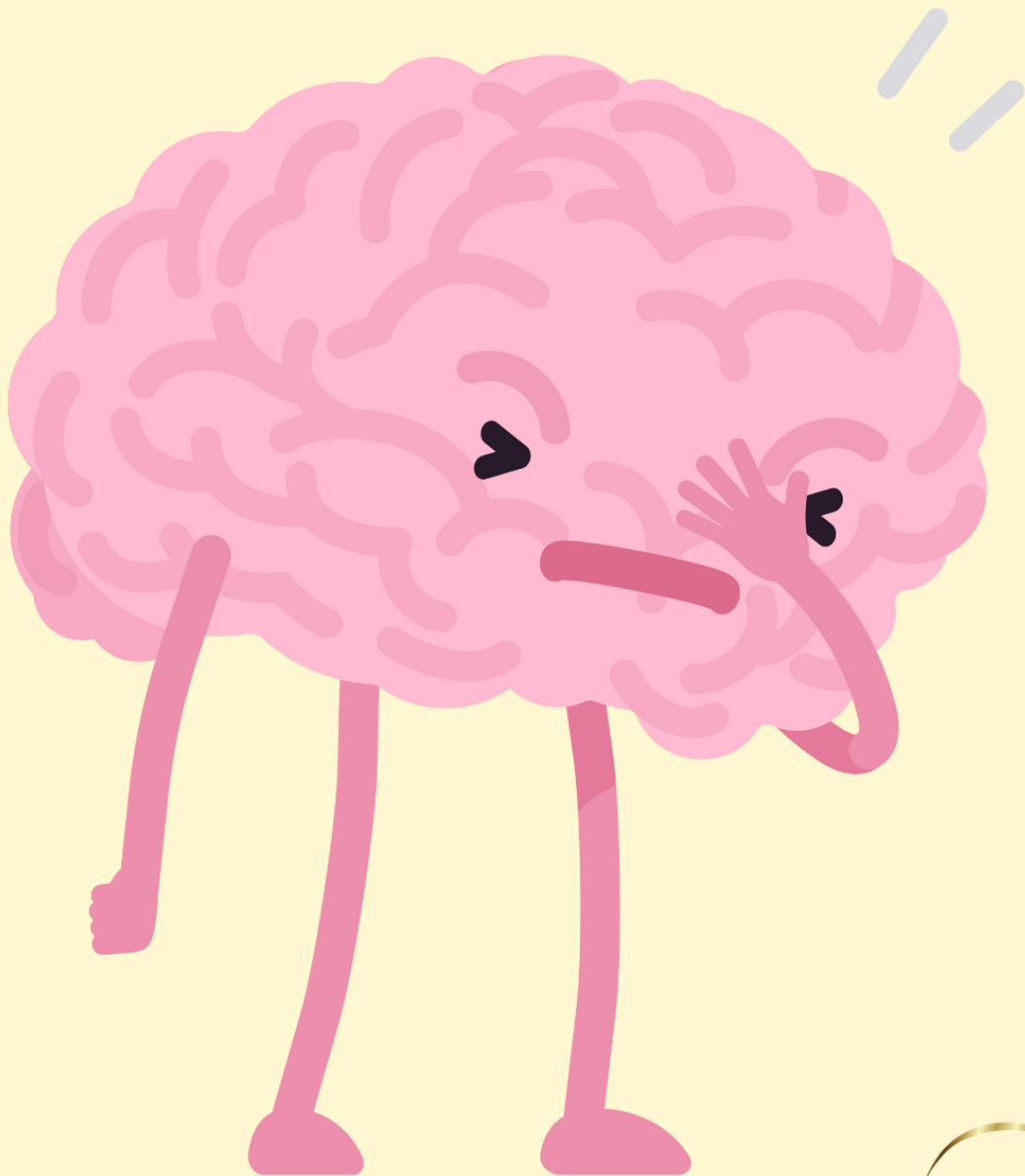


12 Dangers to Your Best Life and How to Fix Them



Ellen McCurdy

Triumph
& Grace

12 Dangers to Your Best Life - and How to Fix Them

Table Of Contents

Seed Oils	4
A Bit of Background	4
Not What We Think It Is	7
Where Can We Go From Here?	8
References	11
Sugar	13
A Bit of Background	13
Not What We Think It Is	15
Where Can We Go From Here?	18
References	21
Alcohol	23
A Bit of Background	23
Not What We Think It Is	27
Where Can We Go From Here?	29
References	32
Side Profile: Normalization	33
Wireless Radiation	35
A Bit of Background	35
Not What We Think It Is	38
Where Can We Go From Here?	40
References	42
Personal Care & Beauty Products	44
A Bit of Background	44

12 Dangers to Your Best Life - and How to Fix Them

Not What We Think It Is	45
Where Can We Go From Here?	48
References	50
Television	51
A Bit of Background	51
Not What We Think It Is	55
Where Can We Go From Here?	58
References	60
Side Profile: Subliminal Advertising	61
Pesticides and Herbicides	63
A Bit of Background	63
Not What We Think It Is	66
Where Can We Go From Here?	70
References	72
Coffee	74
A Bit of Background	74
Not What We Think It Is	79
Where Can We Go From Here?	81
References	84
Processed Foods	85
A Bit of Background	85
Not What We Think It Is	88
Where Can We Go From Here?	93
References	95
Fluoride	99

12 Dangers to Your Best Life - and How to Fix Them

A Bit of Background	99
Not What We Think It Is	100
Where Can We Go From Here?	104
References	106
Marijuana	108
A Bit of Background	108
Not What We Think It Is	111
Where Can We Go From Here?	115
References	117
Nicotine and Vaping	120
A Bit of Background	120
Not What We Think It Is	122
Where Can We Go From Here?	124
References	127
Side Profile: Propaganda and Women	128

12 Dangers to Your Best Life - and How to Fix Them

Seed Oils

Most of us have used vegetable and seed oils at home, whether for cooking, in salad dressings, or as margarine. If you eat in restaurants, it is a solid bet that you are consuming seed oil in some form.

Consumer guidelines have told us that these oils are heart-healthy alternatives to saturated fats like butter and lard. Cookbooks contain recipes calling for all forms of oil.

So, what oils are we talking about? The terms vegetable oil and seed oil are often used interchangeably.

Vegetable oils are plant-based oils, such as olive oil and coconut oil. Seed oils are extracted from plant seeds, such as canola [rapeseed], corn, cottonseed, flaxseed, grapeseed, safflower, sesame, soybean, and sunflower, among others.

This discussion will focus on seed oils, since they have the greatest impact on our health.

A Bit of Background

Where it all started

Historically, people cooked and baked with animal fats [lard, tallow, butter] or traditional plant oils that could be easily extracted through pressing [olive oil, coconut oil, palm oil].

The modern seed oil industry began in the late 19th century when technological advances made it possible to extract oil from cotton seeds, a worthless byproduct of cotton production. Initially manufactured as machine oil and lamp oil, cottonseed oil made its way into the food supply. Other seeds followed soon after.

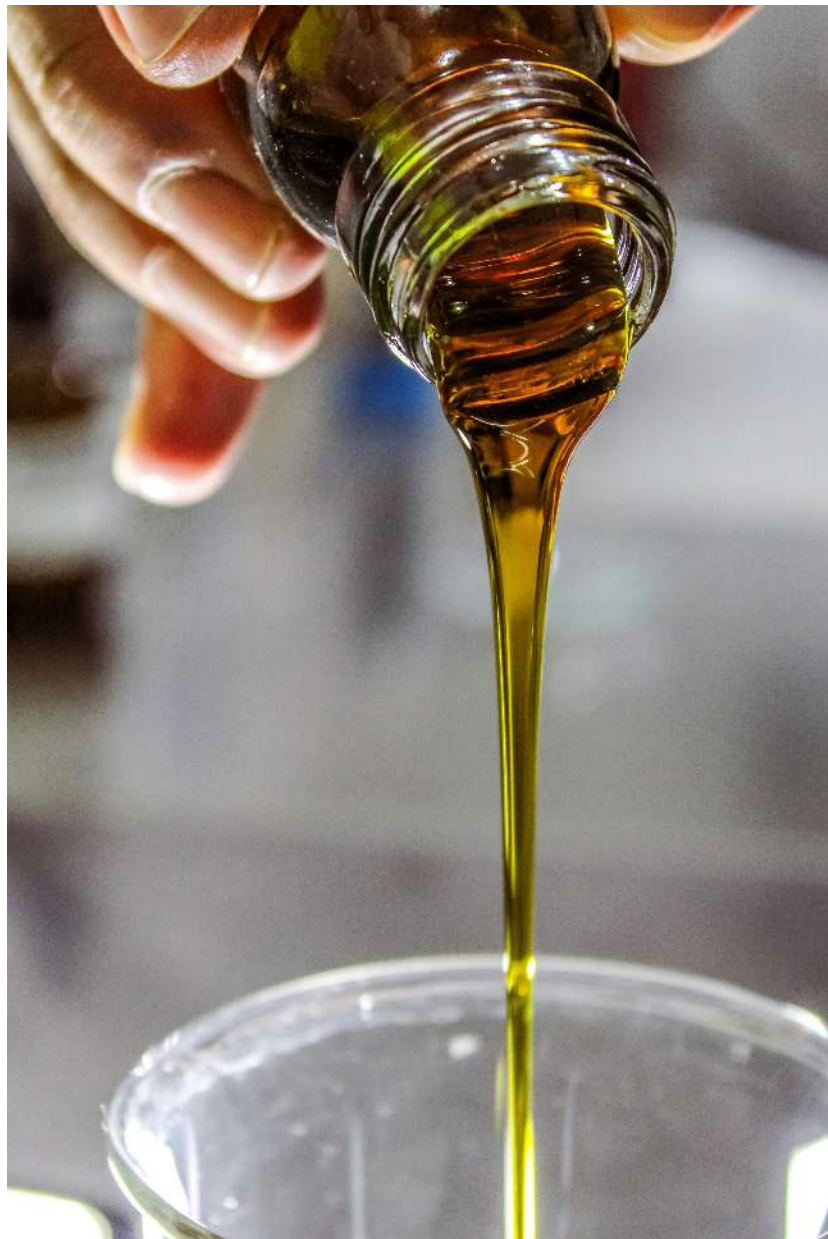
Procter & Gamble, originally a soap company, developed the process of hydrogenation in 1911 to create Crisco vegetable shortening. This product was marketed as a cleaner, more modern alternative to lard.

12 Dangers to Your Best Life - and How to Fix Them

Following questionable research studies, concerns about saturated fat and heart disease led to major dietary recommendations that pushed Americans away from traditional animal fats.

The 1977 Dietary Goals for the United States and subsequent dietary guidelines recommended reducing saturated fat intake and replacing it with polyunsaturated fats, primarily from seed oils.

This shift represented one of the most dramatic changes in human nutrition, and one of the most damaging as we shall see.



12 Dangers to Your Best Life - and How to Fix Them

Industrial processing and consumption

Traditional pressing methods used for olive or coconut oil create a natural product.

Seed oils do not come naturally from the plant, rather they are extracted using industrial methods such as:

- High heat processing that damages fragile fatty acids
- Chemical solvents [typically hexane] to maximize extraction
- Deodorization processes that remove natural flavor and smell
- Bleaching to achieve a clear, marketable appearance

Seed oil manufacturing has paid off. By the 2000s, seed oils were in nearly every processed food. In the United States, by 2000 soybean oil alone accounted for over 7% of all calories consumed, by 2010 the average person consumed 80 grams of seed oils daily, and now the average American gets approximately one-third of daily calories from seed oils.

It wasn't for the health benefits

The initial push toward seed oils had little to do with health and more to do with economics.

The cottonseed oil industry evolved specifically to monetize waste from cotton production. Similarly, corn and soybean oils found markets as profitable outlets for subsidized crops.

Seed oils are cheap to produce, and they do not solidify in cold temperatures like animal fats.

Food manufacturers adopted these oils for their low cost, extended shelf life, and versatility in processed foods. The neutral flavor profile made them ideal for creating consistent, long-lasting packaged foods.

12 Dangers to Your Best Life - and How to Fix Them

More than just cooking oil

Today you will find seed oil in nearly every corner of our food supply. They are in obvious places like salad dressings, baked goods, fried foods and chips, but also in unexpected products like crackers, breakfast cereals, protein bars, granola bars, and even baby formulas.

Restaurant food, particularly fast food, relies heavily on these oils for frying and cooking due to their low cost and stability under high heat.

Even so-called health food products have not escaped. Check the ingredients of many vegan products, protein powders, or gluten-free alternatives for seed oils.

Not What We Think It Is

The omega imbalance

The human body requires both omega-6 and omega-3 fatty acids in a proper balance of roughly equal amounts. The use of modern seed oils has skewed this balance to ratios of 20:1 or higher.

This imbalance affects our overall health because:

- Omega-6 fatty acids consumed in excess promote inflammation
- Omega-3 fatty acids are generally anti-inflammatory
- The body uses these fatty acids to create signaling molecules that affect nearly every biological system

These omega-6 fatty acids accumulate in our body fat, cell membranes, and mitochondrial membranes, in turn causing mitochondrial dysfunction and inhibiting the body's ability to burn fuel properly.

Inflammation caused by excessive omega-6 intake is compounded by the use seed oils in processed foods containing added sugars, refined carbohydrates, and sodium. Over time, this inflammation can lead to:

12 Dangers to Your Best Life - and How to Fix Them

- Cardiovascular disease
- Obesity – especially from calorie-dense ultra-processed foods
- Non-alcoholic fatty liver disease
- Autoimmune conditions, diabetes, arthritis, and rheumatoid arthritis
- Gut permeability issues
- Altered brain function, cognitive decline, and Alzheimer's
- Depression, anxiety, and mood disorders

Under the radar

Seed oils are ubiquitous and normalized in our food supply, making them largely invisible.

Much of the public is still under the impression that animal fats are bad and that plant fats are somehow *healthier*. Nutritional guidelines still promote polyunsaturated fats, without differentiating between whole food sources [such as nuts] and refined oils.

Marketing terms like *natural* and *vegetable oil* convey a wholesome meaning, but they are far from it.

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration [FDA] and other agencies do not set strict limits on omega-6 intake or require any warnings about processed oils.

Food companies, therefore, have little incentive to change, especially when seed oils are cheap and versatile.

Where Can We Go From Here?

Read those labels

You may want to make some changes to your eating habits now. Good.

The first step is awareness. Start by reading the ingredient labels for any of these items and omit them from your diet:

12 Dangers to Your Best Life - and How to Fix Them

- Soybean oil
- Corn oil
- Canola oil [rapeseed oil]
- Cottonseed oil
- Sunflower oil
- Safflower oil
- Grapeseed oil
- Rice bran oil
- Sesame seed oil
- Vegetable oil [usually a blend of the above]

Return to whole foods

At the grocery store, focus on whole foods like meat, eggs, dairy, and produce, and avoid all processed foods.

Replace seed oils with fats that have stable fatty acid profiles and are less prone to oxidation:

- Extra virgin olive oil for low-heat cooking and dressings
- Coconut oil for medium-heat cooking
- Butter or ghee from grass-fed cows
- Tallow [beef fat] for high-heat cooking
- Lard [pork fat] for baking and cooking
- Avocado oil for high-heat cooking

Note on extra virgin olive oil: Purchase your olive oil from reputable sources, since it is often mixed with seed oils. Here are a few sites to help you find them:

- [14 Fake Olive Oil Brands to Avoid 2025 - Worst Brands](#)
- [Fake Olive Oil: 7 Ways to Spot It | Epicurious](#)
- [How to Buy Real Olive Oil \[& Spot Fake Ones\] - The Goodness Well](#)

Cook more, eat out less

One of the most effective ways to eliminate seed oil consumption is to prepare your meals at home, where you control the ingredients and can choose healthier fats.

12 Dangers to Your Best Life - and How to Fix Them

- Use cast iron, stainless steel, or ceramic cookware
- Keep cooking temperatures moderate when possible
- Store oils properly in dark, cool places to prevent oxidation

If you do eat out, ask the restaurant staff what oils are used in cooking. Ask them to use butter or olive oil instead of seed oil.



12 Dangers to Your Best Life - and How to Fix Them

Find alternatives for processed foods

Processed foods are the primary source of industrial seed oils. Consider these alternatives:

- Choose whole, unprocessed foods whenever possible
- Make your own homemade salad dressings and mayonnaise
- Select brands that use healthier oils [check ingredient lists]
- Snack on nuts, fruits, vegetables, and quality proteins instead of chips and crackers

Do what you can

It may be difficult to avoid seed oils entirely. Focus on what you can control and make the best choice in any situation.

Ask your grocer to stock healthy oils.

Talk with your family about how to create a healthy kitchen.

Think of it as a quest to be as healthy as you can be.

Take care of your body, it's the only place you have to live. ~ Jim Rohn

References

[Chris Kresser - Why Vegetable Oils Are Dangerous to Your Health](#)

[Dr. Cate Shanahan - The Hateful Eight: Enemy Fats That Destroy Your Health](#)

[The Truth About Vegetable Oils - Dr. Mark Hyman](#)

[Journal of the American College of Cardiology: Saturated Fat Controversy](#)

[DiNicolantonio JJ, O'Keefe JH. Omega-6 vegetable oils as a driver of coronary heart disease: the oxidized linoleic acid hypothesis](#)

[Seed Oils & Processed Foods: How They're Harming You – Paul Saladino, MD](#)

[PURE Study on Fat Consumption and Mortality - The Lancet](#)

12 Dangers to Your Best Life - and How to Fix Them

[Dr. Chris Knobbe - 'Diseases of Civilization: Are Seed Oil Excesses the Unifying Mechanism?'](#)

[The Oiling of America - The Weston A. Price Foundation](#)

[The Big Fat Surprise | NYT Bestselling Book By Nina Teicholz](#)

[The Worst Ingredient in the World: Interview with Dr. Chris Knobbe](#)

[The History of Margarine \[And Why Butter Is Better\] - Our Heritage of Health](#)

[50 Years Ago, Sugar Industry Quietly Paid Scientists To Point Blame At Fat | Health News Florida](#)

[eCFR :: 21 CFR 101.4 -- Food; designation of ingredients.](#)

[Omega-3 to omega-6 fatty acid oxidation ratio as a novel inflammation resolution marker for metabolic complications in obesity - ScienceDirect](#)

[Cochrane Review: Saturated fats and heart disease](#)

[Everything You Need To Know About Seed Oils | Cate Shanahan, MD](#)

[Are Seed Oils Toxic and Inflammatory?](#)

[Are Seed Oils Bad for You?](#)

[The Hidden Dangers of Seed Oils: Risks and Alternatives](#)

[The Hidden Dangers of Seed Oils in Processed Foods | Alliance for Natural Health USA - Protecting Natural Health](#)

[Unveiling the Hidden Truth: The Harmful Effects of Seed Oils and Healthier Alternatives - Dr. Lisa Koche](#)

12 Dangers to Your Best Life - and How to Fix Them

Sugar

Nearly everyone has consumed sugar in some form, whether the occasional chocolate, a piece of birthday cake, a few cookies, a bottle of soda, donuts at the office, or an ice cream cone on a hot summer day. Most of us still do in varying degrees, and some even eat daily desserts.

Yet the evidence shows that sugar consumption has a dramatic effect on our bodies, our health, and our well-being. Further, sugar is hidden in many foods we consume regularly, so we are taking in a lot more sugar than we think.

This discussion focuses on sweeteners in their various forms: refined and processed sugars, plus honey, agave, and maple syrup. It does not include fruit, although fruit also has an impact on our insulin production.

A Bit of Background

The sweet evolution

Humans are biologically drawn to sweetness from prehistoric times. That quick burst of energy could also give us a bit of extra body fat before the long winter when food was less available.

The earliest evidence of honey gathering appears in ancient cave paintings dating back to 8000 BC. This natural sweetener was highly prized for its rarity and was often used medicinally across ancient civilizations. Pure raw honey still retains these medicinal properties.

Sugar cane cultivation began around 8000 BC in New Guinea, where it was chewed for its sweet juice. By 500 BC it spread to India where the sugar extraction process was developed. From there, the commodity spread through the Middle East and reached Europe during the Crusades of the 11th century.

In these early days, sugar was a luxury, both expensive and rare.

12 Dangers to Your Best Life - and How to Fix Them

By the 16th century, sugar plantations and extraction mills spread to the Caribbean and the Americas, where the transatlantic slave trade supplied the early labor force. Over the following years, sugar became a staple of European diets, signifying wealth and hospitality.

In the 19th century, sugar beet farming provided a new source of sweetness and reduced commercial dependence on tropical cane sugar.

In the 1970s, high-fructose corn syrup [HFCS] was developed, and it became a cheaper alternative to cane and beet sugar.

Today sugars are found in nearly every home and in nearly every processed food and beverage.



12 Dangers to Your Best Life - and How to Fix Them

Not just for sweetness

Eventually sugar acquired other food industry uses, for example:

- It acts as a preservative to extend shelf life
- It enhances flavor and texture
- It aids in fermentation of bread and alcoholic beverages
- It retains moisture in baked goods
- It provides color through caramelization

These functional properties have made sugar an invaluable ingredient for food manufacturers, leading to its use in an astonishing variety of products – from obvious sweets to more savory items like pasta sauce, salad dressing, bread, bacon, sausage, and beans.

Cultural significance

Through effective marketing, sugar has been woven into the fabric of our cultural experiences. The emotional impact of birthday cakes, Grandma's cookies, family desserts, and summertime barbecues reinforce sugar as a symbol of love, comfort, reward, celebration, and even happiness.

The sugar calendar of holidays informs our psyches of the appropriate special treats, from Halloween to Thanksgiving to Christmas to Valentine's Day to Easter. Small wonder that people are frequently sick during the winter.

Not What We Think It Is

The Harvard sugar scandal

In the 1960s, the Sugar Research Foundation [now the Sugar Association] paid three Harvard researchers approximately \$50,000 in today's money to downplay the connection between sugar consumption and heart disease, and to point the finger at saturated fats instead.

The resulting paper, published in 1967 in the New England Journal of Medicine, helped shape nutrition policy for decades, pushing Americans toward low-fat diets while ignoring the risks of sugar. This deception wasn't revealed until 2016 when historical documents were uncovered.

12 Dangers to Your Best Life - and How to Fix Them

This manipulation of scientific research helped create the low-fat craze of the 1980s and 1990s, during which many foods replaced fat with sugar to maintain palatability. Ironically, as Americans reduced fat intake during this period, obesity and diabetes rates soared.

Sugar by any other name

Processed food manufacturers can easily disguise the volume of sugar on their ingredient labels. With well over 60 different names for added sugars, it becomes difficult for consumers to know how much sugar they are consuming.

Some common alternative names include:

- Sucrose, glucose, fructose, maltose, dextrose
- Corn syrup, high-fructose corn syrup
- Fruit juice concentrate, grape juice concentrate
- Brown rice syrup, maple syrup, agave nectar
- Molasses, honey, barley malt
- Dehydrated cane juice, evaporated cane juice
- Maltodextrin, dextrin
- Xylitol, stevia

This naming allows companies to list several different sugars on the labels, preventing any single one from appearing as the main ingredient.

The metabolic impact

So, what is the problem with sugar?

When you consume sugar, your body responds with complex hormonal and metabolic reactions.

Your blood glucose levels rise, prompting your pancreas to release insulin, which helps move glucose from your bloodstream into your cells for energy use or storage.

12 Dangers to Your Best Life - and How to Fix Them

With repeated high sugar consumption, cells may become less responsive to insulin – a condition known as insulin resistance. This forces your pancreas to work harder and produce more insulin to maintain normal blood sugar levels.

Unlike glucose which our cells use for energy, fructose [found in table sugar and high-fructose corn syrup] is processed almost entirely by the liver. Over time, too much fructose overwhelms the liver, leading to fat accumulation, metabolic dysfunction, and a multitude of health issues.

Habitual high sugar ingestion and insulin resistance can lead to:

- Type 2 diabetes, when the pancreas can no longer produce enough insulin
- Weight gain and obesity, particularly around the abdomen
- Non-alcoholic fatty liver disease [NAFLD]
- Increased triglycerides and lowered HDL [good] cholesterol
- Chronic inflammation throughout the body
- Cognitive decline, impaired memory, and risk of dementia

Beyond the waistline

Sugar's impact extends far beyond weight gain:

Brain effects: Sugar triggers dopamine release in the brain's reward center, similar to addictive substances. This can lead to cravings and eating patterns that resemble addiction.

Heart health: Contrary to what the sugar industry wanted us to believe, high sugar consumption is strongly linked to heart disease through multiple pathways, including inflammation, insulin resistance, and altered lipid profiles.

Cancer risk: High insulin levels from sugar consumption may promote certain cancer cell growth. Cancer cells often have more insulin receptors than normal cells and use glucose at higher rates.

12 Dangers to Your Best Life - and How to Fix Them

Skin aging: Sugar molecules attach to proteins in a process called glycation, creating advanced glycation end products [AGEs] that can damage collagen and elastin, accelerating skin aging.

Dental health: Sugar feeds harmful oral bacteria, leading to tooth decay and gum disease.

According to comprehensive global health research published in *The Lancet*, sugar-sweetened beverages alone cause approximately 184,000 annual deaths worldwide, with 133,000 from diabetes, 45,000 from cardiovascular disease, and 6,450 from cancers.

The study found that excessive sugar consumption contributes to:

- 422 million cases of diabetes globally
- Increased risk of obesity, which affects over 650 million adults worldwide
- Heightened risk of heart disease, the leading cause of death globally

Where Can We Go From Here?

Cultivate awareness

Sugar is addictive, not unlike drugs or alcohol, with cravings that keep us coming back for more. The food industry is well aware of this, and they incorporate sugar to make their products hard to resist.

Become a detective about what's in your food and determine your true sugar intake.

Here are some tips to help you spot the hidden sugars in your food:

- Read ingredient lists and look for sugar aliases
- Pay attention to the *added sugars* line on nutrition facts panels
- Remember that ingredients are listed by weight, so multiple forms of sugar spread throughout the list can disguise the total amount
- Recognize that *natural sweeteners* like honey and maple syrup also affect your body in a similar manner

Then decide what you are going to change.

12 Dangers to Your Best Life - and How to Fix Them



Retrain your taste buds

Our perception of sweetness is malleable. If you gradually reduce your sugar intake, your taste buds will adjust, and foods that once seemed not sweet enough will begin to taste perfectly sweet.

Try these approaches:

- Reduce sugar in recipes by 25-50%
- Dilute sweet beverages – mix half juice and half water
- Use spices like cinnamon, vanilla, or nutmeg to enhance perceived sweetness
- Allow fruit to be a single meal or a snack – its natural sweetness and fiber make a healthier choice

Create new habits

Sugar consumption is habitual rather than genuine hunger driven. Identify your triggers – stress, boredom, specific times of day – and develop alternative responses:

12 Dangers to Your Best Life - and How to Fix Them

- Plan meals to include quality protein and healthy fats – these maintain stable blood sugar levels and reduce or eliminate cravings
- Stay hydrated with pure water
- Keep healthy snacks visible and accessible
- Instead of dessert, try going for a walk or brewing a cup of herbal tea
- For a stress impulse, explore techniques like meditation or deep breathing
- Cook at home where you have full control of the ingredients

Consider tracking your sugar intake using a food journal or app for a week. You may be shocked to discover just how much sugar you are consuming each day.

Whole food alternatives

Instead of processed foods with hidden sugars, focus on whole foods that naturally contain fiber, vitamins, minerals, and phytonutrients:

- Replace sugary breakfast cereals with oatmeal topped with fresh fruit
- Swap commercial salad dressings for olive oil and vinegar or lemon juice
- Choose plain yogurt and add your own fresh fruit
- Make your own pasta sauce from fresh tomatoes rather than using jarred sauces
- Drink water infused with citrus slices instead of soda or juice

Question the cultural norms

Challenge the notion that celebration requires sugar. This is a huge mindset shift that will reap beautiful rewards. We can mark special occasions in ways that don't center around sweet treats:

- For children's birthday parties, consider focusing on activities rather than cake
- Bring a fresh fruit platter to gatherings instead of cookies or brownies
- Start new traditions that don't revolve around sugar, like family hikes or game nights
- When you do enjoy sweet treats, make them special and intentional rather than unconscious habits

Mindful evaluation of your relationship with sugar can help you break free of cultural expectations and habits that are harmful to your health.

12 Dangers to Your Best Life - and How to Fix Them

Be patient with yourself

Changing your relationship with sugar is a journey, not an overnight transformation. Be patient and compassionate with yourself.

Focus on progress, not perfection. If you have a setback, return to your healthier habits immediately.

Celebrate your non-scale victories such as improved energy, better sleep, or clearer skin.

Remember that every step toward reducing sugar intake benefits your health, even if the changes seem small at first.

A journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step. ~ Lao Tzu

References

[Sugar Industry and Coronary Heart Disease Research: A Historical Analysis of Internal Industry Documents](#)

[Added Sugars on the New Nutrition Facts Label - FDA](#)

[Dietary Guidelines for Americans 2020-2025](#)

[Guideline: Sugars intake for adults and children - World Health Organization](#)

[Sugar consumption, metabolic disease and obesity: The state of the controversy](#)

[Effect of fructose on body weight in controlled feeding trials: a systematic review and meta-analysis](#)

[Sugar-sweetened beverages and risk of metabolic syndrome and type 2 diabetes](#)

[Estimated Global, Regional, and National Disease Burdens Related to Sugar-Sweetened Beverage Consumption in 2010](#)

12 Dangers to Your Best Life - and How to Fix Them

[Low-carb diet helps cut blood sugar levels in people with prediabetes - Harvard Health](#)

[A Neuroscientist Explains What Sugar Really Does to Our Brains : ScienceAlert](#)

[The Impact of Ultra-Processed Foods and Fructose on Metabolic Health With Dr. Robert Lustig](#)

[The Harmful Effects of Sugar on the Human Body](#)

[Time: How the Sugar Lobby Skewed Health Research](#)

[NPR: 50 Years Ago, Sugar Industry Quietly Paid Scientists To Point Blame At Fat](#)

[What Happens to Your Body When You Eat Too Much Sugar \[and How to Cut Back\]](#)

[What Happens When You Consume Too Much Sugar?](#)

[Blood Sugar: 7 Signs That Yours Is Out of Whack—And What to Do About It | Glamour](#)

[Public Health Columbia: Researchers Challenge Claims That Sugar Industry Shifted Blame to Fat](#)

12 Dangers to Your Best Life - and How to Fix Them

Alcohol

Many of us have lifted a glass of champagne or other alcoholic beverage to celebrate a wedding. We have enjoyed wine at a cozy dinner. We have tipped our beer bottles at a family barbeque.

If you haven't, you surely know people who do. I would encourage you to read this section anyway to understand the full impact of its presence on our lives.

Drinking motifs surround us in all media: print, television, film, literature, music, etc.

Beer and wine have a long history in human experience, one that is entrenched into our psyches. This discussion will focus on them because of their rich history and cultural prominence, but all alcoholic beverages have an impact on our health and well-being.

As we will see, nothing is quite what it seems on the surface.

A Bit of Background

Where it all started

China is credited with the first known use of fermented grains, namely rice, honey, and fruits to produce alcohol, based on pottery dated from 7000 to 6600 BC.

Around 4000 BC, countries in the Middle East experimented with early wine production.

Later around 3000 to 2000 BC, the Sumerians made beer from barley using over 20 different recipes documented on clay tablets. Beer found its way into sacrificial and religious settings as an offering to the gods. The ancient Sumerian *Epic of Gilgamesh* informs us that the wild character Enkidu became civilized after drinking seven pitchers of beer.

12 Dangers to Your Best Life - and How to Fix Them

Egyptians made beer from barley, wheat, and yeasty dough. Medical texts credit beer as a cure for many ailments in addition to it being the drink of the gods. Laborers were paid with this *liquid bread* at a ration of three beers per day.

Around 2000 BC, the Greeks built vineyards, and Greece became an early center for wine production. They too used it as medicine, an offering to the gods, and currency.

This later influenced Rome for the same usage, and Roman soldiers drank 2 to 3 liters of wine per day to maintain good health.

Back to China, it was the first to use yeast fermentation to distill spirits. Here as well, alcohol had both a sacred and ritual significance, including celebrations and holidays, along with a proverbial belief that alcohol was the best of all medicines.

The lineage continues with expansion and experimentation across the continents, but you get the idea. Humans have a long history with alcohol, going back to our earliest recorded times.

Agriculture and alcohol

Alcohol production, particularly beer, is closely tied to agriculture. Grains, hops, and yeast are essential ingredients in brewing, all of which depend on farming.

Barley is the most common grain, but others such as wheat, oats, corn, rice, and rye have made their way into the brewing process.

The flowers of hops contribute flavor and bitterness to beer and serve as a natural preservative.

Yeast is not a direct product of agriculture, but the process of creating it involves agricultural inputs such as sugars and starches.

Wine, of course, depends on vineyards and specific climates to produce the desired grapes.

12 Dangers to Your Best Life - and How to Fix Them

All of this indicates that alcohol production came about with the advent of agriculture and was not possible in the hunter-gatherer days of human history.

It wasn't for the alcohol content

Mesopotamian beer was a thick porridge-type liquid that was a food staple. When food was scarce, this carbohydrate-rich gruel provided necessary calories and protein. The Sumerians consumed beer with straws because of the residual mash and grain in the mixture.

The use of beer to nourish, sustain, and hydrate Egyptian, Greek, and Roman workers indicates its value as a food source. The alcohol content itself was low compared to modern beer, with the estimate around 2-4% alcohol by volume.

The ritual importance of beer and wine was related to the symbolism of fertility, abundance, and sustenance, with reverence for the religious realm.

In addition, beer was a valuable alternative to drinking water which was regarded as contaminated and unsafe to consume.

Enter the monasteries

The ancients understood fermentation, but the actual cause of it, namely yeast, took a while to figure out. Beer initially came about via spontaneous fermentation by wild yeast in the fields.

During the Middle Ages in Europe, as brewing techniques improved, people began to focus on increasing the alcohol potential of beer.

Monasteries became major players in the medieval beer brewing industry, namely through development of brewing techniques and higher alcohol content. They introduced hops to preserve and flavor the brew, adding to its bitterness and stronger flavor.

This beer checked in at 5% alcohol by volume, on a par with modern brews.

12 Dangers to Your Best Life - and How to Fix Them

After this innovation, drinking for intoxication became more widespread, notably for social situations and feasts.



More than just a mug of brew

With a custom so entrenched in the human dynamic, it is easy to understand why we take it for granted as part of life.

For the common person, drinking became a means of enjoyment at social gatherings, feasts, and celebrations. This shared experience fosters a sense of community, as true now as it was thousands of years ago.

The ancients believed that beer and wine made one civilized. That belief is still with us.

12 Dangers to Your Best Life - and How to Fix Them

It's a rite of passage to have your first *legal* drink at a certain age, meaning that your friends or relatives will take you out to get drunk, and you hope you get home safely.

This bonding over alcohol runs deep. It is much more significant than that little dopamine hit you get from the first sip. This is something tribal and vital. It is culture and heritage. It's an identity.

You get a new job – it's your birthday – you got engaged – it's the holidays – all these are triggers to have a drink and celebrate. You suffer a loss – you get fired – a loved one dies – your spouse leaves you – all these are triggers to have a drink and cope with your emotions.

That is why it is so difficult to realize the dangers. Everyone is doing it. It feels normal.

Not What We Think It Is

Agricultural influences

While water is the main ingredient in beer, the quality of the water can be compromised by pollutants such as pesticides, fertilizers, herbicides, and fluoride, which can affect the final product.

The spent grain from the barley mashing for beer may end up in processed foods.

Beer is pasteurized, which kills all its vitality and potential nutrient value.

Oh my aching head... and heart... and liver

Pollutants aside, the sustained damage to your health comes when alcohol enters your bloodstream and reaches the brain, which it does quickly. The resulting slowdown in brain activity leads to:

- Faulty decision making and impaired judgment
- Slower reaction times
- Lack of coordination
- Memory lapse and difficulty concentrating

12 Dangers to Your Best Life - and How to Fix Them

Over time, heavy drinking leads to longer lasting damage:

- Brain shrinkage in the regions of memory, learning, and emotions
- Cognitive decline, leading to dementia
- Mood irregularity based on impact to neurotransmitters

Apart from the brain impact, habitual drinkers may experience:

- Damage to the liver when it can no longer break down alcohol
- Heart issues like high blood pressure, irregular heartbeat, and heart disease
- Digestive difficulties like ulcers, acid reflux, and inflammation of the pancreas
- Damaged immune system where your body cannot fight infection or recover
- Cancer risk, namely in the mouth, throat, colon, liver, and breast

Add to the mix the damage done to family relationships and the perils of drunk drivers on the road, and you might question if drinking is such a good idea after all.

Moderation and advertising

You have no doubt heard the expression *all things in moderation*, and you might ask yourself if you would be satisfied with moderate health and well-being.

Some health advisors suggest that moderate drinking means one drink a day for women and two drinks a day for men. That ends up being 30 and 60 drinks per month, respectively. Further, these guidelines do not consider personal health factors, family history, or other lifestyle choices.

The wine experts claim that red wine has antioxidants and point out the *French Paradox* [the idea that French people have a lower rate of heart disease despite high wine consumption]. Eating grapes and berries can give you better antioxidants in their natural state, and there is no proof that wine contributes to heart health.

These claims stem more likely from the alcohol industry advertising and marketing efforts, and not from any unbiased scientific evidence.

12 Dangers to Your Best Life - and How to Fix Them

The Lancet paints a different picture

British medical journal The Lancet published a 2018 study on alcohol consumption and global health. Their findings paint a vastly different picture.

Their conclusion was that no amount of alcohol consumption is completely safe. They further stated that even low levels of alcohol in the body pose a higher risk of health problems, such as:

- Cancer, including breast, liver, esophageal, and colorectal
- Heart disease, including high blood pressure, arrhythmia, and heart failure
- Brain impairment, including cognitive decline, mental health issues, and dementia from cumulative damage to the brain structure and function

The Lancet study attributes 2.8 million alcohol-related deaths per year globally, not only from heavy drinking but to the cumulative effects of lighter drinking. Moderate consumption over the years can contribute to mortality from liver disease, strokes, and heart attacks.

Where Can We Go From Here?

It starts with a decision

Now what?

I hope this discussion has opened your eyes to the effects of alcohol that you may not have been aware of. You may decide to continue as you are and that is certainly your choice.

However, if you want to be free of alcohol or at least cut back, there are several suggestions below to get you started.

The first thing is to decide that this is your goal and then commit to it. That is how we change anything in life.

12 Dangers to Your Best Life - and How to Fix Them

Next, identify your big WHY – the powerful personal reason behind your decision. Whether it's being there for your family, improving your health, preserving relationships, or maintaining your career success... choose a motivation that deeply matters to you.

This will be your impetus to get through any rough spots and withdrawal symptoms.

Then consider how you want to approach this change in your life.

Whether you choose to gradually reduce or stop completely, keep in mind that any positive change starts with the first step forward.



12 Dangers to Your Best Life - and How to Fix Them

Question the cultural norms

Know what your triggers are. What are those situations, emotions, and people that prompt you to drink?

Do you feel like drinking at the end of the day? On Friday night? When you're feeling stressed? When it's your birthday? When you're feeling happy? When you are mad at your spouse? When a friend comes over?

Consider why you would reach for a drink when you are feeling angry, sad, or overjoyed.

By thinking ahead, it allows you to plan alternative behaviors, such as going for a walk, writing in your journal, or calling a friend to keep you on the path you've chosen.

There will be drinking at parties, and you may face peer pressure in social settings. You may consider bringing your own beverage. I have found that people understand if you don't want to drink, so just be honest with them.

Find alternatives to manage emotions

If you have an emotional support system, it may help you. Can you confide in a family member or a friend to help keep you accountable?

Create a new habit to replace the one you are shedding, and make sure it's a healthy one... don't start drinking soda to replace beer. Try sparkling water with lemon for example.

You could start a new hobby, something you have wanted to try out but never got around to.

Exercise will speed up the detoxification process and boost your mood. Start with walking.

Drink lots of water to flush your system and eat wholesome foods.

Try to avoid events where there will be alcohol, at least in the beginning.

12 Dangers to Your Best Life - and How to Fix Them

Feed your mind with books, podcasts, and videos that inspire you.

A therapist or counselor could provide useful guidance.

Remember this doesn't have to happen all at once. Small steps and steady progress will win the day for you.

Love yourself and acknowledge your progress. You are doing the demanding work that will pay off in a huge way.

As human beings, our greatness lies not so much in being able to remake the world... as in being able to remake ourselves. ~Mahatma Gandhi

References

[No level of alcohol consumption improves health - The Lancet](#)

[Health and cancer risks associated with low levels of alcohol consumption - The Lancet Public Health](#)

[You're Underestimating Alcohol's Impact on Your Health & Fitness Journey](#)

[QUIT DRINKING MOTIVATION - The Most Eye Opening 20 Minutes Of Your Life](#)

[Alcohol Will Kill You: Epidemic of Alcoholism](#)

[Psychiatrist Reveals What Alcohol ACTUALLY Does to Your Brain | Immediate & Long Term Effects](#)

[What Alcohol Does to Your Brain | Dr. Andrew Huberman](#)

[The Myth of Moderate Drinking and the New Rules on Booze | Columbia Magazine](#)

[The World's Oldest Known Beer Recipe Is From Mesopotamia](#)

12 Dangers to Your Best Life - and How to Fix Them

Side Profile: Normalization

Alcohol is deeply embedded in our culture and subtly promoted through television, film, advertisements, books, music, and other media.

Drinking can be portrayed in many different lights: as a symbol of celebration, social status, relaxation, rebellion, wealth, sophistication, success, power, and individualism.

Through drama or comedy, the impact is evident. It is everywhere once you start to notice.

Often in the background, people are seen casually drinking, bonding over a glass of something, to indicate any number of scenarios: expressing emotions, solving problems, relaxing among friends, unwinding from a long day, connecting with new people. Alcohol is presented as a normal aspect of being an adult.

High-end champagne, whiskey, and wine can inform us that the consumers are wealthy, successful, sophisticated, and glamorous.

Beer buddy movies encourage us to identify with the regular blokes who are always making bad decisions and getting into trouble in a funny way. How many wild college vacation movies can you think of, where the young adults are simply innocent and carefree? As if this were a rite of passage.

In endless types of settings, drinking is shown as the path to a good life and a good time.

I invite you to take note of this phenomenon the next time you watch a movie or adult television program. Alcohol is always a character, generally in an understated supporting role as part of normal life.

12 Dangers to Your Best Life - and How to Fix Them

- James Bond films: Alcohol is a signal for sophistication and danger, with the James Bond martini an icon of his unrattled persona.
- The Simpsons: Homer regularly visits Moe's Tavern as an escape and to bond with others, portrayed as natural everyday behavior. Homer acknowledged in a toast to alcohol that it is *the cause of and solution to all of life's problems*.

Other examples include Game of Thrones, Will & Grace, Cheers, Bad Moms, Friends, The Hangover, American Pie, The Breakfast Club, Animal House, 21 Jump Street, Indiana Jones, The Great Gatsby, Sex and the City, The Big Lebowski, and Weekend at Bernie's.

This constant and repetitive influence shapes our perception of what is considered normal behavior, often embedding alcohol consumption into our subconscious mind as an acceptable and even necessary part of our lives.



12 Dangers to Your Best Life - and How to Fix Them

Wireless Radiation

Our world today is hyperconnected, and wireless technology surrounds us constantly. From smartphones to Wi-Fi routers and the expanding network of 5G towers, we are bathed in an invisible sea of electromagnetic radiation around the clock. It's nearly impossible to escape.

These technologies have become so integrated into our daily lives that we may not be aware of the potential effects on our health. Our wireless devices feel familiar, comforting, and essential. We are expected to have them by our social peers and by business and government.

Yet, there is growing concern about the potential health impacts that warrant our attention and action to safeguard our well-being. While this discussion focuses on Wi-Fi and 5G radiation, similar concerns exist for all wireless technologies including cell phones, Bluetooth devices, smart meters, fitness monitors, baby monitors, smart watches, and other radiofrequency [RF] emitting equipment.

A Bit of Background

The rise of wireless technology

The development of wireless technology began in the 19th century with the pioneering work of scientists like Heinrich Hertz, who demonstrated the existence of electromagnetic waves, and Guglielmo Marconi, who developed the first practical radio transmitters and receivers. However, it wasn't until the late 20th century that wireless technology became commonplace.

The first generation [1G] of mobile networks appeared in the 1980s, offering basic voice services. By the 1990s, 2G networks added text messaging capabilities. The early 2000s brought 3G networks with mobile internet access, followed by 4G in the 2010s with faster data speeds.

High-capacity Wi-Fi technology emerged in the late 1990s. What began as a way to connect computers in offices and homes has evolved into an essential utility, with public Wi-Fi hotspots numbering in the hundreds of millions worldwide.

12 Dangers to Your Best Life - and How to Fix Them

In 2019, carriers began deploying 5G networks promising faster speeds, lower latency, and the ability to connect far more devices simultaneously. This fifth generation of wireless technology operates on higher frequency bands and requires more cell towers placed closer together.

Wireless technology is the backbone of the Internet of Things [IoT] that seems to be the world of our future, with smart cities and self-driving vehicles. A word of caution is in order for all of these.



12 Dangers to Your Best Life - and How to Fix Them

How it all works

Wireless communication works by transmitting data via electromagnetic radiation at specific frequencies. Cell towers, small cells, and Wi-Fi routers convert electrical signals into radio waves that travel through the air to be received by our devices.

For those interested in the technology details: Wi-Fi and cellular communications operate in the radiofrequency [RF] portion of the electromagnetic field [ELF] spectrum, with Wi-Fi using 2.4 GHz and 5 GHz bands, and cellular networks using bands from 600 MHz to 6 GHz. The new 5G networks utilize millimeter wave frequencies between 24 GHz and 52 GHz.

When you use a wireless device, it constantly communicates with nearby access points or towers, sending and receiving data packets. Your smartphone actively searches for signals even when you're not using it. Wi-Fi routers typically broadcast signals 24/7, creating a persistent electromagnetic environment in homes and offices.

The influence of industry

No surprise, the wireless technology industry is one of the largest and most profitable sectors of the global economy. The market for wireless infrastructure, devices, and services exceeds \$1.7 trillion annually, with major players like Apple, Samsung, Huawei, Qualcomm, Ericsson, and Nokia leading the way.

Mobile network operators like Verizon, AT&T, T-Mobile, Vodafone, and China Mobile generate hundreds of billions in revenue annually. The Wi-Fi equipment market alone exceeds \$12 billion yearly.

The economic influence of this industry extends into government regulation through extensive lobbying efforts. In the United States alone, telecommunications companies spend over \$80 million annually to that end. Industry associations like CTIA and the Wireless Infrastructure Association actively promote policies favorable to wireless expansion.

12 Dangers to Your Best Life - and How to Fix Them

The industry has established significant control over the narrative regarding wireless safety, funding research, and influencing regulatory standards. International bodies like the International Commission on Non-Ionizing Radiation Protection [ICNIRP] set exposure guidelines that many critics argue are insufficient and outdated, as they do not consider the long-term biological impacts.

Not What We Think It Is

Questionable safety standards

The safety standards for wireless radiation exposure were established in the 1990s based on a narrow grasp of how electromagnetic fields interact with the human body. These standards, set by organizations like the ICNIRP and adopted by the Federal Communications Commission [FCC] in the United States, are primarily concerned with one effect: heating of tissue.

The current standards are based on specific absorption rate [SAR], which measures how much RF energy is absorbed by body tissues. However, these guidelines were developed based on short-term exposure studies using models, and they fail to account for:

- Biological effects that occur without significant heating
- Long-term, chronic exposure
- Combined effects of multiple sources of radiation
- Greater vulnerability of children, pregnant women, the elderly, and those with existing health conditions
- Varying sensitivity among individuals

In the U.S. the FCC has not significantly updated its RF exposure limits since 1996, long before the widespread adoption of Wi-Fi, smartphones, and other modern wireless technologies.

Neurological concerns

The human nervous system operates via electrical signals and is potentially susceptible to external electromagnetic interference. The research is showing this to be true.

Multiple studies have found associations between long-term cell phone use and changes in brain activity.

12 Dangers to Your Best Life - and How to Fix Them

A substantial 10-year investigation, the INTERPHONE study, found increased risk of glioma [a type of brain tumor] among the heaviest cell phone users, particularly when phones were used on the same side of the head where tumors developed.

Research by Swedish oncologist Dr. Lennart Hardell found that people who started using cell phones before age 20 had a 4-5 times higher risk of brain cancer than those who started later in life, suggesting greater vulnerability in developing brains.

Beyond cancer concerns, studies have documented impacts on cognitive function, memory, learning, attention, and behavior. A 2015 replication study at the Yale School of Medicine found that prenatal exposure to radiation from cell phones affected brain development in mice, resulting in hyperactivity and impaired memory.

Sleep disturbances are among the most reported symptoms of electromagnetic hypersensitivity. Several studies have found that exposure to RF radiation before bedtime can affect sleep quality, reducing time spent in essential deep sleep stages.

Other symptoms associated with wireless radiation exposure include headaches, fatigue, cognitive impairment, tinnitus, dizziness, anxiety, and depression.

The new frontier: 5G

The fifth generation of wireless technology introduces several new elements that raise additional health questions.

5G networks utilize higher frequency bands [including millimeter waves] that haven't been extensively tested for human health effects. These higher frequencies don't penetrate obstacles as do lower frequencies, requiring many more antennas in the network placed closer to homes and businesses.

These millimeter waves may not penetrate the body, but they do affect the skin microbiome and the eyes, which are especially sensitive to radiation.

12 Dangers to Your Best Life - and How to Fix Them

Most concerning is the unprecedented scale of the 5G rollout, with millions of new small cell sites being installed near homes, schools, and workplaces, drastically increasing overall exposure levels for the general population.

Adding to these concerns is the minimal safety testing conducted before deployment. New wireless technologies can be deployed with limited pre-market safety evaluation.

The industry stance

The wireless industry and regulatory agencies maintain that there is no conclusive evidence of harm from wireless radiation at levels below current safety limits. However, there are several problems with this position.

The industry has significant financial incentives to downplay potential risks. With trillions of dollars invested in wireless infrastructure and devices, acknowledging health risks could result in massive financial liabilities and regulatory constraints.

Industry funding dictates the research outcomes. A 2007 analysis found that industry-funded studies were significantly less likely to report biological effects from RF radiation than independently funded research.

Where Can We Go From Here?

It starts with a decision

You may be wondering how you can protect yourself from wireless radiation and still function in the modern world. Smart phones, tablets, laptops, and Wi-Fi are a vital part of our lives, but we can use that technology more consciously and mitigate our risks.

Make informed choices

For your smartphone:

12 Dangers to Your Best Life - and How to Fix Them

- Use speaker mode or wired [not Bluetooth] headphones for calls
- Keep your phone away from your body when not in use
- Avoid carrying your phone in pockets or bras
- Enable airplane mode when connectivity is not needed, especially at night
- Text instead of calling when possible
- Use your phone in areas with good reception [phones emit more radiation trying to connect if the signal is weak]
- If your phone is on 5G, switch the setting to 4G or LTE

For your home:

- Turn off Wi-Fi at night or when not in use
- Keep Wi-Fi routers away from bedrooms and areas where you spend significant time
- Consider using wired Ethernet connections for stationary devices like desktop computers, smart TVs, and gaming consoles
- Use corded landline phones instead of cordless phones that emit continuous radiation
- Create a low-EMF sleep sanctuary by removing all wireless devices from bedrooms
- Use EMF meters to measure radiation levels in your environment
- Various plants like cactus, stone lotus flower, snake plant, spider plant, and betel leaf plant may help absorb radiation, though scientific evidence is limited
- Take breaks from your devices, go outside in the sunshine and breathe – take a walk in nature as a reset button for your nervous system
- Look into EMF-blocking phone cases and clothing to minimize your exposure – here are a few suppliers to get you started:
 - [Spero](#)
 - [Lambs](#)
 - [Aires Tech](#)

For children:

- Limit children's use of wireless devices, especially for young children
- Never allow children to sleep with phones or tablets
- Use wired connections for school computers when possible
- Advocate for wired internet in schools rather than Wi-Fi

12 Dangers to Your Best Life - and How to Fix Them

For pregnant women:

- Avoid keeping wireless devices near the abdomen
- Use laptops on tables, not laps
- Minimize wireless device use during pregnancy

The greatest wealth is health. ~Virgil

References

INTERPHONE STUDY GROUP

Whole-genome expression analysis in primary human keratinocyte cell cultures exposed to 60 GHz radiation - Le Quément - 2012 - Bioelectromagnetics - Wiley Online Library

Genotoxic and carcinogenic effects of non-ionizing electromagnetic fields - ScienceDirect

How Big Wireless Made Us Think That Cell Phones Are Safe: A Special Investigation | The Nation

Here's How Telecom Giants Spent More Than \$1 Billion Lobbying Congress

BioInitiative Report: A Rationale for a Biologically-based Public Exposure Standard for Electromagnetic Fields [ELF and RF]

ISPs spent \$235 million on lobbying and donations, "more than \$320,000 a day" - Ars Technica

Texts adopted - Health concerns associated with electromagnetic fields - Thursday, 2 April 2009

Cell Phone Radiation, Cancer and Science: Dr. Lennart Hardell Testifies at Danish Parliament

Cell Phone Radio Frequency Radiation

Wi-Fi is an important threat to human health - ScienceDirect

12 Dangers to Your Best Life - and How to Fix Them

[Oxidative mechanisms of biological activity of low-intensity radiofrequency radiation - PubMed](#)

[10 Plants That Can Absorb Electromagnetic Radiation](#)

[5G and Your Health: The Shocking Science You Need to Know](#)

[Wireless wake-up call | Jeromy Johnson | TEDxBerkeley](#)

[The Invisible Rainbow: A History of Electricity and Life](#)

["The truth about mobile phone and wireless radiation" -- Dr Devra Davis](#)

[Dr. Martin Pall To The NIH: "The 5G Rollout Is Absolutely Insane."](#)

[Physiological effects of millimeter-waves on skin and skin cells: an overview of the to-date published studies - PubMed](#)



12 Dangers to Your Best Life - and How to Fix Them

Personal Care & Beauty Products

Nearly every culture has its personal care routines, products, and customs. Can you really go more than one day without a shower? Probably not.

We use products that clean us, shave us, moisturize our skin, style our hair, and decorate our faces. Cleanliness is great of course, and who doesn't appreciate beauty?

But are we chasing illusions given to us by the cosmetic industry instead of appreciating our natural beauty?

Have we allowed toxic chemicals and substances into our body in pursuit of a smooth complexion, lustrous hair, better smell, whiter teeth, and a glamorous appearance?

Let's dig in and find out what's in our personal care products and cosmetics. More important, let's explore how these products may cause harm to our health and what we can do about it.

A Bit of Background

From ancient cultures to modern times

It seems that we humans have been trying to improve our looks and our smell for over 7000 years, from the ancient world of the Egyptians to the Greeks and Romans and throughout the rest of Europe, Asia, the Middle East, Africa, and the Americas.

In Egypt both men and women wore makeup, and you may have noticed the kohl eyeliner in their artwork. They also used eyeshadows, face paint, and lipstick. For these they used naturally occurring substances and coloring agents, but even then, many ingredients were toxic to the body.

Beauty standards are cultural and diverse yet are present around the world in every society.

12 Dangers to Your Best Life - and How to Fix Them

Of course, huge industries have developed over time to provide these beauty aids and personal care products to the global population. Their combined revenue is expected to top \$677 billion in 2025, with personal care products the largest segment at \$293 billion.

Cultural influences

We know beauty when we see it – the eyes of the beholder interpret all things through a cultural lens. Beauty matters in life, no question about that, whether we are looking at landscapes, mountains, oceans, architecture, art, or people.

For human beauty, it's also a story we've been told – a concept that is marketed to the public, especially to women. For 100 years, the film industry and glossy magazines have shown and sold us on the *perfect woman* – youthful, flawless, and unattainable... probably airbrushed.

To promote this quest for beauty, the industry convinces us to purchase product after product to transform our image: 12-step skincare solutions, expensive serums to defy age, hair coloring agents, teeth whiteners, and an astonishing assortment of makeup.

Can we look at these products with a clear mind? Can we seek the truth?

Not What We Think It Is

You're putting that on your skin?

Many personal care products are cocktails of unpronounceable chemicals. Perhaps not every ingredient is dangerous, but enough of them raise serious red flags.

12 Dangers to Your Best Life - and How to Fix Them

- **Fragrance:** That *fresh rain* or *tropical sunrise* scent is likely a mix of dozens or hundreds of undisclosed chemicals, thanks to a trade secret loophole that makes the fragrance industry responsible for its own safety standards. Many chemicals are linked to hormone disruption and allergic reactions.
- **Parabens:** Used as preservatives, parabens are endocrine disruptors that mimic estrogen and can lead to disruption of body functions, including pregnancy, puberty, fertility, and fetal development.
- **PFAS:** Used to smooth the skin or to affect product texture, synthetic compounds Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances [PFAS] are found in mascara, foundations, liquid lipsticks, eyeshadows, eye creams, and eyeliners. The health risks include decreased thyroid function, impaired fetal development, and ulcerative colitis, along with cancer of the kidneys, pancreas, prostate, and testicles.
- **Phthalates:** Often used to soften and strengthen plastics, help fragrances to stick and topical products to penetrate the skin, phthalates are hormone disruptors associated with reproductive harm and fetal developmental issues.
- **Formaldehyde Releasers:** Shampoos, conditioners, liquid baby soaps, blush, mascara, eye shadow, nail polish, may contain formaldehyde and formaldehyde-releasing preservatives that are known carcinogens.
- **Sodium Lauryl Sulfate [SLS]:** A foaming agent found in shampoos, body wash, hand soap, bubble bath, and toothpaste, sodium lauryl sulfate can irritate skin and eyes, cause rashes and hormonal disruptions.
- **Talc:** A staple to absorb moisture in baby powder and makeup, talc can cause irritation to eyes, skin, nose, throat and lungs. Talc poisoning can cause numerous ill side effects for babies, and if contaminated with asbestos, the health risks are compounded.
- **Heavy Metals:** Lead, arsenic, mercury, aluminum, zinc, chromium, and iron can make their way into lipstick, whitening toothpaste, sunscreen, foundation, eyeliner, concealer, moisturizer, and nail polish. Color additives may also contain heavy metals. These can lead to infertility, irregular menstruation, birth defects and miscarriages, kidney damage, skin rashes, nerve damage, Alzheimer's Disease, and too many others to list.

In small amounts, these may not seem like sizeable risks. However, they accumulate in the body from habitual use and reach a tipping point for diseases of toxicity.

12 Dangers to Your Best Life - and How to Fix Them

Microbeads, microplastics, and nanoparticles make their way into cosmetics and personal care products such as facial scrubs, shampoos, and sparkly makeup. Largely used as fillers or exfoliants, they rinse off into the water supply and soil.

Oversight? No

From the United States FDA [Food and Drug Administration] website: *The law does not require cosmetic products and ingredients, other than color additives, to have FDA approval before they go on the market, but there are laws and regulations that apply to cosmetics on the market in interstate commerce.*

Its foundational law is the 1938 Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act. Do you think more chemicals and substances have been invented since then?

Terms like *natural* and *hypoallergenic* have no meaning without legal interpretation or genuine oversight, so any benefits are not to be assumed.



The beauty trap

Women are specifically targeted by the industry and media to *fix their flaws* – wrinkles, pores, blotchy skin, unruly hair, unwanted weight, weak nails, messy eyebrows, etc. – by using this or that cosmetic or personal care product to resemble a false caricature of ideal female beauty.

12 Dangers to Your Best Life - and How to Fix Them

In a study by Dove that surveyed 1000 girls aged 10-17, a staggering 90% indicated that toxic beauty advice on social media caused low self-esteem and made them feel less beautiful.

Influencers peddle beauty serums. Television defines what beauty and success are. If you're not there, just buy the next product. It's a psychological trap on top of the harmful effects of the products themselves.

Men are not exempt from the marketing either and get roped into it with *manly* scents, skin care products, and hair coloring.

The human cost

That sparkling eyeshadow, glimmering lip gloss, and radiant glow powder will likely contain the mineral mica. It is mined largely in Jharkhand in India and is a \$700 million business. Many people are getting wealthy, but not the men, women, and children who mine the mica by hand above ground and in caves with no safety equipment or lighting. It's a hard life for these families, and collapsed caves claim 10-20 lives each month. Is it worth it?

Where Can We Go From Here?

It starts with a decision

You might want to make a few changes now. Good.

Just decide that it's worth it for your health and take small steps in the right direction. It's all about progress, not perfection.

Read the labels

Start by checking the ingredient lists for everything you put on your skin or in your mouth.

Sites like [EWG Skin Deep](#) database [Environmental Working Group], [Think Dirty](#), and [Yuka](#) can decode the ingredient lists and help you understand what's in your products.

12 Dangers to Your Best Life - and How to Fix Them

Healthy alternatives

Third-party certifications like USDA Organic, [EWG Verified](#), and [Leaping Bunny](#) [cruelty-free] are a good way to find toxin-free products. Generic terms like *natural* and *organic* by themselves do not carry any certainty.

If you're up for it, you can make your own deodorant, body scrub, toothpaste, and moisturizer. Coconut oil alone is a terrific multi-tasker, suitable for any number of uses. Honey and oatmeal can become a face mask. When you do it yourself, you know exactly what's in it.

Here are a couple of websites to get you started:

- [Don't Mess with Mama](#)
- [The Happy Body Project](#)



You are already beautiful

Remember that you are beautiful just the way you are. Unplug from the beauty noise.

Curate your social media feeds and follow real people, not fantasies.

12 Dangers to Your Best Life - and How to Fix Them

When you see ads for beauty products, know that they are trying to tap into your insecurities for corporate gains. Nothing else.

Be bold and confident – own your quirks and laugh at the *flawless* propaganda. You are not a project to be fixed.

Beauty is not in the face; beauty is a light in the heart. ~Kahlil Gibran

References

[EWG's Skin Deep Database](#)

[Aluminum in cosmetics and personal care products](#)

[Cost of Beauty: A Dove Film | Dove Self-Esteem Project](#)

[The Dark Secret Behind Your Shiny Makeup | Undercover Asia | CNA Documentary](#)

[The Dark Side of Skincare \[Documentary\]](#)

[The Toxic Twelve Chemicals and Contaminants in Cosmetics](#)

[7 TOXIC Beauty Products You Never Knew You Were Using!](#)

[FDA Cosmetics Overview](#)

[Campaign for Safe Cosmetics](#)

[Environmental Health News](#)

[Beauty & Personal Care - Worldwide | Market Forecast](#)

[Fact Sheet: Fragrance Industry's Failures & Trade Secret Myth](#)

[Parabens and their effects on the endocrine system - PubMed](#)

[Toxic beauty standards on social media: The stats](#)

12 Dangers to Your Best Life - and How to Fix Them

Television

Television is ubiquitous. Many homes have televisions in several rooms. When you factor in the presence of tablets and other smart devices, it is possible to watch programming anywhere and any time.

How did this all come about? And what are the darker implications of screen viewing on such a wide scale? Television is the focus of this discussion, but the concepts and principles apply to visual entertainment media in all its modern forms.

Let's explore.

A Bit of Background

Where it all started

The earliest television technology goes back to the 1800s where mechanically scanned images were transmitted onto a screen, building on the work of communications pioneers Samuel Morse and Alexander Graham Bell.

By the 1920s, independent inventors in Scotland, Germany, and the United States had built different versions of the mechanical television that sent images through wires using a rotating metal disk.

But it was the Russian and English inventors [Rosing and Campbell-Swinton] who first combined a Cathode Ray Tube [CRT] with mechanical scanning to develop a completely new type of electronic television.

A teenage American student [Farnsworth] in Utah produced a vacuum tube that could dissect images into lines, transmit those lines, and turn them back into images.

And so began the evolution in television technology.

12 Dangers to Your Best Life - and How to Fix Them

Battle for supremacy

The broadcast method and the receivers had to be aligned. While mechanical televisions dominated the market in the early years, the superior technology of electronic television systems won the battle.

In 1941 the Federal Communications Commission [FCC] set guidelines for a single technology standard, using analog broadcast signals of varying radio waves. The major broadcasting networks [ABC, NBC, CBS], the transmission technology, and the end receivers [television sets] were then aligned.

Much later in 2009, transmission digital broadcast signals as binary code replaced the analog model.

The demise of radio

Although televisions were available in some form in the 1920s and 1930s, supported by the corresponding broadcasting stations, by 1940 there were merely hundreds of television sets in use in the United States. Of course they were extremely expensive in their day, with the cost approaching half of an average worker's annual salary.

At this time, radio still ruled, with over 80% of the population owning one. But things changed quickly, more television stations started up, and by the end of the decade and the debut of variety shows, there were over a million television sets in use in the United States.

The move toward television escalated with each passing year. Television became the norm, and radio quietly faded away as the nightly family ritual, along with all its imaginative and captivating programs.

12 Dangers to Your Best Life - and How to Fix Them

The Golden Age

The 1950s are often called the Golden Age of television. It was the post-World War II years, the population was booming, and television was a popular and affordable luxury. By 1950 there were 6 million television sets in American homes, and ten times that by 1960.

Television programming branched out from simple news reports to theater and drama, in two primary formats: magazine programs such as *The Today* show and *The Tonight Show*, and television spectacular or television specials with music and variety programs.

Quiz shows, such as *\$64,000 Question*, dramatic anthologies and series, such as *Playhouse 90*, *The U.S. Steel Hour*, and *Gunsmoke*, and family shows, such as *I Love Lucy*, *Leave It to Beaver*, *The Donna Reed Show*, and *The Adventures of Ozzie and Harriet*, took firm root in peoples' living rooms.

After the 1950s, the technology and quality of television programs continued to spiral upward.

With the mainstream expansion of cable television [originally created for rural and isolated locations] and the addition of numerous program options, television viewing became integral to the lifestyle of people around the world.

Color television broadcasting started in the mid-1960s with dramatic effect.

LCD television came along in the early 1980s.

High-definition televisions [HDTV] became available in 1998 and more affordable afterward.

Now we have streaming services such as Netflix, Hulu, Disney+, and Amazon Prime, which allow us to watch programming on different devices besides our televisions. As a plus, the on-demand aspect of streaming frees the viewer from a fixed schedule.

12 Dangers to Your Best Life - and How to Fix Them



More than just entertainment

The famous Presidential candidate debate between John F. Kennedy and Richard Nixon took place in 1960. While the camera favored the young good-looking JFK, radio listeners believed that older statesman Nixon did a better job.

It wasn't the first televised debate, however. In 1956 Eleanor Roosevelt and Margaret Chase Smith debated on behalf of Adlai Stevenson and Dwight Eisenhower, the candidates for that year's election.

Every Presidential election since has featured televised debates as part of the campaign agenda.

The JFK post-assassination coverage was broadcast full time, including the funeral and the on-camera execution of Lee Harvey Oswald by Jack Ruby.

12 Dangers to Your Best Life - and How to Fix Them

The Viet Nam War brought the horrors and brutality of war into people's living rooms each night. The 1968 Tet Offensive, with tens of thousands of deaths on all sides, signaled the last of any public support for the war effort.

Governments and media have exploited the potential to influence public perception and opinion using television with its instant and visceral impact. Think of more recent times and the Gulf War efforts.

Through the ensuing decades, television programming continued to step into controversial topics, such as the anti-war sentiment, feminism, civil rights, career women, abortion, birth control, divorce, homosexuality, alternative families, and the cult of personality. These shows no doubt had a broad influence on societal norms, for better or worse.

On the other hand, television can deliver enormous benefits to the viewer through a myriad of educational programs, community television stations, CSPAN, theater productions, uplifting drama, and other offerings that engage the active mind.

Not What We Think It Is

Child development

Researchers, psychologists, and parents can agree that children are affected by television viewing. While it can be difficult to narrow down the specific programs, many contend that it leads to the following in children and adults to some degree:

- Cognitive decline over time, 10-20 years
- Aggression and insensitivity, especially around violence
- Decreased conversations between children and their parents
- Reduced study and homework time
- Decreased ability to concentrate, shorter attention span
- Obesity, showing the influence of commercials
- Sedentary life when children should be playing outside
- Diminished sleep, especially if the television is in the bedroom
- Addiction to television and impaired brain development
- Negative values from inappropriate television role models
- Anti-social behavior, isolation, and lack of engagement and empathy

12 Dangers to Your Best Life - and How to Fix Them

Brain impact

The Scientific American reported in 2016, that via brain imaging, regular television viewing clearly affects children's neural circuits. They went on to suggest that *watching television for prolonged periods changes the anatomical structure of a child's brain and lowers verbal abilities*. They added that heredity may play a role as well and that further study is needed.

The same publication cited a Japanese study that found excessive television lowered language-based reasoning ability, and this was confirmed with verbal IQ testing.

There are many other variables naturally, and parents can make their own observations here. While television may not damage the brain as some believe, it most certainly wastes it.

Lastly, prolonged television viewing is linked by some researchers to degenerative brain disorders such as Alzheimer's disease and other dementia.

Hypnotic effect

Our brainwave frequencies are different in our waking and sleeping states. Adult waking states include alpha [resting state, calm, easy to learn] and beta [normal waking state, alert, active decision making].

Within a few minutes of watching television, the brain goes into the alpha state, which serves as a suggestible hypnotic condition that is more suited to meditation and deep relaxation.

In the alpha frequency, your subconscious mind is open to integrating information without any filters, which would be the job of the alert beta state. Think of how this could affect your consumer desires and impulsive purchases that leave you wondering why you did it.

12 Dangers to Your Best Life - and How to Fix Them

The concern here is the lack of critical thinking and analysis while you are consuming content with the non-critical brain. Your decisions are more driven by emotion than logic, which is a boon to any product marketers, who spend millions to find out what will hook their audience. Those Super Bowl ads are significant examples.

Additionally, children's brains operate at the theta level, even lower than alpha, where everything is taken directly into the subconscious mind and accepted as true.

Given the receptive brain state while we are watching television and the repetition of commercial interests, it is no wonder we have become a consumer-oriented culture.

But is there more to this technology?



Nefarious potential

Can television be used for psychological manipulation? I think we have seen that it can... but is it?

Television viewing can keep much of our waking time diverted and distracted from the realities of our world with mind-numbing entertainment. With such a captive audience, the potential and the motivation for darker programming is a clear possibility.

12 Dangers to Your Best Life - and How to Fix Them

The 2024 advertising spend on television topped \$60 billion, with the big spenders including giant corporations like Proctor & Gamble, various pharmaceutical, insurance, and automotive companies. Some of the U.S. government \$1.3 billion advertising spend makes its way into television as well.

Maybe this is all to sell products, services, investments, and the like. And maybe some of this money goes toward influencing public opinion, beliefs, and behaviors without people's knowledge or critical examination.

In any case, the potential of television to manipulate minds and provoke emotional triggers is evident. Follow the money and ask questions to learn more.

Where Can We Go From Here?

Now what?

You may be thinking that you don't want to take in so much television after all. Or to allow your children so much unsupervised access. It comes down to making the decision first.

What can you do to change your habit? Here are some suggestions.

Set limits on the time spent watching television.

Be mindful of what you are taking in and adjust your viewing accordingly.

Focus on quality programs and opt for educational content where your mind can stay alert.

Don't use the television as a babysitter or to keep your children occupied when you are busy with other things.

Read more yourself and read to your children more. Encourage books as a replacement for television.

12 Dangers to Your Best Life - and How to Fix Them

Turn off the television during meals. I remember that my father put a television in the kitchen, and it was the end of any family discussion at mealtimes. That was a big loss.

Turn off the television when you need to focus on studies. It is a terrible distraction and ruins your focus.

Help your children understand the difference between television and real life.

Explain the purpose of television advertisements.

If you're super ready, cancel Netflix and take the television out to the curb.

Remember that you are the director of your life.

The pen that writes your life story must be held in your own hand. ~Irene C. Kassorla



12 Dangers to Your Best Life - and How to Fix Them

References

[Pseudology The Art of Lying](#)

[Forgetting A Film You've Just Seen | TRICK OF THE MIND | Derren Brown](#)

[The Media Experimented with Television Hypnosis Back in 1946](#)

[Multiple local news stations say the same thing verbatim](#)

[What Binge Watching Does To Your Brain | Let Lee Explain](#)

[How TV influences your mind through hypnosis](#)

[Article: The Effects of TV on the Brain](#)

[TV is Mind Control through Physiological and Psychological Manipulation](#)

[Does TV Rot Your Brain? | Scientific American](#)

[The Impact of Television on War: Shaping Public Perception - Military Saga](#)

[Effects of television viewing on child development | Britannica](#)

[PASSIVE LEARNING FROM TELEVISION](#)

[How the government spends a billion dollars a year on advertising](#)

[The Use of Subliminal Messages in Film and Advertising](#)

[The Evolution of Television](#)

[The Birth of Television](#)

[Little boy says he wants to be a murderer](#)

12 Dangers to Your Best Life - and How to Fix Them

Side Profile: Subliminal Advertising

The first known subliminal messaging in film was an animated short of Daffy Duck in 1943. Every 25 frames, the words *Buy Bonds* were flashed. The success of that tactic is unknown, but since that was how the government was raising money to support World War II, officials pursued this tactic, raising concerns once made public.

Years later in 1957, market researcher James Vicary claimed that he flashed the words, *Eat Popcorn* and *Drink Coca-Cola* on movie screens for a fraction of a second, and that sales rose dramatically. No one could duplicate Vicary's results, and he later admitted that the claim was untrue. Yet the seed of invisible manipulation was planted, and people remained fearful of something they could not perceive that might control their behavior.

Life magazine in 1958 published an article about the hidden selling techniques used in movies, i.e., images presented too quickly for the conscious mind to perceive but that registered in the unconscious mind instead. The article also discussed how this tactic could be used to garner support for social issues and even political candidates.

The public was quite concerned about possible psychological manipulation, and the FCC banned subliminal advertising in 1974, as *contrary to the public interest*. Other countries followed suit, but there remained a persistent belief that it was still going on.

Subtle psychological techniques are still on the table, not hidden in rapid frames, but open for the subconscious mind to take in, without conscious awareness.

These tactics may include:

12 Dangers to Your Best Life - and How to Fix Them

- Strategic product placement in movies or television scenes, where this has become a sophisticated process often woven into the storyline with the characters using the products. Think of car companies with their brand as the hero cars in Iron Man.
- Logos, symbols, sounds, and jingles, and brand colors that evoke emotion. Think of the use of red and yellow for fast food promoting appetite and attention.
- Subtle visual references or hidden messages in logos. Think of Netflix's dramatic *tu-dum*.

Throughout the late 1960s up to the 1990s, one study after another discredited the claim that subliminal advertising could work to increase sales. Into the 2000s researchers continued, finding that there could be some effects caused by subtle images but only under circumstances that already inclined the person to do the action. However, not everyone agrees with the results, and one must look at the funding for these studies for more insights.

We cannot overlook the ethical considerations that arise from subliminal components in advertising. Furthermore, do these techniques reflect consumer culture or attempt to form it?

So, what can we make of all this? As advertising techniques evolve and fortunes are spent on them, how aware are we of the influences shaping our choices?



12 Dangers to Your Best Life - and How to Fix Them

Pesticides and Herbicides

You want to buy the best nourishing food for yourself and your family. You pick out those good-looking strawberries and apples, those crisp green beans and orange carrots, that whole grain bread. But how healthy is your food?

Advertising tells us what our food should look like – perfect and unblemished, shiny and vibrant. But is that the natural world?

Modern agriculture relies heavily on pesticides and herbicides, but at what cost to our health?

This discussion will focus on these chemicals, particularly glyphosate, because of their broad use and the emerging health concerns, but all agricultural chemicals have some impact on our health and well-being.

A Bit of Background

The agricultural revolution of chemicals

The widespread use of synthetic pesticides and herbicides is a relatively recent development in agriculture, dating to the post-World War II era. It is important to note that many of the chemicals initially developed for warfare were repurposed for agricultural use afterward.

DDT was one of the first widely used synthetic pesticides, introduced in the 1940s and hailed as a miracle solution for crop protection and disease control. Its creator, Swiss chemist Paul Hermann Müller, even received a Nobel Prize in 1948 for its discovery.

The 1962 publication of Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring* marked a turning point in public awareness about pesticide dangers, particularly the devastating environmental impacts of DDT. By 1972, this pesticide was banned in the United States.

12 Dangers to Your Best Life - and How to Fix Them

In parallel, herbicides were following their own developmental path. In 1945 2,4-D [2,4-Dichlorophenoxyacetic] was one of the first that could kill broadleaf weeds without harming grasses, making it ideal for lawn care and grain production.

Glyphosate entered the scene in 1974 when Monsanto introduced it under the brand name *Roundup*, with its primary function to inhibit an enzyme essential for plant growth, effectively controlling weeds.

It quickly became the world's most widely used herbicide due to its effectiveness and the later development of *Roundup Ready* genetically modified [GMO] crops designed to withstand glyphosate application.

The chemical promise

The initial promise of these agricultural chemicals was compelling – they would increase crop yields, reduce labor costs, and help feed a growing global population with abundant and affordable food.

Farmers could manage larger areas of land with less labor. Crop losses to pests and weeds decreased significantly. Food production expanded dramatically during what became known as the *Green Revolution* of the mid-20th century.

Glyphosate in particular revolutionized weed management. Unlike previous herbicides that required careful application to avoid damaging crops, glyphosate could be sprayed more liberally once *Roundup Ready* crops were planted.

This system was marketed as environmentally friendly because it reduced the need for tilling, which can cause soil erosion. Today, glyphosate is the most widely used herbicide globally, applied to crops like wheat, corn, soy, and even non-food crops like cotton.

For decades, these chemicals were presented to the public as safe when used as directed, with regulatory agencies largely accepting industry-funded research supporting these claims.

12 Dangers to Your Best Life - and How to Fix Them

The United States Environmental Protection Agency [EPA] initially classified glyphosate as *possibly carcinogenic to humans* in 1985 but later changed this assessment to *evidence of non-carcinogenicity* in 1991.



Public perception

For the average consumer, the presence of these chemicals in the food supply is largely invisible, and any residues are not detectable without special testing. This invisibility makes it difficult to connect potential health issues with exposure.

After all, conventional farming practices appear to be successful, and the resulting produce appears abundant, affordable, and visually appealing.

12 Dangers to Your Best Life - and How to Fix Them

The chemical approach is complex, intertwined with economic systems, agricultural education, food distribution networks, and even cultural expectations about how fruits and vegetables should look.

Perfect, unblemished produce has become the standard, and consumers often reject naturally imperfect fruits and vegetables.

Chemical treatment of the food supply is seen as safe and scientific, and in compliance with government regulations. In other words, the use of pesticides and herbicides in farming goes unquestioned.

Not What We Think It Is

The glyphosate connection

While glyphosate was initially marketed as relatively harmless to humans because it targets a metabolic pathway [the shikimate pathway] that human cells don't possess, this overlooks a critical factor, namely our gut microbiome.

The trillions of bacteria in our digestive system do use the shikimate pathway, and growing evidence suggests that glyphosate disrupts this delicate ecosystem of beneficial bacteria. This disruption may contribute to many health issues, including:

- Intestinal permeability [leaky gut syndrome]
- Imbalances in gut bacteria
- Impaired nutrient absorption
- Compromised immune function

A 2013 study published in the journal *Interdisciplinary Toxicology* proposed a link between glyphosate exposure and the rising incidence of celiac disease and gluten intolerance. Glyphosate is often used to dry wheat prior to harvest, leaving residues on the grain which further increases these risks.

The authors suggested that glyphosate's ability to deplete beneficial gut bacteria and increase intestinal permeability are factors in making people more susceptible to developing gluten sensitivities.

12 Dangers to Your Best Life - and How to Fix Them

The disruption of gut microbiota and impairment to the function of critical enzymes [P450] also leads to deficiencies in essential nutrients and amino acids.

Additionally, glyphosate has been shown to act as a chelating agent, binding to minerals like manganese, copper, and zinc. This can potentially lead to mineral deficiencies that affect numerous bodily functions.

Blood levels and disease connections

As testing methods have improved, researchers have begun detecting glyphosate in human blood, urine, and breast milk. A 2017 study conducted by researchers at the University of California San Diego found that human exposure to glyphosate has increased approximately 500% since the introduction of genetically modified [GMO] crops designed to withstand glyphosate application.

Elevated levels of glyphosate and pesticide residues in the body have been associated with various health conditions:

- Inflammation linked to heart disease, diabetes, and arthritis
- Liver damage and non-alcoholic fatty liver disease
- Oxidative stress and damaged cells
- Kidney dysfunction
- Endocrine [hormone] disruption, possibly causing reproductive issues and developmental problems in children
- Mitochondrial dysfunction
- Reproductive problems
- Neurological issues such as autism, cognitive decline, memory issues, and increased risk of Parkinson's disease
- Various forms of cancer, including non-Hodgkin lymphoma
- Immune system damage, increasing susceptibility to infections and autoimmune disorders

In 2015, the International Agency for Research on Cancer [IARC], part of the World Health Organization, classified glyphosate as *probably carcinogenic to humans* based on evidence linking it to non-Hodgkin lymphoma and other cancers.

12 Dangers to Your Best Life - and How to Fix Them

A study published in JAMA [Journal of the American Medical Association] in 2017 found that glyphosate levels in human urine increased significantly between 1993 and 2016, corresponding with the increased use of the herbicide during this period.

The compounding results

Most of the safety testing for pesticides and herbicides evaluates these chemicals in isolation, but in real-world scenarios, we are exposed to multiple chemicals at once. This *cocktail effect* compounds the problem further.

Farmworkers with the highest exposure levels show elevated rates of certain cancers, neurological disorders, and reproductive issues. Even for consumers exposed to lower residue levels, the long-term effects of exposure to multiple chemicals remain poorly understood.

A 2018 study in the journal Food and Chemical Toxicology found that glyphosate formulations [commercial products with glyphosate plus other chemicals] were significantly more toxic than glyphosate alone, sometimes by a factor of 1,000 or more.

Pesticides and herbicides linger in soil, water, and food, entering our bodies through diet, air, or water. Pesticide residues are detectable in many foods, even after washing, and in the blood and urine of most people tested. This long-term, low-level exposure is where the chronic problems begin in our health.

Industry influence on regulation

In 2017, documents unsealed during litigation revealed that Monsanto [now owned by Bayer] had ghostwritten research papers attesting to glyphosate's safety that were later attributed to academics. Internal company emails suggested the company had worked to influence scientific literature and regulatory assessments.

A comprehensive review published in Environmental Sciences Europe in 2019 examined the differences between regulatory evaluations and independent peer-reviewed research on glyphosate.

12 Dangers to Your Best Life - and How to Fix Them

The authors found systematic flaws in regulatory assessments, including failure to consider published independent literature and reliance on outdated testing protocols.

The current regulation system places the burden of proof on proving harm, rather than proving safety. Thus, chemicals often remain in use until definitive evidence of harm accumulates, and that can take decades.

Yet the evidence is there. In a 2018 San Francisco lawsuit, a school groundskeeper was awarded \$289 million after he got cancer from Monsanto's *Roundup* weedkiller. In the year prior, CNN reported that over 800 people were suing Monsanto, making similar claims.



12 Dangers to Your Best Life - and How to Fix Them

Where Can We Go From Here?

It starts with awareness and choice

I hope this discussion has educated you about the effects of pesticides and herbicides that you may not have been aware of. You may want to remove these from your food as soon as possible.

If you want to reduce your exposure to these chemicals, especially glyphosate, there are several suggestions below to get you started.

Transitioning to cleaner food sources

One of the most effective ways to reduce pesticide and herbicide exposure is to choose certified organic foods whenever possible. This includes fruits, vegetables, grass-fed meats, pasture raised eggs, and anything packaged.

Organic certification prohibits the use of synthetic pesticides and herbicides, including glyphosate. Further it prohibits the use of genetically modified [GMO] seeds, an additional bonus.

Independent studies have shown that you can clean up your blood significantly within weeks of eating all organic food. A study led by Dr. Liza Oates found that individuals who ate at least 80% organic food for a week experienced a 50% reduction in pesticide metabolites in their urine.

Consider eliminating the worst offenders, i.e. fruits and vegetables with the highest pesticide residues. For 2024 these include: strawberries, spinach, kale, grapes, peaches, pears, nectarines, apples, bell and hot peppers, cherries, blueberries, and green beans.

Focus on the produce with the lowest amounts of pesticide residues. For 2024 these include: avocados, sweetcorn, pineapple, onions, papaya, sweet peas, asparagus, honeydew melon, kiwi, cabbage, mushrooms, mangoes, sweet potatoes, watermelon, and carrots.

Local farmers' markets offer excellent opportunities to find cleaner food:

12 Dangers to Your Best Life - and How to Fix Them

- You can speak directly with farmers about their growing practices
- Some small-scale farmers follow organic practices but haven't pursued expensive certification
- The produce is typically fresher, meaning higher nutrient content

Ask your grocer to add more organic foods to the produce and meat offerings.

Community Supported Agriculture [CSA] programs provide another avenue for accessing fresh, locally grown produce, often cultivated without synthetic chemicals. At the same time, it supports small-scale farmers and rural economies.

Build a garden or set up containers to grow some of your own food. This gives you complete control over what goes into your food.

Detoxification strategies

If you're concerned about existing pesticide and herbicide levels in your body, several approaches may help with detoxification:

- Increase water intake to support your body's natural elimination processes
- Consume foods rich in antioxidants, which help combat oxidative stress caused by toxins
- Support liver function with cruciferous and sulforaphane vegetables [broccoli, cabbage, kale, cauliflower, brussels sprouts, bok choy]
- Include fiber-rich foods that bind to toxins and promote their elimination
- Consider targeted supplements like activated charcoal, chlorella, or milk thistle

Regular exercise helps flush toxins through increased circulation and sweating. Daily brisk walks will do wonders for your well-being. Infrared saunas may also support detoxification through induced sweating.

Intermittent fasting or time-restricted eating can enhance cellular autophagy – your body's natural process for removing damaged cells and regenerating healthier ones.

12 Dangers to Your Best Life - and How to Fix Them

Remember that change doesn't have to happen all at once. Small steps and steady progress will win the day for you. Each choice to reduce chemical exposure contributes to both a healthier you and a cleaner environment.

The greatest threat to our planet is the belief that someone else will save it. ~
Robert Swan

References

[IARC Monograph on Glyphosate – IARC](#)

[Glyphosate, pathways to modern diseases II: Celiac sprue and gluten intolerance - PMC](#)

[Excretion of the Herbicide Glyphosate in Older Adults Between 1993 and 2016 | Environmental Health | JAMA | JAMA Network](#)

[Major Pesticides Are More Toxic to Human Cells Than Their Declared Active Principles - Mesnage - 2014 - BioMed Research International - Wiley Online Library](#)

[EWG's 2024 Shopper's Guide to Pesticides in Produce](#)

[Trends in glyphosate herbicide use in the United States and globally | Environmental Sciences Europe | Full Text](#)

[Food Additives and Child Health | Pediatrics | American Academy of Pediatrics](#)

[Maternal and fetal exposure to pesticides associated to genetically modified foods in Eastern Townships of Quebec, Canada - ScienceDirect](#)

[Glyphosate perturbs the gut microbiota of honey bees | PNAS](#)

[Research | The Detox Project](#)

[Health Risks of Glyphosate Herbicide](#)

12 Dangers to Your Best Life - and How to Fix Them

[The Effect of Organic Food](#)

[Eating Organic Reduces Pesticide Exposure](#)

[Glyphosate, Pathways to Modern Diseases II: Celiac Sprue and Gluten Intolerance](#)

[Toxic Cocktail: Study Finds Almost 200 Pesticides in European Homes](#)

[Health Benefits + Reduced Pesticide Exposure](#)

[Monsanto case: Jurors give \\$289 million to man they say got cancer from Roundup weedkiller | CNN](#)

[New Monsanto Documents Reveal Scientific Manipulation - Cornucopia Institute](#)

[IARC Monograph on Glyphosate – IARC](#)

[Glyphosate, pathways to modern diseases II: Celiac sprue and gluten intolerance - PMC](#)

[Monsanto Papers | Declassified Secret Documents](#)

[The Shocking Truth About Glyphosate and Your Health & How to DETOX](#)

[DANGERS of Glyphosate and GMO's | Zach Bush MD](#)

[Chemical Free Farming with Josh Adams](#)

12 Dangers to Your Best Life - and How to Fix Them

Coffee

We love our coffee, don't we? It's easy to understand why. When we hold that cup of warm brew in our hands, it seems so familiar and comforting each morning.

Coffee shops are everywhere, and millions drink it in some form: hot, iced, flavored, latte, espresso, small, medium, large, giant, black, with milk, with soy milk, with sugar, with honey... the options are endless.

Consumers enjoy the smell and the taste along with the ambiance of the coffee experience. It makes us feel good and part of the coffee drinking tribe around the world. This cultural aspect of coffee is reinforced in advertising, movies, and television. There is no escape from it.

Although coffee has become integral to our lives, there is also a dark side to this habit that warrants our attention and action to safeguard our health and well-being.

While this discussion focuses on coffee, the effects of caffeine are similar for most teas, colas, cocoa, chocolate, and especially energy drinks. Even decaffeinated coffee is something we need to question.

A Bit of Background

Where it all started

Legend has it that an Ethiopian goat herder in the ninth century observed the excitable behavior of his goats after they ate the red coffee berries on a particular bush. He then ate some himself and found them to be a quick source of energy. Whether legend or not, from this place, the custom spread and morphed into the worldwide phenomenon that coffee production and distribution is today.

12 Dangers to Your Best Life - and How to Fix Them

From Ethiopia, coffee consumption spread through the Middle East, the Mediterranean, to Europe and the Americas, and to parts of Asia. The Industrial Revolution contributed to the coffee business with innovations such as the percolator and drip coffee maker. The invention of instant coffee in the early 20th century led to the in-home convenience of coffee drinking by anyone who wished it.

Ethiopia is still considered the birthplace of coffee, and today the largest producers are Brazil, Columbia, and Mexico in Latin America, with Ethiopia, Kenya, and Uganda the large producers in Africa. In Asia, we have Vietnam as the second largest coffee producer worldwide. Other locations on the coffee stage are Yemen and Hawaii.

The *coffee belt* falls between the Tropic of Cancer and the Tropic of Capricorn, in places with high altitude, tropical climates, regular rainfall, and distinct dry and rainy seasons. The variables for each area determine the distinct flavors that their coffee beans are known for.



12 Dangers to Your Best Life - and How to Fix Them

From the plant to your cup

Coffee cherries are harvested by hand as a rule, and then run through either wet [washed] or dry [natural] processing, both of which involve several chemicals for fermentation, cleaning, and drying.

Afterward, the coffee beans, now freed from the cherry exterior, are dried, milled, and roasted at high heat that further transforms the beans, and in some cases with added flavorings.

If the beans are to be decaffeinated, there are additional chemical processes applied.

After the roasting is complete, the coffee beans are cooled to prevent over-roasting, either on a cooling tray or with fans. The beans emit carbon dioxide, a byproduct of the roasting process, over the following hours or days, depending on the batch size.

From there, whole beans may be packaged as is, or the beans may be ground to varying granularity depending on the intended coffee machine.

Ground coffee is sealed in airtight aluminum or plastic packages with one-way CO₂ gas valves. Some coffee is packed in pre-measured pods for the single-serve machines.

As with any commodity, the product is distributed everywhere through existing channels to local grocery stores and cafés, to online trading companies, to retailers, supermarkets, and specialty stores. Massive coffee companies like Starbucks and Nestlé have their own warehouses and distributors.

The money trail

The coffee industry is profitable across each sector of production, with the lowest profit margin for the farmers. In developing countries, the local farmer will receive a mere fraction of the end value. Global prices and demand have a downstream influence, as do weather, disease, and labor conditions. The Fair-Trade program can help increase income for the growers on high-quality beans.

12 Dangers to Your Best Life - and How to Fix Them

Major coffee bean roasters such as Starbucks, Nestle, and Dunkin' generate billions of dollars in revenue with specialty coffee. In 2024 the global coffee market was valued at \$522 billion. That is a lot of coffee.

For retail coffee shops and cafés, coffee is a high mark-up product. The larger coffee chains, like Starbucks, Dunkin', and Tim Hortons make billions each year, with Starbucks leading the way at \$36 billion in 2024. With franchising opportunities, the retail coffee market is ever-growing as a highly rewarding business.

Let's not forget the instant coffee market. Yes, it's still around. Brands like Nescafé and Maxwell House are large names in this arena, with Nestlé generating over \$10 billion for its instant and roasted coffees.

Add in the coffee pods and their machines, such as Keurig and Nespresso, and you witness another huge market segment.

So, what is the huge attraction of coffee? Once, a colleague of mine, who was a tea drinker, said she envied coffee drinkers because they seemed to belong to a club that only they understood.

More than just a cup of joe

From its early discovery in the highlands of Ethiopia and its progressive spread around the world, coffee continued to attract and entice people into the habit.

As more people discovered coffee, a whole culture emerged around the ritual of downing a cup of the warm brown brew. In major European cities, notably in England and France, coffeehouses became popular meeting places. Inside these walls over coffee tables, people gathered to discuss politics, literature, and intellectual ideas.

In America, coffee chains and cafés further ingrained coffee into the national culture. Later, in the 1980s, specialty coffee entered the stage, with Starbucks in the lead. Featuring custom brews, espressos, and premium coffee beans, it became a global coffeehouse chain.

12 Dangers to Your Best Life - and How to Fix Them

With this phenomenon, people came to view coffee as an experience, not just a morning beverage. The coffee menu at Starbucks contains dozens of options in all kinds of flavors, ingredients, and preparation methods, including seasonal variations. Think of latte, cappuccino, macchiato, mocha, steamed milk, milk alternatives, spices, chocolate, and other syrups for layered flavors, and you get the idea.

This is a long way from a simple black coffee or coffee with milk and sugar. These are desserts in a cup. The 16-ounce frappuccino can have 550-570 calories, more than 25% of an average person's expected intake.

The modern coffee shop is still an important site to hang out and have cultural and social experiences. It's where solo entrepreneurs can spend all day at a table, working on their laptops and using free Wi-Fi. It's a place where friends can gather for a midday break or after work. It's a place where a person can interview clients or meet prospective dates.

Coffee is not just a beverage, it's a personal experience, an indulgence, a luxury, and dare we say... a part of one's identity.



12 Dangers to Your Best Life - and How to Fix Them

Not What We Think It Is

Bugs and things

It must be said. Agriculture is a dirty business... things are growing outside in the dirt, and the companion insect population is part of the deal. Who hasn't pulled a bug off a piece of fruit before eating it?

Coffee attracts its own collection of bugs. During the growing, harvesting, roasting, and packaging processes, ants, weevils, and beetles, insect droppings, legs, and wings make their way into the mix. Humidity can spawn insects in storage containers.

The FDA has defined acceptable limits for insect fragments based on parts per weight of the coffee beans, and the agency assures us that this is safe.

You can decide for yourself.

Spaced out webs and brains

In the 1990s NASA conducted experiments on spiders to determine the effects of psychoactive substances, namely caffeine, marijuana, LSD, Benzedrine, and chloral hydrate. The results were astonishing. Of note, the webs built by the caffeine spiders were dramatically inept and useless.

It was an interesting observation, but we are not spiders. Yet there is a nugget of gold here.

Coffee [and all caffeine] affects blood flow to the brain, with both short-term and long-term impact. This happens because caffeine causes blood vessels to constrict and block the brain's adenosine receptors [which cause relaxation and dilation of the blood vessels].

To illustrate this, researchers in Wake Forest, North Carolina conducted MRIs on a reporter before and after she drank just one cup of coffee. They discovered that blood flow to the brain dropped over 40% as a result.

12 Dangers to Your Best Life - and How to Fix Them

Coffee disrupts the brain's hypothalamus functions of stress regulation and overall homeostasis. Toxins in coffee cause a crisis reaction, the fight-or-flight response, along with increased heart rate and blood pressure.

The key takeaway is that caffeine is an insecticide produced by the coffee plant to defend itself. When you drink coffee, the body recognizes it as poison and tries to expel it quickly in a high alert state.

Tossing and turning those bones

We know that sleep is essential for us to survive and to thrive. Some people stop drinking coffee after lunch or mid-afternoon, thinking that will help them sleep. Some people can drink coffee well into the evening and seem to sleep all right.

There is mixed research, but coffee stays in the body anywhere from 12 – 48 hours by most counts. And it absolutely affects your sleep.

There are two important levels of sleep: REM and deep sleep. Rapid Eye Movement [REM] sleep is when your mind collates the day's events and consolidates memory and learning. It is key for brain development and dreaming. Deep sleep is where your body does its repair work, bolsters your immune system, restores tissues, muscles, and bones.

With caffeine in the body, these levels of sleep are impaired, and your sleep is going to be more in the light sleep category.

And speaking of bones, there is evidence tying coffee to diminished bone density and osteoporosis. This happens when caffeine interferes with calcium absorption, and the mineral ends up expelled in the urine.

I can quit any time

The toughest obstacle to reckon with is coffee addiction.

12 Dangers to Your Best Life - and How to Fix Them

We have already noted that coffee [all caffeine] blocks the brain receptors [adenosine] that allow you to feel tired when the body needs rest and instead forces you to be awake and alert. In response, your body may create more adenosine receptors, which in turn require more coffee to keep you going. This is a physical dependency.

Equally serious is the dopamine effect. That cup of coffee lifts your mood and makes you feel good. We humans naturally seek pleasure. Rewarding the pleasure centers in the brain reinforces our habitual behavior so we can experience more of the same. This is an emotional dependency.

Factor in the social aspects of drinking coffee with family, friends, or co-workers, and you have the tribal dependency, satisfying the desire to fit in with your peers.

Like it or not, coffee is an addiction: *a compulsive, chronic, physiological, or psychological need for a habit-forming substance, behavior, or activity having harmful physical, psychological, or social effects and typically causing well-defined symptoms upon withdrawal or abstinence* [courtesy of merriam-webster.com].

Where Can We Go From Here?

It starts with a decision

Now what?

Are you considering changing your daily habits just a bit?

If you want to be free of coffee and all caffeine, the first thing is to decide that this is your goal and then commit to it. That is how we change anything in life.

Slow and steady wins the race

If you have been drinking coffee for a long while, especially if you drink several cups a day, the best advice is to get off it gradually. Otherwise, it is a shock to the system, and you might find it too difficult to sustain.

12 Dangers to Your Best Life - and How to Fix Them

There will be withdrawal symptoms, so prepare yourself mentally to anticipate them and know that these are temporary. They will go away when your body is cleaned up, so stay the course and win the day.

- Headaches
- Fatigue and sleepiness
- Irritability and grouchiness
- Difficulty concentrating
- Mild depression

Here are some pointers to plan for success – adapt any or all of them as you see fit:

- Start drinking organic coffee to eliminate pesticides immediately
- Reduce your daily intake by one cup for the first week – for example if you drink 8 cups a day, go with 7 cups a day for week one
- Each week, remove another daily cup – in our example, reduce daily cups from 7 to 6 for a week, then to 5 the week after, and so on
- When you are down to one cup a day, cut that in half the following week, then in half again the week after
- Try decaffeinated coffee and stick with the Swiss Water Process
- Switch to herbal teas that are naturally caffeine free
- Drink warm water with lemon
- Get lots of sleep so your body can repair itself
- Take brisk walks to improve your lymphatic functions
- Drink plenty of water to flush out your system

Coffee isn't the only source of caffeine, so be mindful of hot chocolate, sodas, and most teas, or eating chocolate in any form. Even decaffeinated coffee contains some caffeine.

Don't be lured in by the antioxidant claims for coffee and chocolate. If you eat proper whole food, your body will have all it needs.

Pay attention to how you feel and notice the improvements in your mental and physical function. Health is its own reward.

12 Dangers to Your Best Life - and How to Fix Them



Even the experts struggle

When researching this topic, I discovered that many *experts* who discuss how damaging coffee is to the body and the benefits of quitting, still drink it themselves in lesser amounts.

Does this make them wrong or hypocritical? I don't think so.

To me, it demonstrates in big bold letters the power of coffee addiction, that even people who have done extensive research still struggle with letting go.

That *pick me up* elevated feeling is addictive and a false promise of happiness. It is only dopamine and a short-lived pleasure.

What worked for me, after I quit many times and failed, was to walk away and not look back. No contact ever again.

12 Dangers to Your Best Life - and How to Fix Them

You can be free too. I believe in you.

As soon as you trust yourself, you will know how to live. ~Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

References

[Using Spider-Web Patterns to Determine Toxicity](#)

[The effects of coffee on the brain as seen by MRI](#)

[Getting to the Bottom of Common Coffee Myths](#)

[Does Caffeine Affect Your Osteoporosis Risk?](#)

[Michael Pollen Reveals The Negative Effects Of Caffeine](#)

[The Shocking Effects of Going Caffeine-free for a Month](#)

[30 Days of NO CAFFEINE has Surprising Effects](#)

[What Happens To Your Body When You Stop Drinking Coffee \[Minute by Minute\]](#)

[How to Quit Caffeine \[And Why You Might Want To\]](#)

[Kaldi, the Ethiopian Goat Herder Who Discovered Coffee | Moss and Fog](#)

[Caffeine is Not Healthy in Spite of Offering Several Benefits - BlackDoctor.org - Where Wellness & Culture Connect](#)

[Caffeine blues : wake up to the hidden dangers of America's #1 drug : Cherniske, Stephen Snehan : Free Download, Borrow, and Streaming : Internet Archive](#)

12 Dangers to Your Best Life - and How to Fix Them

Processed Foods

Most of us have enjoyed the convenience of grabbing a quick-frozen meal from the grocery store or picking up fast food after a busy day. We know it's not ideal, but we are tired or working late or out of time.

When we notice how certain packaged foods seem to last for months without spoiling, or how processed meats maintain their appealing color and texture indefinitely, we see major red flags that all is not well.

These *miracles* of modern technology do not support our health and well-being in the least.

Let's take a closer look at this pervasive trend in human nutrition and its cultural acceptance.

Processed foods have a relatively recent place in human nutrition, but one that has become deeply embedded in our food systems. This discussion will focus on these products, particularly highly processed items like chicken nuggets, because of their widespread consumption and concerning health implications.

A Bit of Background

The rise of food processing

Food processing in its simplest form – preserving, fermenting, drying – has been part of human civilization for thousands of years. Ancient Egyptians used salt to preserve fish and meat. Romans preserved fruits in honey. Traditional cultures worldwide developed methods like smoking, pickling, and fermenting to extend food shelf life.

In the past two centuries, food processing became industrialized. Wars called for food that could be carried over long distances in all kinds of weather conditions.

Introduced in the early 20th century, refrigeration had a huge impact on food preservation.

12 Dangers to Your Best Life - and How to Fix Them

In 1925, Clarence Birdseye invented a quick-freezing technology that maintained food quality much better than previous freezing methods, leading to the first commercially viable frozen foods for modern homes with refrigerators.

After World War II, food conglomerates became industrialized. The invention of chemical preservatives and the shift toward factory farming marked a departure from traditional food production methods and smaller farms.

Many things contributed to the increased demand for convenience: the post-war economic boom, women entering the workforce, and busier lifestyles.

TV dinners appeared in the 1950s, promising complete meals with minimal preparation. You only had to pop them in the oven to reheat.

During the 1950s and 1960s and the growth of supermarkets, processed foods began to take center stage. What began as simple canned goods evolved into the highly engineered and chemical-laden products we see today.

Fast food restaurants also expanded rapidly during this period, with McDonald's and others perfecting the assembly-line approach to food preparation. The chicken nugget was invented in the late 1950s and popularized by McDonald's in the 1980s when they introduced McNuggets.

Marketing for children with brightly colored packaging, cartoon characters, and toys serves to build up future consumers hooked on the concept.

The convenience revolution

The initial marketing of processed foods was compelling – they would save time, reduce food waste, extend shelf life, and make cooking easier for everyone.

Busy parents could provide meals for their families with minimal preparation time. Food manufacturers could ship products across continents without spoilage concerns.

12 Dangers to Your Best Life - and How to Fix Them

The uniformity of processed foods also offered brand and flavor consistency to the consumer. This standardization was marketed as a quality feature rather than a warning sign about the artificial nature of such consistency.

For decades, these foods have been presented to the public as modern miracles, with regulatory agencies largely accepting industry claims about their safety.



Integral part of our diet

For the average consumer, processed foods are entrenched as a normal part of our diet. They are convenient and they save time. They are more affordable, easy to access, and long-lasting.

School lunches feature chicken nuggets and pizza as staples. Vending machines in workplaces offer packaged snacks as quick energy boosts. Sugary cereals make breakfast time easier.

12 Dangers to Your Best Life - and How to Fix Them

Today, ultra-processed foods [snacks, sodas, and pre-packaged meals] make up nearly 60% of the average American diet, according to a 2019 study in The BMJ [British Medical Journal].

The processed food industry is intertwined with industrial agriculture and mass production, food distribution networks, and expectations about how long food should last on our shelves.

The convenience to consumers and the lack of oversight make it difficult to recognize the dangers.

Global scale

Processed foods are not just an American phenomenon. They are found worldwide, often displacing traditional food for much of people's calorie content. In countries like Mexico and India, multinational food companies have introduced cheap, hyper-palatable products, that contribute to rising obesity and diabetes rates in those cultures.

Not What We Think It Is

Inside the manufacturing process

What exactly happens in food processing facilities? Let's examine chicken nuggets as a case study in industrial food production.

The process typically begins with mechanical separation, where machines forcefully separate chicken meat from bones using high pressure, creating a paste-like substance. This *mechanically separated poultry* often includes parts of the chicken that wouldn't traditionally be eaten, including connective tissues, blood vessels, fat, nerves, and even bone fragments.

Next comes the mixing phase, where the chicken paste is combined with a variety of ingredients:

12 Dangers to Your Best Life - and How to Fix Them

- Stabilizers and binders like modified food starch
- Additives such as phosphates and emulsifiers for texture
- White flour, corn, or soy derivatives as fillers
- Flavor enhancers such as monosodium glutamate [MSG]
- Artificial flavors and colors
- Preservatives to extend shelf life
- Oils and fats to improve mouthfeel
- Salt and sugar for taste

After mixing, this paste is formed into the familiar nugget shapes, coated with batter and breading, pre-fried [often in unhealthy hydrogenated oils], flash-frozen, and packaged for distribution. By the time it reaches your plate, that *chicken* nugget has undergone dozens of industrial processes and contains numerous ingredients never found in a home kitchen.

In fact, according to a 2013 study published in The American Journal of Medicine, researchers examined the content of chicken nuggets from two national fast-food chains and found they contained only 40-50% chicken muscle tissue, with the remainder consisting of items noted above.

Chemicals instead of food

Let's dig a little deeper on the ingredient list for most processed food. The complex chemical names are your first indicator that all is not well with these products. Here are some examples:

Preservatives extend shelf life by preventing bacterial growth or oxidation:

- Sodium nitrite and nitrate in processed meats maintain color and prevent botulism but convert to potentially carcinogenic nitrosamines when consumed
- BHA and BHT [butylated hydroxyanisole and butylated hydroxytoluene] prevent oils from going rancid but have been linked to potential endocrine disruption
- Calcium propionate prevents mold growth in bread but has been associated with behavioral changes in some studies

Texture modifiers create the desired mouth feel and consistency:

12 Dangers to Your Best Life - and How to Fix Them

- Carrageenan, derived from seaweed, creates creaminess in dairy products but may cause inflammation in the digestive tract
- Modified food starch thickens and stabilizes foods but undergoes significant chemical processing
- Phosphates in processed meats and cheeses improve water retention and texture but may contribute to cardiovascular disease when consumed regularly

Color additives make food visually appealing:

- Artificial colors like Red 40, Yellow 5, and Blue 1 have been linked to hyperactivity in children and are banned in some countries
- Caramel color, used in cola and soy sauce, may contain a potentially carcinogenic byproduct called 4-methylimidazole

Flavor enhancers and sweeteners intensify taste sensations:

- Monosodium glutamate [MSG] amplifies savory flavors but may cause headaches, nausea, chest pain, fatigue, rapid heart rate, difficult breathing, dizziness, and fainting
- Artificial flavors can contain dozens or hundreds of chemical compounds, the specifics of which manufacturers aren't required to disclose
- High-fructose corn syrup, common in sodas and snacks, is linked to obesity and liver damage when consumed in excess

A 2019 study in the journal *Cell Metabolism* found that people consuming ultra-processed foods ate about 500 more calories per day than those eating minimally processed foods. It suggests that the chemical additives prevent your body from knowing when it has eaten enough.

Health impacts

There is a serious array of health consequences from a long-term diet of processed foods:

Weight Gain and Obesity: Ultra-processed foods are typically energy-dense but nutrient-poor. Food scientists design products to hit what is called the *bliss point* – the perfect combination of salt, sugar, and fat – that maximizes palatability and keeps consumers addicted to eating.

12 Dangers to Your Best Life - and How to Fix Them

Metabolic Syndrome and Type 2 Diabetes: The high glycemic load of many processed foods causes blood sugar spikes followed by insulin surges. This pattern can lead to insulin resistance, metabolic syndrome, and type 2 diabetes.

Cardiovascular Disease: Many processed foods are high in sodium, unhealthy fats, and refined carbohydrates—all risk factors for heart disease and high blood pressure.

Cancer Risk: Preservatives like nitrates [in processed meats] and high salt intake are risks for colorectal and stomach cancers.

Digestive Disorders: Emulsifiers, artificial sweeteners, and preservatives can disrupt the gut microbiome – the trillions of beneficial bacteria living in our digestive systems – leading to inflammatory bowel disease and other digestive disorders.

Mental Health and IQ: In addition to depression, a diet high in processed foods is linked to lower IQ scores and behavioral issues.

Nutritional Deficiency: While some processed foods claim to be fortified with vitamins and minerals, these are synthetic substances that are not as absorbable as those found in whole foods.



12 Dangers to Your Best Life - and How to Fix Them

Industry influence and regulatory gaps

Children and adolescents are a major target of the processed food industry marketing dollars, with \$1.8 billion spent annually in the United States alone.

Meanwhile, regulatory oversight has notable gaps. The FDA's *Generally Recognized As Safe [GRAS]* designation allows food manufacturers to determine the safety of their own additives without FDA review.

Labeling requirements also have limitations. The term *natural flavors* can include dozens of chemical compounds without specific disclosure. Serving sizes are manipulated to make nutrition facts appear more favorable. *Reduced fat* products compensate with added sugar.



12 Dangers to Your Best Life - and How to Fix Them

Where Can We Go From Here?

It starts with a decision

Now that you are more aware of the health dangers of processed foods, you may want to make changes to the diet of yourself and your family.

The first thing is to decide that this is your goal and make a commitment to follow through.

Consider why you want to make these changes, whether it's improving your energy levels, addressing existing health concerns, setting a good example for your children, or reconnecting with real food... choose a motivation that matters deeply, and you will stay with it.

Transition to nourishing whole foods

Here are some suggestions to help eliminate ultra-processed foods and increase whole and minimally processed foods in your diet:

Start with small changes:

- Consume whole grain cereals such as oatmeal for breakfast
- Swap processed snacks for nuts, seeds, or fresh fruit
- Avoid processed deli meats, which often contain nitrates and excessive sodium
- Choose water, tea, or coffee instead of soda or sugary drinks
- Make simple homemade salad dressings instead of using bottled varieties

Shop the perimeter: Most whole foods [produce, meat, dairy] are located around the perimeter of grocery stores, while processed items fill the center aisles.

Cook more meals at home: Home cooking gives you more control over ingredients. Simple home-cooked meals contain fewer additives and preservatives than their processed counterparts.

12 Dangers to Your Best Life - and How to Fix Them

Batch cooking: Prepare larger quantities on weekends and refrigerate or freeze portions for busy weekdays. This provides the convenience of processed foods without the downsides.

Plan ahead: Keep plenty of healthy snacks on hand such as fruit, nuts, and plain yogurt.

Organic and local

Certified organic foods are grown without synthetic pesticides, fertilizers, and chemicals and without GMO seeds. These can reduce exposure to other harmful chemicals such as artificial preservatives, colors, or flavors.

Growing your own garden can be a fun family project that connects you with fresh food. Start with container produce, like herbs, tomatoes or peppers.

Local farms are a great place to find good quality food:

- The produce is harvested at peak ripeness rather than being picked unripe for shipping
- The fruits and vegetables are fresher, with higher nutrient content and better flavor
- The farmers can discuss their growing practices – you may find that they already adhere to organic guidelines without being certified

Community Supported Agriculture [CSA] programs provide another avenue for accessing local, often minimally processed foods:

- Weekly boxes of seasonal produce directly from farmers
- Some CSAs also offer eggs, dairy, and meats
- Subscription model supports local agriculture and provides steady income to farmers

Food co-ops and health food stores typically offer more whole food options and bulk buying possibilities:

- Buying from bulk bins reduces packaging waste
- Often carry local products not found in conventional supermarkets
- May offer better selection of organic and minimally processed items

12 Dangers to Your Best Life - and How to Fix Them

Read labels and make informed choices

If you do purchase packaged foods, read the ingredient labels carefully.

Ingredient list basics:

- Ingredients are listed in descending order by weight
- A shorter ingredient list typically indicates less processing
- If you can't pronounce it or wouldn't have it in your kitchen, consider alternatives
- Look for whole food ingredients you recognize

Red flags to watch for:

- Multiple forms of added sugar [corn syrup, dextrose, maltose, etc.]
- Hydrogenated or partially hydrogenated oils [trans fats and seed oils]
- Artificial colors [Blue 1, Yellow 5, Red 40, etc.]
- Chemical preservatives [BHA, BHT, sodium benzoate, etc.]
- Flavor enhancers [monosodium glutamate, disodium inosinate]

Learn marketing term limitations:

- *Natural* has no regulated definition
- *Made with real fruit* may indicate minimal actual fruit content
- *Whole grain* products may still contain refined flours and sugars
- *No added sugar* products may contain artificial sweeteners

By becoming more conscious of our food choices, we can reduce our reliance on processed foods and foster a healthier relationship with what we eat. It's all about choosing real, whole foods that nourish our bodies and support local farmers.

The food you eat can be either the safest and most powerful form of medicine or the slowest form of poison. ~ Ann Wigmore

References

[Ultra-processed foods: what they are and how to identify them | Public Health Nutrition | Cambridge Core](#)

12 Dangers to Your Best Life - and How to Fix Them

[Ultra-Processed Diets Cause Excess Calorie Intake and Weight Gain: An Inpatient Randomized Controlled Trial of Ad Libitum Food Intake: Cell Metabolism](#)

[The Autopsy of Chicken Nuggets Reads “Chicken Little” - The American Journal of Medicine](#)

[Consumption of ultra-processed foods and cancer risk: results from NutriNet-Santé prospective cohort | The BMJ](#)

[Conflicts of Interest in Approvals of Additives to Food Determined to Be Generally Recognized as Safe: Out of Balance | Ethics | JAMA Internal Medicine | JAMA Network](#)

[The Western Diet–Microbiome-Host Interaction and Its Role in Metabolic Disease](#)

[EWG's 2024 Shopper's Guide to Pesticides in Produce](#)

[Beyond the Calories—Is the Problem in the Processing? | Current Treatment Options in Gastroenterology](#)

[Which Foods May Be Addictive? The Roles of Processing, Fat Content, and Glycemic Load | PLOS One](#)

[CSPI's Food Additive Safety Ratings | Center for Science in the Public Interest](#)

[McDonald's Secret Ingredients You Never Knew About](#)

[The Dark Side of the Fast-Food Industry](#)

[The Impact of Processed Foods on Health](#)

[Glyphosate and the Risk of Gluten Sensitivity](#)

[Why nitrates and nitrites in processed meats are harmful – but those in vegetables aren't](#)

12 Dangers to Your Best Life - and How to Fix Them

[Nitrites in Cured Meats, Health Risk Issues, Alternatives to Nitrites: A Review - PMC](#)

[How Organic Foods Can Protect Your Health](#)

[Which Is Better Organic Or Non-Organic Foods?](#)

[Understanding Ultra-Processed Foods: How They Affect Your Health and What You Can Do About It | Blog | Loyola Medicine](#)

[What Is Actually in Chicken Nuggets?](#)

[What's In That Chicken Nugget? Maybe You Don't Want To Know : The Salt : NPR](#)

[Ultra-processed Food Intake and Obesity: What Really Matters for Health – Processing or Nutrient Content? - PMC](#)

[Ultra-processed Food Intake and Obesity: What Really Matters for Health- Processing or Nutrient Content? - PubMed](#)

[Food additives in childhood: a review on consumption and health consequences - PMC](#)

[5 Food Additives You Should Avoid](#)

[Food additives and hyperactive behaviour in 3-year-old and 8/9-year-old children in the community: a randomised, double-blinded, placebo-controlled trial - The Lancet](#)

[Potential impacts of synthetic food dyes on activity and attention in children: a review of the human and animal evidence - PMC](#)

[Ultra-Processed Diets Cause Excess Calorie Intake and Weight Gain: An Inpatient Randomized Controlled Trial of Ad Libitum Food Intake: Cell Metabolism](#)

[Sodium | American Heart Association](#)

12 Dangers to Your Best Life - and How to Fix Them

[Heavily processed foods tied to diabetes - Harvard Health](#)

[Ultra-Processed Food Consumption and Adult Diabetes Risk: A Systematic Review and Dose-Response Meta-Analysis - PMC](#)

[Processed meat and cancer: What you need to know | MD Anderson Cancer Center](#)

[Direct impact of commonly used dietary emulsifiers on human gut microbiota | Microbiome | Full Text](#)

[Food Emulsifiers and Metabolic Syndrome: The Role of the Gut Microbiota - PMC](#)

[7 shocking ways ultra-processed foods affect children | GoodtoKnow](#)

[The hidden risks of processed foods in children's diets | News](#)

[Find a Farmers Market near you - nfmd.org](#)

[The Worst "Health" Foods for Kids – Dr. Berg](#)

[5 Ways To Identify Ultra-Processed Foods with Chris van Tulleken](#)

[How harmful can ultra-processed foods be for us? - BBC News](#)

12 Dangers to Your Best Life - and How to Fix Them

Fluoride

Dentists tell us to use fluoridated toothpaste and mouthwash. Municipalities put it in our drinking water. It is even found in processed foods, beverages, and baby formulas.

Consumers are often unaware of its presence beyond dental care, accepting it as part of maintaining oral health. This perception is reinforced in advertising, dental offices, and public health messaging. There is rarely a discussion of the truth of the matter.

A Bit of Background

Where it all started

The fluoride story began in the early 1900s when dentists observed that people in certain areas had unusually mottled tooth enamel [a condition now called dental fluorosis] but surprisingly fewer cavities. Research identified naturally occurring fluoride in local water supplies as the cause of both effects.

Fluoride as we know it today has a darker industrial past. Early in the 20th century, fluoride was known primarily as a toxic byproduct of industries like aluminum smelting, steel manufacturing, and phosphate fertilizer production.

These industries released fluoride waste [or more accurately *fluorine compounds*] into the environment, which led to documented health issues in nearby populations – ranging from bone disease in livestock to mottled teeth and skeletal fluorosis in people.

Rather than pay for expensive waste disposal, these industries found a clever solution: rebrand fluoride as a cavity-fighting mineral based on the properties of naturally occurring fluoride.

12 Dangers to Your Best Life - and How to Fix Them

In 1945, Grand Rapids, Michigan became the first American city to add fluoride to its municipal water. Despite opposition from some scientists and citizens, the trend caught on. Today roughly 73% of the U.S. public water supplies are fluoridated, while many countries like Denmark, Sweden, the Netherlands, and most of Western Europe have discontinued the practice, citing health concerns.

Fluoride was incorporated into toothpastes in the 1950s, with Crest receiving the endorsement of the American Dental Association [ADA] in 1960. This marked the beginning of widespread fluoride use in personal care products and dental treatments.

Not What We Think It Is

From nature to your tap and toothpaste

Fluoride is a naturally occurring mineral found in rocks, soil, and water throughout the earth's crust. The fluoride used in water supplies and dental products comes from other sources.

For water fluoridation, the main compounds used are:

- Sodium fluoride [NaF]
- Fluorosilicic acid [H_2SiF_6]
- Sodium fluorosilicate [Na_2SiF_6]

These compounds are often byproducts of phosphate fertilizer manufacturing, where fluoride gases produced during processing are captured to prevent environmental release and then converted into these water-soluble forms.

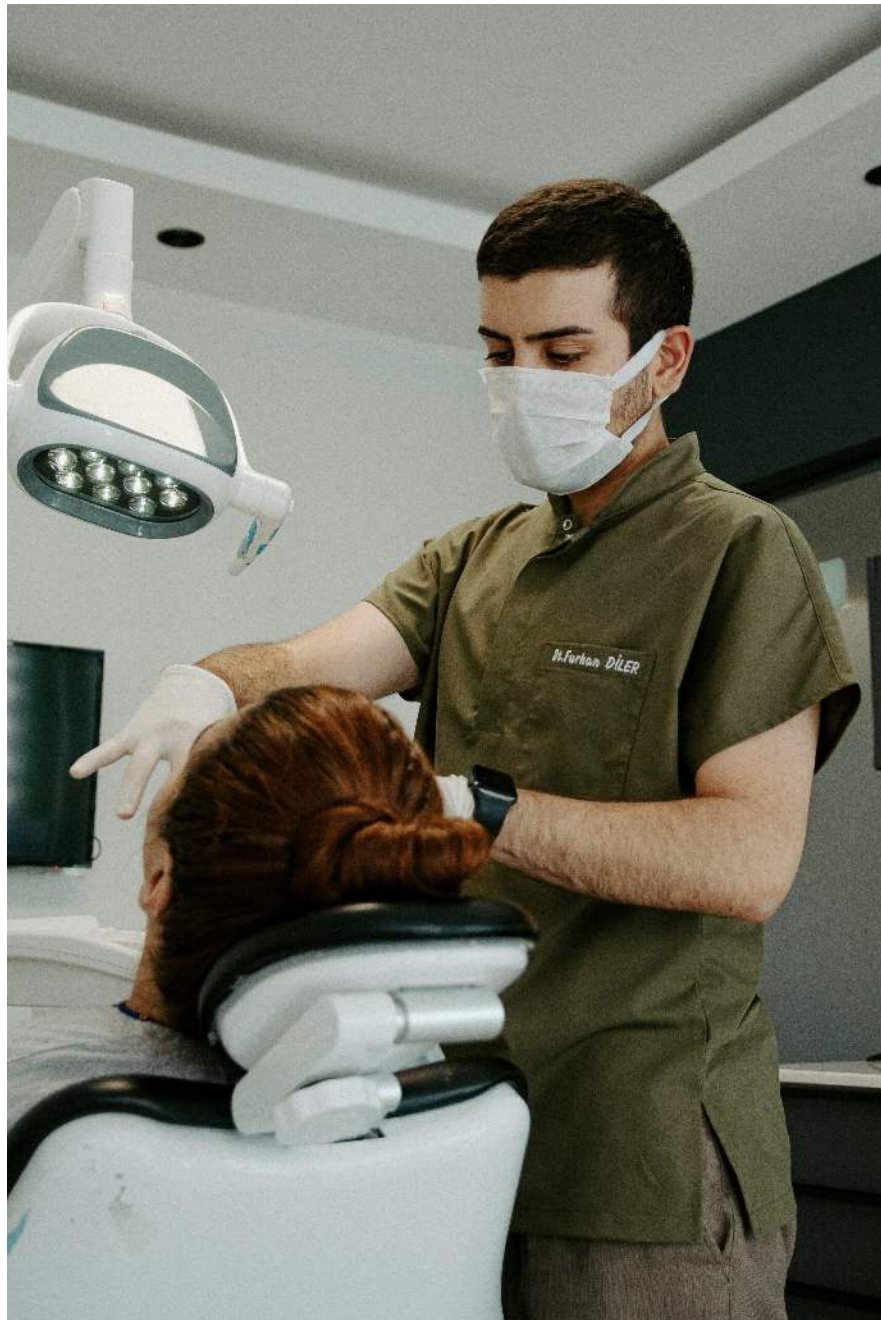
In dental products, you will typically find:

- Sodium fluoride in toothpaste and mouthwashes
- Stannous fluoride [SnF_2] a toothpaste ingredient also known for its antimicrobial properties
- Sodium monofluorophosphate [$\text{Na}_2\text{PO}_3\text{F}$] or [MFP] in many commercial toothpastes
- Acidulated phosphate fluoride [APF] in professional dental treatments

12 Dangers to Your Best Life - and How to Fix Them

The fluoride concentration varies dramatically between products. Drinking water is typically fluoridated at 0.7 parts per million [ppm], while toothpastes contain around 1,000-1,500 ppm, and professional dental treatments may contain 5,000-23,000 ppm.

While the proponents of fluoride claim that it helps with remineralization of teeth and development of stronger enamel, we must look further to determine the risks.



12 Dangers to Your Best Life - and How to Fix Them

Is it worth it?

The research is mixed as to whether fluoride contributes to dental health or not. Some experts swear by it and others claim that fluoride has no beneficial effects at all.

For our purposes here, let us ask if dental health is more related to wholesome diet and oral hygiene than to a chemical additive in our water and toothpaste.

Let us ask if the long-term health consequences of fluoride exposure are worth the potential of fewer cavities. Here are some examples for consideration:

- **Bone and Tooth Damage:** Excessive fluoride, especially during childhood, can cause dental fluorosis, leading to white streaks or brown discoloration and pitting of tooth enamel. Higher concentrations may lead to skeletal fluorosis, a condition where bones harden, become less elastic, and are prone to fractures.
- **Endocrine Disruption:** Fluoride has been linked to changes in thyroid function. A 2018 study found that fluoride levels similar to what is in drinking water could affect thyroid hormone levels, potentially contributing to fatigue, depression, and weight gain.
- **Neurotoxicity and Neurodevelopment Risks:** Recent studies, including a 2019 review, suggest fluoride may act as a developmental neurotoxicant, potentially lowering IQ in children exposed to high levels in utero. A meta-analysis of 27 studies found a correlation between elevated fluoride in drinking water and reduced IQ. The *Harvard School of Public Health* published a 2012 meta-analysis that found strong indications of neurotoxic effects.
- **Other Health Concerns:** Fluoride has been linked to potential thyroid dysfunction, kidney damage, and endocrine disruptions in some studies. For example, historical use of fluoride to treat hyperthyroidism suggests it can suppress thyroid activity at doses close to those in fluoridated water. Kidney health is another concern, with studies in China showing markers of renal damage in children exposed to water with over 2 ppm fluoride. These risks are generally tied to excessive exposure, but cumulative intake from multiple sources raises questions about long-term safety.

12 Dangers to Your Best Life - and How to Fix Them

Pineal gland calcification

In 1997, British researcher Dr. Jennifer Luke found that the pineal gland absorbs more fluoride than any other soft tissue in the body. Fluoride encourages the formation of hydroxyapatite crystals that calcify the gland over time. She also found that fluoride accumulation was associated with earlier onset of puberty in animals.

A 2019 cross-sectional study of U.S. adolescents found associations between fluoride exposure and altered sleep patterns.

Why does this matter? The pineal gland produces melatonin, the hormone that regulates sleep, circadian rhythms, and other biological functions. Some also associate it with spiritual awareness, calling it the *third eye*.

The pineal gland is a workhorse in our body's endocrine system, and we would benefit by protecting it from harm. The physiological implications of pineal calcification – like sleep disruption and hormonal imbalance – are well-documented.

Reading between the label lines

Fluoride appears under many names on product labels, making it challenging to identify. Common fluoride compounds in consumer products include:

- Sodium fluoride [NaF]
- Stannous fluoride [SnF₂]
- Sodium monofluorophosphate [MFP]
- Hexafluorosilicate [SiF₆²⁻]
- Hydrofluorosilicic acid [H₂SiF₆]
- Fluorosilicic acid
- Sodium silicofluoride
- Ammonium fluorosilicate
- Potassium fluoride [KF]

Beyond dental products and municipal water, fluoride compounds may be found in:

12 Dangers to Your Best Life - and How to Fix Them

- Non-stick cookware [as PTFE/Teflon]
- Certain medications [including some antibiotics and antidepressants]
- Processed foods [particularly those made with mechanically separated meat]
- Bottled beverages like soda, juice, tea, and beer made with fluoridated water
- Non-organic produce from pesticide residues

For those concerned about fluoride exposure, reading labels becomes an important habit, though not all sources will be clearly identified.

Where Can We Go From Here?

Now what?

By now, you may have decided to eliminate or reduce fluoride exposure in your water, food, and dental and personal hygiene products.

Here are some suggestions to get you on your way.

Managing your fluoride exposure

Water options:

- Install a Reverse Osmosis [RO] filtration system, one of the few methods effective at removing fluoride [removes 90-95%] and many other contaminants
- Consider Activated Alumina filters specifically designed to remove fluoride – Note: Standard carbon filters [Brita or PUR] do not remove fluoride, so check the description
- Test well water for naturally occurring fluoride levels
- Use spring water from tested sources with low fluoride content
- Seek fluoride-free bottled water – be sure to check labels for any added fluoride
- Find a shower head filter that removes fluoride

Dental alternatives:

12 Dangers to Your Best Life - and How to Fix Them

- Choose fluoride-free toothpastes such as Jason, Dr. Bronner, and Earthpaste
- Make your own toothpaste using ingredients like baking soda, coconut oil, and essential oils like peppermint or tea tree
- At dental visits request non-fluoridated polish [pumice] and refuse fluoride treatments
- Practice thorough oral hygiene and minimize sugar consumption
- Find fluoride-free and alcohol-free mouthwashes such as Desert Essence
- Consider natural tooth powders with ingredients like clay, baking soda, or herbal antimicrobials
- Try oil pulling / swishing with coconut or sesame oil to reduce plaque and bacteria

Food considerations:

- Choose certified organic produce to reduce fluoridated pesticide exposure
- Avoid processed foods and beverages made with fluoridated water
- Restrict tea consumption, particularly black tea which accumulates more fluoride
- Use stainless steel, cast iron, or ceramic cookware instead of non-stick options
- Read ingredient labels to identify fluoride content by its many names [look for the root fluor in the name] – this is especially significant for children and babies
- Consider re-mineralizing nutrients for dental health:
 - Vitamin K2 and D3 supplementation
 - Minerals such as calcium, magnesium, and phosphorus
 - Trace minerals from unrefined salt

Everyone has a doctor in him or her; we just have to help it in its work. The natural healing force within each one of us is the greatest force in getting well. Our food should be our medicine. Our medicine should be our food. ~ Hippocrates

12 Dangers to Your Best Life - and How to Fix Them

References

[Prenatal Fluoride Exposure and Cognitive Outcomes in Children at 4 and 6–12 Years of Age in Mexico | Environmental Health Perspectives | Vol. 125, No. 9](#)

[Association Between Maternal Fluoride Exposure During Pregnancy and IQ Scores in Offspring in Canada | Antenatal Exposures and Child Outcomes | JAMA Pediatrics | JAMA Network](#)

[Fluoride exposure from infant formula and child IQ in a Canadian birth cohort - ScienceDirect](#)

[Exposure to fluoridated water and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder prevalence among children and adolescents in the United States: an ecological association](#)

[Sources of Fluoride - Fluoride Action Network](#)

[Fluoride deposition in the aged human pineal gland - PubMed](#)

[Fluoride Facts: Sources, Exposure and Health Effects - IAOMT](#)

[Water Fluoridation: A Critical Review of the Physiological Effects of Ingested Fluoride as a Public Health Intervention - Peckham - 2014 - The Scientific World Journal - Wiley Online Library](#)

[Developmental Fluoride Neurotoxicity: A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis](#)

[Community Water Fluoridation | Fluoridation | CDC](#)

[Harvard Study on Fluoride and IQ](#)

[The Dangers of Fluoride](#)

[Luke \[1997\]: The Effect of Fluoride on the Physiology of the Pineal Gland \[Excerpts\] - Fluoride Action Network](#)

12 Dangers to Your Best Life - and How to Fix Them

[Fluoride Exposure: Neurodevelopment and Cognition](#)

[Front matter | Fluoride in Drinking Water: A Scientific Review of EPA's Standards](#)

[Is there any association between fluoride exposure and thyroid function modulation? A systematic review - PMC](#)

[Fluoride-Poison-on-Tap-Documentary-pdf.pdf](#)

[Does fluoride exposure affect thyroid function? A systematic review and dose-response meta-analysis - ScienceDirect](#)

[Pineal Gland Function: What You Should Know](#)

[Water Fluoridation Data and Statistics | Fluoridation | CDC](#)

[The Fluoride Deception - Full Length Documentary](#)

[The Dangers of Fluoride on the Brain and IQ with Dr. Mark Burhenne](#)

[The Untold Story of Fluoridation: Revisiting the Changing Perspectives - PMC](#)

[Fluoride: Risks, uses, and side effects](#)

[The Fluoride Debate: The Pros and Cons of Fluoridation - PMC](#)

[Toxic Treatment: Fluoride's Transformation from Industrial Waste to Public Health Miracle](#)

[Fluoride exposure and sleep patterns among older adolescents in the United States](#)

[Developmental fluoride neurotoxicity: an updated review - PMC](#)

[Facts About Fluoride and Water Fluoridation | Live Science](#)

12 Dangers to Your Best Life - and How to Fix Them

Marijuana

Marijuana has become widely accepted and legal in Western countries over the past decades. It is promoted socially, in entertainment, music, and art, and it is even marketed as a wellness product.

It is easy to see why people consider it harmless: it comes from a plant, it has documented medical applications, and it carries the perception of being more benign than other mood-altering substances.

However, there is another side to its use that deserves our attention and action, namely the impact of marijuana on the brain and nervous system.

While this discussion focuses on marijuana, many effects apply to all cannabis products containing THC, including edibles, concentrates, and medical formulations.

Hemp and cannabis are in the same plant species, the difference being the level of tetrahydrocannabinol [THC], with hemp having less than 0.3%. The hemp plant is used primarily for materials and CBD products, while the marijuana plant has recreational and medicinal uses.

A Bit of Background

Ancient roots to modern era

Archaeological evidence suggests that hemp was cultivated in Asia as early as 8000 BC, while cannabis used specifically for its psychoactive properties dates to at least 2500-3000 BC in regions of Central and South Asia.

Throughout history, cannabis served various purposes: as medicine in ancient China and India, as a spiritual aid in religious ceremonies, and as a source of fiber for rope and textiles. Its medicinal applications were documented in ancient Egyptian, Greek, and Islamic medical texts for treating pain, inflammation, and other conditions.

12 Dangers to Your Best Life - and How to Fix Them

From Asia, cannabis spread through the Middle East, Africa, Europe, and eventually to the Americas, where hemp was used for material things like paper and sails.

In the United States, cannabis was widely used medicinally in the 19th century before prohibition began in the early 20th century. The *Reefer Madness* film of 1936 no doubt induced fear in the public mind. The 1937 Marijuana Tax Act effectively criminalized cannabis throughout the country.

Things shifted dramatically in the 1960s and 70s when marijuana became a symbol of the counterculture and was promoted by musicians and artists, as well as in films. The U.S. Controlled Substances Act of 1970 wasn't much of a deterrent.

From the mid-1990s, states began decriminalizing medical marijuana and recreational use. Today, most U.S. states have legalized cannabis in some form. In Canada, Uruguay, South Africa, and parts of Europe, it is fully legal.

From plant to product

Cannabis cultivation today ranges from small home growers to massive industrial operations. The cannabis plant comes in various strains, categorized as indica, sativa, or hybrid, and each is bred for specific effects and THC/CBD content.

After harvesting, the plants are dried and cured. The flowers [or buds] contain the highest concentration of cannabinoids, i.e., the chemical compounds like THC and CBD that produce marijuana's effects. These buds can be smoked directly or processed further.

Simple hash production has given way to complex extraction methods using solvents like butane, CO₂, or ethanol to create highly concentrated products, containing THC levels of 60-90%, compared to traditional marijuana flowers averaging 15-25% THC.

12 Dangers to Your Best Life - and How to Fix Them

Additionally, the cannabis plant is now incorporated into countless products: edibles like gummies and chocolates, beverages, tinctures, topicals, capsules, and vape cartridges. Each delivery method affects how quickly cannabinoids enter the bloodstream and how intensely they impact the brain and nervous system.

The green gold rush

The cannabis industry has exploded into a multi-billion-dollar enterprise. In 2023, legal cannabis sales in the United States alone surpassed \$30 billion, with projections suggesting the global market could reach \$100 billion by 2030.

Major cannabis companies are now publicly traded on stock exchanges. Investment firms have created cannabis-specific portfolios, and venture capital flows readily into cannabis startups. Even traditional pharmaceutical companies have begun developing cannabis-based medications.

Tax revenue has been a significant driver of legalization efforts. States with legal recreational cannabis collect hundreds of millions in tax dollars annually. Colorado, one of the first states to legalize, has collected over \$1.5 billion in cannabis taxes since 2014, with funds supporting education, public health, and infrastructure.

For growers and retailers, profit margins can be substantial. Yet, as with other agricultural commodities, those at the production level often receive the smallest share of the end value. The highest margins tend to be in retail sales and especially in processed products like concentrates and edibles.

More than just getting high

Cannabis has developed its own rich culture and community, highlighting the social impact.

Medical marijuana patients form support groups, cannabis chefs host infused dining experiences, and wellness retreats incorporate cannabis into yoga and meditation practices. Cannabis lounges and social consumption spaces are emerging as places where consumers can gather legally.

12 Dangers to Your Best Life - and How to Fix Them

Cannabis is no longer just a substance; it has become a lifestyle choice, a medical option, and for some, part of their social world. This normalization and the perception of safety make understanding its genuine risks even more important.

Not What We Think It Is

Not like the old days

Despite being called natural, today's cannabis is far from the plant that grew wild centuries ago. As noted above, modern breeding and processing techniques have dramatically increased THC potency to levels never seen before.

Research analysis from the University of Mississippi analyzing cannabis samples showed average THC content increased from about 4% in 1995 to over 12% by 2014. Today's dispensary products regularly exceed 20-25% THC, with some concentrates reaching up to 90%. Compare this to the 3-5% range in the 1970s.

Meanwhile, CBD – a cannabinoid that may mitigate some of THC's harmful effects – has been bred out of many popular strains to maximize the high. Changing the THC ratio has significant implications for brain health and safety.

In addition, commercially grown cannabis often involves pesticides, fungicides, and plant growth regulators. A 2016 study published in the *Journal of Toxicology* found pesticide residues in 84.6% of California cannabis samples tested. When smoked or vaporized, these chemicals can transform into even more harmful compounds.

Contaminants like heavy metals, which the cannabis plant readily absorbs from soil, and molds producing mycotoxins, indicate serious concerns that are overlooked by proponents of marijuana use.

12 Dangers to Your Best Life - and How to Fix Them



The brain under influence

The human brain contains an endocannabinoid system [ECS] – a complex cell-signaling network involved in mood regulation, memory, appetite, pain sensation, and more. THC works by mimicking natural endocannabinoids, but it binds more strongly to cannabinoid receptors and disrupts their normal functioning.

I know this is complex, but bear with me and you will get the idea. When THC binds to CB1 receptors in the brain, it affects multiple regions:

12 Dangers to Your Best Life - and How to Fix Them

- In the hippocampus, it impairs cognition and short-term memory formation
- In the cerebellum, it disrupts coordination and balance
- In the basal ganglia, it alters movement control
- In the prefrontal cortex, it impairs judgment, motivation, and decision-making
- In reward pathways, it triggers dopamine release, contributing to addiction potential

Neuroimaging studies show serious structural changes in regular cannabis users. A 2014 study in the Journal of Neuroscience found that even casual marijuana use was associated with abnormalities in brain regions controlling emotion and motivation.

More alarming, longitudinal studies indicate that regular cannabis use during adolescence, when the brain is still developing, is associated with an average IQ decline of 8 points by mid-adulthood – a loss not recovered after stopping use, according to research published in Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences.

The psychosis connection

Perhaps most concerning is the growing evidence linking cannabis use to psychosis. A landmark 2019 study published in The Lancet Psychiatry analyzed data from sites across Europe and Brazil, finding that daily cannabis users were three times more likely to experience psychosis than non-users. For those using high-potency cannabis [over 10% THC], the risk of psychotic disorders increased five-fold compared to non-users.

THC/Cannabis-induced psychosis or can manifest as:

- Paranoid delusions
- Hallucinations
- Disorganized thinking
- Depersonalization [feeling detached from oneself]
- Severe anxiety and panic

12 Dangers to Your Best Life - and How to Fix Them

While temporary psychotic symptoms often resolve when THC leaves the system, research indicates cannabis use can trigger lasting psychotic disorders in predisposed individuals. A 2017 National Academy of Sciences review concluded that substantial evidence exists for cannabis as a risk factor for developing schizophrenia and other psychoses, with greater risk associated with more frequent use.

Glutamate, an excitatory neurotransmitter, plays a crucial role in learning, memory, and cognition. THC alters glutamate release patterns, potentially triggering cascading effects that can manifest as psychotic symptoms.

Other research confirms it

A 2022 meta-analysis in Psychological Medicine found that cannabis users were three times more likely to develop schizophrenia-like symptoms.

Another study from JAMA Psychiatry showed that adolescent marijuana use is associated with higher rates of suicidal ideation, depression, and self-harm.

The National Institute on Drug Abuse [NIDA] confirms that long-term marijuana use is linked to altered brain development, poor educational outcomes, and lower life satisfaction.

Modern high-THC strains and concentrates may be accelerating psychosis cases, as indicated by increased emergency room visits for cannabis-induced psychosis in states following legalization.



12 Dangers to Your Best Life - and How to Fix Them

Beyond just a habit

Despite popular claims, marijuana addiction is real and termed *cannabis use disorder* in medical literature. According to the National Institute on Drug Abuse, approximately 30% of marijuana users develop some degree of cannabis use disorder.

Research published in JAMA Psychiatry found that teens who use cannabis regularly are 130% more likely to develop an addiction than adult users.

The brain's endocannabinoid system adapts to chronic THC exposure through downregulation of the cannabinoid receptors. This creates tolerance, requiring more cannabis to achieve the same effects, and leads to withdrawal symptoms when use stops.

Cannabis withdrawal syndrome includes:

- Irritability and anger
- Insomnia and disturbing dreams
- Decreased appetite
- Restlessness
- Depression and anxiety
- Physical symptoms like headaches, sweating, and chills

These symptoms peak within the first week of quitting but may persist for weeks, making for difficult withdrawal. The psychological dependence – feeling unable to relax, socialize, or manage stress without cannabis – can be equally challenging to overcome.

Where Can We Go From Here?

Rethinking natural

One of marijuana's biggest marketing assets is the idea that it's natural—and by extension, harmless. But arsenic is natural too. So is hemlock. Just because something comes from a plant doesn't mean it's good for you.

12 Dangers to Your Best Life - and How to Fix Them

It starts with awareness

Understanding the potential risks of cannabis use is the first step toward making informed decisions. We need to acknowledge legitimate scientific concerns about a substance that has become increasingly potent and widely available.

If you currently use cannabis, consider an honest assessment of your relationship with it:

- Do you use it more frequently than intended?
- Have you tried to cut down but couldn't?
- Do you spend significant time obtaining, using, or recovering from cannabis?
- Have you given up important activities because of your use?
- Do you continue using it despite negative consequences?

Harm reduction approaches

To scale down and minimize potential damage, the following strategies may help:

- Choose lower-THC products [under 10% THC]
- Select strains with balanced THC ratios
- Avoid concentration with extremely high THC levels
- Use less frequently – occasional rather than daily use
- Don't drive or operate machinery while impaired
- Purchase from regulated sources that test contaminants
- Avoid mixing cannabis with alcohol or other drugs
- Consider vaporizing flowers instead of smoking to reduce respiratory harm

Finding support for change

If you have decided to phase out or stop cannabis use, know that support is available:

- Consider therapy approaches like Cognitive Behavioral Therapy [CBT] or Motivational Enhancement Therapy [MET]
- Explore support groups like Marijuana Anonymous or SMART Recovery
- Identify triggers for use and develop alternative coping strategies

12 Dangers to Your Best Life - and How to Fix Them

Remember that withdrawal symptoms are temporary and will fade soon enough. Stay with it.

Healthier alternatives

To replace cannabis as a tool for stress management, anxiety relief, or insomnia, there are other healthy choices:

- Regular exercise, yoga, and deep breathing
- Mindfulness meditation and relaxation techniques
- Proper nutrition and hydration
- Detoxifying supplements
- Consistent sleep schedule and optimized bedroom environment
- Limited screen time before bed
- In-person social connection
- Massage therapy

Balanced information is crucial. No matter your thoughts on cannabis use, understanding its legitimate risks allows for truly informed decision-making.

Just because you've reached rock bottom doesn't mean you have to remain there. ~Robert Downey Jr.

References

[THC Induced Psychosis - Weston A. Price Foundation \[westonaprice.org\]](https://www.westonaprice.org/)

[What are the health benefits and risks of cannabis?](#)

[The contribution of cannabis use to variation in the incidence of psychotic disorder across Europe \[EU-GEI\]: a multicentre case-control study - The Lancet Psychiatry](#)

[Effects of Cannabis Use on Human Behavior: A Call for Standardization of Cannabis Use Metrics | Psychiatry and Behavioral Health | JAMA Psychiatry | JAMA Network](#)

[The Health Effects of Cannabis and Cannabinoids: The Current State of Evidence and Recommendations for Research - PubMed](#)

12 Dangers to Your Best Life - and How to Fix Them

[Cannabis use is quantitatively associated with nucleus accumbens and amygdala abnormalities in young adult recreational users | MGH/HST Martinos Center for Biomedical Imaging](#)

[Changes in Cannabis Potency over the Last Two Decades \[1995-2014\] - Analysis of Current Data in the United States - PMC](#)

[Prevalence of Marijuana Use Disorders in the United States Between 2001-2002 and 2012-2013 - PubMed](#)

[Cannabis and psychosis - The Lancet Psychiatry](#)

[Cannabis-associated psychosis: Neural substrate and clinical impact - PubMed](#)

[Significant increase in cannabis-induced psychosis, mental health charity warns](#)

[Unintentional Pediatric Exposures to Marijuana in Colorado, 2009-2015 | Pediatrics | JAMA Pediatrics | JAMA Network](#)

[Structural and functional imaging studies in chronic cannabis users: a systematic review of adolescent and adult findings - PubMed](#)

[Cannabis Use Disorder: What It Is, Symptoms & Treatment](#)

[Determination of Pesticide Residues in Cannabis Smoke - Sullivan - 2013 - Journal of Toxicology - Wiley Online Library](#)

[Adverse health effects of non-medical cannabis use - The Lancet](#)

[NIH/National Institute on Drug Abuse](#)

[The Lancet Psychiatry Study \[High-Potency Marijuana & Psychosis\]](#)

[Suspected Suicidal Cannabis Exposures Reported to US Poison Centers, 2009-2021 | Public Health | JAMA Network Open | JAMA Network Psychological Medicine Meta-Analysis](#)

12 Dangers to Your Best Life - and How to Fix Them

[Effects of Cannabis \[Marijuana\] on Adolescent & Young Adult Brain | Dr. Andrew Huberman](#)

[Cannabis Induced Psychosis? | Weed Psychosis Signs & Symptoms!](#)

[Cannabis Use Is Quantitatively Associated with Nucleus Accumbens and Amygdala Abnormalities in Young Adult Recreational Users | Journal of Neuroscience](#)

[The relationship between cannabis use, schizophrenia, and bipolar disorder: a genetically informed study - The Lancet Psychiatry](#)

[Cannabis and psychosis: triangulating the evidence - The Lancet Psychiatry](#)

[What Happens When You Quit Marijuana?](#)

[5 Gifts That Came From Quitting Weed \[A Lot Happened In 365 Days\]](#)

[Reefer Madness \[1936\] Cult Classic | Full Movie | Subtitled](#)

[Cannabinoid Receptor 1 Gene by Cannabis Use Interaction on CB1 Receptor Density - PMC](#)

[Does Marijuana Cause Permanent Brain Damage in Adults?](#)

12 Dangers to Your Best Life - and How to Fix Them

Nicotine and Vaping

Most of us have seen someone pull out a sleek electronic device, inhale deeply, and exhale a cloud of aromatic vapor. Perhaps you've done it yourself. Vaping has become so commonplace that it barely catches our attention anymore.

Although you may not be a user, I encourage you to read this article anyway to understand the full impact of nicotine and vaping on our lives and health. It surely affects someone you know.

Vaping imagery is found in social media feeds, music videos, movies, and online content. Colorful devices and flavored pods line the shelves of convenience stores, and influencers showcase the latest popular vaping products.

As we will see, nothing is quite what it seems on the surface.

A Bit of Background

Where it all started

Tobacco use has a long history dating back to indigenous cultures in the Americas as early as 1000 BC. Native Americans cultivated tobacco for ceremonial, medicinal, and social purposes, considering it a sacred plant with spiritual significance, to be used sparingly.

When European explorers encountered tobacco in the 15th century, they brought it back to Europe, where its popularity spread. By the 17th century, tobacco had become a global commodity, with plantations established across the colonies to meet the growing demand.

Cigarettes as we know them today emerged in the mid-19th century. The invention of the cigarette-rolling machine in 1880 transformed smoking from a relatively niche activity into a mass-market phenomenon, making cigarettes affordable and accessible to the public.

12 Dangers to Your Best Life - and How to Fix Them

The 20th century saw the explosive growth of the cigarette industry, with marketing campaigns portraying smoking as sophisticated, glamorous, and even health-promoting. By the 1950s, scientific evidence began linking smoking to cancer and other diseases, but the tobacco industry's influence remained powerful.

Vaping, by contrast, has a much shorter history. Hon Lik, a Chinese pharmacist whose father was a heavy smoker who died from lung cancer, invented the modern e-cigarette in 2003. His goal was to find a way to break his own cigarette habit.

E-cigarettes entered the U.S. market around 2007 and gained popularity rapidly. By the 2010s, newer generations of vaping devices emerged, and the industry grew exponentially, particularly among young people drawn to clever designs and appealing flavors.



12 Dangers to Your Best Life - and How to Fix Them

The cultural shift

While cigarette smoking has declined in many countries due to public health campaigns and regulations, nicotine use found new life through vaping. This shift represents not only a change in nicotine delivery, but also a cultural transformation in how it is perceived.

Modern vaping culture emerged as distinct from traditional smoking culture. While cigarettes became associated with health risks and social stigma, vaping developed an image of being technologically advanced, customizable for flavors, and supposedly healthier.

Vape shops have sprung up like coffee shops, and sometimes combined, for enthusiasts of all stripes. This too has become a subculture with its own peculiarities and rituals.

Not just a passing trend

Vaping has demonstrated remarkable staying power. The global e-cigarette and vape markets were valued at over \$18 billion in 2022 and are projected to continue growing rapidly.

The addictive nature of nicotine and industry innovations have been the underpinning of its success. Think of new devices with enhanced features – longer battery life, more powerful heating elements, trendy designs, limited editions – and you have many of the same metrics as mobile phones.

Strategic marketing positions these products as lifestyle accessories rather than just nicotine delivery systems. For some, vaping is integral to their identity and social circles. Quitting then means overcoming both physical and emotional addictions.

Not What We Think It Is

The toxins inside

Cigarettes deliver nicotine with a mix of over 7,000 chemicals, including tar, carbon monoxide, and formaldehyde, which are linked to cancer, heart disease, and lung damage.

12 Dangers to Your Best Life - and How to Fix Them

One of the most pervasive beliefs about vaping is that it offers a harmless alternative to traditional cigarette smoking. This stems from early market positioning as a *healthy* choice and from the absence of combustion in the vaping process.

Less harmful does not mean harmless. E-cigarettes heat up liquids into aerosol vapors that expose consumers to numerous harmful chemicals and substances, including:

- Nicotine, a highly addictive substance that affects brain development in adolescents and young adults
- Propylene glycol and vegetable glycerin, which when heated can form carcinogenic compounds
- Flavor chemicals like diacetyl, linked to serious lung disease
- Heavy metals such as nickel, tin, and lead that leach from the heating coils
- Formaldehyde and various volatile organic compounds
- Ultrafine particles that can be inhaled deep into the lungs

The youth epidemic

The most alarming aspect of the vaping boom is its popularity among teenagers. The CDC reported that in 2022, about 2.55 million United States students used e-cigarettes.

For young people in particular, nicotine use can lead to:

- Altered brain development
- Impaired attention and memory
- Mood disorders
- Increased risk of future addiction to other substances

The allure of bright colors, sweet flavors, and social media campaigns featuring young influencers have all attracted younger users, who see vaping as trendy and rewarding.

Health impacts emerging

As happened with cigarettes years ago, modern researchers are observing patterns of health problems associated with vaping:

12 Dangers to Your Best Life - and How to Fix Them

- Respiratory issues and lung injury, including bronchitis and asthma
- Cardiovascular effects, including increased blood pressure, heart rate, and arterial stiffness, leading to the risk of heart attack and stroke
- Oral health problems such as gum inflammation, dry mouth, and increased bacteria in the mouth, leading to tooth decay and gum disease.
- Mental health impacts, leading to anxiety, irritability, and difficulty concentrating, as well as increase vulnerability to depression and anxiety disorders
- Poisoning risk when toxic liquids are swallowed or absorbed through the skin

Comparing vaping as a less harmful alternative to cigarettes sets an extremely low bar. On the contrary, the evidence is mounting to indicate that vaping carries significant health risks of its own, independent of comparisons to traditional tobacco products.

Where Can We Go From Here?

It starts with a decision

If you are smoking or vaping, you may decide to stop. That would be great for your health.

Many vape users don't realize they've developed an addiction, particularly since vaping lacks some of the obvious physical signs of traditional smoking like yellow fingers or smoky clothes.

Signs of vape dependency include:

- Irritability, anxiety, or difficulty concentrating when unable to vape
- Needing to vape first thing in the morning
- Using more e-liquid than intended or vaping more frequently than planned
- Continuing despite experiencing negative health effects
- Spending significant time, money, or effort obtaining vaping products
- Failed attempts to cut back or quit

Find your reason to break free – whether it's your appearance, your health, your family, or your self-esteem. These will get you through the withdrawal process, specifically in the first days.

12 Dangers to Your Best Life - and How to Fix Them

Practical steps to freedom

If you're ready to break free from vaping, consider these approaches:

- **Set a quit date:** Choose a specific day to stop vaping completely and mark it on your calendar.
- **Remove temptation:** Dispose of all your vaping devices, e-liquids, and accessories.
- **Identify and plan for triggers:** Plan how to handle common triggers such as stress, socializing with other vapers, drinking alcohol, or other activities you associate with vaping.
- **Consider nicotine replacement therapy [NRT]:** Products like nicotine gum, patches, or lozenges can help manage withdrawal symptoms as a short-term aid.
- **Use mobile apps:** Several free apps are designed to help people quit vaping or smoking by tracking progress, providing encouragement, and offering tips to manage cravings.
- **Practice stress management:** Healthy coping mechanisms like deep breathing, meditation, walking and other physical exercise can be crucial for your success.
- **Replace routines:** Substitute other activities for your habitual vaping or smoking routines.
- **Overcome setbacks:** If you falter, get back in the game and carry on – you can do this.

Building a nicotine-free lifestyle

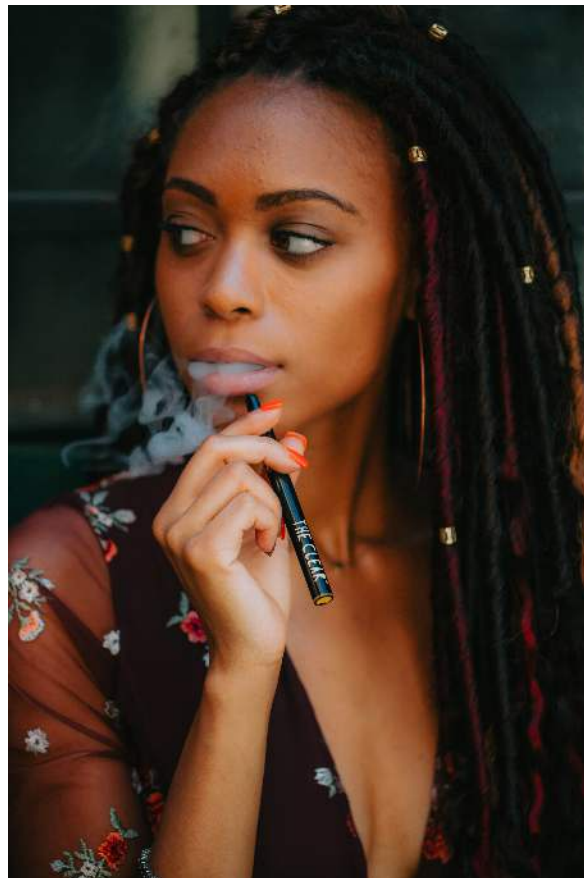
Quitting vaping or smoking isn't just about removing something from your life – it's also about adding new, healthier habits and experiences:

12 Dangers to Your Best Life - and How to Fix Them

- **Rediscover natural rewards:** Nicotine hijacks the brain's reward system, making it harder to enjoy life's natural pleasures. Rediscover simple joys like the taste of food, the satisfaction of deep breathing, or the natural energy boost from exercise.
- **Reinvent social situations:** Explore new ways to connect with others like movies, fitness classes, or outdoor adventures.
- **Repurpose saved money:** Direct the money you save toward something meaningful like a vacation fund, a hobby, or paying down debt.
- **Celebrate milestones:** Acknowledge your progress with meaningful healthy rewards at key intervals to reinforce your commitment and recognize your achievement.

Nicotine and vaping are not the harmless habits you may have thought. The toxins, the addiction, the cultural hype, the rituals all create a tangled web. But you are stronger than the habit. Take it one step at a time, lean on support, and picture the life you can build without it.

The greatest weapon against stress is our ability to choose one thought over another. ~ William James



12 Dangers to Your Best Life - and How to Fix Them

References

[E-Cigarettes \[Vapes\] | Smoking and Tobacco Use | CDC](#)

[American Lung Association - What's In an E-Cigarette?](#)

[Johns Hopkins Medicine - 5 Vaping Facts You Need to Know](#)

[Tobacco, Nicotine, and E-Cigarettes Research Report: Introduction | NIDA](#)

[Yale Medicine - Teen Vaping: What You Need to Know](#)

[Truth Initiative - The Truth About E-cigarettes and Vaping](#)

[Smokefree.gov - Understanding Withdrawal](#)

[American Heart Association - How Smoking and Nicotine Damage Your Body](#)

[Nicotine's Effects on the Brain & Body & How to Quit Smoking or Vaping | Huberman Lab Podcast #90](#)

[The hidden stroke danger of vaping | Dr. Veronica Tomor | TEDxEustis](#)

[Quit Vaping | Smokefree](#)

[E-cigarette And Vape Market Size And Share Report, 2030](#)

[The E-Cigarette Industry's Legal Troubles](#)

12 Dangers to Your Best Life - and How to Fix Them

Side Profile: Propaganda and Women

This section is just a couple of videos to illustrate a point. Smoking was never cool or liberating. Marketing and propaganda have told you what to think and what to do.

In 1929 Edward L. Bernays, nephew of Sigmund Freud, initiated a campaign to promote smoking by women, framed as liberation from the tyranny of men who wouldn't allow it.

Launched as a public demonstration in New York City at the Easter Sunday Parade, a group of women lit up their cigarettes at a pre-arranged signal and shocked the world.

As a result, cigarette sales skyrocketed, and women were allowed to smoke everywhere that men did. The rest, as they say, is history.

This isn't only about smoking. It is about the use of advertising and media to tap into emotions and control human behavior.

[Edward L. Bernays - Torches of Freedom](#)

[Torches of Freedom](#)

[He Said Cigarettes To Women Are "Torches Of Freedom"](#)



12 Dangers to Your Best Life - and How to Fix Them

by Ellen McCurdy <https://www.triumphandgrace.com/>

