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**Dr. Erin's Pondering on the Decline of the Seven Seas Erin Holston Singh, N.D.**

Driving back and forth to Cleveland from Lexington affords me the luxury of listening to National Public Radio all day long! On my last drive home I caught a segment that fascinated and saddened me about the health and vitality of our oceans. As so many ecosystems and humans on the solid earth are not in such great health, the liquid oceans are not faring so well either. We are overfishing our oceans with technologies that just a century ago were unfathomable. For example, industrial trawl nets, which are impervious to both the environmental damage to the seabed as well to the undesirable species also caught in the large netting to insure a massive harvest, far exceeds what a single fisherman would catch for him and his family. Such unsustainable acts threaten our environment in ways that are perhaps pushing the human race into more peril than all the other imminent environmental catastrophes we are confronted with every day.

I felt compelled to share a web site about saving the oceans, since without the health of the oceans, we are a short time away from our own devastation. The decline of the ocean is indicated by rising sea temperatures, which leads to marine diseases and bacterial infestations, stronger storm systems and the eventual disappearance of major species and hence food shortages. There are several indications that a worldwide fisheries collapse could occur (!). Furthermore, a strain of "monster bacteria" has been found in sharks, thought to be the result of penicillins released into the waterways impacting bacterial mutations and impacting their resistance. (Again, please don't flush unused prescriptions down the toilet!).

The web site provides some alternatives to the most commonly eaten fish species which are threatened by extinction. But perhaps we need to even re-think how important seafood is in the current era. While seafood is often touted for its high protein and mineral content, the health-enriching qualities of many seafoods are questionable. Most of the nutrition depends on what the fish themselves are eating. Similar to the beef industry's attempts to make out on overproduced resources (corn and soy), farmed fish are often fed foods that they were not meant to eat (corn and soy!). Farmed fish that are *not* fed corn and soy are often fed fish that are caught in the wild, further contributing to the problem of unsustainable fisheries' effects on the ocean. As my mentor, Dr. Gérard Guéniot used to say, 'most of the fish we eat is not natural, but blind and diabetic'..., as Dr. Guéniot implied, if we are eating blind and diabetic salmon, what is our chance to suffer a similar fate?! Take note, salmon and fresh-water fish are not the only farmed-raised types of seafood; shrimp and other species such as tilapia and carp are also a

farm-raised.

When I arrived home and started working on this article, I looked online for more NPR stories on the vitality of the oceans. I found a story from Fresh Air to be perhaps the most alarming - about the very bottom rung of the oceanic food chain ladder *disappearing!* Phytoplankton, or oceanic microplants and algae, are *the* base of the food chain. For those of you who have used our [Quinton Marine Plasma](#), you might find this especially interesting. The Quinton is extracted from the center of what are called *phytoplankton blooms*, places where the currents create eddies of visible phytoplankton. Krill eat phytoplankton and whales eat krill, so without the phytoplankton, the whales are at risk of losing their primary food source. If our phytoplankton is measurably decreasing, isn't it time we wake up and change our habits?

Perhaps one habit we need to start rethinking is our supplementation. As a physician, despite the rampant claims about the benefits of fish oil, krill oil and the like, I find it sensible for humans to get their omega-3 fatty acid requirements met from plant-based oils as often as possible. What I mean by 'sensible' is both health-sustaining and environmentally-sustaining. Products like [Flax seeds](#), [Perilla oil](#), chia seeds and walnuts are excellent examples of foods rich in the desired omega-3 fats. Here is a [list](#) (not all plant-based) of foods whose ratio of omega-6 to Omega-3 fats is 10:1. Consuming the vegetarian items listed is one way to avoid the need for fish oil. I do reserve the use of fish-based oils for those patients who I do feel need it; it just concerns me the rate at which the entire human population seems to think they need to consume fish and fish oils for health. Such a practice cannot possibly be sustainable. ***It is not necessary to eat seafood to get these nutrients.*** I think it is time we start to ponder our individual impact on the ocean. I hope this article has inspired some food for thought, instead of fish for food.

Here are the websites that inspired and informed my thinking:

[www.iamtheocean.org](http://www.iamtheocean.org)

[Ten Things you can do to Help Save the Ocean](#)

[Bacterial Monsters in our Sharks](#)

[Eco Seafood](#)-the story from WHYY's Fresh Air

[Decrease in Phytoplankton](#)

[Eco-Friendly Seafood Choices](#)

## **Creating a Natural Medicine Cabinet Liz Cavin ND**

In keeping with the naturopathic principle and tradition of *Doctor as Teacher* this month's Natural Medicine Cabinet article will discuss various botanical remedies that can be used to address common acute illnesses such as stomach discomfort, cuts and bruises, muscle strain and headaches.

First, a definition of the various types of botanical remedies. Plants, botanical remedies, phytotherapy, or herbs, are essentially all the same thing, but these therapies come in many different forms: teas, essential oils, tinctures, salves and capsules. Teas are made from flowers, leaves and roots. Leaves and flowers can be steeped (soaked) in hot water for 10-20 min. Roots are usually simmered for 20-30 minutes. The trick with using herbal teas is to provide a palatable taste, especially when giving them to children. Mints, licorice root or dried orange peel are often added to herbal teas to make them taste better.

Essential oils can be inhaled or applied topically. When applying them to large areas of the skin always dilute them with [coconut oil](#) because they sometimes cause skin irritation in their pure form. If you add an essential oil to bath water do a skin test first to avoid any irritation. To do a skin test, put one drop (undiluted) on the forearm directly to test for sensitivity before bathing. Use 7-10 drops of an essential oil for a child's bath and 10-15 drops for an adult's bath.

Tinctures are alcohol extracts of herbs. The alcohol extracts constituents from the herbs that are not water soluble. Tinctures for children have glycerin added to make them more palatable. With this basic understanding of the various forms of herbal medicine, let me explain some home therapies for the following common complaints.

**Acute stomach discomfort** This common complaint can be addressed with catnip, fennel, chamomile and peppermint in both adults and children. The herbs can be given in the form of teas or tinctures. These specific herbs are safe and can be used frequently. They are carminatives which means they dispel gas and aid with gas and bloating. They are also affective for treating colic. Essential oil of [peppermint](#) can be rubbed on the stomach to help relieve stomach ache. Add 1 drop to about 1 Tablespoon of [coconut oil](#). It is also safe to put 1-2 drops of peppermint essential oil in 8oz of water to help address an upset stomach.

**Skin conditions** are numerous and varied. Fortunately many herbs are available to address conditions like cuts, scrapes, burns, fungus, rashes, stings and bruises. Herbs typically used to treat skin conditions are anti-inflammatory, demulcent (soothing) and emollient (softening). They are usually applied in the form of gels, oils and salves.

**Cuts, scrapes and mild burns** respond well to calendula, lavender, comfrey, St Johns wort and aloe vera. Do not apply salves to open wounds, instead, apply herbal gels or [Calendula Cream](#) (Unda). Gels and the Unda Calendula cream are easily absorbed and are less inclined to cause infection than a salve made in a base of olive oil. Some gels contain a little alcohol and might sting. [Calendula Baby Cream](#) (Weleda) is great for diaper rashes or chapped, dry skin. [Lavender oil](#) or [tea tree oil](#) are especially useful in the treatment of insect bites or stings.

We can't forget our trusted friend arnica. [Arnica](#) is great for treating bruises and tissue damaged from the trauma of an accident like tripping and falling. Really we should think of arnica with any type of trauma, be it emotional or physical, a car accident, an emotional shock or being hit by a baseball. *It should be the first reflex, even if you are also calling 9-1-1.* We use Arnica in pellet (oral homeopathic) form, as well as topically. The oral form is for both physical and emotional traumas and the topical form only for physical injuries. The strength of the arnica (potency) should parallel the degree of trauma. So for a skinned knee, we might think of 30K, for a baseball bludgeon we might think of 200K and for a severe car accident, MK, XMK or higher- which are available only by permission from a physician (you won't find these higher potencies on the website, but they are available!).

[Oregano](#) along with [tea tree](#) helps improve fungal conditions. These herbs are most often used in the form of essential oils.

**Headaches** can be treated effectively with essential oils. Make sure the person is hydrated especially if the headache develops after he or she has been in the sun. Homeopathic [Natrum muriaticum](#) is also excellent for this type of headache (better chance of success if given with hydration!). [Lavender](#) or [Rosemary](#) can be applied to the temples. Muscle tightness in the neck or shoulders can cause headaches. [Peppermint](#) or Rosemary essential oil can be rubbed into the tight muscles to help them relax. White willow bark and [feverfew](#) are affective for treating headaches but work best as preventatives for chronic headaches.

**Muscle strains** respond well to herbal treatments. [Arnica](#) is the herb most commonly used for injured muscles. When the injury is acute with swollen muscle tissue apply herbs in the form of an essential oil, like [Juniper](#) essential oil diluted in a gel or cream, such as Arnica, Traumeel or Zellulisan. Once the swelling has gone down a cream or salve can be massaged into the muscle tissue. [Traumeel](#) is a homeopathic cream that contains many plant remedies. It is great a remedy for muscle strain. [Zellulisan](#) is another great cream that specifically addresses the tendons-and even the liver itself-through it's application on the skin!

Stock up on your herbal remedies and be prepared for a huge variety of acute ailments. Make sure you dilute essential oils with some coconut oil when you apply them to the skin. Next month we discuss remedies that can be used to address colds, flu and ear aches.

### **Medical Expenses-according to the IRS Save by Opening a Health Savings or Flexible Spending Account**

Many patients have come to using Health Savings or Flexible Spending Accounts to save tax dollars on money they are spending towards your health. Naturopathic care is covered under the IRS rules, but make sure you know how it works! You need to have a prescription for any supplements taken in order for them to be truly qualified for HSA and FSA spending. See the [IRS website](#)

for the complete rules.

Options will provide a written letter for any patient needing a prescription for the items we use to reinstate your health, just ask!

## **Saturday Appointments Available**

Dr. Liz Cavin is available for Saturday appointments two Saturdays a month. The next two Saturdays are **October 16th** and **October 23rd**.

## **NEW PRODUCTS**

**Withania Complex** - Perpetually seeking those herbs that help maintain strength and stamina while also helping patients manage stress, Dr. Erin decided to carry another neuro-adrenal herbal support. **Withania Complex** contains several adaptogens-or immune balancing, stress supporting herbs-such as Ashwaganda, Licorice, Skullcap and Ginseng. See if it doesn't help you maintain better energy as you manage your stressful workload! (Not for individuals with high blood pressure).

**Hemp Protein Powder + Fiber** Hemp is an excellent, natural protein that is easily absorbed and digested. With the added fiber, it is excellent for smoothies and weight loss. Dr. Erin prefers this to the manufactured protein powders made from soy and other processed ingredients often found in healthfood store brands of protein powder since hemp is a bona fide food! Hemp protein is ideal for patients who are concerned about sensitivities to soy or [whey-based](#) protein powders.

**Pro-Aller** -Fall is often another allergy period for many, sneezing, sniffing, hayfever, the works. We prefer to get to the root of the cause by addressing the liver and reactivity of the individual by using a homeopathic that helps liver function and sensitivity of the person. This is a high quality homeopathic complex, formulated in Germany by a unique method (spagyric) to increase it's efficacy.

## **A New Recipe-Fall zucchini tempeh wraps** -gluten and dairy free!

I was inspired to make a simple lettuce wrap that included tempeh, arame (seaweed) and did not include gluten or dairy. The fall harvest is producing plenty of yellow squash and zucchini, so I had some on hand to incorporate into the mix. And a final, unique vegetable I found at the local co-op, black radish! Black radishes are used in European herbal medicine far more commonly than here in the U.S. to help with liver and gallbladder detox. I was happy to experiment with this hard, spicy root vegetable. Let me know what you think!

Ingredients:

- 1 1/2 packages tempeh, cut into 1/4 inch thick strips
  - 1 1/2 c. arame soaked for 10 minutes and then drained.
  - 1 head green leaf lettuce, washed and any brown parts near the stem removed.
  - 1 small zucchini, cut into small strips
  - 1 small yellow squash, cut into small strips
  - 1-2 black radishes, peeled and cut into small strips
- Cucumbers, daikon or other radish strips could also be added or substituted.

For the marinade:

1/3 c. wheat-free tamari

2/3 c. water

2 T. toasted sesame oil

1T. Bragg's Liquid Aminos

Marinate the tempeh strips in mix above for 1-2 hours or immediately place in the oven on 100-150 degrees (lowest setting) and allow the tempeh to slowly absorb the flavors while partially "dehydrating". Be sure to use a square glass or metal container that allows the tempeh pieces to be completely covered by the liquid.

Meanwhile, prepare the squash, radishes and lettuce.

Once the tempeh has absorbed most (not all) of the marinade, remove the tempeh from the oven (probably 1 1/2 hours) and mix the remaining liquid into a bowl with the other vegetables, save the lettuce leaves for the "wrap". Then on a dry plate, place 2-3 pieces of tempeh lengthwise on a leaf of the lettuce. Then, with tongs, grab a 'handful' of the vegetable/arame mix and place in the center of the leaf, on top of the tempeh. Gently wrap the leaf around the contents and place on another plate. Repeat with all leaves or until you've made enough!