

Health & Views



January 1st issue 2022

Wishing all our readers
a very healthy 2022

Refreshing Health
issues for the Sri
Lankans
worldwide, and
others



<https://www.elanka.com.au/>

[COVID-19](#)

COVID-19: 'Deadly carrot' compound may be effective antiviral

Written by Anna Guildford on December 13, 2021

A new study has investigated SARS-CoV-2 coinfection and demonstrated that an antiviral called thapsigargin successfully blocks the infection in cell cultures.

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Depression: Has brain network modulation come of age?

Written by James Kingsland on December 13, 2021

A newly published review charts the history of using neuromodulation to treat depression and looks at new developments in the field and possible future directions.

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What are cluster headaches?

Written by Aaron Kandola on December 13, 2021

Cluster headaches are sudden, excruciating headaches that usually affect one side of the head and the area around the eyes. They last for a limited time but occur several times a day. The condition is rare and has no cure, but there are treatments that can reduce the incidence and severity of attacks. Learn more here.

[READ ON →](#)

Blood pressure increased during the pandemic, study finds

Written by Timothy Huzar on December 13, 2021

In a new study, researchers explored whether the COVID-19 lockdown is linked to effects on people's blood pressure.

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'Super-immunity' might wane over time

Protection against the SARS-CoV-2 virus [might decline over time, even in people who have both had an infection with the virus and been vaccinated against it](#) — a combination that initially provides hyper-charged immunity. Research from Israel, which has not yet been peer reviewed, was conducted before the Omicron variant emerged. But it sharpens questions about how well COVID 'super-immunity' — also known as hybrid immunity — will fare against the latest iteration of the coronavirus.

[Nature | 5 min read](#)

Reference: [medXriv preprint](#)

Feature

[How the coronavirus infects cells](#)

In July, *Nature* explored the life cycle of SARS-CoV-2, the tricks it uses to evade detection and the quirks that make some variants so dangerous. Researchers have discovered [key adaptations that help the virus to grab on to human cells with surprising strength](#) and then hide itself once inside. Later, as it leaves cells, SARS-CoV-2 executes a crucial processing step to prepare its particles for infecting even more human cells.

[Nature | 15 min read](#)

Feature

[The tangled history of mRNA vaccines](#)

The messenger-RNA (mRNA) vaccines against COVID-19 are among the most important and profitable vaccines in history and have been given to hundreds of millions of people around the world. But the route to success was not direct. Scientists had [worked on mRNA vaccines for decades before the coronavirus pandemic brought a breakthrough](#). The story illuminates the twisting path that many scientific discoveries take on the way to becoming life-changing innovations: decades of dead ends, rejections and battles over potential profits, but also generosity, curiosity and dogged persistence against scepticism and doubt.

[Nature | 20 min read](#)

Don't miss the truth of Christmas

23 December, 2021 [Russell Powell](#)

In his first Christmas message, the new Anglican Archbishop of Sydney, Kanishka Raffel, has focussed on the truth of Christmas, as our community emerges from months of restrictions.

"This is our second pandemic Christmas. We have learned a new vocabulary - words like social distancing, self-isolating and now omicron," the Archbishop said in his video message.

"What else have we learned?" he asks. "Lockdown certainly forced us to consider the essentials of life - some of us even took up bread-making. There's something basic about that - we humans have always broken bread to share and connect with each other.

"Jesus came into the world and told his disciples "I am the bread of life. He who comes to me will never go hungry..." Jesus is no mere man. He is the one whom God has sent into the world to be our life - the source of our life."

Archbishop Raffel was elected in May as the new Archbishop of Sydney, after six years at St Andrew's Cathedral as Dean of Sydney.

"I hope there will be food to share on your Christmas table - and people you love around it. We have missed that so much during lockdown. But don't miss the truth of Christmas. See who Jesus really is. He says to us this Christmas - come, believe, and trust in me."





FEATURED

Rheumatoid Arthritis Home Remedies That Don't Work

People try all sorts of things to relieve rheumatoid arthritis pain. We debunk some of the common ones and let you know what needs more testing.

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SLIDESHOW

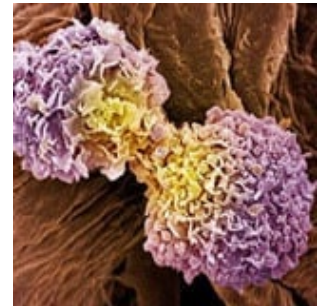
17 Causes of Bad Breath

Learn how drinking alcohol, gum disease, and dieting can lead to bad breath. Find out how to get rid of bad breath as well. [Read more...](#)

[The loss of the world's frozen places](#)

Two new books [add to the growing literature on the loss of the world's frozen places](#): Porter Fox's *The Last Winter*, which travels to the edge of the Northern Hemisphere's snow line and introduces the idiosyncratic scientists and explorers who study it, and *Meltdown!* by Jorge Daniel Taillant, who helped Argentina to adopt the world's first law to protect glaciers and permafrost. But, in a crowded field, each succeeds only in part, writes reviewer and *Nature* reporter Alexandra Witze.

[Nature](#) | 6 min read



SLIDESHOW

Breast Cancer: Where It Can Spread

When breast cancer spreads, or metastasizes, it often goes to these five places. See how breast cancer metastasis affects the body. [Read more...](#)

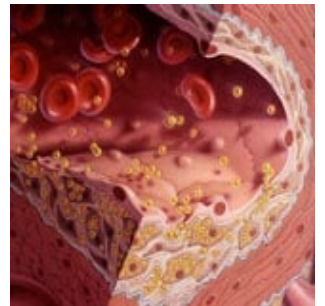


FEATURED

12 Foods to Watch When You Have AFib

When you have AFib, an irregular heartbeat, you need to watch what you eat. Think twice before you eat or drink these foods to help keep your heart healthy.

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SLIDESHOW

What Cholesterol Numbers Mean

LDL, HDL, good, bad, and triglycerides - Get the facts on cholesterol, blood testing, treatments, and how to keep it in check. [Read more...](#)

SLIDESHOW

Best Diets When You Have Diabetes

Which popular eating plans are safe and effective? The right diet will help you control your blood sugar, get a handle on... [Read more...](#)

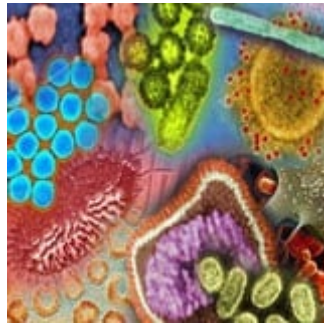




SLIDESHOW

Common Eye Problems

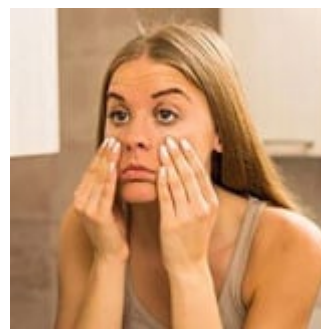
Eye diseases can cause damage and blindness if not treated soon enough. Learn the warning signs and symptoms of... [Read more...](#)



SLIDESHOW

13 Types of Lung Infections

Is your cough caused by a cold, flu, pneumonia or something else? Learn causes of respiratory infections like... [Read more...](#)



SLIDESHOW

Signs of Sleep Deprivation

Think you may have sleep deprivation? Whether short term or long term, sleep deprivation can cause trouble. [Read more...](#)

[India: Embrace international collaborations](#)

“Having trained with three Nobel laureates, I knew the power of collaboration to drive cutting-edge science,” writes bioengineer Arun Kumar Shukla. Yet after returning to India, he discovered that some grant and hiring committees [count research publications for nothing if they have foreign co-authors](#). Some

assessors feel that they can’t judge an Indian author’s contribution, or that the attention to a paper is due to the foreign author and not to the science itself. But the attitude ultimately hurts the progress of science, argues Shukla.

[Nature | 4 min read](#)

[Mental health under pandemic pressures](#)

For two decades, says mycologist Matt Kasson, his hyperactivity and anxiety felt like a superpower. Then COVID-19 struck. “Like many people who live with mental illness, I kept my struggles professionally and personally private,” he writes. “Convinced of my own resilience, I felt I might will my way through my illness.” But inside, things were falling apart. Now, with the right combination of medications and therapy, [Kasson says he is discovering the true meaning of balance](#). “Being open about my own mental disorder doesn’t diminish my value and contributions as a scientist,” he writes. “Honestly, the truth feels like a second chance.”

[Nature | 6 min read](#)

[All you need to know about angular cheilitis](#)

Written by Zawn Villines on December 14, 2021

Angular cheilitis causes pain and inflammation in the corners of the mouth. It can become infected, which can spread if left untreated. Learn more here.

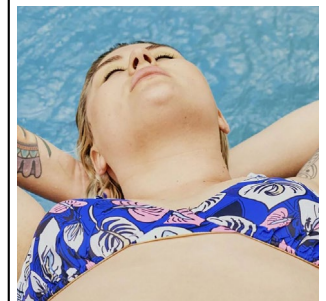
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[Is aspartame safe, and what are its side effects and health risks?](#)

Written by Beth Sissons on December 14, 2021

The food additive aspartame is a sweetener used in many foods and drinks. Learn whether it is safe to consume here.

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[WHY DO NIPPLES GET HARD?](#)



Vitamin B12 benefits, food sources, deficiency symptoms, and all else you need to know

Written by Zia Sherrell,
MPH on December 14,
2021

Vitamin B-12 is an essential vitamin needed for nerve tissue, brain function, and red blood cell production. It is found in many animal products. Learn more.

[READ ON →](#)

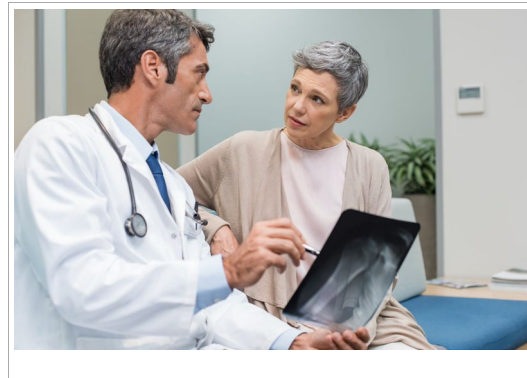
Why did my period cycle end early, and is it common?

Written by Mary West on
December 14, 2021

Sometimes a short period is normal. However, it can be an indication of a medical condition. Learn more about the potential causes of a short period.

[READ ON →](#)

Osteopenia: When you **have weak bones, but** **not osteoporosis**



Like their names suggest, osteopenia and osteoporosis are related diseases. Both are varying degrees of bone loss, as measured by *bone mineral density*, a marker for how strong a bone is and the risk that it might break. If you think of bone mineral density as a slope, normal would be at the top and osteoporosis at the bottom. Osteopenia, which affects about half of Americans over age 50, would fall somewhere in between.

[Read more »](#)

- In a study including 2,246 high-risk individuals, Pfizer's antiviral pill — Paxlovid — had an efficacy of 89% at preventing hospitalization and death from COVID-19. However, it is worth noting that the study has not been peer-reviewed. Read about molnupiravir, another antiviral pill, [here](#).
- Researchers have developed a chewing gum derived from lettuce that can neutralize SARS-CoV-2 in saliva, and therefore believe it may help reduce transmission of the virus. The researchers are now seeking to test the chewing gum in clinical trials. Read more [here](#) about how the gum works.
- A Mediterranean plant called [Thapsia garganica](#), commonly known as deadly carrot, may become a promising alternative to combat COVID-19, [research](#) suggests. Scientists discovered that thapsigargin, a compound in the roots and fruits of the plant, blocked all infection with Alpha, Beta, or Delta variants. Read more [here](#).
- [New research](#) has found that in 11 countries, the number of masks that ended up as litter reached 2 million. The study points out that before the pandemic, there was almost no litter related to masks. Read more [here](#) about the extent of PPE litter during the pandemic.



WHY YOUR EYES
MAY HAVE FELT
DRIER DURING THE
COVID-19 PANDEMIC



[READ THE FULL UPDATE](#)



MNT's Sunday Supplement: What omega-3s can — and cannot — do for your health

Throughout this year, *Medical News Today's* [Honest Nutrition series](#) has taken an in-depth look at the science behind what we eat and drink and its effect on our health. We have tackled [clean eating](#) and whether or not [carbohydrates are essential](#) or just plain [bad for us](#). We have examined the claims that some foods can [boost metabolism](#) and the links between [diet and the immune system](#).

This week, Honest Nutrition focused on [omega-3 fatty acids](#). Many people who are careful about what they eat tend to view omega-3s as a free pass to good health. There is some truth to this, as there is good evidence to support their role in reducing inflammation, blood pressure, and cholesterol levels while warding off depression.

But the evidence for the benefits of consuming omega-3s to prevent diabetes, cancer, or death from a heart attack or stroke is much weaker. Indeed, in the case of some cancers, consuming too many omega-3 fatty acids may make things worse.

To learn more about omega-3s, including what they are, which foods contain them, the likely benefits, and possible risks, jump to "[Omega-3: Facts and myths about its health benefits](#)."

As 2021 is drawing to a close, and *MNT's* Sunday Supplement approaches its first anniversary (February 20, in case you were wondering), we thought we'd take a look back and share the 10 most-clicked articles from the past year. You'll find the full list below, including stories on [Alzheimer's disease](#), [COVID-19 vaccines](#), the [microbiome](#), [masturbation](#), [hypertension](#), and a very popular piece on [how to pick the healthiest cheese](#).

This is the last Sunday Supplement of 2021, but we will return with our regular daily newsletter tomorrow. Please get in touch [by email](#) if you have any feedback, comments, or questions about this week's Sunday Supplement.

In the meantime, the team at *Medical News Today* would like to wish you a Merry Christmas and a healthy and happy New Year!

[Tim Snaith](#)

Newsletter Editor, *Medical News Today*

Likely cause of Alzheimer's identified in new study



Recent research in mice turned to the blood-brain barrier for clues as to why Alzheimer's disease occurs and how to stop it.

[READ ON](#) →

Is the microbiome another organ? Maybe we should treat it as such



In this article, we hear from two researchers whose work focuses on obesity and metabolism. They discuss the microbiome, probiotics, marketing hype, and the future.

[READ ON](#) →

What is the healthiest cheese?



Different cheeses can be healthy or unhealthy in different ways. We list the eight healthiest cheeses and explain which cheeses are best for different

COVID-19 booster vaccines: Are they safe and effective?



A new study has assessed the safety and effectiveness of seven different COVID-19 vaccine boosters, and its findings are encouraging.

[READ ON →](#)

Omicron has been found to multiply [about 70 times quicker](#) than the original and Delta versions of coronavirus, researchers from the University of Hong Kong have reported. The faster rate of infectiousness means the variant could cause greater fatalities than previous strains. Britain's chief medical officer has warned the country is being hit by "two epidemics on top of each other" and big rise in hospitalisations is "a nailed-on prospect" as it reported its highest daily infection tally yet, [with 78,000 new cases overnight](#). The cumulative death toll in the US [has passed 800,000](#); a quarter of whom represent "preventable deaths", a leading epidemiologist has said.

Drop These Cancer-Causing Habits Now

You don't need special products or extreme behaviors to lower your risk of many types of cancer. These simple lifestyle changes can go a long way.

[Read More](#)

Surprising Things That Can Damage Your Lungs

Carpets, fireworks, and hot tubs are some of the unexpected things that can hurt your lungs. See what you can do to prevent problems from these and other culprits.

[Read More](#)

Today's Must Read!

Pfizer Says Its COVID Pill Is Effective in Protecting Against Severe Disease—Here's What We Know So Far



How to Get Rid of Age Spots

These small, dark areas on your skin won't hurt you. But if you don't like how they look, there are things you can do to make them less noticeable or even make them disappear.

[Read More](#)



How To Remove Oven Stains

This magic spray easily removes toughest oven stains without any scrubbing.

[Here's how to remove the toughest stains in seconds...](#)

DrClean Spray



Powered by  Liventent

What is the healthiest cheese?



Different cheeses can be healthy or unhealthy in different ways. We list the eight healthiest cheeses and explain which cheeses are best for different health goals.

[READ ON →](#)

What Your Feet Say About Your Health

Cold feet, misshapen nails, swelling, and numbness can be warning signs of illness. Find out when you should call the doctor and when you can simply put on socks and put your feet up.



[Read More](#)

Boost Your Brain With These Drinks

Looking to improve your energy level, cut down on brain fog, and concentrate better? Get the scoop on a dozen different beverages that may help.

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How Long Should Sex Last? Here's What Sex Therapists Say

Here's why sex therapists say focusing on the clock can kill the mood—and what they suggest doing for more enjoyable sex.

[Read More](#)

>

5 Vitamin Myths You Have to Stop Believing—And 1 Vitamin You Actually Do Need

Taking vitamins you don't need isn't just a waste of money—it could put your health at risk, too.

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'MIND' diet may slow cognitive decline in people with Alzheimer's



New research suggests that the MIND diet, designed to improve brain health, can slow cognitive decline in people with Alzheimer's disease.

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Taking 7,000 steps or more a day may lower mortality risk

New research finds that people who take at least 7,000 steps a day may have a lower mortality risk than those who take fewer than 7,000 steps.

[READ ON →](#)