

Study: Diet Drinks May Not Fuel Your Appetite

Take another sip of that Diet Coke—a new study suggests diet soda drinkers don't eat any more sugary or fatty foods than people who stick with water instead.

Some researchers have proposed drinks sweetened with fake sugar might disrupt hormones involved in hunger and satiety cues—causing people to eat more.

Others hypothesized diet beverages could boost the drinker's preference for sweet tastes, translating to more munching on high-calorie desserts.

“Artificial sweeteners are a lot sweeter than regular sugar, on the order of 250 times sweeter, so that's where the concerns came from,” said Vasanti Malik, a nutrition researcher from the Harvard School of Public Health in Boston.

The new findings may ease some of those worries, according to researchers led by Carmen Piernas, from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill Gillings School of Global Public Health. But they don't prove pounding back diet drinks is harmless.

The study included 318 overweight or obese adults in North Carolina, all of whom said they consumed at least 280 calories' worth of drinks each day.

Piernas and her colleagues advised one-third of the participants to substitute at least two daily servings of sugary beverages with water. Another one-third was instructed to substitute them with diet drinks, including Diet Coke, Diet Mountain Dew and Diet Lipton Tea.

After three and six months, people reported their food and

beverage intake on two different days in detail. A previous publication showed participants in both groups lost weight.

According to the new report, water and diet beverage drinkers reduced their average daily calories relative to the start of the study, from between 2,000 and 2,300 calories to 1,500 to 1,800 calories. At both time points, people in the two groups were eating a similar amount of total calories, carbohydrates, fat and sugar, the research team reported in the American Journal of Clinical Nutrition.

Six months in, the only differences were that members of the water group ate more fruit and vegetables and people randomized to diet beverages ate fewer desserts, compared to their diet habits at the study's onset.

"That's sort of the opposite of what you would expect if consumption of diet soda increased the preference for sweets," Malik, who wasn't involved in the new study, told Reuters Health.

The research was partially funded by Nestle Waters USA, which provided the water used in the study.

Despite the results, diet beverage drinkers may not be totally in the clear.

Another new study, also published in the American Journal of Clinical Nutrition, found Frenchwomen who drank beverages sweetened with either real or fake sugar were more likely to be diagnosed with diabetes over 14 years than those who stuck with water.

'Not the Final Answer'

Piernas cautioned that everyone in her study was heavy and trying to lose weight—so the findings may not apply to normal-weight people who drink a lot of diet beverages.

"This is not the final answer," she told Reuters Health.

Some studies have suggested an increased risk of cancer tied to certain artificial sweeteners, but convincing evidence is lacking, according to Malik.

“We’re trying to reduce sugar-sweetened beverage intake in the population for obesity, so the next logical question is: what substitutes can be used?” she said.

“I think (diet drinks) can be consumed in moderation, along with other beverages—water, coconut water, sparkling water, that type of thing,” Malik added.

Len Lopez: Why Your Supplements Aren't Working

The time has finally come: you’re tired of taking medications that are only treating the symptom. Because you want to take a safe, natural approach, you might have already tried a supplement program but have been disappointed with the results. Why haven’t you gotten the results?

This is a problem I hear about all too often, but there could be several reasons you’re not getting healthier from all of the supplements you are taking.

Inferior Supplements

You could be taking an inferior or poorly manufactured product. There are lots of these around. Unfortunately, many manufacturers focus on the price, NOT on the quality of the product. They use inexpensive nutrients that are poorly absorbed. You, as the consumer lose.

Unless you know what to look for on a label, you could easily

be paying for a product that's not going to help much. Be careful of supplements sold at the big discount shopping stores. Many times, these products only focus on the price, not the quality.

Compliance

The second reason for poor results could be compliance. It's easy to understand that you can NOT walk five minutes a day, or do only five push-ups and hope to get in shape. To reap desirable benefits, you need to walk at least 20-40 minutes or do 20-40 pushups a day. So why do so many people only take one capsule of "whatever," when the recommended dosage is two to three capsules, twice a day?

A simple rule of thumb for many nutritional supplements is the bottle should last about one month. For example, if the package contains 60 capsules, you would typically take two per day. If the package contains 180 capsules, the recommended dosage is probably six per day, unless it is the 'economy size' bottle. Too many people think they get a six-month supply of something when it contains 180 capsules, even though the recommended dosage says "six capsules a day." Proper dosage, much like exercise, is critical in the healing process.

Food Allergies

A third problem is closely related to the first, but instead of inferior raw materials, **you may have a "hidden" food allergy to one or more of the ingredients.** Common food allergens that you could be having a problem with are dairy, wheat, corn, soy, and peanuts. Read your labels. It doesn't take much to illicit a reaction that can interfere with the absorption of that supplement. You'd be amazed how sensitive the body is and how easily it reacts to certain foods.

Poor Digestion

Another reason that is very common is poor digestive function. If you are constantly struggling with indigestion, heartburn, and other irritable bowel problems, how can you expect to digest and absorb the nutrients to help your joints, allergies, immune system, or hormones? Address those digestive and elimination issues first; otherwise you could be wasting lots of money on supplements that aren't absorbed.

Just because you swallowed it doesn't mean you absorbed it! The same goes with our elimination system. If you struggle with constipation or diarrhea, something is wrong and you are contributing to the toxic overload and poisoning of your body.

Pills Not a Cure-All

Supplements only take us part of the way. Diet, stress, sleep, and exercise take us the rest of the way. We might need to implement other lifestyle changes, such as eating foods that keep our blood sugar stable (low to moderate glycemic foods). Don't skip meals!

Stay away from processed, refined foods. How about making a conscious effort to reduce stress in your life? Get some exercise and get a good night's sleep. We can't put all our faith in the supplements. We'll never overcome any health challenge if we don't balance our blood sugar (insulin and glucagon) and stress hormones (cortisol, adrenaline, DHEA).

You can never balance your reproductive (estrogen, progesterone, testosterone) hormones, unless you balance your stress hormones, and you will never balance your stress hormones if you don't balance your blood sugar!

As you can see, there is no 'magic' pill? It would be nice to only swallow one pill for whatever ails you, but realistically that is not how you get healthier. Too often people are swallowing products for specific ailments like diabetes, arthritis, osteoporosis, PMS, prostate, thyroid, or menopause without first addressing the smaller issues that eventually

lead up to your major health complaint.

We don't wake up one day with a major problem like irritable bowel, allergies, high blood pressure, loss of libido, or any other degenerative or autoimmune disease. There have probably been many little clues your body has given you: such as indigestion, fatigue, poor elimination, cravings, weight gain, irritability, loss of hair, or difficulty concentrating or sleeping. This tells us that something isn't functioning properly.

Restoring your health is a matter of first restoring normal function. The best results I have seen come from people who follow a simple program that encompasses all of the above questions. It doesn't matter what your complaint is—it could be fatigue, weight gain, PMS, hot flashes, heart disease, arthritis, or some other degenerative or autoimmune disease.

The point is, before you start swallowing some magic formula, you need to make sure all of the key areas (digestion, elimination, hormones, blood sugar) are functioning properly. Otherwise you may be caught in a 'vicious' cycle, where one system throws another system out of balance.

I encourage you to take our online health quizzes to help you identify the root cause of your problem, as well as look at our Healthy Steps Program to learn what steps you should be taking to get over the hump. The worse thing you can be doing is swallowing a handful of pills and not getting better.

Dr. Len Lopez is a nutrition and fitness expert and creator of The Work Horse Trainer. He speaks extensively on diet, exercise, and how stress can affect your overall health and wellness.

For the original article, visit .

Dershowitz: Papal Candidate is an Anti-Semite

Renowned Harvard legal professor Alan Dershowitz wrote a letter to the Miami Herald last week in which he called Cardinal Óscar Andrés Rodríguez Maradiaga of Honduras a “notorious anti-Semite” who should not be permitted to become the next pope.

Dershowitz wrote the letter in response to photographs of potential candidates for the papacy that were published in the Miami Herald on Feb. 12, following Pope Benedict XVI’s surprise announcement that he will resign at the end of February.

“[Maradiaga] has blamed the Jews for the scandal surrounding the sexual misconduct of priests toward young parishioners!” Dershowitz wrote. “He has argued that the Jews got even with the Catholic Church for its anti-Israel positions by arranging for the media – which they, of course, control, he said – to give disproportionate attention to the Vatican sex scandal. He then compared the Jewish controlled media with Hitler, because they are “protagonists of what I do not hesitate to define as a persecution against the church.”

Dershowitz wrote that Maradiaga had refused to take those statements back.

“I don’t repent . . . sometimes it is necessary to shake things up,” Dershowitz quoted Maradiaga as saying.

“The Vatican has rightly called anti-Semitism a sin, and yet an unrepentant sinner is on the short list to become the leader of the Catholic Church,” Dershowitz wrote. “If that

were to occur, all of the good work by recent popes in building bridges between the Catholic Church and the Jews would be endangered. This should not be allowed to happen.”

Pope Benedict XVI recently announced he will resign on Feb. 28 because he no longer has the strength to fulfill the duties of his office, becoming the first pontiff since the Middle Ages to take such a step.

For the original article, visit [.](#)

Pastors Bring Grace to Men's Ministry

Today's average man is like a deer caught in the headlights of a Hummer. He doesn't fully understand—and so can't apply—what God has to say about a man's identity, purpose, relationships, marriage, sex, fathering, work, money, ministry, time, emotions, integrity and dozens of other subjects.

However, men routinely “bluff” when asked, “How are you doing?” Pastors observe this all the time. For that reason, I think we should be just as concerned about the men who have not yet become statistics as those who have.

Many of these men are under the loving discipline of a God who, like the hound of heaven, refuses to let them wander too far from the green pasture.

They are like sheep without a shepherd, and they regularly show up at church on Sunday morning looking for—what? Actually, many of them don't really know what they're looking for. They probably think they're looking for relief from

temporal troubles, but what they need is a personal encounter with the Good Shepherd. They need to become disciples of our Lord and Savior, Jesus.

It's not as though these men want to struggle or fail. But their *capabilities* are not equal to their intentions. As Denzel Washington—playing a recovering alcoholic ex-military bodyguard in a Latin American country in *Man on Fire*—said, “You’re either trained or you’re not trained.” Spiritually, most men are not.

The Opportunity

Reaching these men is one of the great strategic opportunities—and needs—of our time. Instead of the “men problem,” some quarters need to start seeing the “men opportunity.” Pastors are the logical choice. Pastors bring grace to the equation. They see men not so much for what they are, but what they can become in Christ. Pastors are the ones whom God has called to instruct, encourage, correct, challenge, inspire and call men to “act like a man.”

It is the pastor who can help men refocus from the vicissitudes of the temporal onto the goodness and greatness of our holy, loving God—a God who is not caught off guard by the recession, and a God who is not wringing His hands about how the economy will turn out.

This is a significant yet solvable problem. God’s vision is that every man in your church becomes a disciple of Jesus. Men’s ministry needs to be redefined so that it is “all-inclusive.”

Most pastors also desperately need more lay leaders. Another opportunity in discipling men is that some will grow into leadership. For example, a friend of mine started a small group with seven men in his Birmingham, Ala., church. During the next seven years, his ministry grew to seven groups totaling 128 men.

At that time, his church needed about 150 leaders to function properly. One hundred of those leaders came through his small groups. But what's especially intriguing is that approximately 75 of those men—fully half of the church's leadership—started in his groups as cultural Christians who would (probably) not have otherwise stepped up to become church leaders.

Most church leaders we talk to are profoundly dissatisfied with the number of men in their churches who are effective disciples. But the majority of churches that have tried to implement men's discipleship initiatives have not been able to sustain them. They need better information, models, methods and processes grounded in research, field-testing and biblical authority.

The Answer: The Disciple-Making Church

If you project out 20 or 50 years, can you visualize any way of ever getting the world right if men are wrong? The "men problem" is the root cause behind virtually every problem that ails us. It's an untreated cancer that keeps producing more and worse tumors.

One day a major donor said, "Pat, I can't support your ministry anymore."

I said, "That's fine, but tell me why."

He said, "My heart is really in prison ministry and teenage crisis pregnancy centers."

I laughed out loud. I said, "By all means, please support that important work. But why do you think so many young men end up in prison? And why do you think a young teenage girl would hop into bed with a boy?" (We dialogued more and he did continue his support).

Let's treat the symptoms—of course, but let those who can (pastors) also treat the disease. A disciple-making church offers the only *systemic* solution to what ails us. As someone

has said, "The church has many critics, but no rivals."

By the beginning of this century, there had been many false starts in churches—even our best churches. Many pastors and laymen had devoted as many as 10 years to untested strategies that really were doomed to fail from the beginning. And I didn't see any reason to think things would be different in another 10 or 20 years—unless we came up with a fresh approach.

A Research-Based Approach

At the same time, I sensed the need for a more research-based approach to men's discipleship. So in 2002, to augment my masters in theological studies, I embarked on doctoral research, which led to earning a Ph.D. in management in 2006. For my dissertation I studied the question, "Why do some churches succeed at men's discipleship while others languish or fail?"

My research revolved around two major issues. First, I wanted to learn, "How do church-based men's discipleship ministries that succeed differ from those that languish or fail?" Second, I wanted to discover, "What are successful pastors doing differently than the pastors of ineffective or failed ministries to men?"

I compared and contrasted churches that had effective men's discipleship programs to churches that had ineffective or failed programs. Here is the indisputable bottom line: *The senior pastor is the key to everything.* The three main factors in the highly effective churches were:

- A senior pastor with the *vision* to disciple every man in the church.
- A senior pastor with the *determination* to succeed.
- A senior pastor who found a *sustainable strategy* to make disciples.

Of course, Jesus is the perfect example of these three

factors. In fact, His sustainable strategy has outlasted every institution, organization, kingdom and government ever established.

Without the pastor, men's discipleship in your church will never be more than a fringe activity.

A Pastor-Led Approach

The pastor can accomplish what laymen can only dream about—and so much more quickly. With the support of his senior pastor, John started a small-group ministry in his very busy 1,000-member church in Atlanta. Over the span of seven years, his ministry grew to ten groups with a combined total of about 120 people.

Then a new senior pastor led the church. He shared his vision for small groups. He convinced the leadership that the congregation should stop coming to the church building on Wednesday nights. Instead, he wanted to break people into small groups that would meet in homes.

In the spring he announced that they would start the new small-group ministry in the fall. Over the summer he preached on the importance and value of small groups. On the first night, 817 people met in small groups.

It took seven *years* for a talented, committed layman (he's in top management with a Fortune 500 company) to recruit 120 people into small groups—even with his pastor's full *support*. With the pastor's *personal involvement*, it took only seven *months* to recruit 817 people into small groups—an increase of nearly 700 percent.

What men really need is for their pastors to take responsibility for men's discipleship in their churches. That certainly doesn't mean the pastor has to do it all—in fact, that would even stunt men's growth. But at the end of the day, it is the pastor who has to bring the vision, determination, and strategy to the party.

The preceding was adapted from Patrick Morley's book, Pastoring Men: What Works, What Doesn't, and Why It Matters Now More Than Ever.

Pat Morley is the 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 non-profit organization to help men find meaning and purpose in life. Dr. Morley is the bestselling author of *The Man in the Mirror*, *No Man Left Behind*, *Dad in the Mirror*, and *A Man's Guide to the Spiritual Disciplines*.

Hezbollah Threatens Israeli Power Grid

The head of Lebanon's Hezbollah terrorist movement, which is an Iranian proxy militia, warned Israel on Saturday not to think that a weakening of Bashar al-Assad's regime in Syria means Hezbollah is also weaker.

"We have everything we need in Lebanon. We don't need to transport arms from Syria or Iran," Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah said in a speech broadcast on a giant video screen in southern Beirut. "I warn the Israelis that the resistance in Lebanon will not remain silent in the face of any aggression against Lebanon.

"They know all it takes is a few rockets for their airports, ports and power plants to be plunged into darkness."

Nasrallah's warning comes against the backdrop of tension along Israel's border with Syria and Lebanon.

Israel is worried that with the loosening of Assad's grip on power, weapon stockpiles will fall into the hands of terrorist groups, including Hezbollah. Assad is an ally of Hezbollah and he is believed to have been transporting some of his weapons stockpiles to the Lebanese terrorist group, out of fear that they would fall into Syrian insurgents' hands.

10 Leadership Lessons From George Washington

You may remember Valley Forge from junior high history, but to refresh your memory, it was where the American Revolutionary soldiers wintered in 1777-1778.

Conditions were brutally cold—clothing in tatters, shoes nonexistent. Many wounded soldiers died from exposure. And those left living had to contend with typhoid, jaundice, dysentery, and pneumonia. George Washington wrote, *"To see the soldiers without clothes to cover their nakedness, without blankets to lie upon, without a house or hut to cover them ... and submitting without a murmur... can scarcely be paralleled."*

Approximately 2,500 American soldiers died in Valley Forge that year. Why? Yes, these men loved freedom. But according to historian David McCollough, it was mainly their love for Washington. They would go anywhere with him and do anything for him. They knew how much Washington cared for them and how he put himself in harm's way.

In earlier battles, Washington's two horses were shot out from under him and four bullets passed through his coat. The American soldiers knew this. And bled for him.

George Washington was the embodiment of a great leader and someone we can all learn from. No one can ever be another Washington. But that's OK, because no one can be another you, either. The question is, who is that "you" going to be?

We can't be George Washington, but we can employ his leadership skills as we fine-tune our own roles as All Pro Dads on President's Day, a day to honor him. Here are 10 Leadership Lessons from George Washington:

1. **He believed in his men.** Belief is a choice before it is an emotion. Believe in your children. Believe in your wife. Believe in your family.

2. **He was a man of exemplary character.** Fact – it's a lot easier to take direction from a general, a coach, a CEO, or a dad who also leads from the front in terms of moral character. We can all be that man.

3. **He treated others with the utmost respect.** Washington treated the lowliest private with the dignity and respect he afforded a visiting dignitary from Philadelphia. How we treat service personnel, subordinates at work, people on the telephone, the guy at the garage, our family members, all impacts the effectiveness of our role as a leader.

4. **He held his men accountable.** Along with respect came expectation. I believe in you ... therefore I expect you to come through. It's the same thing at home. We demonstrate to our children that we believe in them, and that we respect them–

but if there is no consistent response in terms of guidance and discipline, we will eventually lose our edge as leaders.

5. **He loved his men.** If you care, it shows. If you don't, then that shows too. People will do a lot for you if they love you. If you love them, then the sky is the limit. How secure is your family in the knowledge of your love for them?

6. He placed the welfare of his men ahead of his own. It's not just that Washington was willing to take a bullet—there's no glory in vain bravado. No, what Washington demonstrated is why he was willing, and it wasn't for his own glory, it was for the cause and for the welfare of those who looked up to him and trusted him.

7. He was personally invested in the cause. The great general put his money where his mouth was. He personally invested in the cause, not only blood, sweat and tears but cold hard cash too. Those who look to us for leadership are always conscious of the priorities that guide us.

8. He did not waver from his guiding principles. He was against tyranny, so he was not a tyrant. He valued freedom, so he extended it to others. He believed in the principles expressed in the Declaration of Independence, and he lived as if they were worth his own life to secure. Does our family know how deeply we hold our faith and our values?

9. He was a man of deep faith who demonstrated that via his actions. Washington advanced his belief in God by living a godly life. He was not the kind of leader who gave fine speeches and then returned to the comforts of his own tent. Washington was respected as a man of faith more for what he did than what he said.

10. He took his responsibilities seriously. Washington did not want to come out of retirement and the life he enjoyed at his estate and then lead a new nation. What he wanted was peace and quiet. But, he also knew that the mark of a leader is to use the gifts you have and to use them for the betterment of the world. He did not shirk from that, even though he was tempted.

Additional Resource: 10 Ways to Lead Your Family.

All Pro Dad is Family First's innovative and unique program for every father. Their aim is to interlock the hearts of the

fathers with their children and, as a by-product, the hearts of the children with their dads. At , dads in any stage of fatherhood can find helpful resources to aid in their parenting. Resources include: daily emails, blogs, Top 10 Lists, articles, printable tools, videos and eBooks. From fathers can join the highly engaged All Pro Dad social media communities on **Facebook, Twitter, YouTube** and **Instagram**.

‘A Spoonful of Sugar’ Makes Self-Control Go Down

As a CrossFit coach and fitness writer, people often ask me about my diet. Questions such as, *Are you Paleo? Do you do “The Zone?” Do you eat gluten? What do you think of juicing? What do you eat before and after you work out? Do you eat carbs?*

Recently, one of the athletes I coach asked me if I ever eat sugar. (For the purposes of this post, “sugar” refers to the added sugars found in cereals, sweets, and Starbucks drinks, not those that occur naturally in fruits, honey, even some vegetables like beets and carrots.) I replied, “Very, very rarely. But that’s just me.”

This answer probably seems strange, considering that it opposes a ubiquitous health mantra that I fully embrace: “everything in moderation.” So why, when it comes to my personal nutrition, am I staunchly anti-sugar?

For me, and maybe you, too, sugar is a highly addictive substance, much like liquor to an alcoholic or the “next fix” to a junkie.

Everyone has a weakness, an area of vulnerability by which we can, if unprepared and undefended, fall victim to the lusts of our flesh and eyes, or prey to the enemy's promised attacks (1 John 2:16, 1 Peter 5:8). For some it's alcohol. For others it's sex, gambling, pornography, or a combination of several. For my father (and others on his side of the family), it was food.

Despite his vast knowledge of health and proper nutrition as a physician, as well as his personal discipline as an avid bodybuilder for most of his life, my dad struggled with his weight. Along with his hypothyroidism, he felt that much of his food addiction stemmed from his DNA. And I believe him because I too experience unusual cravings for more sugar after just a few bites of something particularly sweet, such as ice cream, cake, or chocolate.

Dopamine is one of our "feel-good" neurotransmitters, largely responsible for our motivation and reward systems. Typically, drug-seeking behavior will cause dopamine levels to rise in our brains even before the "drug" is actually consumed. In other words, merely anticipating the forthcoming sensation is pleasurable!

In studies, sugar-addicted rats ingest the white stuff in a binge-like manner that releases dopamine in the nucleus accumbens (the part of the brain that influences sensations of reward, pleasure, laughter, and addiction) during and right before consumption, much like heroin use in humans.

Also like drug addiction, sugar bingeing causes changes in the expression and availability of dopamine receptors in the brain: the next "high" will require *even more* sugar to achieve the same effect. It's been proven recently that those with sugar addictions and compulsive eating habits actually have fewer D2 dopamine receptors, meaning their bodies tell them they need more stimulation—more sugar—to feel satisfied. (Check out this [link](#) to learn more about sugar addiction and

how to overcome it.)

I often feel rude for turning down the offer of dessert, especially if a friend or family member has worked hard to prepare it. For those who are blessed without this sugary thorn in their side, I know it must be hard to understand why I, and others like me, can't "just stop after a few bites," after just "a spoonful of sugar."

I envy people like my mom, brother, and husband who satisfy their sweet tooth with a few harmless nibbles of a chocolate chip cookie or a single sliver of pumpkin pie. They get "their fix," then forget about it.

Until I receive my glorified body up above and am seated at the Wedding Feast before a banquet of food that is quite literally out of this world, I will continue to ask for and employ a *spiritual* kind of nourishment—the fruit of the Spirit—to defy my DNA and say "No more!" after an appropriate amount of gustatory decadence.

So, that's the long answer to the question, "Do you eat sugar?" I hope this post will also help the bakers and pastry chefs among you to not take it personally when friends pass on your delectable treats. Food, I believe, can be just as much of a stronghold as any other addictive substance, and many are fighting a battle you're not aware of.

I'm praying now against all of the countless things we wrestle with, from alcohol and drugs to food and shopping, even junk TV. Whatever we do, whatever we eat and drink, let it all be for God's glory.

With Him, we can have victory over *any* addiction. Let us remember that the same resurrection power of the Holy Spirit that lifted Christ from the grave and seated Him at the Father's right hand has been given to each of us who have made Jesus Savior and Lord. He wants to do more than guarantee your salvation for tomorrow. He wants to set your body free today.

“Then your light will break forth like the dawn, and your healing will quickly appear; then your righteousness will go before you, and the glory of the LORD will be your rear guard” (Isaiah 58:8, NIV).

Stay fit and stay faithful.

Diana Anderson-Tyler is the author of Creation House’s *Fit for Faith: A Christian Woman’s Guide to Total Fitness*. Her popular website can be found at [.](#) and she is the owner and a coach at CrossFit 925. Diana can be reached on Facebook and Twitter.

The Idea of Circumcision: A Key to Israel’s Survival

Since we began our lives in Israel decades ago, we have participated in many circumcisions of Jewish baby boys, eight days old. It is a solemn, yet joyous event for all the family and friends who have come to witness another child being brought into the Covenant of God that He made with Abraham nearly 4,000 years ago.

Our son had his *brit milah* some 34 years ago; a rabbi *mohel* who quietly believed that the faith of the Messianic Jews of Israel is the true faith performed the circumcision. And a year and a half ago, in Jerusalem, our grandson (son of Kobi and Shani) joined the ranks of the children of Abraham, Isaac and Israel on his eighth day.

Circumcision is the key ordinance identifying Jews as the chosen people of God. Contracts are usually boring but

essential documents guiding the lives of the human race—whether it's a nation's constitution, a couple's marriage certificate or a will left to one's descendants.

But God created the most extraordinary contract with the man Abraham. After choosing him from the entire human race, God informed him that this covenant was a promise that through Abraham and his descendants, the world would be blessed, and that He, the Sovereign Lord, would be God forever to his "peculiar people."

What was even more amazing is that this covenant was a one-sided, unconditional contract. Well, it was unconditional except for one single command that had to be kept by Abraham and his descendants. On the eighth day of the birth of a child of Abraham, he must be circumcised!

"This is My covenant which you shall keep, between Me and you and your descendants after you: Every male child among you shall be circumcised... and it shall be a sign of the covenant between Me and you. He who is eight days old among you shall be circumcised, every male child in your generations..." (Gen. 17:10-12)

The Lord then gave him a warning: "And the uncircumcised male child, who is not circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin, that person shall be cut off from his people [the Jews]; he has broken My covenant" (Gen. 17:14).

If this is not a peculiar, strange arrangement between God and man, then what is? But this Abrahamic covenant was and is an everlasting covenant of boundless blessing, promising that this nation would impact the world. This nation would receive a particular piece of land, with specified borders by God himself. And this covenant would be forever—as long as Israel circumcised their male children. Read it for yourself!

It is important to understand that this covenant did not automatically bring an Israelite eternal life. That depended

on whether or not a descendant of Abraham had a heart for God. Four hundred plus years later, God gave to this same nation a second covenant. If ever there was a *conditional* contract, this was it!

The purpose of this covenant was to help God's beloved people know whether or not they were keeping the standards and laws of God. The goal was to bring His chosen ones to understand that they were an unclean people with unclean lips—as Isaiah the prophet so eloquently cried out. Why were they so sinful? Because they are part of the human race, and the human race is fallen. A fallen race is a cursed race in the eyes of the Holy One of Israel.

Here then are the steps the Lord ordained to create a people wholly given to Him:

1. Abraham's Covenant: To remember that God's eternal promise was to bless Israel, to give her a specific piece of land for her nation, and to always, forever, be her God. This covenant is unconditional as long as the male children of the Jewish people are circumcised.

2. Mosaic Covenant: Given to Israel through Moses to show each and every Israeli that if he committed any of a long list of sins, he would be cut off from God. For example, breaking the Sabbath day or one of the holidays, cursing one's parents, and many other commandments would mean that the offender was cursed.

3. The New Covenant: God's plan of redemption is an immensely important and complex subject, which needs a book to explain. But the essence of what God was saying is: Israel, you are my people, my peculiar people. I will always be your God. As long as you circumcise your children, you have My promise. Nevertheless, I must show you your sin (who likes to be shown their sins?) so that you will understand you need Me to wash away your sins. You need a New Covenant which will take away

the curses of the Law of Moses, so that I can freely give you the many blessings of the Law and fulfill the great promises which I swore to Abraham.

Through the prophets, God spoke time and again, saying, "Come Israel, come to Me and I will bring you Salvation which you as a sinner cannot bring yourself."

"Ho! Everyone who thirsts, Come to the waters; And you who have no money, Come, buy and eat" (Is. 55:1).

The Old Testament is God's love story to His chosen people—his faithfulness to Israel, and His grief over their sinfulness. In the Old Testament, God explained that there is forgiveness of sins, but only through the spilling of blood. What did that mean? That another life (in the Old Testament, an animal was killed) must die so that the sinner could have life—eternal life.

But the Bible teaches over and over again that eternal salvation comes only from God, not anything mankind can do for himself. So God sent a part of His own Divine Being in Yeshua the Messiah who ratified the New Covenant with his blood. It is He whose death brings life to Israel—and to all peoples everywhere! It is for anyone from any nation who wishes to be grafted into the olive tree—God's symbol of the descendants of Abraham, Isaac and Israel. (See Rom. 11)

Most Jews have not yet received salvation through the New Covenant. They are still burdened with their sins described in the Mosaic Covenant. But the promise is still theirs. The promise that God would be their God—as long as they circumcised their male children.

Through the ages, Jews have fallen away from the Jewish nation—intermarrying, deciding they no longer believed in any God, integrating into the races of other nations and even forced conversion. But for centuries most Jews, persecuted as they were, stayed in close communities to survive, trying to

keep the Law of Moses as best they could.

However, in the last couple of centuries, besides the terrible Holocaust, which destroyed one third of all Jews, the Jewish nation continues to shrink. Many Jews whose parents believed in God and Jewish traditions one generation ago, have simply become secular. First, they stop going regularly to the synagogue. Next, they no longer wear clothes that identify them as Jews. After that, slowly, if not they, then their children no longer fast on Yom Kippur, or no longer observe the holidays such as Passover.

But the last sign that a Jew no longer identifies with his people at all, is that parents decide against circumcising their male children. When that happens, that family ceases to be a part of the Jewish nation.

For the original article, visit .

Prepare Yourself For the Internal Toxin War

Even if you lived in a perfect, unspoiled environment with no chemicals or poisons, your body would still produce its own toxins. Your body creates many different toxins in an infinite variety of ways just to function.

In a perfect environment, dealing with your body's internal toxins would be a cinch for your liver and excretory system. But your liver, GI tract, organs and tissues have been bombarded from without and within with far more poisons than they were ever designed to handle.

Take a look at some of these toxic enemies:

- If you have had repeated bouts of antibiotics, or even a single bout of superantibiotics, then you could be at ricks for developing an overgrowth of dangerous intestinal bacteria and yeast.
- Millions of french fries are being produced in our bodies every day and, if unchecked, will set the stage for cancer, heart disease and a host of other potentially fatal diseases.
- Too many sugars, fats, processed foods, fast foods and other devitalized foods are literally draining the life out of us as they constipate our bodies, introduce toxins, and drain us of our nutrient reserves.
- Fried foods, hydrogenated and partially hydrogenated fats, excessive amounts of polyunsaturated fats and food sensitivities cause inflammation in the body. We know that arthritis, autoimmune disease, asthma, cardiovascular disease, Alzheimer's disease and most cancers are associated with excessive inflammation.

When the Cure Causes the Crises

Without antibiotics, we'd be in trouble. Infections that might have snuffed out a life a century ago are little more than a nuisance today. But, we are just beginning to get the full picture of the toll that the overuse of antibiotics have taken on a generation of users.

Your intestines are filled with good bacteria, such as *lactobacillus acidophilus* and *bifidus*, which prevent the overgrowth of pathogenic bacteria (bad bacteria) in your intestinal tract. When you take antibiotics, many of your body's beneficial bacteria can be killed. Your good bacteria function like a firewall to keep pathogenic bacteria and yeast in check. So when antibiotics throw off the balance, the bad bacteria and yeast may grow like a wildfire, out of control with nothing to slow them down or stop them.

Bad Bacteria may produce endotoxins, which may be as toxic as almost any chemical pesticide or solvent that enters your body from outside. Overgrowth of bacteria in your small intestines can cause excessive fermentation, just like the fermentation that happens when you leave apple cider outside for too long. This fermentation process creates even more poisons such as *indoles, skatols and amines*.

Just like a biblical plague of locusts that ravaged ancient farmlands, yeast overgrowth causes damage to the intestinal lining. *Candida albicans* is a yeast that releases over 80 different toxins into the body. Some of the most toxic substances produced by *Candida albicans* are acetaldehyde and ethanol, which is alcohol. For more information on this, refer to my book *The Bible Cure for Candida and Yeast Infections*.

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has concluded that acetaldehyde is probably a human carcinogen, based on studies on its effects on animals. German factory workers at a plant that processed acetaldehyde were found to have a higher cancer rate than normal, according to a study by the International Agency for Research on Cancer in 1985. Acetaldehyde is also extremely toxic to the brain, even more so than ethanol. It causes memory loss, depression, concentration problems, and severe fatigue.

When you consider the potential danger of having strong, devastating poisons created inside your body, you will recognize that the toxins within can do as much or even more damage than environmental toxins.

A Strategy for Winning the War Against Toxins

You may feel overwhelmed by the monumental battle your cells, tissues and organs are faced with each day. As you look in the mirror, you may even see some of the results of this war: premature aging, sickness, chronic fatigue, arthritis, cancer, heart disease and so much more.

The good news is that you don't have to sit by passively while your God-given entitlement to good health is stolen right out from under your nose. Your body is designed with an incredible system of defense that keeps you healthy even under extreme circumstances—and you never have to give it a second thought. But when the battle becomes overwhelming, when toxins pile up inside you over time, your liver and excretory system may eventually become overburdened. They simply cannot keep up.

However, you can choose to step in and even the score.

Your Detoxification Program

Here's an overview of Dr. Colbert's 28-day fasting program:

- Start by undergoing a three-week partial fast to strengthen and support your liver and improve your elimination through the GI tract.
- Then you will go on a juice fast for seven days. You may need to be monitored by your doctor for this period of time. If you cannot fast for seven days, you will see tremendous results by fasting only one or two days.
- You will follow my four-day guidelines for breaking your fast (later in the book). I would recommend that you go back on the special diet for your liver and GI tract for another two weeks and complete my 28-day fasting program.

As you go through his fasting program, you will discover the renewed energy, rejuvenated health, and a fresh, glowing sense of vitality that will absolutely astonish you.

This article is an excerpt from Don Colbert, M.D.'s book, *Get Healthy Through Detox and Fasting*.

Don Colbert, M.D., is board-certified in family practice and in anti-aging medicine. He also has received extensive training in nutritional and preventive medicine, and he has helped millions of people discover the joy of living in divine

health.

Shomer Yisrael: He Who Watches Over Israel

“Behold, He who keeps (watches over) Israel will neither slumber nor sleep” (Ps. 121:4)

On Jerusalem’s King David Street, immediately next to the YMCA (where for years we held services) there is something VERY interesting to see. It seems like a prophetic picture, and I can’t help pointing it out to people when we pass by.

In 2002, many artists (more than 60, I believe) contributed their version of a lion statue, to be displayed throughout Jerusalem. Everywhere you went, you saw a lion around Jerusalem.

The two lions in the location I just mentioned are significant. Out in front, facing the street, and indeed facing the Old City of Jerusalem, is a large, ostentatious “would-be” lion. It is larger than all the others, colorful—actually quite dazzling.

But it isn’t really a lion; it’s a demon with large protruded eyes and diabolical features. It sits as though ready to pounce, like a cat watching its prey.

Just a few meters behind this “demon lion” is a much smaller statue of a plain white lion. It was created with a dove on its head, and a crown made of barbed wire. Smiling, he is watching over both the city and the enemy disguised as a lion.

I have heard that the artist was approached and asked why she

made a lion with “those symbols of Jesus”. She responded that she had no intention to make that connection! She had in mind the theme of peace (the dove) trumping conflict (the barbed-wire). Whether this is truth or hearsay, the outcome is true: the crown was removed from the statue, though the dove remains.

However, stripping the symbol does not alter the identity of the “Shomer Yisrael” (He who watches over Israel). He has nothing to prove about who He is, or what He is doing. He just sits and watches, knowing He is the all-powerful one.

My heart is warmed by the truth that these lions represent. It is not only Jerusalem, and Israel that are being watched over. It is you and it is me. Read on, in Psalm 121:

“The LORD is your keeper, the LORD is your shade on your right hand. The sun shall not strike you by day nor the moon by night. The LORD will keep you from all evil; he will keep your life. The LORD will keep your going out and your coming in from this time forth and forevermore.”

Father, like a child in its father’s arms is how I feel with You. Safe, protected, and in the hands of the strongest one. Keep me from being fooled and intimidated by the deceiver. Whatever the enemy has up his sleeve, You are more than ready for it! You are smiling and confident and Your love is triumphant.

[Click here](#) for the original article at King of Kings Community Jerusalem.