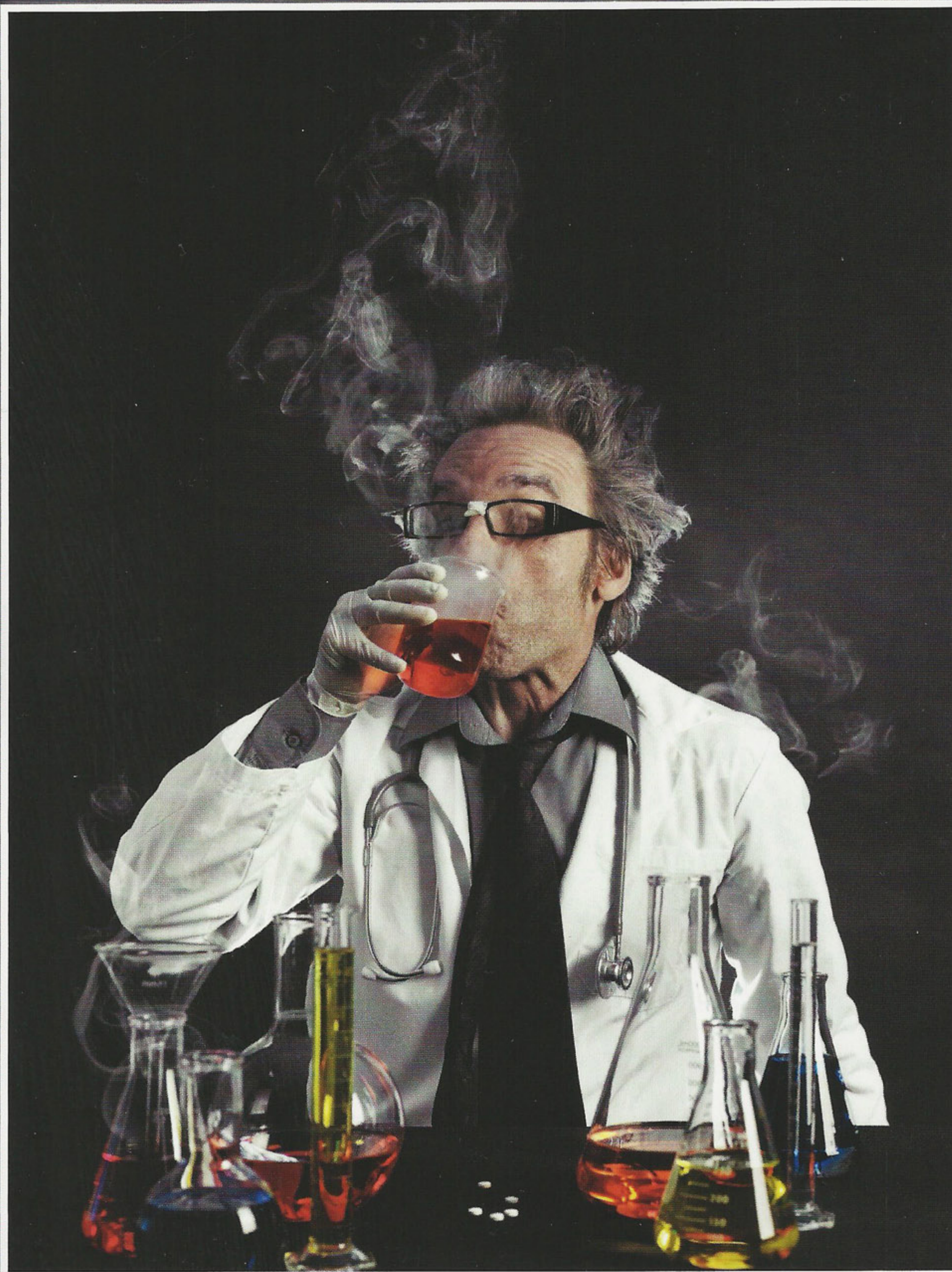


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Townsend Letter

The Examiner of Alternative Medicine

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Avoiding AGEs

CELLULITE TREATMENT

A Novel Option





Integrative Medicine Perspective by Dr. Julie

by Julie T. Chen, MD
www.makinghealthyez.com

Is There Such a Thing as the Fountain of Youth?

My patients frequently bring me advertisements for products or procedures that they are interested in using for anti-aging. They are willing to spend hundreds, if not thousands, of dollars to achieve longevity and anti-aging. Ironically, the best way to achieve the results of looking and feeling like you just took a spa trip to the “fountain of youth” is to live a lifestyle and to consume a diet that is anti-inflammatory.

These days, it seems that everywhere we turn, we see ads for human growth hormone, supplements that prevent stretch marks or wrinkles, and pills that help us lose weight and keep it off. In this modern society where quick fixes are the norm and “guaranteed results” are expected, why would we want to take the extra time and effort to live a life that is anti-inflammatory? Is it worth the effort and time when we can just take a magic pill or get a magic injection or procedure?

Here’s my take on this: there is no such thing as one magic bullet or pill to cure aging. This is because human physiology is complex, and it takes multiple changes on a molecular level to get to the point where your health and body are today. To obtain optimum anti-aging results that will last, we need to address all these factors. Let’s take the example of one of my patients who has an autoimmune disease. She felt as if she were 10 years older than her actual age and thought that she looked it. By treating her disease with an anti-inflammatory approach, she is now feeling as if she were “in her 20s again.”

Y. T. is a 38-year-old female who was diagnosed with systemic lupus erythematosus and fibromyalgia in her early mid-30s. Looking back, she thinks that she’s had early symptoms since her early 30s of fatigue, chronic muscle and joint pains, insomnia, and overall feeling achy and “bad.” She has been on medications since her diagnosis, and she was initially diagnosed with her symptoms and a leg blood clot even though she was not taking oral contraceptive pills or any other medications at the time. Due to her propensity toward blood clots, she is now on warfarin (a blood-thinning medication) and has to get regular blood checks to make sure that her INR (international normalized ratio) is in the therapeutic range.

She came to see me because she had always preferred natural methods of health management when possible. She also still felt “horrible” despite being on medications. Her initial comment to me was, “I feel like an old woman and I’m only 38.” She was not directly looking for anti-aging treatments, but she wanted to feel as she had prior to the disease onset: functional and able to enjoy activities of life. She was also worried about how she would be in another 5 to 10 years when she already felt “old and decrepit.”

We began her evaluation and treatment with blood work and salivary cortisol testing to address issues of adrenal fatigue and any vitamin/mineral or hormonal deficiencies. She was placed on numerous supplements, including but not limited to vitamins D3 and B12, magnesium, selenium, free-form amino acids, CoQ10, DHEA, DGL, and other adrenal tonics, based on her lab findings. Since she was taking warfarin, she had to get more frequent INR checks as she changed her supplements and diet to make sure that she stayed in the safe therapeutic range.

She was started on acupuncture, including but not limited to treatment of *jing* deficiency and cupping for chronic back myofascial pain, and was receiving regular myofascial release therapies along with low level laser therapy to diminish exacerbating factors contributing to her inflammatory status. She had a great deal of stress in her life and was having trouble sleeping. We began hypnotherapy and guided imagery. She also began seeing her church pastor for spiritual support and as an additional form of stress management.

She began changing her diet to vegan, with a significant proportion of plant-based proteins. As she began to have more energy and even noticed her skin looking brighter and healthier, she decided to do a trial elimination diet of nuts, soy, dairy, gluten, and sugar. From this trial she realized that she was gluten sensitive and sugar sensitive. She began adding the components of a gluten-free and low glycemic load diet that is as sugar-free as possible.

Integrative Medicine



She has been seeing me for about 10 months now and is "feeling like a 20-year-old" again. Let's examine why she might be feeling like she just took a trip to the "fountain of youth."

Her labs have improved, including a heartier thyroid and adrenal functioning status. She has minimized the constant drain on adrenal functioning by managing stress more effectively. She is recognizing that, as a machine, the body requires nutrients, and she is eating accordingly. She has taken the time to figure out what elements of her diet cause inflammation and eliminated those ingredients. She is seeing that the body ages faster without rest, recovery, and appropriate nutrients. She also sees now that, in that process where the body is being traumatized from the lack of what it needs to function optimally, the organs don't function as well and aging occurs from the inside out and outside in.

In essence, the best anti-aging results come from addressing all the factors that contribute to aging, including diet, lifestyle habits, weight management, physical activities, and physiological health such as hormonal balance and managing chronic diseases. We are born with a set of genes that create

the outline of who we are. However, based on the concept of epigenetics (whereby how we live directly affects how these genes are expressed), we have control over how we age, the rate at which we age, and how we look and act at any given age.

Inflammation in the body is a major factor in early aging. By viewing healthful food as a youth serum, eliminating unhealthy lifestyle habits as though they were the poisonous apples in the fairytales, cultivating healthy physiology as though it's the hottest new trend in town, and maintaining a youthful mindset of neoteny (viewing the world with the curiosity, joy, and positivity of children), we can live a full and healthy life as though we are all in our "20s."

So, I caution all readers as you seek that one magic bullet to turn back the hands of time: Results for anti-aging are more positively pervasive and longer-lasting if you seek a lifestyle that is youthful and healthful. In other words, if we take care of our bodies and our organs, our appearance and energy are those of a younger individual. If we only take care of our outward appearance and our bodies are deficient and inflamed internally, our battle to look younger will be an uphill one. By taking care of our internal health along with our external health, we can achieve that elusive anti-aging goal not just in the way of our looks, but also in our overall health. ♦

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