

LIFESTYLE BENEFITS

JANUARY 2018

Here's to YOU!



Health & Wellness

Charcoal: Activate!

Charcoal for health and beauty? We're not talking about the same stuff you use to fire up your grill! Typically made from coconut shells, peat, coal or wood that has been exposed to extreme heat, activated charcoal is a porous black powder. While its effectiveness is under debate, it has been known for its medical uses for hundreds of years.

Improved skin. Beauty products such as face masks use activated charcoal to help clean pores by drawing toxins out of the skin.

Reduced bloating. The compounds in activated charcoal have been said to help prevent gas and assist with the digestion of food. Hello, hangover cure!

Whiter teeth. Activated charcoal's absorbing power can draw stains, plaque and food particles away from your teeth, leaving you with a pearly white smile.

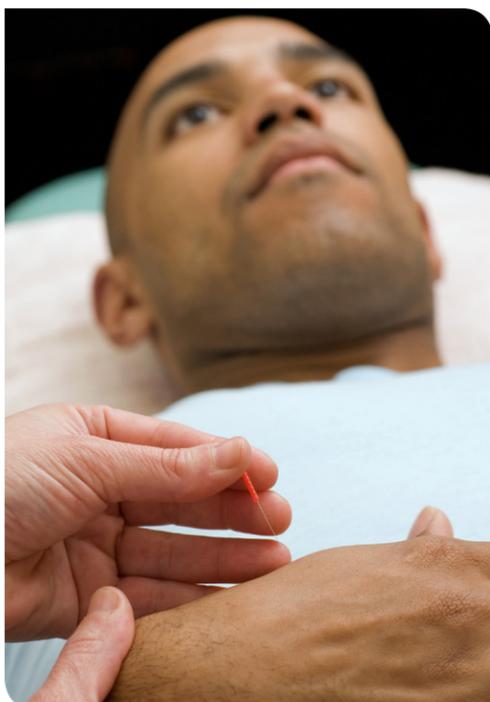
Toxin removal. This is claimed as one of activated charcoal's most effective uses. It can prevent certain toxins from being absorbed into the body. Under a doctor's care, it can be taken orally if a drug overdose is suspected or if certain poisons have been ingested.

Before incorporating activated charcoal into your wellness routine, make sure to discuss all of your options with your physician. Possible side effects include nausea, vomiting, intestinal blockages, and interactions with certain medications.



Integrative Medicine

Why treat only one specific health problem when you could be treating your overall physical and mental health instead? Enter alternative treatments such as acupuncture and chiropractic care prescribed alongside traditional treatments such as medications. A few examples of conditions that can be treated through integrative medicine include:



Asthma. Traditional inhalers can help keep symptoms under control, while deep breathing exercises (think yoga) could help avoid hyperventilating during an asthma attack.

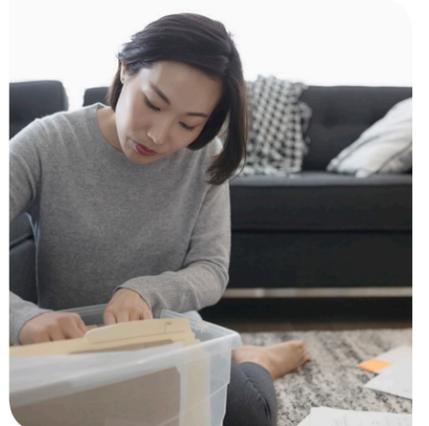
Depression. Instead of one solution, counseling sessions, medication and/or acupuncture are used concurrently.

Back Pain. Traditional prescription painkillers or surgery can be complemented with chiropractic manipulations and massage therapy to help treat back pain.

Let's Get Minimal

When you hear the word "minimalist," you may picture a nearly empty white room with nothing more than a sofa and a TV. While this scenario may be true for some, minimalism is really all about finding ways to simplify your lifestyle.

Here are changes you can make to progress toward a more minimalist lifestyle.



- ❖ **De-clutter your home** to focus on getting rid of the unnecessary items so that your living space can be more functional and enjoyable. Make separate piles for items that should be kept, trashed and donated or sold.
- ❖ **Take a look at your finances** and assess your spending habits. See if there are any areas like going out to eat or entertainment expenses that you can begin to limit.
- ❖ **Cut back on social media** to reduce some noise in your life. Cull your friends list so you can invest your time reading only about those who you would actually like to spend time with.
- ❖ **Get creative with gift giving** by considering items with practical use such as a monthly food subscription box or, better yet, gifts that involve an experience such as tickets to a concert or local food festival.

The process of simplifying and organizing can reduce stress levels by helping to cut down on the excess in your life. Remember: You don't have to follow anyone else's rules – take it at your own pace, and do what works best for you and your family!

Benefit Spotlight

Hyper-Personalized Healthcare

Each of us has unique DNA. Obviously this affects our physical characteristics, but it's also key to our health. To tap into that knowledge, consider hyper-personalized healthcare — optimizing medical decisions based on the context of one's genetic content. That means therapies, preventive actions and medications can be chosen based on one's predicted response or risk of disease. Therefore, instead of a one-size-fits-all approach to wellness, doctors can assess a person's DNA in order to pick specific diets, exercise plans and medications in an attempt to ward off specific diseases that one might show a genetic marker for or that's in their family tree.



How do you make this work for you? Talk with your doctor about DNA testing. Next, locate a specialty clinic near you that can read, evaluate and translate the testing into a personalized healthcare plan. These types of tests and analysis can cost upward of \$25,000, though, so first consult your insurance plan documents to see what type of coverage is available to you.



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