

# 4 Energy Draining Food Habits

Energy is essential to survive our hectic lifestyles and to enjoy them too. But, the bitter fact is that most of us have just enough energy to get through the day.

Catering to the many needs of fulfilling various duties during the day, you are left with absolutely no energy to look after your children, have fun with your family, and devote time to your favorite hobbies.

Working women are highly affected because they are required to balance their work, home, and family. When inquired as to how they cope with their daily routine, most working women answered that they feel as they are left with only one-third of the energy to manage their duties. The lack of energy and all day fatigue has even caused them to lose the zeal to live life to the fullest.

According to them, they are doing all the things perfectly such as eating a healthy diet containing whole foods; consuming sufficient fluids and water to stay hydrated; and sleeping adequately to remain energetic, but something is still lacking. On further investigation, it was found that they are habitually choosing the wrong foods and those culprit foods were draining their overall energy.

If you also feel that you do not remain energetic the whole day in spite of paying attention to your diet, then you must be eating energy-sapping foods. Below are listed some of the common mistakes people commit regarding their food habits:

## **1. Binging on too many carbohydrates and avoiding proteins.**

The obsession with eating excessive carbs is slowly and gradually dying among healthy and sensible eaters. Though you are strictly avoiding starch carbs such as potatoes and breads, you are still missing out on something that you should not include overly in your diet. Eating fruits and vegetables

is great for your health, but taking them solely for breakfast or lunch is doing you more harm than good.

You may not realize, but your body needs protein for conserving energy and preventing blood sugar crashes that often occur from consuming excessive carbohydrates. Yes, here we are talking about fruits and vegetables, and they are carbohydrates. Experts advise people to include a healthy protein shake with their breakfast for controlling blood sugar levels all day long and for keeping their energy intact.

A healthier way to start your day is by drinking a gluten, soy, and dairy free protein shake along with a high quality protein powder, which should be preferably prepared from pea protein, chia, or rice. In case you don't like protein shakes, you may consider eating two egg whites, some turkey sausages or another food rich in protein (at least 20 grams) before leaving your home in the morning.

The breakfast of a typical American involves muffins, bagels, and croissants; these usually drain their energy and cause them to snack more after a few hours. These extra snacks do the same—'sap your energy!'

**2. You are not eating frequently.** People who skip meals and remain without food for several hours usually put their body at stress. During your hectic day, it is not a choice but a necessity to have a hearty breakfast or healthy lunch to keep you energetic.

When individuals do not eat every three to four hours, their blood sugar level declines, which in turn is considered a crisis by your body and it slows down its working. In order to maintain your blood sugar level, your body triggers your adrenal glands to secrete more amounts of cortisol that work to increase your blood sugar.

It is natural to feel drained out, fatigued, and exhausted when your body uses cortisol reserve to manage your blood

sugar level. So, don't mess up with your body. Ensure to include healthy meals at least three times and snacks two times a day to keep your energy at peak for the entire day.

**3. Having no allergies does not guarantee that all foods are good for you.** Even if you are not dealing with celiac disease (allergies to certain foods such as gluten) you can still have a negative response to some types of foods. This is because food allergies are different from food sensitivities. If your lips don't plump after eating certain foods or you are found to be free of allergies, this does not mean that every food you eat is safe for consumption.

You will experience gas, abdominal pain, or bloating after some time of consuming foods you are sensitive to. Other reactions that you may suffer from are joint pain, skin disorders such as acne, stubborn weight, and fatigue. All of these symptoms may not appear immediately, but slowly, which leaves you with no clue why you feel dreadful and low in energy most of the time.

Dairy and gluten are two of the most common food products that cause food sensitivities. Gluten sensitivity is very common these days and causes various symptoms such as migraine headaches, bloating, and brain fog. It may even stimulate the onset of autoimmune diseases in a few rare cases.

Dairy can also cause most of these symptoms along with the drop in your energy level. You need to remember that in spite of avoiding the consumption of milk or yogurt, you may still consume them in various other forms. For instance, dairy-based additives such as casein and whey snuck are contained in food products like canned chicken broth, chip dip, and thickened soups and sauces.

To ensure that you are not suffering from gluten and dairy sensitivities, try eliminating gluten and dairy foods for a week and notice how you feel.

**4. You think sugar only makes you fat.** We are all aware of the fact that sugar is deposited in the body as fat. This is why when one plans to lose weight, he avoids sugary foods. Well, statistics indicate that the average American consumes at least 25 teaspoons of sugar every day 'unknowingly.' You may be amazed to learn, but sugar is present in almost every type of food such as salad dressing, granola bars, ketchup, as well as hamburger buns. Moreover, lots of organic foods are bursting with various kinds of sugar like dates, molasses, and honey.

Sugar in any form is not healthy for your body since it causes your blood sugar to spike and crash, which in turns leads to a quick decline in your energy level. It also stimulates your probability of becoming diabetic or insulin resistant in the long run. Be sure to go through the ingredient label carefully before purchasing any food product. If the amount of sugar is more than six grams, ditch that product.

It is important to note that when you are tempted to eat anything sugary, it means that you are low in blood sugar. In such cases, it is recommended having an apple along with some almonds or almond butter.

Eating the right kinds of foods at the recommended times can drastically change the way you feel while helping you easily deal with the challenges that each day stores for you. If you are ready to change some of your old eating habits, then you can feel more concentrated and energetic than ever before.

***Don Colbert, M.D.*** has been board certified in Family Practice for over 25 years and practices anti-aging and Integrative medicine. He is a New York Times Bestselling author of books such as The Bible Cure Series, What Would Jesus Eat, Deadly Emotions, What You Don't Know May be Killing You, and many more with over 10 million books sold. He is the Medical Director of the Divine Health Wellness Center in Orlando, Florida where he has treated over 50,000 patients. He is also

*a internationally known expert and prolific speaker on Integrative Medicine.*

For the original article, visit .

---

## **God vs. Sports: What Defines Your Identity?**

Wearing a 49ers jersey to the Seahawks stadium was like going into the lions' den. Because of whom I represented, I faced jeers and cheers, love and hate, hugs and mugs of beer, acceptance and rejection, affirmation and confrontation.

It was a NFL playoff game with the Super Bowl appearance in the balance, but my jersey taught me a lesson about "fandamonium" and the "brand" I represent. Hoping you will take a seat in the classroom as well.

The recent World Cup brought the world together, but make no mistake—every individual drew a line at their international border, marking their *identity* and proudly telegraphing how they would spend *energy* and *express* their loyalty.

My passion for my sports teams is a matter of personal pride. I have a deep national, cultural or relational bond there. No one who knows me is really surprised. I am competitive, loyal and love sport.

But I wonder, when push comes to shove, if God's men are more inclined to represent their team or country in a more energetic manner than their Savior? So, here are three lessons to learn from our affection for sport that we can apply to ourselves.

**1. Where you're from is who you are.** What are your roots personally? Wearing your colors typically represents where you are from i.e., your country, state, region or city. One tracks naturally with the other because together they create an *identity*.

It's easy to wear a jersey from our hometown. We see someone else wearing our colors and we relate. We're rooted. Our identity is supported by others from our locality. This sporting dimension, according to the Bible, operates the exact same way in the spiritual dimension of our lives. Where you are from is who you are:

*"But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ" (Phil. 3:20).*

See the connection between "citizenship" and eagerness. By nature of salvation—i.e. Jesus sacrificing his life to bear our sins—we have become citizens of heaven and heirs in the family of God. That's who we are, where we're from and to whom we belong. Naturally, that's whom we should represent. So, why do men prefer to identify with their physical locality rather than their eternal heritage? It's because men feel safer identifying with their temporary homeland than their eternal one. One identity is stronger than the other.

The Bible refers to those who choose to follow Jesus as heirs of God, and the Heavenly Kingdom is their truest country of origin and primary identity.

**2. Our energy is spent based on our identity.** Once you know your identity, putting energy behind it is also easy. For sports fans, we wear our team colors and jerseys, coordinate gatherings, plan to attend or host, discipline our schedules, buy gear and equip ourselves for the tailgate with the big-screen display. Then, we read all the articles about our team and watch ESPN for the news so we know the latest about our beloved team.

But if we were to apply that same energy towards our real identity, we would be proud of serving Jesus, hosting men's gatherings, planning in advance, buying resources to support our faith, and reading the Bible to know our Father better. Energy always follows identity. Our locale is merely temporary. But our destination is eternity.

**3. We express loyalty based on where we invest our energy.** If you're from Denver, you'll spend energy on Broncos gear and gatherings, and, during the game, you'll cheer and drink with every point put on the scoreboard.

Cheering, a form of worship, is an expression of loyalty which is based on where we've invested our energy, because of our identity.

While sports create opportunities to express our identities and energies, if we connect with our eternal heritage, we'll express our loyalties with praise, worshipping the "I am" who loved and created us in the first place.

Here's the dangerous part. If you express your team loyalty in a crowd of random—or partial—observers, you may be persecuted. Wearing a 49ers jersey at the Seahawks' home field brought me much closer to persecution than I could have imagined.

Still, if we are willing to express our faith in God in a manner others may see it, then we will be rewarded.

*"Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you" (Matt. 5:11-12).*

We can learn from Timothy who breaks down this simple argument:

*"But you, man of God (identity), flee from all this, and*

*pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance and gentleness (energy). Fight the good fight of the faith. Take hold of the eternal life to which you were called when you made your good confession in the presence of many witnesses (expression.” (1 Tim. 6:11-12).*

Feelings run deep on both sides of the ball. But if we could only translate our identity, energy and expression in our lives for Christ, we could serve a higher purpose; much higher than who wins the big game.

**Kenny Luck**, founder of Every Man Ministries, men’s pastor at Saddleback Church, and ChristianMingle advisory board member, provides biblically oriented teaching and leadership for men and pastors seeking relevant, timely material that battle cultural, worldly concepts threatening men and God’s men. Follow Kenny and Every Man Ministries now on Facebook, Twitter (@everyMM) and YouTube.

*For the original article, visit .*

---

## **4 Ways to Put Out the (Acid Reflux) Fire in Your Belly**

Acid reflux (heartburn) is triggered when stomach acid backs up into the esophagus. It can make you feel as though someone has lit a small bonfire in your chest, and it’s burning its way up to your neck.

GERD is short for gastroesophageal reflux disease, which is frequent heartburn that can lead to long-term problems. It can cause inflammation and strictures in your esophagus. It may even lead to cancer. There is a great deal you can do to heal

this problem:

- **Limit or omit coffee and alcohol.** Caffeine and alcohol can weaken the lower esophageal sphincter (LES) and induce occasional or recurring acid reflux. Drink no more than one cup of coffee a day; for some people even that is too much. Drink no more than three alcoholic drinks per week. These beverages can weaken the LES and induce occasional or recurring acid reflux.
- **Mix 1 to 2 teaspoons of Bragg's raw apple cider vinegar in water; drink 15 minutes before a meal.** Many people mistakenly believe all acid reflux and indigestion is caused by an overproduction of acid. They take antacids, which can make them worse. The latest research shows it's actually the opposite for many people: There is too little acid produced to adequately digest the food eaten. Take one to two capsules of HCL Betaine with food (never on an empty stomach). This will especially help with protein digestion. HCL should never be taken by anyone who is also using any kind of anti-inflammatory medication such as corticosteroids (e.g. predisone), aspirin, Indocin, ibuprofen (e.g. Motrin, Advil, etc.) or other NSAIDS. These drugs can damage the gastrointestinal lining, and supplementary HCL might aggravate this, increasing the risk of stomach bleeding or ulcer.
- **Mix baking soda** (bicarbonate of soda; don't use baking powder) to increase alkalinity at the time of reflux. One tablespoon in six ounces of water can give immediate relief from heartburn.
- **Increase enzymes.** This can easily be done by drinking fresh vegetable juices everyday—drink two glasses per day. Also, eat more organic raw food. Raw foods are rich in enzymes.

**Cherie Calbom**, M.S., C.N., is the author of 24 books, including *The Juice Lady's Remedies for Allergies and Asthma*,

The Juice Lady's Remedies for Stress and Adrenal Fatigue, The Juice Lady's Big Book of Juices and Green Smoothies *and* Juicing, Fasting and Detoxing for Life. *She has devoted her life to teaching people how to care for their bodies so they might complete their destiny. For more information, visit her at .*

*For the original article, visit .*

---

## **From Day 1, Gaza History Reflects Volatility and Hatred**

Last Sunday, I spoke to about 1,000 people and I asked them a simple question. *Who controlled Gaza before Israel took over the area in the Six-Day War?*

For about a minute no one answered. Finally a woman yelled out the right answer. I don't write this to shame the congregation—not at all—the results would have been similar in any U.S. congregation. The fact remains that people do know the history of the relationship, and it is essential in understanding the rights and wrongs of the conflict, especially in light of what is going on in the area at present.

**1948:** Israel declares independence. The War of Independence ensues, whereby five Arab counties attacked Israel and as many as 140,000 Arabs fled from Israel to Gaza. To be clear, David Ben Gurion, in Israel's Declaration of Independence encouraged the Arabs to stay and help build the new state. He guaranteed them the same freedoms Jewish Israelis would enjoy. Still, for

many reasons (you can check this out to review the reasons for the exodus) the Arabs fled.

**Post War:** When the war ended, Egypt controlled Gaza (there is your answer) and turned it into a prison. Even Al Jazeera, the openly pro-Arab, anti-Israel news outlet, recognized how poorly the Egyptians treated their Arab cousins.

Unlike the West Bank, which was effectively annexed by Jordan in 1950 and its population offered Jordanian citizenship, Egypt maintained Gaza under military rule until a legislative council was elected in 1957. Moreover, unlike Jordan, Egypt had little ties with or concern for Gaza, and thus the Strip received little attention or investment in infrastructure between 1948 and 1967.

The world was silent. No one cared for these Arab refugees. As long as Israel could not be blamed, it was not an issue. "In 1955, one observer (a member of the United Nations Secretariat) noted that 'For all practical purposes it would be true to say that for the last six years in Gaza over 300,000 poverty-stricken people have been physically confined to an area the size of a large city park.'"

**1967:** The Six-Day War effectively liberated the Gaza inhabitants. That's right, I said *liberated*. In the early years, Israelis and Gazan Arabs got along just fine. My wife used to go into Gaza with her father as a child to buy vegetables. It was safe. They were happy to be out from under Egyptian control.

**EARLY 1970s–1987:** The PLO turns Gazans against Israel. Frequent conflicts erupt between Israel and Gaza. In 1987, the first Intifada was unleashed against Israel where Arab youths, armed with large rocks, targeted both Israeli soldiers and citizens. Israelis were shot at on the highway and sometimes attacked in their homes.

**Post Gulf War:** President Bush Sr., after crushing Saddam

Hussein's attack on Kuwait, calls for peace between Israel and the Palestinians. The first peace conference is held in Madrid. Under Clinton, Yitzak Rabin allowed the PLO into Israel to become the de-facto leadership of the Palestinian people. Things were quiet for a season and there was much cooperation between Israelis and Palestinians. The PLO became the Palestinian Authority and governed the West Bank and Gaza.

**Late 1990s:** Palestinian suicide bombers unleash terror in Israel. Despite the progress and cooperation between Arabs and Jews, there were many Arab groups that did not want peace with Israel. Over the next decade, 171 suicide bombers would explode themselves in an effort to kill as many Israelis as possible and cause terror throughout the country.

**2000-2005:** Palestinians unleash the Second Intifada against Israel. Israel, in defense, builds a Security Fence, which causes the rebellion to fizzle out, as it effectively stopped the suicide bombings.

**2005:** The terror group Hamas wins a third of the Palestinian legislative council.

**2006:** Hamas wins a majority of the Palestinian legislative council.

**2007:** Hamas takes over the Gaza strip from Fatah (PLO).

**Back up to 2005:** Israel, in a controversial move, evacuates Gaza, while gaining nothing in exchange from the Palestinians. Hamas and other groups had shot 1000s of Rockets over the previous years. Israel wrongly though, *if we leave, they will stop*. Actually, since we left Gaza, they have shot over 9,000 rockets and missiles at Israeli population centers. What country would tolerate this? What is even more sickening is that Hamas uses women and children as human shields, willing to sacrifice them for their own purposes. Israel has done far more to protect Gazans than their elected leaders.

**2005-2009:** Hamas sees Israel's evacuation in 2005 as a sign of weakness and unleashes thousands of Qassam Rockets and Grad Missiles against population centers in southern Israel. Finally, in late 2008, after Israel had endured 3,000 rockets just that year, she invades Gaza in Operation Cast Lead. After 22 days, Israel leaves Gaza, feeling that it had greatly neutralized Hamas' ability to attack Israel.

**2012:** After increases in rocket attacks, Israel steps up attacks and kills three Hamas operatives, including the top military commander, who was responsible for the capture and imprisonment of Gilad Shalit.

Hamas declares that Israel has "opened the gates of hell," and unleashes 275 rockets against Israel today, including three that reach the Tel Aviv area, showing that they now have the capability of killing Israelis in its largest population center—crossing all red lines.

Israel calls up reserves and seeks to neutralize threat. Morsi of Egypt brokers ceasefire.

**Present Day:** After three Israeli teens are murdered by Hamas activists, an Arab boy is killed by Jews. Hamas takes advantage of the unrest and unleashes 1,000 rockets against Israel in one week. Israel calls up 40,000 reservists. One Israeli death has resulted from direct rocket fire. The Iron Dome has a 90 percent success rate in taking down rockets. As of Thursday, 193 Palestinians are dead, many who were human shields at the request (insistence) of Hamas. Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas calls it genocide, but the world is not buying it. Hamas unleashed this war to increase its credibility in the Arab world. However, they may have miscalculated. Even the Palestinian United Nations representative admits that Israel is conducting this war in a humane way while Hamas is committing crimes against humanity.

**Ron Cantor** is the director of *Messiah's Mandate*

*International in Israel, a Messianic ministry dedicated to taking the message of Jesus from Israel to the ends of the earth (Acts 1:8). Cantor also travels internationally teaching on the Jewish roots of the New Testament. He serves on the pastoral team of Tiferet Yeshua, a Hebrew-speaking congregation in Tel Aviv. His newest book is Identity Theft. Follow him at @RonSCantor on Twitter.*

*For the original article, visit .*

---

## **What Struggling Men Have in Common**

Working with men is my vocation, and I love it. However, every day I hear from men whose lives, marriages, and families are falling apart or barely hanging on.

Often it's because of emotional neglect—chasing some dream that didn't include their families. Other times it's because of mishandling money, substance abuse, pornography, prostitution, lapses in integrity, and so on.

While there is no common denominator for why men fail, most of these men do tend to have one thing in common. If they are Christians, it is uncanny how most of these men were part of a small group they no longer attend. As a result, they have become isolated.

Isolation is the devil's No. 1 strategy. Why? Because it's so effective. We all know from the National Geographic Channel that the lion never goes after the herd. The lion always attacks the stray ... the one who has become isolated. That's because every predator understands the strategic value of

isolation—whether in the animal kingdom, human traffickers, or sexual predators.

Men are particularly vulnerable to this strategy of isolation. The reasons why men are so vulnerable is a different article, but what's the solution? First Peter 5:8 puts it this way: "Stay alert! Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour." Easily the best way for a man to execute 1 Peter 5:8 is to be part of a group—like the one they used to attend.

Are you actively part of a group? If so, congratulations. There is safety in numbers. If not, I exhort you as your brother to find, treasure, and fully appreciate a group of brothers with whom you can be honest, open, and vulnerable.

While there's no law that says you have to do such a thing, why wouldn't you? Only because of the temptation to live in isolation—the isolation the devil adroitly deploys to dull our love for Jesus.

And if you are a leader, please, please, please build a sustainable ministry model in your church that encourages all of your men to get into small groups over time. Yes, pray for their families, preach them the gospel and pick them up when they fall. But make sure you don't sentence them to try and live the Christian life in isolation because isolation is what men who fail have common.

Until every church disciples every man ...

**Patrick Morley** is founder and CEO of *Man in the Mirror*. After building one of Florida's 100 largest privately held companies, in 1991, he founded *Man in the Mirror*, a nonprofit organization to help men find meaning and purpose in life. Dr. Morley is the best-selling author of *The Man in the Mirror*, *No Man Left Behind*, *Dad in the Mirror*, and *A Man's Guide to the Spiritual Disciplines*.

For the original article, visit .

---

## 5 Advantages to Doing Devotionals With Your Spouse

I can still remember opening all of the wedding gifts my beautiful wife and I received after we first got married. They ranged anywhere from a “sweet” vacuum, a nice new set of silverware and a lot of towels.

These gifts aren't meant to be like what you receive on your birthday, but they do come in handy. We made the best of it all and continued to open.

Toward the end of the pile, I opened up a smaller gift. It was a couple's marriage devotional. The title of it was *Night Light*. I believe you can still pick this one up and I'd highly recommend it.

My new wife and I gave it a quick browse, smiled, and added it to the pile of other stuff. The problem was that most of the stuff was just, well stuff, but that little devotional was a great tool that we had no idea we needed. We were about to learn the hard way...

Let's move forward four years, when our marriage was on the rocks. I'll be honest; we were on the brink of divorce. Years of not communicating well, not working together and keeping God on the back burner took its toll.

We had stashed the little devotional I mentioned earlier away somewhere. We only made it through a few of the chapters. We thought we were above all that Jesus stuff. We were wrong.

Fast-forward to present day and my wife and I are doing much better. Through the help of close friends and our pastors, we were able to give our marriage over to Christ and re-build our marriage. We are now going through the "Love and Respect" devotional. We try to do it at least once a week.

We don't always accomplish it week to week, but we never let it go too long without doing it. This simple tool has made a huge impact in our marriage and it can impact your marriage as well. Not sure? Doesn't sound manly enough for you husbands out there? Let's dig in...

Here are 5 advantages to doing devotions with your spouse:

**1. It keeps God at the center.** It's simple, when each spouse is seeking to keep Christ at the center of themselves, it will ultimately keep Christ at the center of their marriage. As husbands, it is our responsibility to make sure we are keeping Christ first in our lives. Personally, I have to make sure I am seeking him in my daily work activities, my daily family activities and when I am alone. One of those activities is engaging in weekly or even daily devotions with your wife. It is a wonderful way to keep your marriage strong and keep Christ firmly planted at the center.

Doing devotions is a great way to keep Christ at the center of your marriage.

**2. It brings you closer as a couple.** When was the last time you and your spouse really sat down and had a quality conversation? I hope it was recently and helped you grow as a couple. Doing a devotional requires set aside and focused time. Doing a devotional will bring you closer as a couple because you are both engaging in something together. You both need to listen, focus and in some cases answer questions at the end. Television, games and even nice dinners can't provide this type of closeness.

Devotionals will keep you close to your spouse in a loving and

quality way.

**3. It allows you to discuss new marriage topics and questions.**

“Hey honey, what could I do to improve our marriage?” Do you remember the last time your spouse came up to you and asked a question like that? Chances are, those type of in-depth questions are never asked, and they are exactly the ones we need to be asking! Doing a weekly or daily devotion with your spouse will bring up these kind of important questions, offer advice on how to act on these questions and allow for opportunities for each spouse to answer the questions. You’ll be amazed at how much these questions could change and improve your marriage.

Devotionals are a perfect way to ask those hard but necessary questions.

**4. It allows for prayer together.** As a husband, even a Christian husband, I can admit that praying with my wife can be very difficult. Not because I avoid it, but because we have an enemy who does everything he can to make prayer strange and awkward. The advantage to doing devotions is that it will allow for the perfect opportunity to pray with and for your spouse. Even if it’s short and to the point, God will use it to build a new closeness and trust between the two of you. Not sure what to pray about, just pray using the topic that was discussed in the devotion.

Devotionals are the perfect way to open up your marriage for prayer.

**5. Quality Time.** Doing a devotional with your spouse is about genuine quality time. It’s a great time to decompress from the day, forget about work or the kids and focus on God and your marriage. Life, most of the time, is hectic and busy, and devotions are a great way to relax and unwind with the one you love the most. Step up this week and establish a time of devotions with your spouse.

Devotionals are a great way to spend quality time with God and your spouse.

What are you waiting for? Get your devotional this week and start building a stronger marriage. Please share some advantages you have experienced by having a time of devotions with your spouse.

***Maturity** is a blog built on establishing spiritual maturity in today's man. The goal is to assist men in building better marriages and help them in grow in maturity and explore different aspects of manhood. features new weekly blog posts, daily social media updates and a powerful resources page. Stay up to date with the Maturity blog communities on Facebook and Twitter.*

*For the original article, visit .*

---

## **Awake Brain Surgery Sets Pace for Parkinson's Treatment**

We don't normally think about the ability to button a shirt, drink a cup of coffee and get out of a chair. But we should.

More than seven million people worldwide can't do those or other everyday things because of illnesses like Parkinson's Disease. But a little-known surgery can help those people get their lives back.

### **Pacemaker for the Brain**

People like Nathan Rivera, even though he suffers from Parkinson's Disease, can control his body thanks to a pacemaker. It doesn't send electrical signals to his heart,

though. They go directly to the part of his brain in charge of motion.

To demonstrate how well it works, Rivera turned it off and immediately began to shake uncontrollably.

Before Rivera got his brain pacemaker, also called a deep brain stimulator, he was like many Parkinson's patients: a prisoner in his own body.

As a minister, Rivera's violent tremors prevented him and his wife Elizabeth from fulfilling their mission to reach Spanish-speaking citizens around Youngstown, Ohio. Rivera recalled how normal activities like walking and getting dressed were nearly impossible.

"I had problems doing the simplest things, like bringing my wife a cup of coffee or something. My hand would shake so much the coffee would spill. I couldn't really eat," he said.

### **Deep Brain Stimulation**

Rivera heard about deep brain stimulation, performed by neurosurgeon Darlene Lobel at the renowned Cleveland Clinic.

"It's important to understand that deep brain stimulation is not a cure for Parkinson's Disease," Lobel said.

"It will treat the symptoms. It treats tremors very well. It controls about 90 percent of tremors, which is impressive. For stiffness and slowness of movement it controls about 70 to 80 percent of those symptoms. The effect is durable, which means it lasts over a number of years," she explained.

Even though that sounded great to Rivera, he admitted he was not very excited about the fact that he would have to be awake during the surgery. He recounted praying about it.

"And I said, 'God, why do I have to go through an operation when You can just touch me and heal me?'" he said.

The operation involved placing sensors in the exact locations of the brain that control motor function. Pinpointing those spots meant Nathan had to follow the doctor's commands while the doctor worked inside Nathan's brain.

Nathan said the commands were simple.

"Move your right hand, move it to the left, can you move this, move your fingers, move your hand up, move your hand down," he recalled.

### **Painless Surgery**

Although the idea of being awake during brain surgery sounded unnerving, Dr. Lobel said at least it doesn't hurt.

"The skin has sensation and can feel pain. But as soon as we put in local anesthetic they don't feel anything else for the entire procedure. There's no pain endings in the brain, for example," she explains.

Nathan said during the surgery he had to focus on keeping calm.

"I didn't know what else to think about. I just kept on saying, 'I gotta concentrate on something, so I'm not concentrating on what's going on because this is taking a long time.' But it took a long time, and the nurse kept on asking me if I was okay and she kept talking to me to keep me busy," he said.

The surgeon stretches a thin wire from the brain to a generator implanted near the collarbone, and then when it's all over there is a test.

"And this the most wonderful part of the surgery," Dr. Lobel smiled, "Patients are there in the operating room. We've held their medications, so their tremors are usually pretty severe at that point. As soon as we turn on the stimulator, they see their hand stop shaking and that's the best feeling in the

world for them, and for me as a surgeon.”

Since there is no cure for Parkinson’s, it will continue to attack Nathan’s body. But thanks to deep brain stimulation, he can stay one step ahead of the shaking.

“Because of the way I was, I couldn’t function,” he said. “But now I’m able to function. We’re in ministry, my wife’s in evangelism, we go out and preach to other churches, and why not use this as part of my testimony.”

For more information contact the Center for Neurological Restoration directly:

Toll-Free:

---

## **Why We Lose Our High School Buddies**

The other day I was hanging out with a group of guys. We were all telling stories of the crazy things we did as young men. It was fun to reminisce.

One thing that stood out to me was how we spoke of friends we had in high school and college. It got me thinking, why do adult men not seem to have the kind of friendships they had when they were younger?

It seems that it is more and more common for men to not have any friends. Most men I know don’t seem to have the kinds of friendships they had in high school and college.

What has happened? Why don’t we have friends like we did when we were younger? There are numerous reasons, but I want to draw our attention to two major reasons.

**1. Proximity.** Most men post-college are not forced to live in close proximity to other men. Yes, you work closely with other men, but that is very different from having a roommate or living in a dorm, apartment or fraternity house with other guys. Things like sports, school or serving in the military also offer instant community and brotherhood. If you don't have the close relationships with other men that you once had, part of the reason could be a lack of proximity or natural community with other men.

**2. Availability and responsibilities.** When I was freshman in college hanging out in the common space of my dorm late at night, if some random stranger said he was going out to get food and asked if anyone wanted to come, I was there. Being married for 6 years and having two kids, I've learned that I don't get to do that anymore. My availability is very different. One of the biggest reasons you don't have the friendship you once had is that your availability has changed.

What would you add to this list? What are the major things that have caused the nature of your friendships to change?

Most men I know have three spheres of people they spend time with: drinking buddies, work acquaintances and social circle acquaintances. The problem, most of the time, with most guys is they spend most of their time together talking about sports or the weather or politics and never really go below the surface to connect at a soul level. We have settled for a version of friendship that does not help us grow into the men that God is calling us to be.

In part two of this two-part series, we're going to talk about some ways we can go about having great and soul level friendships again.

**Matt Patrick** is the lead pastor of The Well Church in Boulder, Colorado. For the original article, visit [.](#)

---

# Can Sugar Make Your Brain Foggy?

By now you already know that too much sugar harms your body. It makes you fat, leads to diabetes, heart disease, and cancer, and the list goes on and on.

If you have a health problem, chances are it's caused by, or made worse by, too much sugar in your diet. An easy test is to stop eating sugar, including carbohydrates like white bread, pasta, and rice (which affect your body the same way as sugar) for a couple of months and see how you feel.

Chances are, you'll feel better. Remember, sugar comes in many forms. The most popular is high fructose corn syrup, but there are many other forms, including other types ending in -ose, starches and, of course, cane sugar, syrups and honey.

If you don't think you can bear to go without the sugar and refined carbohydrates outlined above, you are most likely a sugar/carb addict. That is a subject for another blog, but in short, science has determined that in some people, sugar and carbs cause the release of dopamine in the brain, which is connected with pleasure and reward, so you never get enough ... in fact, you always want more.

This is a big problem for your health, but perhaps more importantly because no person should be in bondage to any substance, whether sugar, carbs, alcohol, painkillers, cocaine and so on.

If you find yourself thinking, "I can't go without ..." and you complete the sentence with a substance, you are an addict, and you need help. Humans are not made to be slaves to substances.

We should be in control of them, not the other way around.

But take heart: if you are under the control of a substance, you can change! In the case of sugar and carbs, you probably only need to go cold turkey, exercise extreme self-control for a time and your cravings will go away in a few days to a few weeks.

I am speaking from experience. However, if you're addicted to any of the other substances listed above, please get help from one many treatment centers and organizations available.

So while we've established that sugar is terrible for your body, did you also know it wrecks your brain? It does!

Researchers at UCLA fed three groups of rats the same food: "rat chow," or regular rat food. During this time, the researchers trained all three groups of rats to navigate a maze.

The maze had lots of walls, visual markings, so the rats could learn their way, and one exit. All three groups of rats learned the maze the same.

Then the researchers substituted one rat group's water with water spiked with fructose.

Sound familiar? That's what soda is. So that group of rats ingested lots of sugar over a period of six weeks. At the end of the six weeks the rats who had been fed fructose were slower and had greater difficulty remembering how to get through the maze than the rats who hadn't been fed the sugar.

According to one of the researchers, "Their brains showed a decline in synaptic activity. Their brain cells had trouble signaling each other, disrupting their ability to think clearly and recall the route they'd learned six weeks earlier."

The rats that were fed fructose also developed insulin

resistance. Researchers suggest this disrupts learning and causes memory loss and corrupts the brain's ability to process thoughts and emotions.

According to one scientist with the study, "Insulin is important in the body for controlling blood sugar, but it may play a different role in the brain, where insulin appears to disturb memory and learning," he said. "Our study shows that a high-fructose diet harms the brain as well as the body. This is something new."

But wait, there's more: a fascinating twist. Remember there were three rat groups? One stuck with the original diet, the other was fed a bunch of sugar, and the third was given a bunch of sugar fats, like the kind found salmon, walnuts, and flax. The group of rats that was fed sugar and Omega-3 fats navigated the maze much better than the group of rats that had just sugar.

The conclusion is obvious. Omega-3 fats lessen the destructive impact of sugar on the brain.

We can learn a lot from this study. The first thing is to avoid fructose like the plague. Regardless of what we do during the day, we must perform at our best intellectual ability, and fructose simply handicaps our thinking process.

We must look at the list of ingredients in all the things we purchase, because fructose is added to an estimated 80 percent of the items at the typical grocery store. If you see fructose in the list of ingredients, or one of its sugary cousins, such as ingredients ending in -ose, or "starch" or "syrup," don't purchase it.

Of course fructose and related sugary ingredients are added to sweets like cookies and candy. But that's just the tip of the iceberg. They're in foods that many people do not consider sweet, but they really are, such as bread, crackers, pasta sauce, granola bars, cereal, yogurt, jelly, and on and on and

on.

So read the list of ingredients. Remember the list begins with the ingredients the food contains the most of, and goes from there. So if sugar is the first ingredients, run for the hills. That means it contains more sugar than anything else. This applies to many foods. Don't believe me? Check out the ingredients of soda or kiddie cereal.

If you are less than perfect, and choose to eat something sugary, this study teaches us that we can mitigate the damage from that sugar by consuming Omega-3 fats. Although these healthy fats are found in foods like salmon, walnuts, and flax, it's actually difficult to get enough Omega-3s from our diet.

So it's best to take a fish oil supplement. Make sure you look at the label of the supplement and get the one that tells you how many milligrams of DHA are in each capsule. Take enough capsules each day to equal about one gram of DHA per day.

By the way, you should know that the consumption of too many Omega-6 fats blocks your body's ability to process Omega-3 fats. So it's best to cut way, way back on Omega-6 fats. These are vegetable oils, corn, soybean, canola, etc. These are the oils in the clear, plastic bottles that line the grocery store shelves. Also check the list of ingredients on processed foods for these unhealthy oils.

A good diet consists of consuming EQUAL amounts of Omega-3 and Omega-6 fats. However, the average American consumes 20 times more Omega-6 fats than Omega-3s, and this imbalance leads to massive inflammation, a known killer. And since the two types of fats compete against each other, eating too many Omega-6 fats blocks your body's ability to process the healthy Omega-3s.

So to summarize, for healthy brain function, including memory and thinking, stay away from sugar and take one gram of DHA in

a supplement form each day. Finally, drastically reduce your consumption of Omega-6 oil.

---

# Dealing With Teenage Rebellion God's Way

In *5 Reasons Why Your Teen is Rebelling*, I shared with you underlying reasons your teen may be rebelling. Once you understand *why* they are rebelling, you'll have a clearer picture of *what* you can do about it.

So let's review different things teens struggle with, review why they struggle, and then answer the "Now what?" question.

## 1. Teens struggle for identity.

- **Why?** Teens are trying to answer the timeless question of, "Who am I?" as they grow into adults.
- **Now What?** Help your teen to understand that their image, how others see them, is not what's ultimately important. Their identity, who they are, is what matters. Tell your teen, and tell them often, that they are valuable because of who they are not because of what they do. They are valuable because they are a child created by God ... your child. My *How to Validate Your Child's Identity* blog will provide you with more ideas.

## 2. Teens struggle for acceptance.

- **Why?** Teens want to feel like they fit in somewhere ... that they belong.
- **Now What?** Be sure your child knows that it's a normal desire to want to fit in. But also share with them that it's good to be different too. Standing up and standing

out as a young man or woman, especially when it's for the right thing, is what leadership is all about. Also, make sure they feel accepted by the most influential person in their life—you!

### **3. Teens struggle for attention.**

- **Why?** A lot of teens desire to have people pay attention to them and they'll do what they think they need to do to get noticed.
- **Now What?** Notice your child. Catch them doing something good and praise them for it. Encourage your teen every opportunity you get. And, as I talked about in my blog, *How to Be Available for Parenting Teenagers*, it's important to intentionally set aside time and just be available when your teen needs you or wants to talk.

### **4. Teens struggle for control.**

- **Why?** Many teens want to make their own rules as they grow older, which oftentimes means they are not afraid to break yours.
- **Now What?** You must learn *How to Be an Out of Control Parent*. That means, as your child grows in age, takes on more responsibility, and earns your trust, more decision-making and control should be given to them. In other words, as I said in *Creating Boundaries for Your Kids*, their "playing court" should be increased.

### **5. Teens struggle for freedom.**

- **Why?** More freedom is what most teens *think* they want.
- **Now What?** First, be clear with your child that you love them and always have their best interests at heart—which is the reason you have certain parameters for them. Remember *How to Stay Joined at the Hip and Heart with Your Teen* when addressing this issue of freedom. Second, your teen needs to understand that with freedom comes responsibility. So have your teen write down the

freedoms they want and the responsibilities they think go along with those freedoms.

For example, if they say something like, “I just want to be on my own and do what I want,” you can say, “Well, I love you and really want you to stay here, but if you want that kind of freedom, then come up with a plan for how you’re going to live. Your plan should include things like where you want to live, how you are going to pay for it, and all of your other living expenses and transportation. It might also include things like who’s going to take care of you when you’re sick, who’s going to cook your meals, do your laundry, and hold you when you cry.”

They’ll probably quickly realize that they can only handle a smaller amount of freedom and responsibility while they are still teenagers.

What are some other ways you have handled a rebelling teenager?

***Mark Merrill** is the president of Family First. For the original article, visit .*