

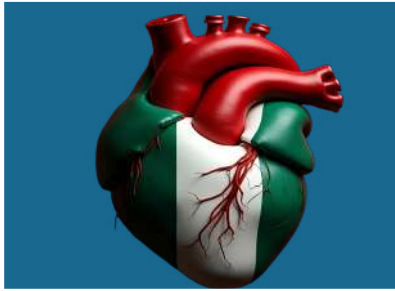
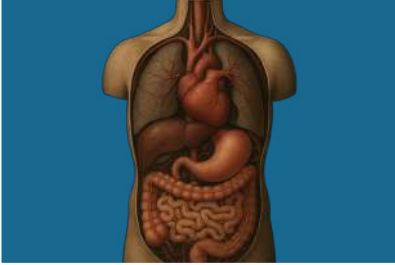
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HCOWAA: Advancing Healthcare Standards in West Africa

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.

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Why the HCOWA Medical Expo and Summit Matters



The China–West Africa Medical & Health Industry Expo and AI Diagnosis & Project Cooperation Summit has steadily grown into one of the most significant platforms for healthcare innovation in the subregion. Far beyond an exhibition of products and technologies, it represents a bridge—linking policymakers, medical professionals, investors, and innovators from West Africa and China in a shared effort to transform healthcare.

What makes this summit so vital is its ability to address the persistent gaps in our health systems. Across West Africa, hospitals face overwhelming patient loads, pharmaceutical production remains limited, and access to advanced medical technologies is often restricted to a privileged few. By convening diverse stakeholders under one roof, the expo offers not only solutions but also the partnerships needed to implement them.

A recurring strength of the summit is its focus on artificial intelligence in healthcare. AI-driven diagnostic platforms, advanced imaging systems, and digital hospital management tools have the potential to redefine how care is delivered. In regions where doctor-to-patient ratios are low and rural communities often lack specialist services, these innovations could drastically improve access, speed, and accuracy in treatment.

Equally important is the conversation around local

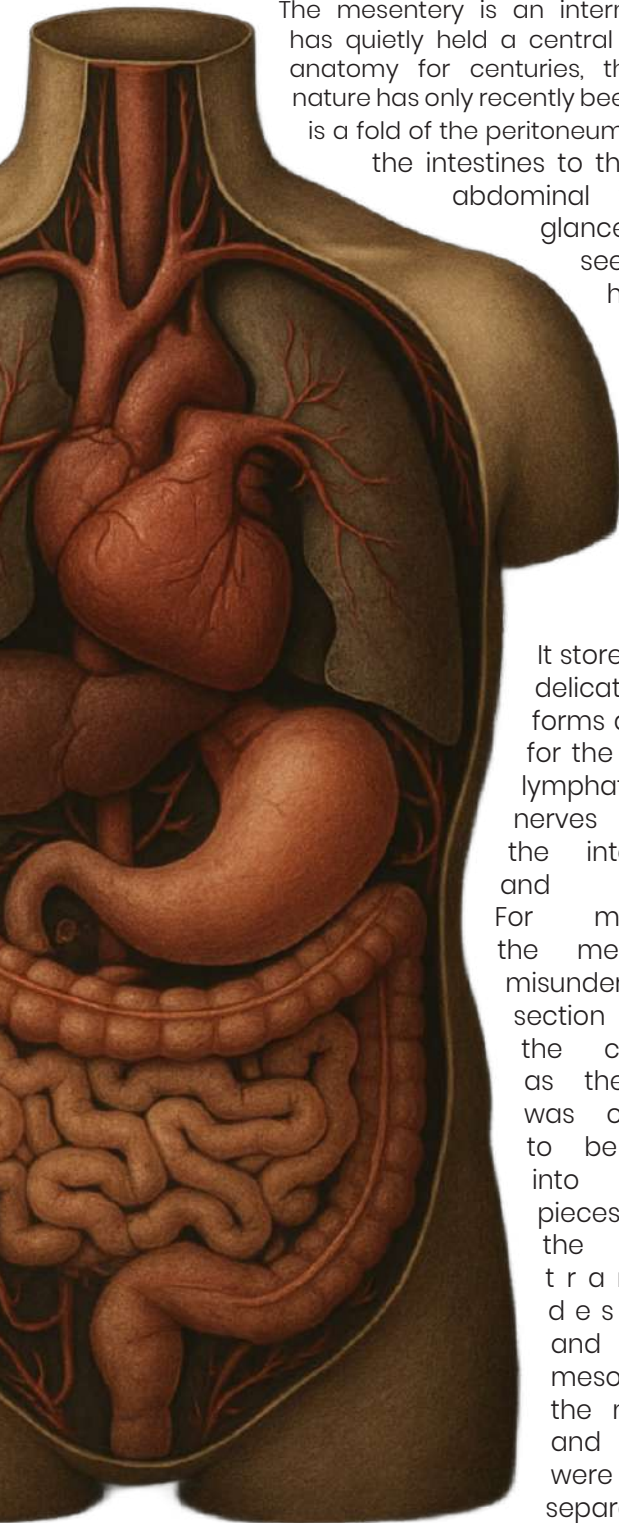
production of medicines, reagents, and medical equipment. For too long, West Africa has depended heavily on imports, leaving its healthcare systems vulnerable to global supply chain disruptions. The summit's emphasis on fostering industrial cooperation and encouraging the establishment of factories within the region is a step toward self-sufficiency, job creation, and economic resilience.

The academic and professional forums that accompany the expo further enrich its impact. By focusing on pressing medical fields such as oncology, nephrology, ophthalmology, and the integration of AI with traditional medicine, these sessions create space for knowledge-sharing, research collaboration, and the development of region-specific strategies. They transform the event from a marketplace of technology into a laboratory of ideas.

Ultimately, the significance of the HCOWA Expo and Summit lies in its vision. It reminds us that healthcare must be treated as a regional priority, demanding both innovation and partnership. If pursued with foresight and transparency, the collaborations born here can reshape West Africa's healthcare systems—making them stronger, more innovative, and better prepared for the future.

Anatomy of the Mesentery

By Yosua K. Domedjui



The mesentery is an internal organ that has quietly held a central role in human anatomy for centuries, though its true nature has only recently been recognized. It is a fold of the peritoneum that attaches the intestines to the back of the abdominal wall. At first glance, its task may seem simple:

holding the intestines in place, but the mesentery does far more than provide structural support.

It stores fat, cushions delicate vessels, and forms a passageway for the blood vessels, lymphatics, and nerves that keep the intestines alive and functioning. For many years, the mesentery was misunderstood. The section linked to the colon, known as the mesocolon, was once thought to be fragmented into several pieces, including the ascending, transverse, descending, and sigmoid mesocolons. Even the mesoappendix and mesorectum were considered separate entities.

This fragmented view

persisted until 2012, when detailed microscopic studies revealed that the mesocolon is, in fact, a single continuous sheet stretching from the duodenojejunal flexure to the distal mesorectum. By 2017, the mesentery was officially recognized as a distinct organ, reshaping our understanding of abdominal anatomy.

The mesentery's functions are numerous and vital. It anchors the intestines, preventing them from twisting or tangling. It houses the vascular network that delivers nutrients and clears waste, while its embedded nerves regulate gut movements and secretions. Through its lymphatic vessels and nodes, it contributes to immune defense, protecting the body from harmful pathogens. It also acts as a fat reservoir, storing energy and shielding blood vessels from injury.

Beyond normal physiology, the mesentery has been linked to a wide range of health conditions. In Crohn's disease, for instance, mesenteric inflammation plays a significant role in disease progression. Its fat deposits are also associated with metabolic disorders like diabetes, obesity, and cardiovascular disease.

Other problems, such as tumors, hernias, congenital malrotation, volvulus, and rare inflammatory conditions, further highlight its clinical importance. For surgeons, the mesentery is now more than just supportive tissue. Incorporating mesenteric resection in procedures has shown promise in reducing disease recurrence, especially in colon cancer and Crohn's disease. By redefining abdominal regions according to the presence of mesentery, surgical approaches have become more precise and effective. The reclassification of the mesentery as a continuous organ has done more than correct a historical misunderstanding; it has opened the door to new research and improved treatments. Far from being a passive structure, the mesentery is now recognized as an active, dynamic organ essential to digestive health, immunity, and overall well-being.



2025 China–West Africa Medical & Health Industry Expo and AI Diagnosis & Project Cooperation Summit held in Accra

The city of Accra has become the epicenter of innovation in healthcare as the 2025 China–West Africa Medical & Health Industry Expo and AI Diagnosis & Project Cooperation Summit officially commenced with a grand opening at the Accra International Conference Centre (AICC).

Organized by the Health Community of West Africa (HCOWA) Association, the three-day event, popularly known as the HCOWA Medical Expo, runs from August 20th to 22nd, 2025, and is expected to draw thousands of participants, including medical professionals, policymakers, investors, and innovators.

The Expo was preceded by a prestigious welcome dinner, setting the tone for collaboration and dialogue. Among the dignitaries present were the Chief of Staff, Honorable Julius Debrah, Mr. Tang Hong, and the Deputy Director General of the Ghana Health Service, alongside senior officials from Togo's Ministry of Health, the President of HCOWA, and over Five-hundred Chinese medical manufacturers.

The dinner highlighted the spirit of friendship and mutual respect that underpins this cooperation, serving as a bridge between policy discussions and industry engagement.



This year's Expo is one of the largest of its kind, bringing together:

- Over **500 Chinese exhibitors**;
- Representatives from **500+ hospitals** and clinics across West Africa;
- More than **1,500 merchants and industry stakeholders**;
- With an estimated **20,000 visitors** expected during the three-day program.

Participants are exploring cutting-edge technologies, from AI-powered diagnostic platforms and next-generation medical imaging systems to advanced surgical tools and hospital management software.

Delivering the keynote address, Chief of Staff Hon. Julius Debrah reaffirmed the government's commitment to partnering with HCOWA and its international collaborators.

He emphasized that healthcare remains central to Ghana's development agenda:

"Our vision is to ensure that Ghana and West Africa are not left behind. This partnership allows us to harness global expertise to make healthcare more accessible and more innovative for our people."

He also underlined that the Expo aligns with government's ambition of positioning Ghana as a medical hub in the subregion, leveraging innovation to strengthen healthcare delivery and improve doctor-to-patient ratios.

Speaking to journalists, Prince Opoku Dogbey, Vice President of HCOWA Association, highlighted the transformative nature of the initiative:

"This is not just an exhibition; it is a bridge. We are connecting West Africa and China in healthcare, introducing artificial intelligence in diagnostics, medical imaging, and supply chain management to address critical gaps in our systems."

He revealed that discussions have already begun on establishing factories in Ghana for the local production of medicines, reagents, and medical equipment:

"About 300 manufacturers from China are preparing

to set up plants here in Ghana. This means jobs, industrial growth, and reduced dependence on imports. We are working closely with the Ministry of Trade and Industry to make this a reality."

Academic and Professional Forums

A major highlight of the Expo has been the launch of four distinct medical forums, starting from Day One. These forums brought together medical professionals, researchers, and doctors from across the West African subregion, alongside Chinese manufacturers and experts. The forums provided platforms for in-depth dialogue, innovation, and knowledge exchange in key fields of healthcare, namely:

- Oncology
- AI & Traditional Medicine
- Nephrology
- Ophthalmology

Far from being simple academic sessions, these forums have served as platforms for innovation, policy dialogue, and technology showcase, delivering impactful insights that will guide both medical practice and future research in the region. Beyond exhibitions and forums, the summit sessions are focusing on:

- Policy frameworks for medical innovation;
- Public-private partnerships in healthcare;
- Opportunities for investment in West Africa's health industry;
- The role of AI in accelerating diagnosis and improving patient care.

Health experts argue that this Expo could mark a turning point for Ghana's healthcare system, particularly at a time when local pharmaceutical production remains limited and hospitals are struggling under heavy patient loads.

By creating a platform for knowledge exchange, investment, and project cooperation, the Expo is expected to accelerate the adoption of AI-driven solutions, expand local production of medical supplies, and strengthen healthcare delivery across the subregion.

The event will officially conclude with a closing dinner at La Palm Royal Hotel, offering participants the opportunity to reflect on achievements, celebrate partnerships, and lay the groundwork for long-term cooperation between West Africa and China.



Exploring the Neurobiology and Bonding Power of Breastfeeding

By Priscilla Akorfa Formevor

As a new mother embraces her baby in her arms, the warmth of their skin-to-skin contact triggers a series of emotional and physical responses that strengthen their bond. Breastfeeding is more than simply a way to provide nourishment; it is a personal experience that builds a strong bond between mom and child. The gentle touch, soothing voice, and intimate moments shared while nursing provide a sense of security and comfort for both mother and baby.

Lactation is a story written by the body itself. Long before a baby arrives, the subtle work begins, a biological preparation for the life to come. Then, with the birth cry, a powerful hormonal symphony starts. Prolactin, the diligent milk-maker, gets to work. Oxytocin, the hormone of love and let-down, weaves its gentle spell, triggering a warm, tingling release that is as much about emotion as it is about nourishment. This intricate system operates on a simple, beautiful principle: your baby's need dictates your body's supply. To say that breast milk is just food would be like saying that the ocean is just water. It is a dynamic, living material that is specially made. During a single feeding, its composition changes, with the foremilk being light and hydrating and the hindmilk being rich and gratifying. Week by week, even day by day, its formula is meticulously modified in response to a newborn's sniffles or support the development of a developing infant. It is a mother's first gift of immunological defense.

Yet the true essence of this act extends beyond biology. It is in the weight of a sleeping baby, the trust in their gaze, the tiny hand splayed against skin. It is a tool of profound comfort, a silent language that says, "I am here. You are safe." For the mother, it is a cascade of hormones that fosters deep bonding and a quiet, empowering confidence. It is a threshold into a new version of herself.

The journey of breastfeeding can be complex and requires mutual learning between mother and child. Challenges like a shallow latch causing pain, concerns about milk supply, and engorgement are common. However, these obstacles aren't indicative of failure but rather a natural part of the process. Seeking support from partners, lactation consultants, or experienced mothers can be incredibly empowering and help navigate these challenges.

How Simple Habits Forge Family Well-Being

Priscilla Akorfa Fomevor

Maintaining good hygiene practices is essential for family health, preventing the spread of infectious diseases and promoting overall well-being. By adopting simple habits, families can significantly reduce the risk of illness and create a healthier living environment.

It begins with the hands, our primary explorers of the world. Teaching children—and reminding ourselves—to wash away the day's adventures with warm water and soap before meals or after returning home is a fundamental act of prevention. It's less about fear of

germs and more about respect for the body, a small moment of cleansing that honors the food we eat and the sanctuary of our home.

The kitchen, the focal point of the house, deserves special respect of its own. Hygiene is an act of love here. To protect the sustenance of our family, let us make sure that surfaces are kept clean, that foods, both raw and cooked are made with conscious cleanliness. It's the difference between just eating and actually enjoying a healthy, safe and well-prepared meal.

Beyond the kitchen and the bathroom sink, family hygiene extends to the very air we share. Letting fresh air dance through the rooms, banishing staleness and inviting in the new, is a vital practice often overlooked. Similarly, the act of laundering clothes and bed linens is more than a domestic duty; it is a renewal, a way to wash away the physical residue of the world and allow for rest in a space that is truly fresh.

Perhaps the most profound aspect of these practices is their power to become a silent language of love. When a parent models brushing their teeth alongside their child, it becomes a shared ritual, not

a solitary rule. When a family makes tidying up a common space a collaborative effort, it transforms from a task into an expression of mutual respect for the environment they share.

The goal of this common approach to hygiene is not to foster a life of fear and sterility. It's about building a solid foundation that will allow our families to flourish. What really makes a family strong is the peaceful assurance that comes from knowing the little things are handled, which frees us up to concentrate on the relationships, laughing, and talks.

Robotic Surgical System

By Yosua K. Domedjui

The Robotic **Surgical System**, often exemplified by the **Da Vinci Surgical Robot**, represents one of the most advanced innovations in modern healthcare. Designed to enhance the precision and control of surgeons, this system is redefining how complex procedures are performed in operating rooms worldwide.

At its core, the system is not an autonomous machine but an **advanced tool controlled by a surgeon**. It consists of a console where the surgeon sits, robotic arms equipped with surgical instruments, and a high-definition 3D camera that provides a magnified view of the surgical field. Through hand and foot controls, the surgeon manipulates the robotic arms, which can move with greater dexterity than the human hand. This enables extremely fine, steady, and precise movements, even in the most delicate procedures.

The **functionality** of robotic surgery is broad. It is widely used in urology, gynecology, cardiothoracic surgery, general surgery, and even in cancer-related procedures. Surgeries that once required large incisions can now be performed through a few small cuts, thanks to the minimally invasive capabilities of robotic systems.

There are many **reasons why hospitals and patients prefer robotic surgery**. First, it offers surgeons unmatched control and visibility, reducing the risk of complications. Second, patients benefit from smaller incisions, less blood loss, reduced pain, and faster recovery times compared to traditional open surgery. In many cases, patients can leave the hospital sooner and return to normal life more quickly.



The advantages are significant:

- Greater precision in cutting, stitching, and manipulating tissues.
- Enhanced visualization with 3D magnification of up to ten times.
- Reduced surgeon fatigue, as the console design allows for ergonomic operation.
- Improved patient outcomes, including fewer complications and shorter hospital stays.

What makes the Robotic Surgical System truly **special** is its ability to merge human intelligence with technological precision. While the surgeon retains full control, the robot translates movements into micro-actions beyond the limits of the human hand. This unique synergy makes it possible to operate in hard-to-reach areas of the body with minimal disruption to surrounding tissues.

In essence, robotic surgery is not just an upgrade of traditional techniques; it is a **revolution in surgical practice**. It symbolizes the future of healthcare—where innovation, safety, and patient-centered care come together to achieve outcomes that were once unimaginable.

Cardiologists Warn of Growing Cardiovascular Crisis in Nigeria, Africa

By Yosua K. Domedjui

Cardiologists have raised alarm over the rising burden of cardiovascular diseases (CVDs) in Nigeria and across Africa, warning that the continent is experiencing the fastest-growing rate of the disease globally.

Speaking ahead of the Nigerian Cardiac Society's (NCS) 54th annual general meeting and scientific conference in Abuja, experts revealed that about four in ten adult Nigerians are hypertensive—a key driver of heart failure, stroke, and kidney disease. The five-day conference, which begins on September 15, is being organised in partnership with the Pan-African Society of Cardiology (PASCAR) under the theme “Cost-effective interventions to mitigate the burden of cardiovascular diseases in Africa.”

According to the World Health Organisation, CVDs remain the leading cause of death worldwide, claiming 17.7 million lives in 2015 alone, with more than three-quarters of these deaths occurring in low- and middle-income countries.

NCS President, Prof. Augustine Odili, described the Nigerian situation as alarming, noting that hypertension prevalence has grown from as low as 3 per cent decades ago to nearly 40 per cent today. He linked the surge to poor lifestyle habits, obesity, inadequate exercise, and weak health systems.

“Hypertension is fuelling the rise in cardiovascular diseases. Unless urgent steps are taken, the crisis will overwhelm our health facilities,” Odili warned.

PASCAR President, Prof. Elijah Ogola, echoed the concern, pointing to data showing that cardiovascular diseases now account for over half of admissions in some public hospitals in Kenya. He stressed that Africa is grappling with the crisis even as it continues to battle communicable diseases.

Prof. Kamilu Karaye of Bayero University also highlighted peripartum cardiomyopathy, a condition affecting young mothers after childbirth, as a growing but poorly recognised challenge in northern Nigeria.

As part of the conference, organisers are hosting workshops on research, interventional cardiology, and open-heart surgery. A Basic Life Support training programme will also equip residents of Abuja with cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) skills.

“We want Nigerians to act when sudden cardiac arrest occurs. Prevention of hypertension and diabetes remains the cheapest and most effective solution,” Odili said.





Vaccines Don't Cause Flu or Autism

By Dovia Richeal Elikem

Vaccines remain one of the greatest achievements of modern medicine, preventing millions of deaths every year. Yet, despite decades of scientific research, misinformation continues to spread—fueling fear and vaccine hesitancy. Two of the most common myths are that vaccines cause the flu or lead to autism. Let's set the record straight.

Myth 1: "The Flu Vaccine Gives You the Flu"

This is one of the most persistent vaccine myths. The truth is simple: **the flu vaccine cannot give you the flu.**

Most flu vaccines contain either inactivated (killed) virus particles or small pieces of the virus. These

components are designed to train the immune system to recognize and fight the flu but are not capable of causing infection.

So why do some people feel unwell after vaccination? Mild side effects such as a low fever, fatigue, or soreness at the injection site are common. These are signs that your body is building immunity—not that you're infected.

In rare cases, someone may catch the flu around the same time they get vaccinated, but this happens because they were exposed to the virus before the vaccine had time to take effect—not because of the shot itself.



Myth 2: "Vaccines Cause Autism"

This myth began with a now-discredited study published in 1998, which falsely claimed a link between the MMR (measles, mumps, rubella) vaccine and autism. That study has been retracted, and its author lost his medical license.

Since then, dozens of large, peer-reviewed studies worldwide have found no evidence connecting vaccines to autism. Autism is a complex condition influenced by genetics and early brain development—not vaccination.

Spreading this myth does more harm than good: it discourages parents from vaccinating their children,

leaving communities vulnerable to outbreaks of preventable diseases.

The Real Danger: Vaccine Hesitancy

When people delay or refuse vaccines because of misinformation, diseases like measles, polio, and whooping cough can return—threatening public health. Vaccines are rigorously tested for safety and effectiveness, and the scientific consensus is clear: they do not cause the flu, and they do not cause autism.

Protecting yourself and your community means choosing facts over fear. The next time you hear a vaccine myth, challenge it—with evidence.

Addictive Disorders

By Gloria Addo

Addiction is often described as a “hidden thief” silently stealing a person’s health, happiness, relationships, and even their sense of self. Addictive disorders go beyond bad habits or lack of willpower; they are powerful brain conditions where an individual feels an overwhelming urge to use a substance or engage in a behavior, even when they know it’s causing harm. Whether it’s alcohol, drugs, gambling, gaming, or even social media, addiction hijacks the brain’s reward system, creating a dangerous cycle of craving and dependence.

With millions of people worldwide affected, addictive disorders have become a serious global health crisis, not only destroying lives but also placing a heavy burden on families and communities. Understanding the nature of addiction is the first step toward breaking the cycle and offering hope, recovery, and healing to those trapped in its grip.

Addiction develops when the brain’s reward system is hijacked by substances or behaviors that flood it with dopamine, the “feel-good” chemical. This makes the brain prioritize addictive habits over healthy ones. Genetics can account for up to 60% of a person’s risk, while mental health issues like depression or PTSD, past trauma, peer pressure, family history of addiction, and early exposure to substances all increase vulnerability. Over time, the body builds tolerance and experiences withdrawal symptoms, making it even harder to break free. Behavioral symptoms of addiction often include an inability to control or cut back on substance use or addictive behaviors, even after repeated attempts. Individuals may experience intense cravings and constant preoccupation, spending significant time and energy on the addiction. As it worsens, they may neglect responsibilities at work, school, or home and withdraw socially, avoiding loved ones or hobbies. Addiction is often marked by secrecy and dishonesty, such as hiding substances or lying about activities,

and can lead to risky or illegal behaviors, like stealing or unsafe sex, to sustain the habit.

Prevention of addictive disorders involves education and awareness, especially among the youth, to highlight the dangers of addiction. Strong family support, healthy coping strategies, and early treatment of mental health issues reduce vulnerability. Limiting access to addictive substances and promoting positive lifestyle habits like exercise and social connection also play key roles in prevention.

Addictive disorders have clear causes, visible symptoms, and serious effects that impact individuals, families, and communities. Recognizing the signs early and addressing the root causes through awareness, support, and timely intervention is key to breaking the cycle of addiction. With the right help, recovery is possible, leading to healthier lives and stronger societies.



Facials: More Than Just a Beauty Ritual

By Dovia Richeal Elikem

When people hear the word facial, they often think of luxury spas and pampering sessions. But facials go beyond relaxation—they're an important part of skincare that can improve skin health, enhance confidence, and even prevent long-term skin problems.

What Is a Facial?

A facial is a multi-step skincare treatment designed to cleanse, exfoliate, nourish, and rejuvenate the skin. It usually includes cleansing, steaming, exfoliation, extraction of clogged pores, massage, and application of masks, serums, or moisturizers tailored to your skin type.

Benefits of Facials

- 1. Deep Cleansing** – Removes dirt, oil, toxins, and impurities that everyday washing can't fully address.
- 2. Improved Circulation** – Facial massages increase blood flow, delivering oxygen and nutrients that make skin glow.
- 3. Anti-Aging Support** – Treatments with antioxidants, retinoids, or collagen-stimulating products help reduce fine lines and wrinkles.
- 4. Acne Management** – Professional extractions can safely unclog pores and reduce breakouts without scarring.
- 5. Stress Relief** – The relaxation component of facials reduces stress, which in turn benefits skin health.
- 6. Customized Care** – Facials can be tailored for oily, dry, sensitive, or combination skin.

Types of Facials

- **Classic/European Facial:** Basic cleansing, exfoliation, extraction, massage, and mask.
- **Anti-Aging Facial:** Focused on reducing fine lines and boosting collagen.
- **Acne Facial:** Targets clogged pores, excess oil, and acne-causing bacteria.
- **Hydrating Facial:** Provides deep moisture to combat dryness and flakiness.
- **Brightening Facial:** Uses vitamin C and other actives to reduce dark spots and improve tone.
- **Medical Facials:** Done in dermatology clinics, often using advanced tools like chemical peels or microdermabrasion.

How Often Should You Get a Facial?

For most people, once every 4–6 weeks is ideal since that's the length of a skin cell cycle. However, frequency depends on your skin needs, lifestyle, and budget.

At-Home vs. Professional Facials

- **At-home facials** (using masks, steam, or scrubs) are great for maintenance.

- **Professional facials** provide deeper treatment, expert analysis, and access to stronger products and equipment.

Precautions

- People with very sensitive skin, eczema, or rosacea should consult a dermatologist before certain facials.
- Avoid facials immediately before big events if you're trying a new treatment, as irritation may occur.

Final Thoughts

Facials are not just indulgence—they are maintenance. Just as you exercise for your body, your skin also needs regular care to stay healthy and radiant. Whether at home or in a professional spa or clinic, facials are an investment in long-term skin health and confidence.



EXPO GALLERY



Pulsating with Health and Wellness







Specialized Forums Empower Healthcare Professionals at the 2025 Expo China–West Africa Medical & Health Expo

At the core of the 2025 China–West Africa Medical & Health Expo were specialized forums that went beyond speeches to spark action. These interactive sessions transformed ideas into practical, solutions-driven discussions, giving healthcare professionals the tools to innovate in their daily work. By bridging policy, research, and industry expertise, the forums tackled some of the region's most urgent health and trade challenges, offering fresh pathways toward stronger healthcare systems.

The ff. summarizes the details of the 5 specialized forums that took place over the course of the 3-day conference and expo at the Grand Arena of Accra International Conference Centre (AICC).

• West Africa Merchants Conference (Aug 20) –

The Expo opened with a strong trade and commerce focus, recognizing that healthcare cannot advance in isolation from economic systems. The conference brought together suppliers, distributors, retailers, and manufacturers. Notable addresses came from Dr. Charles Gaetan Adangabey (Ghana Health Service), Prof. Kofi Adu Manu (Chairperson), and the Ghana Standards Authority, setting the tone for quality and regulatory standards. Company presentations by TAT Ka Wai Hong Pharmaceutical Group, Changsha Honglang Technology Co. Ltd., Anhui Zhongke Medical

Devices, Hunan Techray Medical Technology, and COA Mixture emphasized regional supply chain strengthening and opportunities for new cross-border partnerships.

• **Oncology Forum (Aug 21)** – Cancer care took center stage as Dr. Maria Darko (37 Military Hospital), Dr. Wallace Odiko-Ollennu (GHS), and Dr. Nana Agyeiwaa Awuku (UGMC) joined Chinese oncologists Lei Kaijan and Tong Yu to share insights on thoracoscopic surgery, advanced cancer therapies, and the role of digital labs in improving diagnosis and treatment outcomes across the subregion.

• **Alin Traditional Chinese & African Medicine Forum (Aug 21)** – A pioneering session that examined the intersection of modern technology and traditional systems. Experts including Prof. Kingsley Amponsah (KNUST), Dr. Hao Linduan (Chinese Medical Team), and Prof. Kofi Busia (Pentecost University) discussed how AI can modernize herbal therapies, harmonize regulatory frameworks, and validate traditional practices, setting the stage for integrated medicine in the digital era.



• **Nephrology and Dialysis Innovation Forum (Aug 22)** – With chronic kidney disease on the rise across Africa, this forum brought urgent attention to renal care. Dr. Kumashie (The Bank Hospital) and Tang Yi (Yibin Second People's Hospital) highlighted new dialysis technologies, community-level interventions, and policy-driven solutions to ensure affordable, sustainable kidney care.

• **Ophthalmology Innovation Forum (Aug 22)** – Vision health closed the series of discussions, with Dr. Daisy Asiamah-Asare (Head of Ophthalmology, Ghana), Dr. Zhang Qiuli (Guangdong Medical University), and Dr. Alex Addo (Quantum Medical Centre) presenting breakthroughs in advanced eye surgeries, AI-powered diagnostic tools, and community-based eye care strategies to tackle preventable blindness.

A Vision for the Future

With more than 500 exhibitors, 100 professional speakers, and delegations from nine West African countries and China, the Expo successfully established Ghana as a central hub for healthcare and trade innovation.

The Expo provided a dynamic platform for engagement, bringing together ministers of health,

ambassadors, leading medical experts, investors, and private sector innovators.

Exhibitors showcased cutting-edge technologies ranging from AI-powered diagnostic tools, advanced medical imaging systems, dialysis innovations, oncology treatment equipment, and hospital infrastructure solutions. The event was not only a showcase of products but also a strategic conversation on the future of healthcare ecosystems in Africa.

For many participants, the Expo represented a critical bridge between policy dialogue and real-world investment. It created pathways for trade facilitation, knowledge transfer, and cross-border partnerships, ensuring that healthcare advancements translate into tangible improvements in patient outcomes.

The event underscored the importance of investment opportunities, AI-driven solutions, and strategic cross-border partnerships that will shape the next chapter of healthcare and commerce in West Africa.

SOURCE-HealthPulseOnline.com



Silent Struggles:

Men's Health and the Truth About Enlarged Prostates

By Dovia Richeal Elikem

Urinary problems are one of the most common yet least discussed men's health concerns. For many men, especially those over the age of 50, trips to the bathroom become more frequent, especially at night. Weak urine flow, difficulty starting urination, or the feeling of incomplete emptying are often brushed aside as "just part of getting older."

But in many cases, these symptoms are linked to benign prostatic hyperplasia (BPH) an enlarged prostate gland. While not cancerous, an enlarged prostate can have a significant impact on daily life and long-term health.

Why Men Should Pay Attention

Ignoring urinary issues may seem harmless, but untreated BPH or other urinary conditions can:

- Put strain on the bladder and kidneys.
- Lead to urinary tract infections.
- Cause bladder stones or, in severe cases, kidney damage.

The constant sleep disruption from nighttime bathroom visits can also affect energy levels, productivity, and overall quality of life.

When to See a Doctor

If you notice any of the following, it's time to seek medical advice:

- Difficulty during urination.
- Weak or interrupted stream.
- Frequent nighttime urination (more than twice a night).
- Pain or burning during urination.
- Blood in the urine.

Early diagnosis makes management easier and prevents complications.



Treatment & Lifestyle Options

The good news is that urinary problems caused by an enlarged prostate are highly treatable. Options range from lifestyle changes and medications to minimally invasive procedures and surgery.

Practical steps include:

- Limiting caffeine and alcohol (which irritate the bladder).
- Reducing evening fluid intake.
- Regular exercise and a balanced diet.
- Talking openly with your doctor about treatment options.

Final Word

Urinary problems are not just an “old man’s issue”—they’re a quality-of-life issue. Men should not suffer in silence out of embarrassment. Addressing symptoms early helps protect kidney health, improve sleep, and restore confidence in daily life. Your health is worth the conversation.

Yeast Infection

By Larsey Hilda Kai

According to the World Health Organization, about 75% of women will experience at least one vaginal yeast infection in their lifetime, and 40–45% will have two or more episodes. While it's not life-threatening, it can cause significant discomfort and disrupt daily life. Understanding what causes it, how to treat it, and ways to prevent it is the first step to taking back control of your health and confidence.

Candida overgrowth happens when the natural balance of bacteria and yeast in the body is disrupted, causing Candida to multiply rapidly, especially in the mouth, vagina, skin, or gut. It can be triggered by antibiotics, which kill helpful bacteria like Lactobacillus that keep yeast in check, or hormonal changes from pregnancy, birth control, menstrual cycles, or menopause that increase glycogen levels, feeding yeast. A weakened immune system due to HIV/AIDS, cancer treatments, or chronic stress also makes it harder to control fungal growth. Additionally, uncontrolled diabetes creates a favorable environment for yeast by providing extra sugar and weakening the immune response, leading to recurrent infections.

Symptoms of a yeast infection depend on the affected body part but commonly include itching, irritation, redness, burning, and thick, white discharge in the vaginal area. Other types of yeast infections can

cause white patches in the mouth or throat (thrush) or, in severe cases of invasive candidiasis, symptoms like fever and chills. It's important to see a doctor to confirm the diagnosis and receive appropriate treatment, especially if it's your first time or symptoms are severe.

To prevent yeast infections, it's important to maintain good hygiene by keeping the genital area clean and dry, and wearing breathable cotton underwear while avoiding tight clothing that traps moisture. Limit unnecessary antibiotic use, as it can disrupt the balance of healthy bacteria that keep yeast in check. For those with diabetes, managing blood sugar levels is crucial since high sugar promotes yeast growth. Avoid scented soaps, sprays, and feminine products that can irritate and upset the natural pH balance. Additionally, change out of wet clothes like swimsuits or sweaty gym wear promptly, practice safe sex, and boost your immune system with a healthy lifestyle, including balanced nutrition, regular exercise, adequate sleep, and stress management.

Yeast infections are common but preventable. With good hygiene, healthy lifestyle choices, and early treatment, you can reduce discomfort, prevent recurrence, and maintain overall well-being.

The Tech-Driven Future of Wellness:

Your Digital Health Partner

By Dovia Richeal Elikem

Technology is reshaping the way we think about health and wellness, bringing personalized care and real-time insights into the palm of our hands. What was once available only in hospitals and clinics is now part of everyday life, thanks to innovations in digital health.

Wearable devices such as smartwatches and fitness trackers have become more than just step counters. They now monitor heart rate, sleep quality, oxygen levels, and even stress patterns, providing users with valuable data to make better lifestyle choices. These devices act as constant companions, empowering people to track progress, detect irregularities, and stay motivated in their wellness journey.

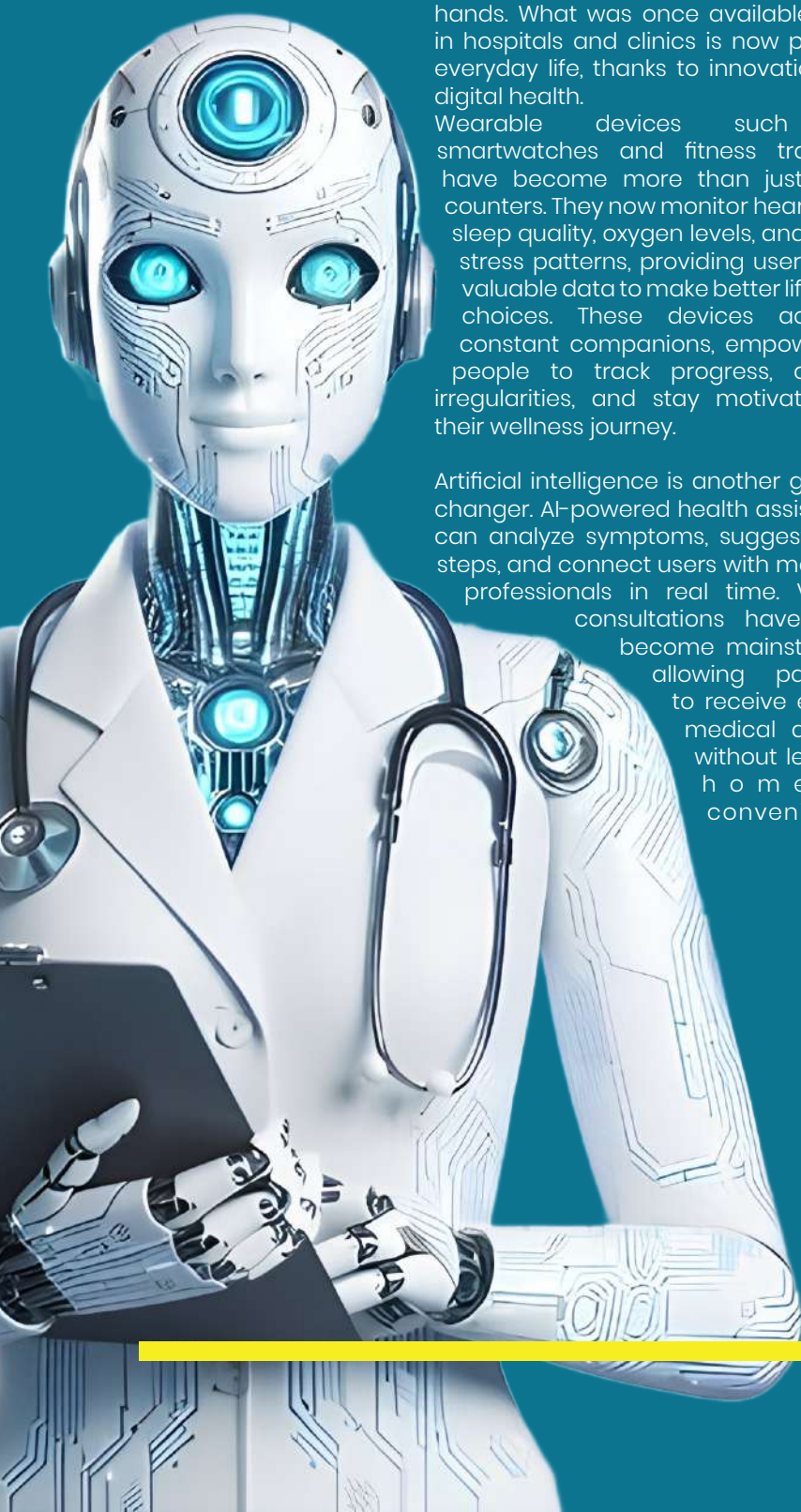
Artificial intelligence is another game-changer. AI-powered health assistants can analyze symptoms, suggest next steps, and connect users with medical professionals in real time. Virtual consultations have also become mainstream, allowing patients to receive expert medical advice without leaving home—a convenience

that saves time and extends healthcare access to remote areas.

Mental and emotional well-being are also benefiting from this digital revolution. Mobile apps now provide guided meditation, mood tracking, and virtual therapy sessions, making mental health support more accessible and less stigmatized. For people managing chronic conditions, digital platforms offer medication reminders, diet tracking, and progress monitoring, ensuring consistent care outside traditional clinical settings.

What makes technology truly transformative is its ability to **personalize wellness**. By analyzing data from multiple sources—genetics, lifestyle, and behavior—digital tools can recommend tailored diets, fitness routines, and preventive measures. This shift from one-size-fits-all healthcare to individualized wellness plans marks a new era of proactive health management.

In 2025, technology is no longer just supportive—it has become a **trusted health partner**. With wearables, AI, and digital platforms guiding healthier choices, individuals are more empowered than ever to take control of their well-being. The future of wellness lies in this powerful partnership between humans and technology, creating healthier, more informed lives.



The Secret Ingredient You're Throwing Away: **Citrus Zest**

When life gives you lemons (or limes, or oranges), don't just squeeze the juice—use the zest!

The zest, which is the colorful outer skin of citrus fruits, contains natural oils packed with intense aroma and flavor. Unlike the juice, which is sharp and acidic, zest delivers a bright, fragrant kick without altering the acidity of your dish.

Why Zest?

- **Double the flavor:** Citrus zest is more concentrated than juice.
- **Healthier seasoning:** Brightens dishes without adding salt or sugar.
- **Versatile:** Works in both sweet and savory recipes.

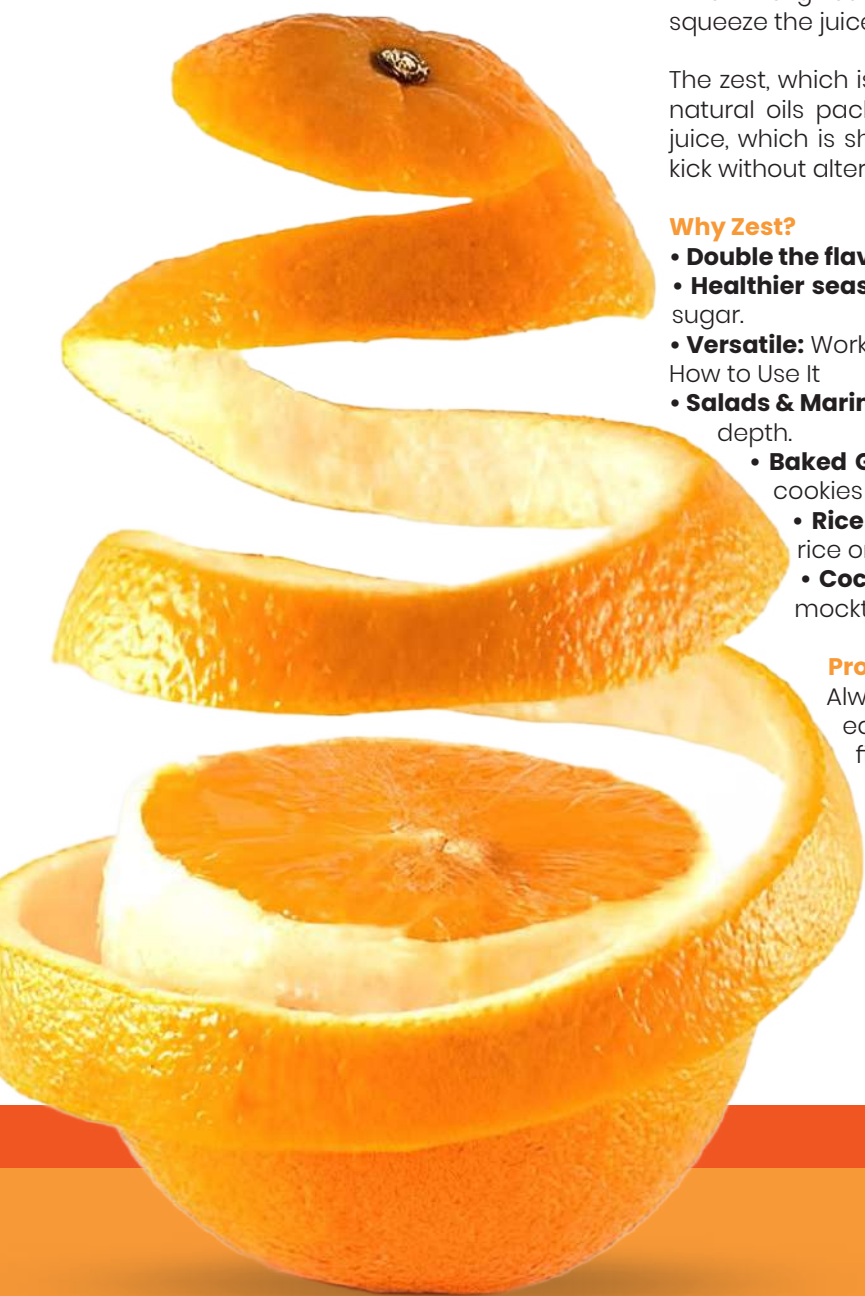
How to Use It

- **Salads & Marinades:** Add lemon or lime zest for freshness and depth.
- **Baked Goods:** Orange zest makes cakes, muffins, and cookies irresistible.
- **Rice & Grains:** A sprinkle of zest instantly lifts plain rice or couscous.
- **Cocktails & Drinks:** Rim your glass or stir zest into mocktails for an elegant twist.

Pro Tip

Always zest **before cutting or juicing** your citrus—it's easier to handle when whole. Use a microplane or fine grater, and avoid the white pith underneath (it's bitter!).

The next time you reach for a lemon or lime, remember: the juice is good, but the zest is gold.



4K Fluorescence Endoscope Camera System

By Dovia Richeal Elikem

The 4K Fluorescence Endoscope Camera System is a cutting-edge medical imaging solution that enhances the safety and precision of minimally invasive surgery. By combining ultra-high-definition 4K white light imaging with near-infrared (NIR) fluorescence technology, the system enables real-time visualization of structures and processes that are otherwise invisible to the naked eye.

Using fluorescent tracers such as Indocyanine Green (ICG), it highlights blood flow, lymphatic drainage, and tumor boundaries—empowering surgeons to identify, navigate, and treat with unmatched accuracy.

Key Features & Capabilities

- **4K Ultra-High Resolution:** Provides exceptional image clarity (3840 × 2160 pixels), ensuring every detail is visible during delicate procedures.
- **Integrated Fluorescence Imaging:** Seamlessly merges

visible light and NIR fluorescence for enhanced intraoperative guidance.

- **Fluorescent Tracer Technology:** Utilizes ICG to highlight tissues, pathways, and vascular structures.

- **Multiple Imaging Modes:** Switch effortlessly between HD white light, black-and-white fluorescence, and color fluorescence views.

- **Enhanced Surgical Navigation:** Clearly visualizes tumor margins, lymphatic systems, and blood vessels, reducing risks and improving outcomes.

- **Versatility Across Specialties:** Ideal for oncology, hepatobiliary surgery, and a wide range of minimally invasive procedures.

- **Precision & Safety:** Equips surgeons with detailed insights for more confident decision-making.

- **Advanced System Options:** Some models feature dual-spectral light sources, automated exposure control, and quantitative fluorescence analysis.



The Exercise Beyond The Gym

By Adams G. Latif



When we think of fitness, the gym often comes to mind first: treadmills, weights, and high-intensity workouts. But fitness doesn't have to be confined to four walls or involve heavy equipment. In fact, some of the most effective and enjoyable ways to stay fit happen outside the gym setting. From rhythm-filled dance classes to the discipline of martial arts and the refreshing freedom of outdoor activities like cycling or hiking, fitness can be both exciting and sustainable.

Regular exercise can prevent and reverse age-related decreases in muscle mass and strength, improve balance, flexibility, and endurance, and decrease the risk of falls in the elderly. Regular exercise can help prevent coronary heart disease, stroke, diabetes, obesity, and high blood pressure. Regular, weight-bearing exercise can also help prevent osteoporosis by building bone strength.

Walking is the most underrated form of exercise. It's free, easy on the joints, and can be done anywhere. Just 30 minutes of brisk walking a day improves heart health, boosts mood, and burns calories. Walk instead of driving short distances. Take the stairs instead of the elevator. Turn phone calls into "walk-and-talk" moments. Walk your way to fitness. Small steps add up literally.

Exercise also becomes more enjoyable when

it is paired with fun. Dancing, for example, turns movement into celebration. Whether it is a lively Afrobeat session, a Zumba class, or simply dancing around the living room while cooking dinner, the combination of music and motion lifts the spirit while working up a sweat. It does not matter if the steps are perfect; what matters is the energy and joy released in the process.

Another way of keeping fit beyond the gym is Cycling and Hiking. Cycling is a low-impact but high-return exercise for building stamina and leg strength, while Hiking strengthens legs, improves cardiovascular health, and burns calories while exploring nature. Regular fitness can help chronic arthritis sufferers improve their capacity to perform daily activities such as driving, climbing stairs, and opening jars.

The beauty of exercise is that it doesn't have to look the same for everyone. Some people thrive in gyms, while others find joy in dancing, gardening, or evening walks. What matters is consistency. The more you move, the stronger, happier, and healthier you become. So the next time you think, "I don't have time to exercise," remember: movement is everywhere. You just have to choose it.



Bend, Don't Break:

Building Flexibility for a Stronger, Healthier Body

By Dovia Richeal Elikem

When it comes to fitness, most people focus on strength training, cardio, or endurance—but stretching often gets overlooked. Yet flexibility is the foundation of movement. Without it, even the strongest muscles can feel tight and restricted, limiting performance and increasing the risk of injury.

Stretching keeps muscles and joints supple, allowing your body to move through its full range of motion. This mobility is essential not only for athletic performance but also for everyday activities like bending, reaching, or twisting. The good news is, flexibility isn't fixed—it improves with consistent effort. Just a few weeks of regular stretching can lead to noticeable changes in how freely and comfortably you move.

Benefits of Stretching

A solid stretching routine offers more than just loose muscles. It directly supports your training and recovery:

- **Injury prevention:** Flexible muscles are less likely to tear or strain, keeping your workouts safer.

- **Better circulation:** Stretching boosts blood flow, helping deliver oxygen and nutrients to muscles while speeding

recovery.

- **Enhanced performance:** Dynamic stretches before exercise prime muscles for action, improving power and efficiency.

- **Less tightness, more mobility:** Over time, stretching improves range of motion, making strength training and cardio movements more effective.

- **Stress relief:** Post-workout stretching helps your body cool down and relax, reducing tension in both muscles and mind.

- **Improved balance and coordination:** Flexible muscles work more smoothly, supporting better control during exercise.

How to Add Stretching to Your Routine:

For the best results, combine dynamic stretches—like leg swings or arm circles—before workouts with static stretches after training, when your muscles are warm. Focus on major muscle groups you engage most: hamstrings, calves, quads, hips, chest, shoulders, and back. Even dedicating 5–10 minutes per session can make a big difference over time.

Remember, flexibility training is not about forcing your body into extreme positions—it's about gradual, consistent improvement. By making stretching a non-negotiable part of your fitness plan, you'll move better, recover faster, and perform at your best.



Ask The

EXPERT

Early Signs of Skin Cancer and How to Perform a Self-Examination

Skin cancer is one of the most common cancers worldwide, but the good news is that when caught early, it is highly treatable. Many people overlook subtle changes on their skin, thinking they are harmless. However, learning to recognize the early signs—and performing regular self-checks—can help detect problems before they become serious.

What Are the Early Signs?

Skin cancer can show up in many ways. Common warning signs include:

- A new growth that doesn't go away.
- A sore that refuses to heal or bleeds repeatedly.
- A patch of skin that becomes red, rough, scaly, or itchy.
- A mole that changes in size, shape, or color.
- Dark streaks under the nails or unusual spots on the palms and soles.

For melanoma, the most dangerous type, experts recommend the ABCDE rule:

- **Asymmetry:** One half of the mole doesn't match the other.
- **Border:** Irregular or blurred edges.
- **Color:** Uneven shades of brown, black, red, or even blue.
- **Diameter:** Larger than 6 mm (about the size of a pencil eraser).
- **Evolving:** Any change over time—growth, itchiness, bleeding, or new symptoms.

How Can You Check Yourself?

Doctors recommend a monthly self-examination. Here's how:

1. Stand in a well-lit room with a full-length mirror and a hand mirror.
2. Check from head to toe—including the scalp, ears, and neck.
3. Look closely at your arms, chest, back, and abdomen. Use a mirror for hard-to-see areas or ask a partner for help.
4. Don't forget your hands, nails, feet, and between your toes.
5. Track changes by writing notes or taking photos

of moles and spots.

Why It Matters

Most skin cancers are curable if diagnosed early. If you notice a mole or lesion that looks suspicious, or if a spot changes over time, consult a dermatologist without delay. Remember, prevention starts with awareness—and your eyes are often the first line of defense.



Health Terms

Antiandrogen withdrawal (AAWD): A temporary syndrome some patients experience after discontinuing an antiandrogen. They may experience a decline in PSA, improvement in symptoms or tumor regression (a decrease in size).

Antibody-drug conjugate A treatment that combines an antibody that can attach to a cancer cell with a drug that can kill the cancer cell.

Bipolar androgen therapy (BAT) : A treatment that alternates androgen deprivation therapy with high-dose testosterone supplements.

Brachytherapy : A type of radiation therapy in which tiny radioactive seeds are implanted directly into or near the prostate. The implants may be temporary (HDR brachytherapy) or permanent (LDR brachytherapy). Also called internal radiation therapy or interstitial implants.

Catheter: A thin, flexible tube used to drain fluids or instill fluid. A catheter may be inserted into the bladder through the urethra to drain urine.

Chemotherapy: A form of cancer treatment that uses powerful drugs to kill cancer cells. Can be the first therapy for metastatic prostate cancer or used after other therapies stop working.

Digital rectal exam (DRE): A screening procedure for prostate cancer in which the doctor inserts a gloved, lubricated finger into the rectum to feel the size and shape of the prostate.

: A derivative of testosterone, which has stronger effects than testosterone within the prostate and is blocked by 5- α reductase inhibitors (5-ARIs), such as Proscar (finasteride) and Avodart (dutasteride).

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