

## Jojoba for Youthful Skin

By ANTHONY LANGSTONE and LOUISE VALENTINE  
*Epoch Times Manchester, U.K. Staff and New York Staff*

Jojoba, (pronounced ho-ho-ba), known as “the peanut of the desert,” has been used for hundreds of years by the Apache Indians of the Sonoran Desert in southwestern United States and northern Mexico.

American Indians of today utilize the seed in much the same way as their ancestors—as medicine and food for the family and livestock. The oil revitalizes and conditions hair. Roasted seeds are used to create a unique hot beverage.

After the oil is extracted from the seed, a substance called “meal” is left over. This contains up to 30 percent protein with 17 amino acids, making jojoba meal a valuable source of nutrients. The nutritious meal also contains an appetite suppressant called simmondsin, which, when removed, can enable the meal to be used for livestock feed. Researchers are currently looking into the uses of simmondsin for humans.

The ancient ones not only used the extracted oil on wounds and sores but also found it could rejuvenate scarred and wrinkled skin. Skin loses its elasticity due to over-exposure to the sun or from ageing. The components found in jojoba reduce the effects of ageing, giving a less-wrinkled and youthful appearance by increasing the skin’s elastin. Oil of jojoba is odorless

and readily absorbed, so there is none of that greasy look or feel after it is applied, for it is very similar to our own skin’s oil—sebum.

Because jojoba restores the skin’s pH balance, it relieves minor skin disorders such as acne, sunburn, chapped skin, nappy rash, soft fingernails, and facial blemishes. When applied to the scalp, it removes build-up of oils and other substances from the hair follicles, eliminating dandruff as it moistens dry skin.

Chemists will be glad to hear that jojoba oil is really not an oil but a straight-chained ester. However, the rest of us can note that, as such, it does not become rancid as most oils do, making it a good preservative for cosmetics and giving it a long shelf life if kept away from light.

In the 1920s and 30s, jojoba oil and sperm whale oil were found to have almost identical structure and properties, except for the fishy smell of whale oil. Thereafter, jojoba oil has been able to replace whale oil in cosmetics and industry, where its properties have outperformed petroleum derivatives.

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## Echinacea Cuts Colds

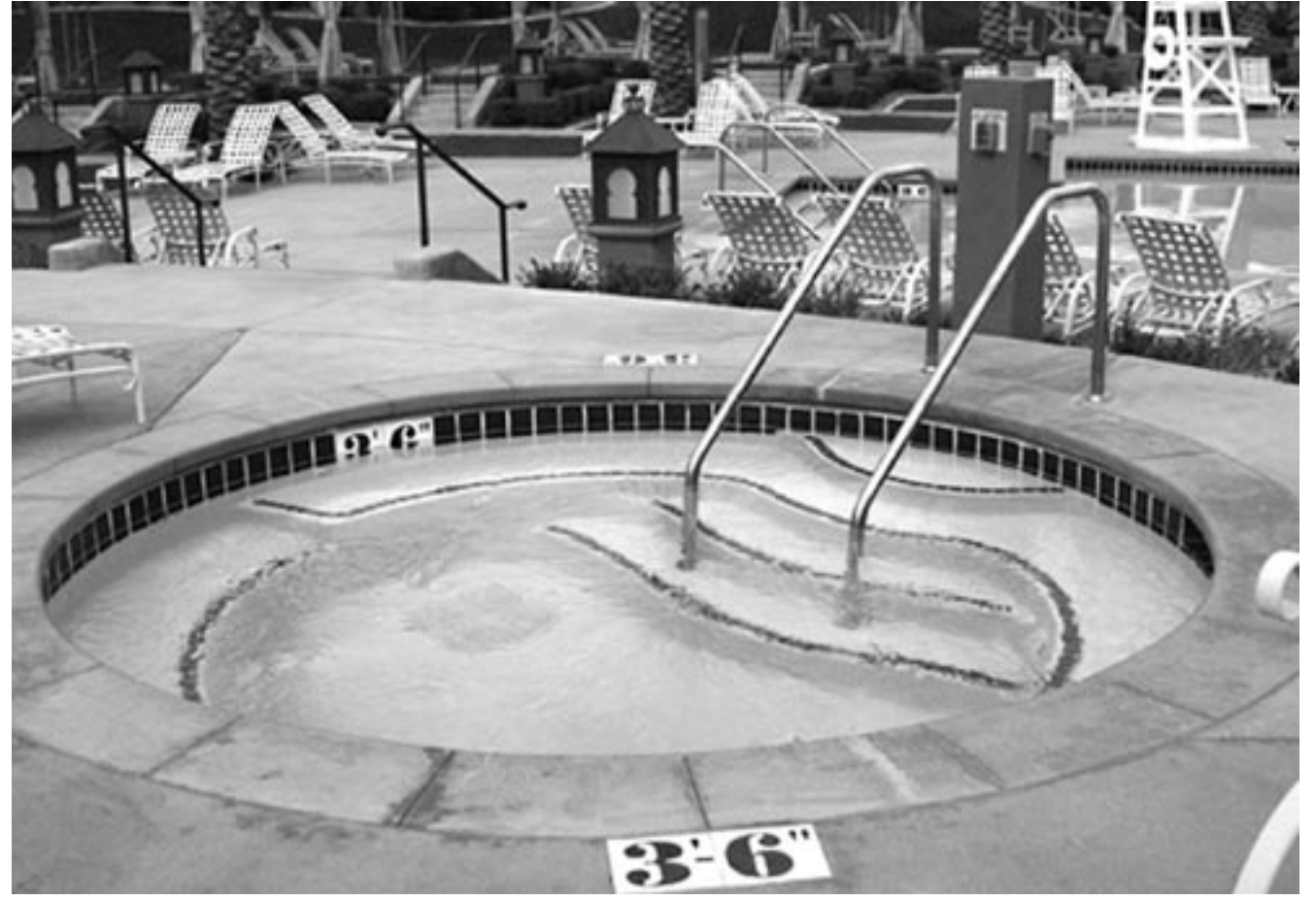
BOSTON (Reuters Health)—Use of echinacea (extract of the purple cone flower) before the onset of full-blown symptoms of the common cold reduces the incidence by more than a half and the duration by almost two full days, researchers reported at the annual meeting of the American College of Clinical Pharmacology.

There are approximately one billion colds reported annually, Dr. Sachin A. Shah told meeting attendees. He commented that 20 percent of patients report using nutraceuticals for symptom management. Of these, echinacea is the most commonly used.

Shah of the University of Connecticut, Storrs, and colleagues conducted a search and ultimately a pooled analysis of randomized controlled trials on the subject.

The investigators found 14 studies that contained information on incidence in 1,356 patients and duration in 1,630 patients.

The team found that echinacea use cut incidence by 58 percent. Duration was shortened by 1.9 days compared with the colds of nonusers.



Too Hot to Handle? Hot tub use has the potential of causing lung infections.

## Pleasures and Dangers of Hot Tubs

By W. GIFFORD-JONES, M.D.

Have you just checked in to a hotel and gone to the health club in dire need of relaxation? So now you’re sitting in a hot tub and the world looks a lot better? Unfortunately, you should know there are pleasures and hazards to most things in life, and hot tubs are no exception. One of the hazards is “Hot Tub Lung” (HTL) infection, and you may want to think again.

Perhaps as you were reaching to turn on the jets, you saw this message out of the corner of your eye: “Persons suffering from heart disease, high blood pressure, diabetes, or other health problems should not enter the spa without prior medical consultation and permission from your doctor.” There may also be warning not to consume alcohol, not to use temperatures over and, if pregnant, to consult a physician.

In today’s litigation-riddled society, this caution helps to ward off lawsuits. After all, when McDonald’s can be successfully sued because you spilled a cup of hot coffee while driving and burned yourself, there’s small wonder for such messages. But, sad to say, there are potential health problems lurking in hot tubs.

It’s hard to find a better place to grow bacteria than a hot wet area, and one bacterium—*Mycobacterium avium*—has a special liking for this location. This is particularly true if tubs are not cleaned as recommended by health authorities. And chlorine loses some of

its effectiveness at high temperatures.

But how can a germ in the water get into your lungs? Bubbles form in the contaminated water from the force of hot tub jets. These bubbles burst when they rise to the surface, dispersing the bacteria into the air.

*Mycobacterium avium* is related to the class of bacteria that causes tuberculosis, but luckily it’s not contagious. It can, however, cause fever or chills, a wet cough, tightness of the chest, fatigue and shortness of breath.

Diagnosis of HTL is made by chest X-rays or a CT scan of the lungs. Testing water in the tub will also detect this bacterium. The usual treatment consists of corticosteroids and antibiotics to combat the inflammation and infection. Fortunately, this is not a common infection.

What is the risk of heart attack while using a hot tub? Some authorities are concerned that hot water could cause extra stress on the heart by increasing the heart rate.

Dr. Thomas Allison, a cardiologist at Mayo Clinic, says that the chance of this happening is “pretty rare.” But he advises that a stay in the tub should not last more than 15 minutes.

Other cardiologists suggest that patients who are taking beta-blockers and ACE inhibitors, which lower blood pressure, should use hot tubs cautiously. They should be aware of the risk of fainting after a long hot soak.

Sitting in a hot tub also causes the blood vessels to dilate as the body

adjusts to increased heat. This would normally cause a decrease in blood pressure as widened vessels mean less pressure is needed to push blood through the body. But the force of water against the body prevents this from happening. Stepping out of the tub removes this counterforce. In addition, gravity allows blood to drop toward the feet. So as the brain loses blood, fainting may occur.

Also reported have been deaths due to heat stroke from prolonged hot tub soaks. Being immersed for a long time prevents the body from sweating to remove excess heat.

It’s debatable whether hot tubs could cause damage to a developing fetus. But there’s been enough concern expressed that, in all probability, pregnant women should forgo this pleasure.

For the majority of people, a few minutes in a hot tub is safe and beneficial. And for those suffering from arthritis, it helps to ease stiff joints and tight muscles by increasing blood flow and loosening connective tissue. But enjoy without alcohol. Imbibing makes you more likely to ignore warnings or become overheated, and it increases the risk of slipping.

Obviously, huge numbers of hot tubs are in use and there’s no epidemic of HTL infections. So for the majority of people, these tubs are safe. But be aware.

*Dr. Gifford-Jones is a medical journalist with a private medical practice in Toronto.*

## Key Nutrients High in Salad Eaters

NEW YORK (Reuters Health)—People who eat plenty of salads, or raw vegetables in general, typically have higher blood levels of several important nutrients, according to a large study of U.S. adults.

Researchers found that even one serving of raw vegetables a day moved people closer to getting the recommended amounts of vitamins A, E, B6 and folic acid. And as salad and raw vegetable intake increased, so did blood levels of vitamins C and E, folic acid and several carotenoids—antioxidants that give yellow, orange, and red hues to many vegetables and fruits.

Unfortunately, few Americans regularly eat raw vegetables, according to the researchers, led by Dr. L. Joseph Su of the Louisiana State University Health Sciences Center in New Orleans.

Of the nearly 18,000 U.S. adults surveyed, only 18 to 38 percent said they ate salads. White women younger than 45 had the highest rate; older African Americans had the lowest.

In general, black adults of all ages were less likely to eat salads and other raw vegetables than their white counterparts, Su and colleague Dr. Lenore Arab report in the *Journal of the American Dietetic Association*.

The particularly low vegetable intake among African Americans is “alarming,” the researchers write.

They based their findings on data from a federal health and nutrition survey of 17,688 U.S. adults. Participants reported on their diets over the last 24 hours and had medical exams that included measuring nutrient levels in the blood.

Overall, salad and veggie consumers had higher blood levels of a range of



Sold on Salads: Eating salads associated with increased nutrient intake

nutrients—15 percent higher, on average, than people who reported a menu free of raw vegetables. They were also two to three times more likely to meet the recommended daily intake for vitamin C.

What’s more, the “dose” of salad didn’t have to be large to help people meet their daily requirements for several nutrients. Even one a day made a difference, noted Arab, a professor of epidemiology at the University of California, Los Angeles.

“Salad is a colorful, creative way to get nutrients that are in short supply in the U.S. diet,” she told Reuters Health.

Arab did offer some caveats as to what constitutes a healthful salad. Color is key; dark leafy greens mingled with red and yellow vegetables beats iceberg lettuce and croutons.

“We are not talking about pasta or

potato salad here,” Arab added.

The findings should also help allay any concerns about the body’s ability to absorb certain nutrients from raw vegetables, according to the researchers. Water-soluble vitamins, like vitamin C and many B vitamins, are heat-sensitive, and it’s better to get them through raw vegetables, Arab explained.

But certain other nutrients, including the carotenoids, tend to be better absorbed from cooked vegetables.

However, a little fat helps the body get the most from these nutrients. And in this study, salad dressing was linked to higher nutrient levels in the blood—suggesting, according to the researchers, that the oils in many dressing aided in absorption of some nutrients.

Source: *Journal of the American Dietetic Association*, September 2006

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This patient suffered from hemiplegia after a stroke. She was bedridden before treatment, but after the first treatments, she was able to stand up.

## Newer Antidepressants Raise the Risk of Violence

WASHINGTON (Reuters)—Newer antidepressants, already suspected of raising the risk of suicide, may also cause a few people to become violent, researchers reported this month.

They found that people who took GlaxoSmithKline’s antidepressant Paxil were twice as likely to have what was called a “hostility event” as those given a placebo.

Paxil, known generically as paroxetine, is in a class of drugs called selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors or SSRIs.

They came under scrutiny when some doctors reported that teenagers taking the drugs might be more likely to commit suicide.

In 2004, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration concluded there was a higher risk of suicidal behavior among children and teenagers and ordered strong label warnings on several SSRI drugs. It has urged close monitoring of adults.

David Healy and David Menkes from Cardiff University in Britain and Andrew Herxheimer from the Cochrane Centre used several sources of information to see what the risk of violent behavior was among people taking SSRIs.

They included data on paroxetine presented to Britain’s Committee on Safety of Medicines Expert Working Group by GlaxoSmithKline, legal

cases and e-mails from 1,374 patients in response to a British television program on the subject.

They found that 60 out of 9,219 people who took Paxil or 0.65 percent, had “a hostility event,” compared to 20 of 6,455 given a placebo, or 0.31 percent.

Writing in the online journal *Public Library of Science-Medicine*, the researchers said, however, that such violence was likely to be rare.

“The new issues highlighted by these cases need urgent examination jointly by jurists and psychiatrists in all countries where antidepressants are widely used,” they wrote.

“When violence is a suspected outcome, every case has to be considered carefully, on the principle that individuals are responsible for their conduct, unless there is clear evidence of compromised function that cannot be otherwise explained.”

## New Findings About Treating Childhood Ear Infections

(VOA)—One of the most common childhood illnesses is ear infection. The standard treatment is a prescription for an antibiotic. But now a new study suggests a safer alternative.

There’s no doubt ear infections are painful. Here is why: when the middle ear becomes infected, it becomes red and swollen.

Doctors frequently prescribe an antibiotic, but a new study in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* shows they may not have to.

Dr. Joseph Gigante of Vanderbilt Children’s Hospital explains: “About 75 to 80 percent of kids who have ear infections will get better without antibiotic treatment.”

Dr. David Spiro at Oregon Health and Science University was one of the researchers who conducted the study. “Antibiotics do have side effects such as vomiting and diarrhea, and overprescription leads to an increase in resistance of bacteria.”

In the study, parents of children with ear infections were given a prescription for antibiotics.

Half of them were told to get the medication immediately. The other half were told to wait two days before filling the prescription.

To reduce the children’s fever and pain, parents gave them ibuprofen and eardrops.

Dr. Phil Fischer at the Mayo Clinic says parents and pediatricians will be interested to hear the news. “One of the most exciting things about this study is that it can make parents more comfortable not giving antibiotics for ear infections.”

Doctors have long said it is best to save antibiotics for when children and adults really need them.

This study should make it easier to adhere to that principle.