

## Jacob Teitelbaum, MD, on Supplements, the Ills of Modern Life, and Anything Else He Wants to Talk About

Interview by Adam Swenson



**Jacob Teitelbaum, MD**, is a favorite around here. Wise, funny, and deeply insightful, this Hawaiian is a true iconoclast. A writer of five best-selling books, he is also the lead author of "gold standard" research on effective treatment for chronic fatigue syndrome and fibromyalgia, and an integrative treatment protocol recognized as "standard of practice" for chronic pain conditions.

Here he is in narrative format. We asked him about supplements, and he will take it from here...

### Keep the effectiveness, hold the toxicity

What people need to "get" is the importance of supplements. One of the things that makes supplements so important is that you have over 200,000 deaths a year from medications, most of them preventable—or many of them preventable. You have over 30,000 deaths a year from arthritis medications like ibuprofen, the ones called NSAIDs (non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs) alone, and another 15,000 overdose deaths from narcotic medications used for pain. That's 45,000 deaths. If you look at the research, repeated studies show that natural supplements are often far more effective than the medications, but without the toxicity. Basically, 200,000 deaths a year from meds and zero for supplements.

A recent study, for example, looking at a special, highly absorbed curcumin combined with boswellia was more effective than Celebrex. If you look at studies of willow bark, it's twice as effective as Motrin for chronic back pain. The first study I mentioned was for arthritis—any arthritis—and study after study shows that the natural supplements are as effective, and often more effective, than the medication. That's 45,000 easily preventable deaths a year—30,000 just from arthritis medications alone. We're talking about a massive amount of benefit that could be obtained.

If you're looking for other things like heart disease, which is the number-one killer in the United States, the medications used for treating heart disease have some benefit, but if you look at the natural support—for example, ribose, coenzyme Q10, hawthorn, magnesium, and B vitamins—these supplements dramatically increase the efficiency of heart function, while prolonging life. But again, very little in the way of side effects, and much cheaper than the medications. Unfortunately, this research is rarely reported in the news media: 45,000 deaths a year from pain medications—who cares?! Somebody gets a hemorrhoid from an herbal remedy? Guaranteed that will be top news on CNN! So it's up to the public to find the information they need.

### Common ill of modern life

And this is just the tip of the iceberg. Let's take a moment and look at some of the most common ill of modern life. We talked about heart attacks, which would be the biggest killer. We're looking at saving 30,000 to 45,000 lives in 15 minutes if people just knew the research on natural remedies for pain. Let's look at how to make pain go away.

My research has shown pain is like a warning light on your body's dashboard. It tells you that something needs attention, and you can either put a Band-Aid over the annoying red flashing oil light so your motor burns out, or you can put oil in the car and fix the leak. Then the oil light turns off. In the same way, give your body what it needs and the pain goes away!

Our double-blind study of fibromyalgia, for example, showed that if you give SHINE—sleep, hormonal support, treat infection and inflammation, nutritional support, and exercise—the pain often goes away. So this is another thing that our research has shown. Pain is not the enemy: it's a warning light on your body's dashboard saying, "Pay attention!" Unfortunately, people don't know what the pain is telling them—that if you have a red flashing light it doesn't have oil in it. You didn't come with an owner's manual. So what do you do?

That's the reason I wrote *Real Cause, Real Cure*, so people would have an owner's manual for their body. They would understand what their body is telling them, with the tools needed to keep it healthy.

### Autoimmune diseases

Now heart disease is getting less common, and what's becoming more common are a slew of immune and inflammatory diseases, diseases of immune function. Why is this happening? One, because of the modern American diet. The medical word for it? It's *kakal*! We've got half our calories coming from sugar, white flour, and fat that's been added to the diet and is pro-inflammatory and almost empty of vitamins and minerals. So we're seeing people being both malnourished and obese for the first time in human history. Immune problems also come from poor digestion; we don't have the enzymes to digest food. They're destroyed in food processing, so we have partially digested foods and we have leaked gut from the bowel infections, from antibiotics, and from sugar. We're getting massive amounts of partially digested proteins being absorbed and that overwhelms our immune system, triggering food allergies and other immune problems. That's why wheat and bread has gone from being the staff of life to being the stuff of food allergies.

### The hammer

I'm not against medications. Medications are an important tool in the tool kit—they're like the hammer. But I don't want to throw away all the rest of the tools. Natural medicine is like the rest of the tool kit. I don't want to throw away the hammer, but I don't want to only have a hammer. Most people, all they have access to is a doctor who uses only the hammer, and the person walks out of the office and they feel slammed like they're a nail. That's all the doctors know about.

### The best medicine is whole foods

FULLY-GROUNDED FOOTBED ALLOWS YOU TO RECONNECT TO THE EARTH'S ENERGY!

FOOTWEAR THAT MAKES YOU FEEL BETTER

FREE SHIPPING

10% OFF

Dr. David Williams

STOP constipation, gas, and bloating.

SHOP NOW!

HEALTHY DIRECTIONS

VeggieTales

VALUES TO GROW BY

GAIAM

Your guide to all things green

SHOP NOW

### SPONSORED LINKS

Take 25% Off Essentials Backpacks with code **PACK** at [Lifeisgood.com](#) Ends 8/31.

You can trust [BotanicChoice.com](#) - their products are doctor recommended and always carry an unconditional 100% money-back guarantee.

The best medicine is a good healthy diet of whole foods. That's as close as nature makes it. We live in the 21<sup>st</sup> century and if you don't want to shop and cook 25 hours a day, it's really hard to get that. So I encourage people not to obsess with it, and try to add in healthy things as they can. For example, if you have cereal for breakfast, get a whole grain cereal. Throw some berries into it for your antioxidants. Slice a banana into it so you get the potassium to help decrease high blood pressure. These simple things you can do, if you add these things in, they will help with health. Meanwhile, chocolate is a health food, decreasing the risk of death from a heart attack more than cholesterol medications will. So eating healthy doesn't have to be hard to do. Remember, most of the things that are good for you feel good. We have a myth, and it's really a nasty myth, that says that anything that feels good is bad for you. It's like, "Are you insane?" Things feel good because they're good for you. That's why they feel good.

There are things you can do in processing food that fool the taste buds and fool the body to the point where it becomes toxic, like 150 pounds of sugar per person per year that we add into diet—18 percent of our calories. So we're kind of fooling the body with that.

But overall, if you look at eggs, for example, eggs are healthy food. The current advice, to cut down salt to a certain amount, if followed, has been shown to be correlated with dying younger. The NHANES studies, the largest nutritional studies in the world, and study after study shows that restricting salt to amounts recommended is associated with dying younger... Listen to your taste buds, but use a good iodized or sea salt, and salt your food to the degree that your taste buds would like.

#### The best supplements are...

Low cost and easy to take. Because of the widespread nutritional deficiencies, people need a good multivitamin. Instead of taking 35 pills a day though, I recommend a simple drink like the Energy Revitalization System vitamin powder. I add a 5 g scoop of ribose (Corvalen), and that's my morning energy drink. It's incredibly healthy and leaves most people feeling great. Along with this I take one simple pill, Vectomega, which supplies the same amount of fish essential fatty acids as eight fish oil horse pills. So one drink and one pill offers a foundation for excellent health and energy. It's easy!

Looking at SHINE gives my priorities for supplements. If you can't sleep your eight hours a night, there is an herb for that. In fact I use a mix of six herbs called the Revitalizing Sleep Formula. Hormonal issues? If you are tired, achy, gaining weight, and cold intolerant, you need thyroid support. I get tri-iodine 6 ½ mg a day for three months. In marriage counseling or a divorce lawyers office? Do you get very irritable when hungry? These suggest adrenal fatigue. A good mix such as Adrenal Stress End includes licorice, adrenal glandulars, vitamin B5, and vitamin C. This supports adrenal function and will smooth the moods right out. Much cheaper than a divorce lawyer. If taking hormones, use common sense and use bioidenticals. For immunity, a good enteric-coated probiotic is recommended. And get a \$15 pedometer as a biofeedback tool for exercise. For pain, End Pain and Curamin are my favorite two herbal mixes.

This mix of supplements gives a very effective foundation for most people's problems.

#### Poisoning or augmenting?

Let me give you a different way of looking at medicine. Most of our medications work by poisoning a system in the body, and because of that, we get very quick effects and very strong effects.

Unfortunately, the system that's being poisoned is necessary and because of that, we also see a lot of side effects and toxicity. Natural remedies are more likely to be augmenting and rebalancing your body's systems. The natural remedies are usually a mix of molecules that are found in combination in nature because they help the plant. They do good things in the plant, and are therefore more likely to help rebuild things. Where poisons will work quickly within minutes, natural remedies build things more deliberately. It's like tearing down a house versus building a house—you can tear down a house in one day, but it takes six weeks to build it. The natural remedies are more likely to help rebuild and heal things as opposed to poison things, so they may take a bit longer to work. Very often I will combine the two approaches. If I need a quick fix, I may go to medication while adding in the natural remedies to heal the system so the medicine can then be weaned off.

#### Taking a supplement instead of a prescription?

God, yes. Are there times when it's good to take something that will rebuild your system and heal you, that are low-cost and very safe, as opposed to going directly to a poison that will likely kill you? Well, duh. That's like asking, is there a time that it's okay to try to use another tool besides a hammer? It's like, "Yes! Please!"

#### What can we do to cut down the number of times we go see the doctor?

The acronym I use for that is SHINE. Sleep—we used to get nine hours of sleep a night, now down to 6 ½. That's a 30 percent pay cut. Hormonal support—in large part necessary due to the chemicals in the environment—but use only bioidentical hormones. Getting iodine to address deficiency can also help. Infections and inflammation—if you eat a whole foods diet, get grass-fed instead of grain-fed, cut the sugar back when it's convenient—not out, but save it for deserts where it belongs—and take it out of your drinks and sodas and things you'll cut back inflammation dramatically. Nutritional support—again, people ask which vitamin or mineral they need, and the answer is all of them. Then, Exercise. So, S-H-I-N-E. It's a simple acronym for optimizing health and optimizing energy.

#### How is that working for you?

The way you tell how something is working for you is by how it's working for you. How does it feel? Now, you could shoot heroin and you'll feel good for a couple of hours, but overall you're going to feel lousy. So how do you feel overall? How's it working for you?

And there's no one-size-fits-all; there's such a variety and choice. So look at a simple question: How is that working for you?

Full interview coming soon to [alternativemedicine.com](http://alternativemedicine.com).