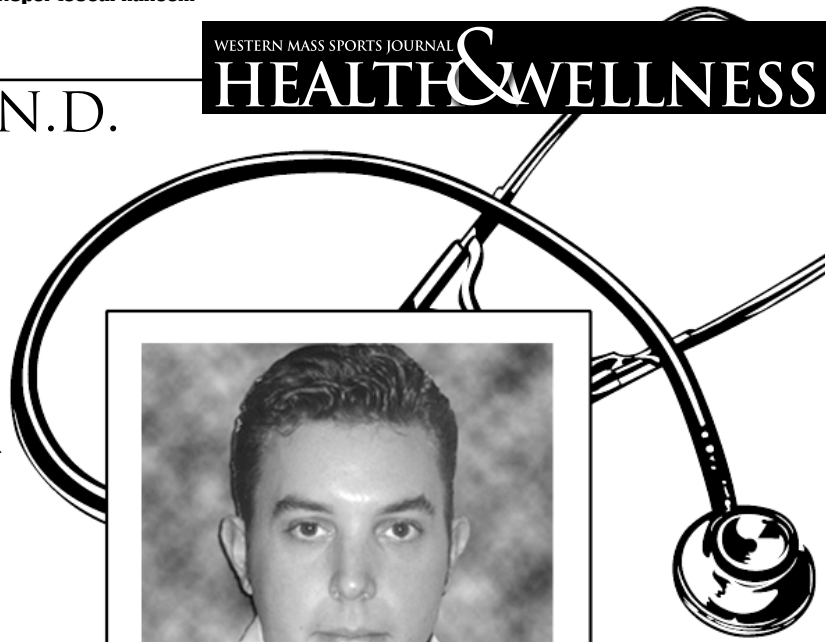


FASTING AND CANKER SORES



Dr. Frank Aieta, N.D.

Dear Dr. Aieta,

I can't wait to read your articles every month. They are very interesting and informative. I was wondering if you could offer some advice for the treatment of recurrent canker sores in my mouth. I have been suffering with them since childhood and although they are not life threatening, they can be quite painful and bothersome. I notice that they are worse when I am under stress or haven't slept enough.

Thank you,
J.P.

Recurrent canker sores are a very common condition and usually resolve in one to two weeks. But, as you stated, they can be quite painful and bothersome, especially when eating certain foods. I have treated this condition in numerous patients with excellent results.

I find that the most common causes of recurrent canker sores are related to food sensitivities (especially milk and gluten), stress and nutrient deficiencies. As I have stated in past columns, the first thing I do with all of my patients, regardless of their condition, is to change their diet. I usually start with the elimination of the most common allergens from a patient's diet for a period of time, then reintroduce them. That way, if symptoms re-occur, we know which food should be avoided altogether. This is called an elimination diet, and I find that it's the best way to uncover food allergies.

In certain cases, I may run blood tests to uncover food allergies, but I find that the elimination diet is much more accurate.

Preservatives found in food can also be allergens that spark canker sores. Some common problematic preservatives to look out for are benzoic acid, methylparaben, dichromate and sorbic acid. As I've already stated, the most common

food allergies that bring on canker sores are gluten (a protein found in grains) and dairy.

The next thing I look for is whether nutrient deficiencies are causing the problem. The lining of the mouth and throat is often the first place where a nutritional deficiency becomes visible because of the high turnover rate of the cells in the tissue. One particular nutrient that has been shown in the research to be the most significant in keeping the lining healthy is the B-vitamin thiamine. Another study showed that a deficiency in iron, folate, B-12, and other B-vitamins deficiencies can be contributors to cankers as well. To counter these deficiencies in patients, I put all of my patients on a high-potency multivitamin with plenty of these nutrients.

Obviously, the key to treatment is prevention, but if a patient already has canker sores, I recommend a special licorice extract known as DGL in a powder form dissolved in water and used as a mouthwash up to four times a day. In some cases, I have seen complete healing of the ulcer in less than three days with this treatment. I also encourage my patients to get adequate sleep and manage their stress either through exercise or meditation.

Dear Dr. Aieta,

I would like your opinion on fasting. I am interested in doing a juice fast with different vegetable and fruit juices. How long should I do it for, and are there any risks associated with this type of fast?

Thank you,
P.G.

In my practice I routinely have patients fast. I'm not a big fan of juice fasting though. In fact, I'm not a big fan of juicing in general.

When you just drink the juice

derived from either fruits or vegetables, the fiber content is removed from it. Essentially what you are left with is sugar water with vitamins and minerals in it. When you eat whole fruits and vegetables, the fiber content slows the absorption of the sugar so that blood sugar will rise more gradually, allowing the body to deal with it easily. When the fiber and pulp are removed, the juice can cause an abrupt rise, then an eventual crash in blood sugar.

Such a crash can be a huge problem if all you are consuming, as in the case of a fast, is a highly refined juice. Instead, when I have patients fast, I have them use a nutrient fortified, hypoallergenic rice protein mix. I typically have the patient consume a shake of this mixed in water or green tea, up to four times a day in lieu of food. The protein and fiber content of the shake will help maintain steady blood sugar levels and aid in the detoxification process.

A typical fast is usually three to four days, at most, and I only recommend fasting to people under a physician's supervision. Many times I will use fasting as a tool

to determine if a patient has food allergies by adding back one food at a time after the fast to see if any of the foods exacerbate symptoms they may be having such as sinus, joint, intestinal or in the case above, canker sore problems.

Dr. Frank Aieta is a board certified and licensed Naturopathic Physician with a private practice in West Hartford, Conn. He specializes in the treatment of disease, using natural therapies such as acupuncture, homeopathy, spinal manipulation, clinical nutrition, and herbal medicine. If there is a specific topic you would like to see addressed in an upcoming column, you can e-mail him at DrAieta@aol.com, or visit www.DrAieta.com for additional information

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