

DOCTOR DIRECT

A Publication of The Institute for Natural Healing

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Welcome to *Doctor Direct*. It's your monthly insider access to the top health professionals on the cutting edge of their fields.

There's no runaround...no paperwork...no prescriptions...no co-pays... Just the information you need to take control of your health.

Are you worried about your health? Ask our doctors about your problem. Send your question to:

editor@INHresearch.com.

The answer may appear in next month's *Doctor Direct*.

*We value your privacy. Names are changed on all published questions.



Is Surgery the Only Answer?

Q: *My husband was diagnosed with some cervical stenosis and a bulging disc in the C7-C9 area at the beginning of last year. He received physical therapy and had some massages. The pain gradually subsided, but he found he could not do activities that caused him to tilt his head up anymore.*

Recently, he went to stand up from the couch and was hit with searing pain. He's just weaning off the last of the dose of prednisone his doctor gave him. (Something he was hoping to avoid in the first place.) So far, no improvement in the pain.

What is your opinion of surgery of any kind for these spine issues? And do you have any additional recommendations?

– Beth K.

A: Hi Beth,

As we age, the majority of us will have some form of neck or back pain. But even if an MRI or other diagnostic imaging reveals a problem, surgery may not be the best answer. In most cases, it should not be your first answer.

In my opinion, step one should be conservative treatment. These include acupuncture, chiropractic adjustments, and physical therapy. An even more conservative approach would be to start with natural anti-inflammatories like ginger and turmeric.

To a certain extent, pain is inflammation. Have your husband eat an anti-inflammatory diet if

he doesn't already do so. This means eliminating processed foods, products with added sugars, soda, and even grains.

For many spine issues, traction may be an answer. Check with his doctor and see if it's an option.

Most minor issues, though painful, resolve themselves in time. This can be months for some. For others, it could take years. It depends on the individual. I believe surgery should become an option only when conservative measures fail.

Before anyone considers surgery, they should ask these three questions:

- ▶ Have you had these symptoms for at least 4-6 months?
- ▶ Do your symptoms interfere with your quality of life (ex: poor sleep, keeps you from daily activities)?
- ▶ Have you tried or exhausted conservative treatments?

If your husband can answer "no" to any of these questions, I would say it is best to not jump right into surgery. However, there are certain instances where I would encourage surgery sooner.

These include when patients have significant spinal cord or root compression, muscle weakness or atrophy, or loss of sensation in their extremities.

Nobody wants to hear they need spine surgery. Talk to your husband's doctor. See if you can reevaluate the situation. If there are more conservative options you haven't explored yet—like acupuncture or injections—give them a try.

Don't be afraid to ask a lot of questions or get a second opinion. I believe the more your husband educates himself, the better his outcome will be.

**Best,
Dr. Wayne J. Broth**

Natural Strep Throat Protocol

Q: My grandchildren are strep throat magnets, and their mom is pregnant. Do you know of any natural solutions that can help them prevent it—or fight it off fast?

– John M.

A: Hi John,

Strep throat is a highly contagious infection caused by the *Streptococcus pyogenes*

bacteria. Alone it is not considered dangerous. But if left untreated it can cause dangerous inflammatory illnesses such as rheumatic fever, or heart and kidney problems. These rare but potentially serious complications are why most doctors recommend an antibiotic to treat it.

Now, your timing with this question couldn't be any better... My family has spent the last month dealing with strep. And being 35 weeks pregnant during my strep throat diagnosis, I refused to use antibiotics. Instead, I managed to treat it on my own.

My 3-year-old daughter brought it home from school about a month ago. One Saturday evening, she suddenly became very tired. She fell asleep right on my yoga mat while I was practicing. This was very odd behavior for her. She does not nap anymore and generally is full of energy.

Over the course of the next week she seemed more tired than normal. Her appetite for food and fluid was greatly reduced, her nose was a bit runny, but her spirits were high.

Unfortunately, her appetite continued to decrease and by the next week I was pretty concerned. She hadn't had a bowel movement in five days, so I called her pediatrician who could not see us until the next day.

During our appointment with her pediatrician—a D.O. who is very conservative with medical treatments and holistically minded—I was surprised that my daughter tested positive for strep throat. (She never complained of a sore throat.)

Antibiotics were prescribed, and I hesitantly decided that she needed to take them. We didn't provide the full 20-dose course as recommended, but we did give her six doses.

She was like a new girl.

Since she was doing so well and was no longer contagious, I felt confident treating her with herbs, probiotics, and only natural treatments from there on out.

(Note: There is some controversy regarding the need to take the full course of antibiotics. A Harvard study found that the full courses were often just as effective as taking half or even a third of the doses.ⁱ For example, three days of treating pneumonia with antibiotics was just as effective as using them for 10 days. The longer you treat with antibiotics, the more good bacteria you kill!)

Soon after my daughter recovered, it was my turn.

My throat was swollen and painful, I had a low-grade fever, and I was exhausted. I was diagnosed with strep throat at an urgent care clinic, and prescribed antibiotics.

It is my professional opinion that the use of antibiotics during pregnancy should be avoided whenever possible. This is to ensure your baby is born with a strong immune system. Although I took the script with me in case things got out of hand, I instead followed a strict natural protocol:

Prepare and clean your environment. All of my daughters' bedding, clothing, toothbrushes, and hygiene items were either sterilized or disposed of. Then we vacuumed and sanitized our home in addition to using two HEPA filters in our room while we slept at night. We did this to avoid spreading bacteria and re-infecting my daughter, which is very common with strep.

This is why it is important to take your infection seriously, even if you are an adult. If you do not completely rid yourself of the bacteria, you will continue to spread it, even if you are symptom free. Reinfection can occur at any time and at any age.

Rest. This is hard to do as a pregnant mom, but I rested as often as possible. We tried to avoid leaving the house. I also made sure to relax by taking herbal baths nightly while listening to soothing music.

Keep your mouth clean. Maintaining optimal oral hygiene can make a big difference. Brush your teeth (and tongue) three times a day and rinse your mouth out regularly. You may also wish to gargle with this salt water and bee balm tincture:

Mix one-quarter teaspoon sea salt and a dropper full of bee balm tincture (you can substitute or add oregano, thyme, or Echinacea as you wish) and mix it with some warm water. Gargle as far back in your throat as able for 30-60 seconds three to four times at night and in the morning.

Another natural solution for a clean mouth is oil pulling. Simply swish some coconut oil around your mouth just like it was mouthwash. Coconut oil has antimicrobial and antibacterial properties. Do this for 5-10 minutes once a day and then spit it out when you're done.

Drink herbal tea. I added a teaspoon of anise and lemon balm to my teas. Anise is not only great to defeat infection, but is soothing to the throat. It's safe during pregnancy and tastes great. Lemon balm is antiviral and calming. It also can help the body sweat out microbes and toxins. Take a teaspoon of each herb and steep in 8-12 ounces of hot water for 15 minutes. Strain and drink two to three times per day.

Take the right vitamins. When you have strep, immune support is extra important. Vitamins A and D3 are my go-to choices. You can take 1,000-5,000 IUs of D3 a day when you're pregnant. For your vitamin A supplement, do not exceed 3,000 IUs if pregnant or lactating.

Fight bad bacteria with probiotics. Take a probiotic supplement with Lactobacillus, Acidophilus, Bifidobacterium, and Saccharomyces if you can find one. If you take an antibiotic, double your probiotic dose. And don't take it until at least two hours after taking the antibiotic. This will help keep the good bacteria alive.

Following this protocol, my full recovery took only a week! I hope it helps your family, John!

**Best Wishes,
Shannon Amori, N.D.**

What's the Best Way to Get More Fiber?

Q: I need to start eating more fiber for my heart and digestion. But I'm trying to avoid grains as much as possible. What's the best way to go about doing this?

– Lauren G.

A: Hi Lauren,

I do believe that dietary fiber is good for your heart. But that's because it promotes digestive health.

Fiber is advertised as the solution for constipation. But in my mind fiber's most important function is to feed your gut bacteria—the microbiome. The goal is to make a complex, thriving, and busy population of stomach microbes.

Our gut bacteria are key to a strong immune system. But so are our levels of inflammation, metabolic balance, nervous system function...and of course, our digestive health.

A healthy microbiome leads to bowel regularity in every (gross) detail. This means stools one to three times daily. They should be well-formed and sink in the toilet bowl. And you shouldn't have problems with excess flatulence or straining.

Now to answer your question... What the best source of fiber?

I agree about avoiding grains. Patients with inflammatory bowel especially should stay away from them. Fibers like wheat or oat bran work—in part—by irritating the lining of the bowel. This causes a reflexive increase in motility. I don't want my bowel lining to be irritated... I want it to be healthy and happy.

You should strive for a mixture of soluble and insoluble fiber.

Soluble fiber mixes with water. It forms a gelatinous mixture and is soothing to the intestinal lining. It's plentiful in carrots, winter and summer squash, starchy tubers, root vegetables, and plantains.

Insoluble fiber doesn't mix with water. Too much can be irritating, but it's good in moderation. Leafy greens, cruciferous vegetables (cabbage, broccoli, and cauliflower), green beans, and peas of all sorts are good sources. You can also get it from bell peppers, eggplant, celery, and alliums. The cabbage family ferments nicely as sauerkraut for people who are intolerant of fresh cabbage.

In the process of healing an unbalanced digestive tract, I might add supplemental soluble starch, either as potato starch (particularly helpful for balancing blood sugar problems) or acacia starch.

Freshly ground flax seeds and chia seeds are high in fiber and offer other health benefits. But these can irritate some people. Psyllium, although soluble, is usually too forceful at promoting

regularity rather than balanced health.

The short answer? Start by filling 3/4 of every plate with vegetables. Have a piece or two of fruit in the evening. Then you can get a little more adventurous.

**To Your Health,
Dr. Deborah Gordon**

THE DOCTORS



Dr. Wayne J. Broth, D.C., D.O., L.Ac

Dr. Wayne J. Broth is a spine specialist and surgical consultant. He works with [Orthopedic and Laser Spine Surgery](#), the [Center for Artificial Disc Replacement](#), and [New Jersey Spine and Orthopedic](#). They have offices throughout Florida and New Jersey.

Dr. Broth works alongside Dr. Scott Katzman, M.D., who was voted one of the country's top 10 spinal surgeons by Newsweek in 2012. This award-winning team specializes in pain management and minimally invasive procedures. Incisions are smaller than a postage stamp.

Dr. Broth is also co-owner of [Gardens CrossFit](#) in Palm Beach Gardens, Fla. It's one of the top 15 CrossFit gyms in the country. Dr. Broth currently sees patients—by appointment only—in Palm Beach Gardens, Fla.



Dr. Deborah Gordon, M.D.

Dr. Gordon believes the basis of all health is a nutrient-dense diet. Most modern foods are poison to many—if not all—people. Many diseases—acute and chronic—are not pharmaceutical deficiencies. They're nutritional deficiencies.

When you choose integrative medical care wisely it can greatly improve your quality of life.

At [DrDeborahMD.com](#), she invites you to look through an online version of her practice. She'll show you how the choices you make can determine your health. You'll get the truth about treatment options—not just prevention. Her weekly E-Letter offers you insight on preventing and reversing disease naturally.



Shannon Amori, N.D., R.D.

Shannon Amori has studied health and nutrition for over a decade, working with hundreds of patients and clients. Feeling limited within the medical-clinical setting, Shannon's practice is now holistic and non-invasive. It's client-centered and based on natural science.

Dr. Amori can help you regain health through the main pillars of traditional naturopathy. She offers clients in-person and online consultations. Shannon also offers natural, organic and/or wild-crafted herbal products at her shop, [Dandelion Botanics](#).

You can see her full list of services—and get great info—at her blog, [Really Heal](#). Don't forget to like and follow her on [Facebook](#).

THE DOCTORS



Dr. Guido Tricot, M.D.

Dr. Tricot is a hematologist and Professor Emeritus of Internal Medicine at the University of Iowa. His recent clinical studies focus on not only attacking myeloma cells, but the microenvironment that supports their growth and survival.

Over the last 15 years, the median survival for patients newly diagnosed with myeloma has, in large part due to this work, increased from 2.5 to more than 10 years. The complete remission rate has increased from 5% to 80%. A third of all patients are still in complete remission 10 years later.

For more information on Dr. Tricot, please [visit his page on the University of Iowa website](#).



Dr. Ruth Hoover, M.D.

Dr. Ruth Hoover believes in searching for the underlying root causes of our ailments and rebalancing our God-given chemistry naturally. She is passionate about preventing disease and maintaining vitality with natural hormone replacement therapy.

Her training includes a BS in Nutrition from the University of Minnesota and an MD from the Medical College of Pennsylvania. She is board certified by the American Academy of Anti-Aging & Regenerative Medicine and the American Academy of Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation.

For more information on Dr. Ruth, and to see how she can help you reach your best health, please visit her practice website, [OptiHealth MD](#).

1. <https://www.health.harvard.edu/blog/is-the-full-course-of-antibiotics-full-of-baloney-2017081712253>

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