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RATIONAL EVIDENCE-BASED COMMENT FOR THE GENERAL PUBLIC & HEALTH PROFESSIONALS. WE SAY EXACTLY WHAT WE THINK

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Letter

Harris Family Update & Tips



April, Sarah, Adele

<http://bit.ly/2TloCoP>

Peter Harris of Melbourne, Australia, has been a subscriber for some 15 years and, from time to time, he lets us know how he and his family are getting on. See:

Welcome Natural Eater Adele, [June 2009](#)

[1]

Young Parent Guide to Baby Food, [Dec 2009](#) [2].

Parent Role Model for Baby Feed, [Jan 2013](#) [3]

Like many families, the Harris family has to make compromises between the ideal and what is possible. Peter observes:

"Sarah and I are typical privileged professional westerners with enough money but not enough **TIME**.

"We can afford to eat quite well and put in enough time for the shopping, cleaning and processing to get to say 60%-70% natural eating standard,

"The balance we strike is a function of the pressures of work, finances, growing children, spare time, sanity etc.

"Having said that, when we err from the ideal, we are aware of it, and 'take note'. We moderate and > **p2**

Evolutionary Behavior

Menopausal Killer Whales



Killer whales hunting a seal

Credit: Callan Carpenter, Wiki Commons

<http://bit.ly/2usWreX>

The killer whale is one of the relatively rare species which has a grandmother generation. Scientists have confirmed that thanks to grandmother killer whales, their grand-calves have much better survival rates [4].

Female killer whales usually hit menopause in their 40s but live, as grandmothers, for a couple of decades more.

As we have seen with humans, grandmothers were vital to the survival of the species. Indeed they contribute more to the well-being of the forager band (with child-care and food provisioning) than any other category. See: **Grandmothering key to human life-span,** [Feb 1999](#) [5]. And **Childhood,** [Deadly Harvest, Chapter 8,](#) p 218 >**p. 4**

Low Vitamin D in childhood – Adolescent problems

Children with deficient blood vitamin D levels were twice as likely to develop aggressive and rule-breaking behaviors [6].

Vitamin D deficiency has been associated with other mental health problems in adulthood, including depression and schizophrenia > **p. 4**

Hints & Tips

The 80-15-5 Rule

"You don't have to be perfect, just good enough"

Peter Harris (this page) reminds me that it is time to repeat what I say at the end of many of my lectures.

"I have outlined a daunting challenge but there is hope. You don't have to be perfect, just good enough.

"I recommend the 80-15-5 rule. If 80% of what you do is spot on, then 15% can be a little off, and 5% is a major lapse for birthdays and so forth."

In truth, even this is a little strong.

Whilst Nicole and I live to (and better than) this principle, most people can get away with being rather less strict.

When you think that most people on a Western diet are following a "0%-0%-100%" rule, then any move in the right direction is an improvement! See also: **The 80-15-5 Principle,** [March 2007](#) [7]

Spreading the Word

PUBLIC LECTURE: April 1, Oxford, UK

"It's in the scientific literature, but no one says it!", says Geoff. In spite of the evidence to the contrary, even health professionals promote commonly held – but false – beliefs which refuse to die.

In this talk Geoff examines some of these "zombie" beliefs; explains why, in evolutionary and scientific terms they are a nonsense, and gives you the tools to separate fact from fiction.

DETAILS: page 3

Questions

Arrowroot – conforming?

Q. Arrowroot powder is used in many Paleo recipes. What is your take?

A. Not a lot. Arrowroot has a high glycemic index (worse than sugar) so it has to be used in condiment quantities. Since its main purpose is thickening of sauces and such like, then this is fair enough.

Compared to wheat flour, arrowroot does have the advantage of being gluten-free.

See also: **Arrowroot** [Feb 2011](#) [8].

Palm Oil Shortening – OK?

Q. Palm oil shortening is used in many Paleo recipes. But it's a solid saturated fat. What do you say?

A. It can be tolerated under sufferance (but we don't). It is indeed mostly saturated fat but, by a quirk common to other saturated vegetable fats (like cocoa butter and coconut oil) it is largely non-bio-available so passes almost harmlessly through the system. See: **Palm Oil: Friend or Foe?** [Oct 2011](#) [9]

Needless to say, palm oil never formed part of the forager diet, and studies are still inconclusive about its safety [10,11].

There is also the ethical question. Vast swathes of Asian jungle, home to the orang-utan and many other endangered species, are devastated in favour of oil palm mono-cultures. All things considered we prefer to **AVOID** palm oil in all its forms.

Hints & Tips

Insomniac Tip: Second Sleep

Sleep scientist, Matthew Walker, (**Ancestral Sleeping Patterns**, [Feb 2019](#) [12]) has the following tip for those who wake up at night and can't get back to sleep [13]:

"Don't lie in bed awake. If you find yourself still awake after staying in bed for 20 minutes, or if you are feeling anxious or worried, get up and do some relaxing activity until you feel sleepy. The anxiety of not being able to sleep can make it harder to fall asleep."

See: **Night Sleep in Two Goes**, p 3

Insomniac Tip: Avoid High GI Foods

We've known this for a long time, but yet another study confirms that high GI foods keep you awake [14].

Says Prof. James Gangswich of Columbia University, NY, the glycemic/insulin switchback: "leads to the release of hormones such as adrenaline and cortisol, which interfere with sleep."

My View? This is a study of the *Women's Health Initiative* providing data on some 50,000 women over five years.

Previous studies have suggested that high GI foods consumed later in the day are a factor in insomnia. This study is interesting in that it finds that a high GI diet **AT ANY TIME OF DAY** is a factor.

Book Review (part III)

Stoneylde Novels by Kit Berry

Gollancz, 2011 [15]



From [last month](#). Continuing the review of novels about a community of villagers still living the way of life led by their Celtic-Saxon ancestors.

Author Kit Berry deftly paints how these villagers are so in tune with their natural surroundings and how this is a source of well-being for them.

All this chimes with the drums I have beating on how, today, rather than being integrated into the natural world, we have become alienated from it.

We have forgotten all the wonderful variety of food-plants that I talk about in **Forgotten wild plants**: [Oct 2000](#) [16]

Our children have lost their naturally endowed childhoods which prepare them for life in society. See: **Kids: What Happened to Play?** [April 2014](#) [17]

Unlike Berry's villagers, we have lost the conviviality of living in a tight-knit social group. As our reader *Stanimir Ivanov* says in **Hunter-gatherer Socializing**, [Jan 2018](#) [18]

"I keep thinking about how the hunter gatherers spend their evenings. They are surrounded by the whole tribe and are very social. They eat together, laugh and dance. They know each other for most of their lives. Now compare this to the solitude of modern life..."

I have reported a multitude of times the studies finding that the absence of contact with nature affects our **MENTAL** and, indeed, our **PHYSICAL** health. See: **Green-space Deficit Disorders**, [Aug 2018](#) [19].

Some of us are recognizing that we have to make an effort to re-connect with nature – and enterprises have sprung up to fulfil this need. One big business is now with 'Forest Therapy'.

Forest Therapy: "...encourages the opening of the senses to the forest atmosphere; slowly walking through the forest; inhaling the forest air; and fostering an emotional connection to the landscape" [20]. See: **Nixing Nature Deficit Disorder**, [May 2018](#) [21]

[Next month](#): *Berry's villagers, like foragers, were also deeply in tune with the moon and its phases.*

Continued from Page 1

Harris Family Update & Tips

monitor. Even that is raising awareness."

Peter makes the point that the biggest battle is not with knowledge, but with **HABITS**. In this regard, he makes a plea for us to provide a "step-by-step guide for better habit formation".

[Note that my three flagship books: [Natural Eating](#), [Deadly Harvest](#) and [Paleo in a Nutshell](#), all contain step-by-step guides - Geoff]

Peter has his own tips:

Team-work. For him and his family, the most important factor is "having a two-parent team".

[We know of cases where it is almost unworkable if parents are pulling in opposite directions - Geoff]

Broad Strategies:

1. Form habits.
2. If it's not sustainable, drop it.
3. Make achievable goals.



4. Take small steps and don't feel bad for the gap between where you are and perfection.

5. Anything is better than nothing. Just keep trying.

See also **The 80-15-5 Rule** page 1.

Next Month: *Hints from Peter's experience feeding his children Adele and April.*

Ancestral Biology

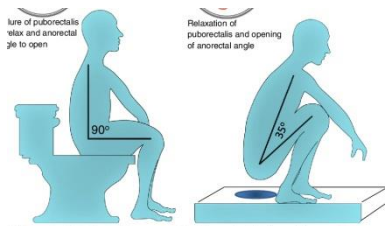
Constipation - Part II

Continuing from [last month](#) where we saw how constipation is unknown in the forager way of life and some of the lessons we can learn from them. Now for another:

The Squat Position

The idea of squatting like a forager to defecate is also gaining traction.

Notably the squat position opens the 'puborectalis', the muscle which acts as a defecation valve. This position also provides the correct angle for straight-through flow of the feces.



<http://bit.ly/38rWJBn>

But with all the measures mentioned [last month](#), plus the one above, it is still an uphill struggle against factors in the modern world which sabotage our efforts. For example:

Medications, Illnesses & Infections

A huge range of medications from anti-depressants to blood-pressure tablets to anti-Parkinson's drugs **INCREASE** constipation. Likewise, illnesses like diabetes type II, MS, depression and inactive thyroid, increase constipation.

Indeed infections like the common **HERPES** virus can cause an almost incurable form of constipation. This is because the virus destroys the specialised nerves in the colon which trigger 'peristalsis' (the pulses which propel the biomass down the colon). See: [Herpes/Chronic Constipation Link, July 2016](#) [22].

My View? Foragers have a quite different flora in their guts compared to us. See: [Gut Bugs: West vs Foragers,](#)

[Jan 2016](#) [23]. This must be due to a host of factors and, as far as I know, no one has investigated whether constipation and slow transit time are two of them.

But we do know that our bodies and our biochemistries depend on us having a healthy, Paleo-conforming biomass in our colons. See: **Our Living Gut - part I, June 2016** [24] and all subsequent episodes.

Moral? Live like a forager where we can, medicate and trim where we must.

News Flashes

Light Pollution is bad for the Body-clock

Just in the last 100 years, our lives have been blighted (some would say) by the ubiquitousness of artificial light at night.

Researchers find even the low light intensities of urban 'sky-glow' from street lighting can suppress melatonin production and so disrupt the body-clock [25].

Light intensity is measured by the unit called the 'lux'. The melatonin sensitivity threshold for humans is 6 lux. Even street lighting is typically higher. See also: **Morning sun keeps off the pounds, May 2014** [26].

In contrast foragers would have experienced only 0.3 lux on a full moon and only 0.01 lux on a starlit night. See: **Forager vs Modern Light Exposure, May 2018** [27]

The researchers point out that even low levels of light at night disrupt the body-clock with all the cascade of ills that follow. e.g.: **Night Light and Cancers, Jan 2006** [28]; **Breast Cancer & Dim Night Light, Aug 2014** [29]

My View? In my experience it is incredibly difficult to experience a full night sky without any light pollution. See: [light pollution map](#) [30].

For those determined to experience an unpolluted night sky, there are dedicated light-free towns and zones: www.darksky.org/our-work/conservation/idsp/

Climate Watch - It's not all bad

Increased Crop Yields

In the UK, the extra warmth from global warming can increase yields of oilseed rape (Canola) by 30% [31].

Professor Steve Penfield who carried out the trials said the findings were also likely to apply to other field vegetables such as lettuce, and soft fruits...

My View? Every cloud has a silver lining!

Spreading the Word

LECTURE REPORT

ARTZT Symposium, Frankfurt, Germany



Geoff addresses the audience of health professionals
<http://bit.ly/2uZqL00>

Many thanks to Astrid Buscher for organizing such a successful and worthwhile symposium. It was a pleasure for me to take part.

The lecture hall was overflowing for my talk and it received a standing ovation. Was this due to my virtuosity – or to my introducing a mini-skirted, 82-year-old Nicole to the audience! We hope to have more photos from the official photographer shortly.

PUBLIC LECTURE

Date: Weds April 1, 2020

Time: 7:15 pm for 7:30 pm sharp

At: The Lecture Theatre, Green-Templeton College, Oxford University, Oxford, OX2 6HG, UK

Title: Unfounded Fears about Cholesterol; Sunshine; Osteoporosis; Dehydration and other issues.

Ancestral Insights

Contact: Mary Perryman, mary.perryman4@gmail.com.

Tel: +44 (1865) 552688

Ancestral Sleep

Night Sleep in Two Goes

Our homeland being situated on the equator, we humans are adapted to year-round daylight being for 12 hours from 6am in the morning to 6pm at night.

But most of the industrial west lives in much higher latitudes. So the periods of daylight and night vary greatly with the seasons. Does this disrupt our sleep patterns?

I was sensitised to this question when I recently read Robert Harris' latest novel [‘The Second Sleep’](#).

This highlights the habit – at least in medieval northern Europe – of people waking up in the middle of the night, going about their business for a couple of hours, and then going back to bed for a ‘Second Sleep’.

Australian researchers Dr Siobhan Banks, and Dr Melinda Jackson confirm this phenomenon and go on to opine: “Modern society may place unnecessary pressure on individuals to obtain a night of 8 hours of **CONTINUOUS** sleep.” [32]. “Split sleep schedules may be a more natural rhythm for some people”.

My View? The good doctors have a point: today our lives are ruled by the clock. It is not surprising if the natural rhythms of life refuse to fit into this straitjacket.

Indeed, as we saw in **Naturalizing Primordial Sleep** [Sept 2015](#) [33] and **Grandparent Sentinels**, [Aug 2017](#) [34]

we may be programmed for intermittent sleep. See also: **First Night Effect & Poor Sleep**, [May 2016](#) [35].

Insomniacs can take encouragement from the second-sleep strategy when,

in the middle of the night, they wake up, sleepless. Find something useful to do and then, after an hour or so, go back to bed.

This chimes with Matthew Walker's advice too. See **Insomniac Tip: Second Sleep**, p 2

Letter

Did you see the film Idiocracy?

From Natalie, UK

In your **World Population Doomed to Rise**, [Sept 2019](#) [36], you say that

“...as discussed in **Human Species Brain Shrinkage**, [June 2019](#) [37], since lower IQ individuals tend to have more children, this will result in a lowering of average intelligence in the general population.

[Moreover] just as so many well-meaning westerners are deciding to have no children “to save the planet”, so they will, perversely, leave the field open to be populated with the genes of those people who have no such concerns

“The 2006 satirical film “**Idiocracy**” [38] graphically made the same point:

Over the next five centuries, the expectations of 21st-century society ensure that the most intelligent

humans fail to have children, while the least intelligent reproduce prolifically, which creates generations that collectively become increasingly dumber and more easy to manipulate with each passing century” [39].

My View? Point well made, Natalie!

Continued from Page 1

Menopausal Killer Whales

My View? In humans, grandmothers tended to focus on the

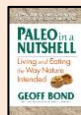


children of their **DAUGHTERS**. And, if you are a grandmother, that is the Darwinian reason for your existence – caring for your daughter's grandchildren!

Continued from Page 1

Low Vitamin D in childhood - Adolescent problems

My View? The modern lack of outdoor activity and daylight (whether overcast or sunny) is a modern day catastrophe for both children and adults. See: **Sunny Climates Reduce ADHD**, [Dec 2013](#) [40].



Paleo in a Nutshell: Geoff's latest work encapsulates, concisely and easily, current thinking on living the way nature intended. www.paleo-nutshell.com



Paleo Harvest Cookbook: Over 170 delicious, Bond Precept conforming recipes www.paleo-harvest.com

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