemedicine, training programs, and joint research. Remote consultations could bridge the gap for patients in remote areas, while exchange programs would enhance the skills of West African ophthalmologists. Research collaborations were also proposed to address region-specific eye diseases.

The Zhongshan Eye Center expressed readiness to support these initiatives, reinforcing its commitment to global health equity. The delegation left optimistic about future projects that could transform eye care accessibility in West Africa.

This visit not only strengthened ties between the institutions but also underscored the power of international cooperation in advancing healthcare worldwide. With a shared vision, both sides aim to turn these discussions into tangible improvements, bringing clearer vision to communities in need.

Natural Ways to Fortify Your Immune System.

By Priscilla Akorfa Fomevor

It has never been more important to boost our immune systems in a world where health is of the utmost importance. The immune system is a complex network of cells, tissues and biochemical signals that works nonstop to defend us against infections and illnesses. It is by no means a single organ or a straightforward mechanism. Research indicates that a mix of diet, lifestyle and mindful practices might improve our body's natural defenses, even while there is no magical remedy or super foods that ensure immunity.

A balanced diet full of fruits, vegetables, and whole foods is the foundation of a strong immune system. The vital vitamins, minerals, and antioxidants found in these foods support the body's defenses against disease.

Vitamin C, which is rich in foods like citrus fruits, berries, and leafy greens, is essential for the production of white blood cells. Ginger, turmeric, and mushrooms are other foods that can strengthen the immune system since they contain anti-inflammatory qualities.

But food is just the starting point. Regular exercise, adequate sleep, and stress management are also essential for immune system support. Exercise can help to stimulate the immune system, while sleep deprivation can weaken it.

Stress, either physical or emotional, can weaken the immune system, making individuals more prone to sickness. Finding healthy strategies to manage stress, such as meditation or yoga, can help keep our defenses against disease strong.

Along with these lifestyle adjustments, supplements can help strengthen the immune system. For instance, probiotics can support a balanced gut microbiota, which is critical for immunological response. The immune system may also be strengthened by vitamins such as elderberry, zinc and vitamin D.

By incorporating these simple strategies into our daily lives, we can give our immune systems the support they need to protect us from illness and disease.

Immune system support is crucial for preserving general health and wellbeing, whether your goal is to avoid colds and the flu or just to feel your best. Take charge of our health and fully enjoy life by maintaining the strength of our immune systems.

When Hair Starts to Fade:

Understanding the Pattern of Male Baldness

By Priscilla Akorfa Fomevor

For many guys, looking in the mirror and seeing a diminishing hairline or thinner crown can be a source of quiet dread. Hair loss, particularly male pattern baldness (androgenetic alopecia), is a very personal experience influenced by genetics, hormones, and even self-perception. But what exactly is the cause, and what can be done?

Male pattern baldness is more than just a physical issue; it has biological roots. Dihydrotestosterone (DHT), a testosterone-derived hormone, is the primary driver of the illness. In genetically predisposed men, DHT attaches to hair follicles, gradually reducing them until only fine, scarcely visible strands are produced before disappearing entirely.

This leads to the classic “M” or “U” shaped pattern of hair loss—starting at the temples and crown before expanding.

Interestingly, ethnicity plays a role. Caucasian men are more likely to experience significant balding earlier in life compared to East Asian or Black men, where hair loss tends to be less severe and onset later. And while folklore might blame your maternal grandfather, the truth is that genes from both

parents contribute to your likelihood of thinning hair.

According to studies, males who have early balding frequently become worried, sad and low self-esteemed. Male that are bald are typically perceived as older and less attractive, which adds to the psychological pressure.

However, not everyone feels distressed. Many people welcome the change, shave their heads entirely or wearing fashionable haircuts that complement rather than contradict their hair loss. For men who want to delay or reverse hair loss, two FDA-approved treatments have stood the test of time:

1. Minoxidil (Rogaine) is a topical treatment for hair growth that reduces shedding.
2. Finasteride (Propecia): An oral medicine that suppresses DHT, which is more effective but has possible negative effects.

Emerging treatments such as platelet-rich plasma (PRP) therapy and low-level laser therapy (LLLT) show promise, although the data is uncertain. Surgical alternatives like as hair transplants, which transfer follicles from the back of the head to thinning areas, provide permanent improvements but come at a higher cost and require more recovery time.

If you're concerned about hair loss, a dermatologist or trichologist can help you find a solution that works for your lifestyle, budget, and goals. Because, in the end, the ideal treatment is one that allows you to look in the mirror and be comfortable.

Potato, Asparagus & Mushroom Hash

In this vegetarian hash with potatoes, mushrooms and asparagus, Boursin cheese melts and combines with heavy cream to form a rich sauce. Serve with hearty whole-grain toast perfect for an easy vegan breakfast or with an egg on top for a vegetarian take

Ingredients

- 1 pound new or baby potatoes, scrubbed, halved if large
- 3 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil, divided
- 1 bunch asparagus (about 1 pound), trimmed and cut in 1/2-inch pieces
- 4 ounces shiitake mushroom caps or other mushrooms, sliced
- 1 shallot, minced
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- 1 small onion, coarsely chopped
- ½ cup chopped jarred roasted red peppers, rinsed
- 1 tablespoon minced fresh sage
- ½ teaspoon salt
- ¼ teaspoon freshly ground pepper
- Fresh chives for garnish

Directions

1. Place a steamer basket in a large saucepan, add 1 inch of water and bring to a boil. Put potatoes in the basket and steam until barely tender when pierced with a skewer, 12 to 15 minutes, depending on size. When cool enough to handle, chop into 1/2-inch pieces.
2. Heat 1 tablespoon oil in a large (not nonstick) skillet over medium heat. Add asparagus, mushrooms, shallot and garlic and cook, stirring often, until beginning to brown, 5 to 7 minutes. Remove to a plate.
3. Add the remaining 2 tablespoons oil to the pan. Add onion and the potatoes and cook, stirring occasionally and scraping up the browned bits with a metal spatula, until the potatoes are browned, 4 to 8 minutes. Return the asparagus mixture to the pan along with roasted red pepper, sage, salt and pepper; cook, stirring, until heated through, about 1 minute more. Serve sprinkled with chives, if desired.





Nurturing a Healthier Lifestyle:

Building Healthy Family Habits

By Priscilla Akorfa Fomevor

Maintaining healthy behaviors as a family can sometimes become secondary to the demands of daily living. However small, persistent efforts can lay a solid basis for physical, mental and emotional well-being. When families emphasize health together, they provide a good example for their younger ones.

Sharing meals with others serves as an opportunity to connect as much as to eat. Gathering as a family promotes attentive eating, lessens the desire for fast meals, and facilitates deep discussions. Children learn about nutrition and are more likely to like healthy foods when they are involved in meal planning and preparation. With time, small decisions like choosing fresh produce, whole grains and vegetables over processed snacks can have a big impact.

Families engaging in physical activity should not be a chore. In particular, outdoor activities promote an appreciation of nature and provide a respite from screens. When done jointly, even chores around the house, like cleaning or gardening, may turn into enjoyable, mild workouts. Finding activities that everyone enjoys is crucial for ensuring sustained engagement.

A healthy family dynamic includes open communication and emotional support.

Encouraging each other to share thoughts and feelings without judgment builds trust and resilience. Simple routines can elevate mood and lower stress, such as saying “thank you” at dinner or scheduling a quiet time for reading. Understand whether someone needs space or a sympathetic ear promotes peace and teaches kids how to properly control their emotions.

Technology is a useful tool, but too much screen time can interrupt sleep, restrict physical activity, and limit face-to-face relationships. Set boundaries, such as no gadgets during meals or a family “digital curfew,” to promote deeper connection. Instead of scrolling independently, family can connect through board games, storytelling, or creative projects that encourage imagination and collaboration.

Children learn habits by watching the adults around them. When parents practice self-care, exercise frequently and eat nutritious foods, their children are more likely to do the same. Practicing a balanced approach to work, rest and play teaches children that health isn’t about perfection, but about making conscious decisions every day.

The Science of Healthy Eating Habits in Children

By Yosua K. Domedjui

A child's growth and development depend on more than just genetics—it depends on what's on their plate. Medical experts and nutrition scientists agree that healthy eating habits in early childhood lay the foundation for physical growth, brain development, and long-term well-being.

According to pediatricians and dietitians, the first five years of life are especially critical. During this time, the body and brain grow rapidly, and the demand for quality nutrition is high. This means that children need a well-balanced diet rich in macronutrients—proteins, carbohydrates, and healthy fats as well as essential micronutrients like iron, calcium, zinc, and vitamins A, C, and D.

Protein sources like milk, eggs, beans, and lean meats help build strong muscles and tissues. Complex carbohydrates from whole grains, fruits, and vegetables provide the energy children need to play, learn, and grow. Healthy fats, found in foods like avocados, fish, and nuts, support brain development and hormone production. Meanwhile, calcium and vitamin D are vital for strong bones and teeth, and iron plays a key role in brain function and oxygen delivery.

Medical experts recommend that children eat three balanced meals and two healthy snacks each day. Their plates should be colorful rich in a variety of fruits and vegetables to ensure a wide range of nutrients. Hydration is also essential; water should be the main drink, while sugary beverages and sodas should be limited or avoided entirely.

The World Health Organization (WHO) and American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) emphasize that poor eating habits in childhood can lead to obesity, type 2 diabetes, and heart disease later in life. Furthermore, studies show that children with balanced diets perform better academically and display better emotional control.

Good habits go beyond food choices—they include eating at regular times, sharing meals as a family, and limiting screen time during meals. These practices not only improve nutrition but also strengthen emotional connections and promote mindful eating.

Building good eating habits from an early age is not just about avoiding illness—it's about helping children thrive physically, mentally, and emotionally. When we nourish our children well today, we equip them with the strength and resilience to face tomorrow.



ISCC Conference Highlights Urgent Need for Sickle Cell Awareness and Systemic Support

By Priscilla Akorfa Fomevor



The 2nd Annual International Sickle Cell Centre (ISCC) Conference held on 20th June, 2025 at Tang Palace, Accra —brought together patients, advocates, and healthcare professionals to address the urgent challenges faced by sickle cell warriors, emphasizing prevention, education, and systemic reforms. Personal testimonies and expert insights underscored the gap between available solutions and their accessibility, particularly in low-resource settings.

Shadrack Benjamin, a sickle cell warrior for 20 years, shared his harrowing journey: “Today you are fine, tomorrow you are not. Before ISCC, I was hospitalized four times a month. Now, I’ve learned to cope—going months without admission.”

His story highlighted the unpredictable nature of sickle cell disease (SCD), where pain crises can escalate rapidly without proper management. Another attendee recounted a near-fatal crisis during a trip to Cape Coast, where a lack of nearby specialized care forced an emergency transfer. “The first hospital only gave me tramadol. I struggled to breathe until ISCC intervened,” he said, exposing gaps in emergency SCD care.

Dr. Ernest Konadu Asiedu, Head, Medical and Dental Unit, Ghana’s Ministry of Health outlined national strategies, stressing medications that can help red blood cells form properly from infancy, preventing crises.

Consultant Pediatrician National Focal Person for SCD, Dr. Emmanuel Parbie Abbeyquaye added that unskilled handling of SCD patients can worsen outcomes, calling for standardized training.

Dr. Eugenia Owiafe, a specialist hematology nurse, Korle Bu Teaching Hospital, Child Health Department, lamented low compliance with newborn screenings: “We need nationwide coverage and government support to ensure every child is tested”.

Dr. Judith A. Oscar-Larbi, Co-Director MSc Genetic counseling, WAGMC, emphasized premarital genotype testing: “Counseling helps couples understand risks before having children.” Meanwhile, Dr. Maame Amoakohene, Associate Director, CHAI detailed efforts to sustain screening programs in Ghana, noting “reducing diagnostic costs and partnering to reach children under five” as critical goals.

Before the conference concluded, there was a stirring performance by the University of Ghana’s Abibigromma School of Performing Arts, symbolizing hope amid struggle. Panelists unanimously urged systemic changes—from compulsory screenings to affordable treatments—to transform SCD from a “death sentence to a manageable condition.” As CEO and Co-founder, Dr. Mary Dede Ashong, reminded the audience, “Awareness saves lives. Know your genotype.”



Can I Trust Online Health Advice?

In today's digital world, it's common to turn to the internet for answers even when it comes to our health. A quick Google search can yield thousands of health tips, remedies, and even self-diagnoses. But can you really trust everything you read online?

The truth is, **not all online health advice is created equal.** While some websites provide accurate, research-based information from medical professionals, others are run by unqualified individuals, influencers, or companies pushing products for profit.

One of the biggest risks of relying on online advice is misdiagnosis. Symptoms like fatigue, headache, or chest pain can be signs of many different conditions—from mild to serious. Relying on an internet search instead of seeing a doctor can lead to unnecessary anxiety, delayed treatment, or taking medications that may be harmful.

So, how do you know what to trust?

Here are a few tips:

1. **Check the source:** Reliable health

information often comes from hospitals, government health departments, universities, or recognized organizations like the World Health Organization (WHO) or Mayo Clinic.

2. **Look for the author's credentials:** Is the article written or reviewed by a medical doctor or healthcare professional?

3. **Beware of miracle cures:** If a website claims to "cure" diabetes or cancer overnight, it's likely not trustworthy.

4. **Check the date:** Medical advice can become outdated. Look for recent articles, ideally reviewed within the last 2 years.

5. **Avoid self-treatment for serious symptoms:** Always consult a doctor for conditions that involve pain, bleeding, infections, or persistent symptoms.

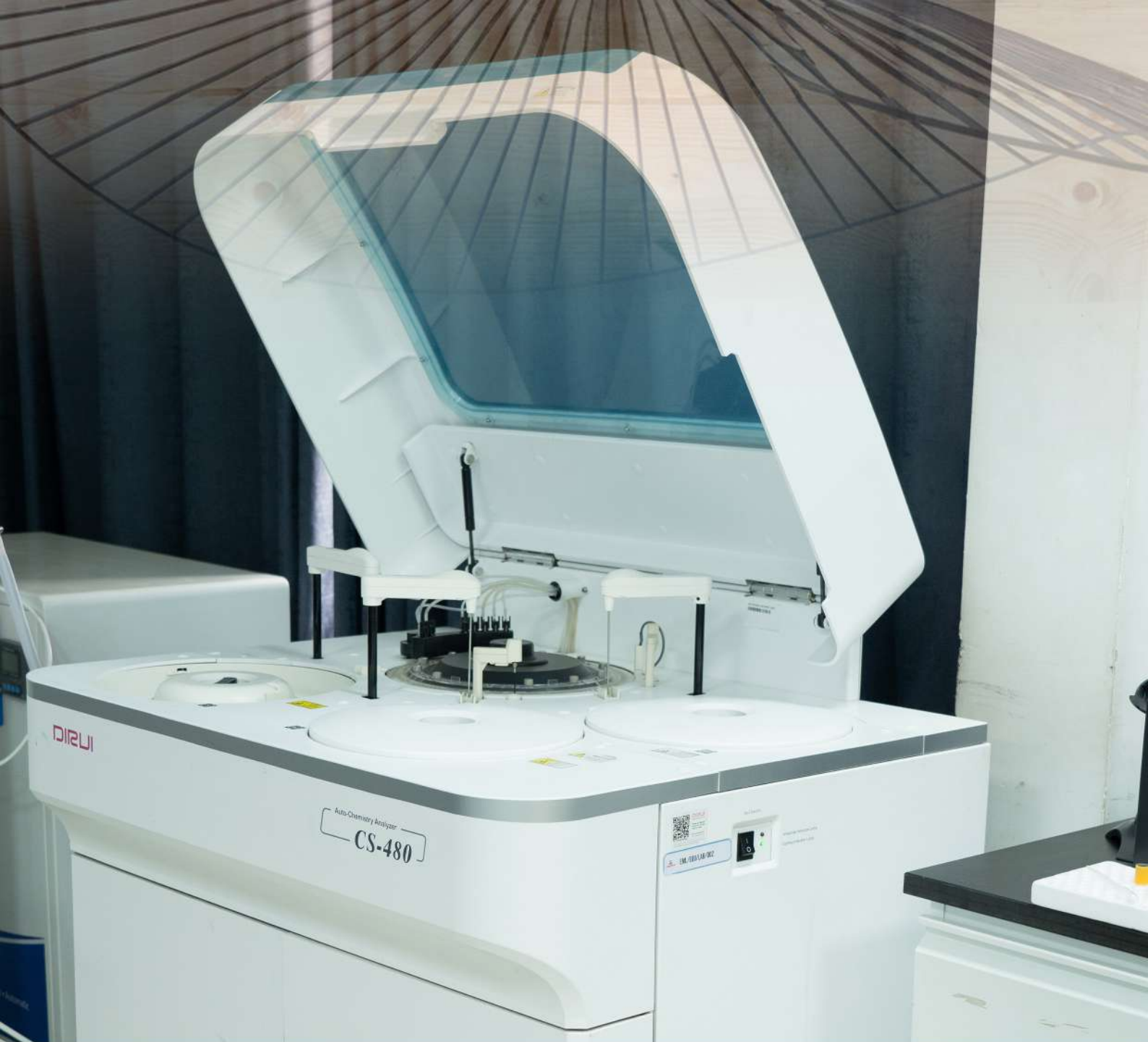
While the internet can be a helpful tool for learning, **it should never replace professional medical advice.** Use online information to ask better questions, but let your healthcare provider guide your treatment.

Health Terms

- **Hormesis:** A phenomenon where small amounts of stress or toxins can have beneficial effects on the body.
- **Mitochondrial dysfunction:** Impaired energy production within cells, linked to various diseases.
- **Neuroplasticity:** The brain's ability to reorganize and adapt throughout life.
- **Oxidative stress:** An imbalance between free radicals and antioxidants, contributing to cell damage.
- **Senescence:** Cellular aging, where cells stop dividing but don't die.
- **Telomere shortening:** Shortening of protective caps on chromosomes, associated with aging.

OUR PARTNERS





HCOWA
ASSOCIATION

@healthpulseonline



@healthpulseonline



@healthpulseonline



www.healthpulseonline.com

