



Alan Inglis, M.D.

HEALTH REVELATIONS

from America's Country Doctor

People are being cut open—and too many are dying—in an unproven surgery that's making doctors rich!

Have we lost our minds? I know common sense doesn't always prevail, but this time, it doesn't seem to have a snowball's chance.

I'm talking about gastric bypass surgery—a very major surgery (don't let anyone tell you different!) that reduces your stomach from the size of a football to an egg and reroutes your intestines. In my opinion, that's beyond just major surgery—that's radical surgery! So radical, that one out of every 50 patients dies within a month of having it done. And if the surgeon is inexperienced, that number jumps up fivefold.

I'm not here to tell you to find an experienced surgeon. I'm telling you—and asking you to tell the ones you love—don't even think about it unless you've truly exhausted the alternatives! Instead, I've got safer and far more effective long-term solutions to help you or a loved one shed those pounds and begin to live a longer and healthier life.

If it sounds too good to be true...

I blame it all on Al Roker, the popular weatherman on the Today show. He means well, but he's mis-

informed. Not only did he have gastric bypass done, he had the whole procedure videotaped. Next thing you know, it's being aired on Dateline for the whole world to see. Suddenly, gastric bypass was thrust from the outer reaches of obscure medical "treatment" and into the limelight of celebrity status—and the number of operations done each year is growing.

I understand the temptation. Don't get me wrong. You see Al on TV one day and the next week he's lost 100 pounds. The weight appears to literally fall right off. And for people who feel they've "tried everything," this seems to be the magic wand to make it all vanish. You may know someone who has had it done. I sincerely pray they lived to tell you about it.

They're the lucky ones—so lucky, they should play the lottery!

A cash cow for surgeons!

Surgeons love gastric bypass, which puts them in hot demand. Over 175,000 procedures were done just last year—and sadly, it's now becoming more common among teenagers. All you need to do is pay about \$36,000 a pop. At least \$5,000 of that goes into your

surgeon's pocket. That's not bad for about an hour's worth of work—easy work, if you can get it, and they do. You don't have \$36,000? No problem. Insurance still covers it. And if you're an obese government employee in some Texas counties, taxpayers will pay for it! With the U.S. in the grips of an obesity "epidemic," it's no wonder these surgeons see a never-ending gravy train that is now a \$6 billion industry.

The concept underlying gastric bypass is simple. Basically, the surgeon reworks your insides, stapling the top of your stomach into an egg-sized pouch before connecting it to the middle of your small intestine.

The so-called science behind this medieval chop-job is that you'll feel fuller faster. I guess you would, since you can literally only stomach about two tablespoons of food at a time. And that's if you survive the surgery past the one-month mark, as I mentioned. In case your math skills are rusty, that would be a minimum of 3,500 people who died within a month last year as a result of having this surgery done.

For those who do survive, they're faced with nasty side effects that

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Gastric bypass

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are downright inhumane. One of these is a syndrome called “dumping,” in which you develop nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, dizziness and sweats. Sugary foods are usually the culprit, and it happens anytime food passes too quickly through the digestive tract. Suddenly, sugary foods don’t seem so appealing, if they cause you to stick close to your toilet.

Then there are the risks of multiple vitamin deficiencies, one of which is thiamine. Low thiamine levels can lead to a neurological condition called Wernicke encephalopathy, in which you become confused and uncoordinated.

I’m infuriated by one of the biggest side effects of gastric bypass: Malnutrition. And it’s actually *caused* by “medical treatment”! Really, how much nutrition did you think could be packed into two whopping tablespoons of food?

And this is where the ugly truth

begins to show itself.

At the end of the rainbow, a pot of baloney waiting for you

For starters, patients will need to take supplements religiously in order to stave off vitamin deficiency. This isn’t so extraordinary—a good many of us take our supplements daily to stay healthy. Unfortunately, the medical advice these patients receive goes against everything I stand for because they’re being told to use supplements to replace natural, whole foods, since they can barely stomach a meal. Doesn’t this strike you as unnatural?

I told you about the side effect of sugar, which makes it a food to limit. Not only does it cause dumping, it also has a high caloric value, which is a “waste” of the limited calories you’re allotted if you want to lose weight.

Another food to avoid is fiber. It’s now a problem because you have less stomach space to hold it and less stomach acid to break it down. And, it can get stuck in the stomach pouch. Wait—I thought doctors everywhere

recommended their patients eat more fiber! What’s going on?

Here’s the truth: Gastric bypass patients have to watch their diets—and exercise—to keep the weight off.

Surprise! I believe this is what these patients have been hearing for years, but were unsuccessful in doing—which is a major reason why they’re now deciding to go under the knife. They go through this radical surgery only to find out that they need to create a healthy lifestyle—only stricter—virtually overnight. But the only thing that’s changed is a re-finagled interior, leaving them ill if they don’t eat right. Talk about enforced compliance!

It sounds like the treatment used for alcoholics and drug addicts, in which they’re prescribed a drug to make them sick if they pick up their addictive habit again. The difference is gastric bypass patients need to eat. It must feel like having an electric shock bracelet around their stomach—getting a “jolt” if they stray too far from course.

Mainstream medicine calls this

HEALTH REVELATIONS

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bariatric surgery—I call it *barbaric* surgery.

If good dietary habits aren't strictly adhered to, the weight is regained. Even radical surgery can't change behavior, and 20 percent of the time weight loss surgery is not successful. This means the weight comes back, thanks to the post-surgery diet. So much for a magic bullet. Not only is this not an easy method for weight loss, it's also not fail-proof. The stomach can—and will—stretch, especially if those old habits die hard. Surgeons actually expect a weight-rebound rate of 50 percent!

Because the surgery is only recently more common, we don't know the true long-term health effects. How many of these folks will be okay after five years? Ten years? Again, we just don't have a clear picture. Most surgeons are so convinced the surgery works (after all, who—besides me—can argue with a quick 100 pound weight loss?) they just don't want to know the rest of the story five to ten years down the road. Nor would the surgeons be likely to share that picture—it would be bad for business.

Have your chocolate cake—and eat it, too!

It would seem these patients have been sold a bill of goods. They've been given a drastic—and dangerous—answer that comes down to the original advice: Watch what you eat and exercise. Only now, it's repackaged as an expensive, invasive surgery.

You don't need to avoid High GI foods—which can lead to weight gain. Eat mostly Low GI foods—and enjoy a healthy balance.

High-GI Foods	Medium-GI Foods	Low-GI Foods
White bread	Pita bread	Whole wheat breads
Bagel	Basmati rice	Peanuts, roasted
Bran flakes	Cheese and tomato pizza	Low-fat yogurt
French fries	Apricots, canned	Cherries
Jelly beans	Ice cream	Pearl barley
Rice cakes	Raisins	Butter beans
Cornflakes	Cantaloupe	Whole grain spaghetti

I'm pleading for a return to common sense, and it's as easy as this simple equation: Nutrient-rich calories in, energy expenditure out. You can't just throw any old junk into your body. And if you want to lose weight, you need to burn more calories than you eat. You can put all the window dressing on it you want—but that's the facts.

I'm going to show you a way to make your food selections healthier—without feeling deprived. I'm not kidding about having chocolate cake! You haven't "tried everything" until you've tried this—and it's not a gimmick.

I always recommend balance and moderation to you. When it comes to food and nutrition, you need to understand the glycemic index (GI) diet. I teach it to my patients who are struggling with their weight and need to learn how to make healthful choices. You've heard me talk about the Mediterranean diet before, and don't think I'm switching gears. The Mediterranean diet reflects the wisdom and science behind the GI. Here's what I mean.

The GI diet is a plan you can live on indefinitely. It's not the latest fad or gimmick. (Stay clear of those!) The glycemic index measures how quickly specific foods spike blood sugar and insulin, which is related to how quickly foods are absorbed into the body. Those high on the glycemic index trigger higher insulin levels—which can lead to weight gain, blood pressure, and type 2 diabetes. (Aren't these the very things gastric bypass promises to combat?)

Then there are the foods on the lower rungs of the index. These are digested gradually, releasing small amounts of glucose over several hours into the bloodstream. As a result, the insulin response is more moderate and doesn't lead to weight gain, or any of the health problems that go along with it. So these are the foods you want to base your meals around.

Here's where the balance comes in: I'm not telling you to entirely avoid all those high glycemic foods—they're often quite tasty, and life's

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10 POWERFUL WAYS TO KEEP THE LOCAL RADICALS TAMED

In my country town, radicals are bad news. Inside your body, they're mostly trouble. Free oxygen radicals, as we call them, are the result of too much stress (physical, emotional, and environmental); over-exercise; and bad food.

We will always have some free radicals. But an excessive number of them can cause oxidative stress and inflammation, which underlie the major common degenerative diseases that plague our society, such as heart disease, diabetes, dementia, arthritis, and cancer.

These free radicals need to be neutralized, and antioxidants are your answer. To give your body this beneficial neutralizer, think in terms of food first. That's always your best source of nutrition! There are thousands of different antioxidants in fruits, vegetables, and whole grains that work together as a team to support good health.

Don't underestimate sleep, because that's when antioxidants perform their most important repair work. If you overlook this step, it won't matter how well you eat or how many supplements you take.

As a reader of mine, you already know that I recommend green tea, pomegranate, blackberries and blueberries, prunes, and chocolate (dark chocolate with at

least 65 percent cocoa!) as terrific sources for antioxidants. But I've put together my top ten list of antioxidants that aren't as well known but are just as powerful.

1 Coffee berry

Folks, we've been throwing the baby out with the bath water on this one. Luckily, we've realized it and have found a way to enjoy its health benefits. Coffee berries are the highly perishable parts that get removed when making coffee beans. Ounce for ounce, it has more antioxidant activity than any other known food—which makes it ideal for concentrating a whole extract into an easily taken capsule form. It may provide a beneficial effect on glucose metabolism, which would make it potentially useful in the treatment of diabetes. Keep your eyes and ears open, because you'll be seeing and hearing more and more about this interesting antioxidant—it's a relative newcomer to this country.

2 Grape seed extract

You can think of grape seed extract as the concentrated form of grape seeds. It's up to five times more powerful than either vitamin E or vitamin C and keeps LDL cholesterol from oxidizing into its

harmful artery-clogging form.

Grape seed extract also strengthens blood vessels, reduces leg swelling caused by aging veins, and helps protect against macular degeneration and cancer. The benefits mainly come from bioflavonoids called oligomeric proanthocyanidins (OPCs), which are complex plant chemicals considered to be the most powerful antioxidants of all.

3 Goji berries

These little berries pack more antioxidant punch than any other food, and in a very small package. Also known as wolfberry, the Goji berry has been used in traditional Chinese medicine for 2,000 years. (Goji is actually the Chinese pronunciation.) Goji berries are a nutrient-dense food that resembles raisins when dried. They can be purchased in the dried form, and I've also seen a Goji juice. In addition to having a high antioxidant value, Goji berries have been purported to enhance the libido. Add them to your trail mix, to your baked goods, or on top of your cereal or oatmeal in the morning.

4 Kale

I recommend leafy greens all the time for their health benefits, and kale is a good example. A relative of cabbage and brussels sprouts, it's packed with vitamin C. One cup of kale supplies almost a day's worth of it! Vitamin C is an antioxidant that's able to reach every cell in your body, and it

works to regenerate vitamin E—an antioxidant that's next on my list. Kale is also especially rich in vitamin A. An added benefit—it boosts your liver's ability to rid your body of harmful toxins. Steam it lightly, and look at this month's "Forgotten Cures" for an idea that will enhance its health-promoting benefits.

5 Vitamin E

This vitamin is made up of eight related substances that act together as a team. Or, as some people who love the sound of a 25-cent word would say, "synergistically." Vitamin E helps to protect delicate cell membranes and prevent LDL cholesterol from oxidizing into its harmful, artery-clogging form.

Unfortunately, vitamin E has gotten a bad rap. Most of the mainstream research has focused on just one of its eight substances—alpha-tocopherol—and often only in its synthetic form. The problem with that? Alpha-tocopherol isn't the form that acts on LDL cholesterol: It's *gamma* tocopherol!

In fact, flooding the body with a lot of alpha-tocopherol may cause a deficiency of gamma tocopherol. For some mysterious reason, the studies conducted by the so-called experts fail to mention this little tidbit. A glaring omission, in my humble opinion!

And do these same experts really believe that a little extra vitamin E can kill you faster than cigarettes? Preposterous, I know,

but this was actually suggested by a world famous medical school in a well-publicized, poorly designed, (and now much-criticized) study. Seems you can't trust anyone nowadays.

Now that we've cleared that up, I recommend up to 400 IUs of vitamin E with all four tocopherols and tocotrienols. Most folks are probably fine with 100 to 200 IUs, since the whole form is many times as effective as the isolated alpha-tocopherol. Look for vitamin E with "mixed tocopherols" and if possible, "tocotrienols."

6 Rosemary

If you don't currently grow this herb in your garden, I highly recommend you do so. It has traditionally been used as a remedy for pain, menses, respiratory ailments and even to stimulate hair growth! Rosemary contains several well-understood, powerful antioxidants and anti-inflammatories, including carnosol and caffeic acid—both of which have been shown to have antitumor effects. Rosemary extracts are included in a number of anti-inflammatory supplements. You can use it to flavor foods or to bake into breads, and it goes great with lamb. It's also thought to keep hair from turning gray. It wouldn't hurt to try it! Check Weleda—a company that specializes in holistic body care products. They offer a rosemary shampoo. Go to http://usa.weleda.com/products/hair_care.asp.

7 Alpha-lipoic acid

Here's one known as the king of antioxidants, thanks to its ability to function in all types of tissues. It also recycles vitamins E and C, enhancing their effectiveness. Alpha-lipoic acid plays an essential role in cell energy production and passes easily into the brain, where it protects against free radical damage. It also improves insulin sensitivity, so it's helpful in treating diabetes; it is used in Europe to treat diabetic neuropathy (damage as a result of diabetes). Along with milk thistle and selenium, it has been used to treat liver diseases, such as hepatitis. Alpha-lipoic acid may help remove or "chelate" mercury from your body. For the purposes of general antioxidant support, take 50 mg of alpha-lipoic acid twice a day. If you're using it for diabetes, take up to 300 mg twice a day.

8 Raisins

Maybe you had these tucked into your lunch box when you were a child, or you may have put them into the lunch boxes of your children. Either way, what was being packed was more than just a tasty-sweet treat! Raisins' claim to antioxidant fame is their high concentration of phenols—antioxidants that are commonly found in fruits. And even though they are sweet, they actually inhibit the bacteria in our mouths that cause tooth decay. These little dried fruits are quite versatile,

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FORGOTTEN CURES

Old folk medicine cures arthritis, heartburn, and hangovers

As a young man, I read a book by Dr. D.C. Jarvis called *Folk Medicine*. Little did I know then that I would owe him so much credit for helping me cure my patients.

Dr. Jarvis was a small-town medical doctor, as well as an enthusiastic organic gardener way before it became trendy.

He swore by a natural remedy: Apple cider vinegar. He claimed that taking a spoonful of the stuff—mixed with a little honey—could help remedy a whole host of troubling common ailments, ranging from arthritis to hangovers.

But what did Dr. Jarvis know? Where were all the “scientific” studies to back him up? There was no proof. Of course, he’d only treated hundreds of patients with this safe and cheap—albeit somewhat hard to swallow—natural remedy. (And the fact that he wasn’t run out of his small town on a rail proves he knew what he was doing!)

At the time, I forgot about it. Now I know better!

But you’re probably wondering why the drug companies haven’t turned this old cure into a multi-million-dollar advertising campaign. For starters, it only costs a buck a bottle, so the drug companies would be hard-pressed to bang a profit out of it, which is why it has received so little fanfare. However, several small, but compelling, studies show blood

sugar levels reduced by 25 to 50 percent after people ate meals with apple cider vinegar. Along with cinnamon, it’s now part of my regimen for diabetic patients. Apple cider vinegar also calms the appetite and may help with weight loss.

But there are also many more benefits. Let me explain. Apple cider vinegar is an acid that promotes a more alkaline state in the body. How? Your liver converts it into water and bicarbonate, which is an alkaline mix. If your diet includes too much meat, dairy and processed carbs and not enough fruits and vegetables, (the typical meat, potatoes, and ice cream diet, for example) you’re creating an acidic environment in your body. This promotes an unhealthy balance of bacteria in the gut—which can lead to inflammation and chronic disease. And acidic urine increases the loss of calcium, leading to bone loss and osteoporosis. Regularly ingesting apple cider vinegar can combat this acidic condition, supporting healthy gut bacteria and good bone health.

Just about every fruit and vegetable under the sun promotes a healthy alkaline balance, as do eggs, chicken, almonds, cinnamon, tea, and seeds such as pumpkin and sunflower, just to name a few. On the opposite end of the spectrum, foods that are acid-forming include most meats, dairy products, fats, fish, and grains. These aren’t “bad” foods—they’re only harmful

in excess without the balancing effect of alkaline foods. And it looks as if apple cider vinegar can help provide that balance.

When it comes to arthritis and heartburn (aka acid reflux), give it a try. For arthritis, there are other excellent natural remedies that I recommend, such as fish oil and the botanical anti-inflammatory called Zyflamend. I now include apple cider vinegar in my recommendation. When it comes to heartburn, you’ll know right away if it works. Many people I know swear by it.

So you have a bottle of apple cider vinegar sitting out on the table and you’re thinking: “Now what, Doc?”

To start, mix a couple of tablespoons of it with some olive oil and use it as a dressing on a salad. Unless you have diabetes, you can combine your apple cider vinegar with a teaspoon or two of raw honey or molasses in order to sweeten it a bit and lessen the tang.

Try steaming leafy greens (my favorites are kale, collard greens, and mustard greens) and sprinkling them with some apple cider vinegar. You’ll find them to be a perfect complement to each other.

Note: If you suffer from calcium kidney stones (the most common form), you may want to skip the apple cider vinegar—as you’ll need slightly acidic urine to help keep things under control. But if your stones are the uric acid type, try using apple cider vinegar. **HR**

10 top anti radicals

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found in baked goods and as a trail mix stand-by. Try adding raisins to brown rice, along with slivered almonds, for a healthy pilaf. And who needs sugary, expensive energy bars when you can toss down a handful of raisins and nuts for a snack?

9 Curcumin

This substance is in turmeric, which is most commonly found in curry and provides its yellow color. Turmeric is now the subject of a great deal of scientific research for its potent antioxidant,

anti-inflammatory, and antitumor effects—the last of which cancer researchers are especially interested in learning more about. Lower rates of Alzheimer’s disease in India may be due to that country’s high curry intake. Use it in your cooking to color rice or add it to potatoes or stew. You don’t have to make a curry with it! It’s also available in many supplement formulations. New Chapter’s “Supercritical Antioxidants” contains turmeric. I also like their turmeric-only “Turmeric Force.”

10 Quercetin

Mom had it right when

she got on you about eating those apple peels! Quercetin, an antioxidant and anti-inflammatory, is found in a wide variety of fruits and vegetables, such as apple skins, red onions, spinach and citrus fruits (especially lemons). Well known for its allergy-fighting effects, it is used to combat seasonal allergies and hay fever. Try a lemon a day (if you dare) or lemon juice, gently sweetened with a little raw honey or molasses. If you use the supplement form, you’ll need to take 500 to 1,000 mg two to three times per day for allergies, but I can tell you from my experience—it really works! **HR**

Gastric bypass

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too short! The whole principle of the low GI diet is based on *all* the foods you eat at a given mealtime—known as the glycemic load.

This means high glycemic foods—such as a slice of chocolate cake—won’t affect your glucose levels as much when eaten with proteins and fats. Let’s say you serve a roast chicken or broiled fish for dinner, along with roasted potatoes, carrots and peas. You can finish the meal with that slice of chocolate cake (not too big!) because the fats and proteins of the meal will balance out the carbohydrates in the cake. Keep in mind: Carbohydrates like chocolate cake by themselves will be unhealthy due to the insulin spike. Carbohydrates along with protein and fat give a healthy balance,

avoiding the spike.

A rule of thumb

How can you make healthy low glycemic choices without having to memorize a long list of foods? Stick with natural, unprocessed fiber-rich whole foods—fruits, vegetables, nuts, seeds and whole grains.

Remember how I told you that gastric bypass patients have to avoid fiber? We need fiber, and whole grains are among the best forms of energy that you can give your body. And we need healthy fats from fish, pasture-fed beef, free-range chicken and the eggs they produce, plus nuts and seeds. Without enough healthy fat our brains and bodies just can’t work as well as needed. Fiber and fats make you feel fuller longer (sound familiar?) and combat constipation.

They’re low on the glycemic index—not raising your blood sugar levels—making them ideal to base your meals around.

See the side bar for some examples of foods and which category on the glycemic index they fall into. Remember, balance your foods.

You may think I forgot, but not so fast. There’s the other part of the equation: Exercise. It’s not a dirty word, and it’s something our grandparents did daily by virtue of their lifestyles—manual labor, baking bread and making meals from scratch. My grandparents walked every day after dinner—a healthy habit to aid digestion, catch up on the day, and burn calories. Don’t make it complicated. Like that old sneaker commercial said: Just do it! My advice is even simpler—just do something, starting today. **HR**

Your Questions Answered

When to bypass the bypass

Q *I'm curious to know what you think about heart bypass surgery. It seems it has almost become "trendy" these days! A friend of mine is about to have one done and doesn't seem the least bit concerned about it (or else he's putting on a good game face), even though it's a major surgery. Is surgery the best answer if you have heart disease?*

—Jack R., Portsmouth, NH

A The short answer is no. If someone walked up to you on the street, took out a knife, and offered to cut you, I think you'd yell long and loud for the police to come and handcuff this obviously insane person. Yet every day in surgeons' offices across the country, there's a megalomaniac offering to do just that! And the only possible difference between him and that man on the street is that the surgeon wears a white coat and has a sheepskin hung on the wall.

You know I'm not an advocate of surgery, and for good reason. In the overwhelming majority of cases, there's no benefit! Plus, some surgeons see your rib cage as their personal piggy bank, and payday just arrived.

There's minimal evidence that having a coronary artery bypass graft surgery (CABG or "cabbage") will reduce chest pain over the long term. In fact, research has shown that any benefit to this surgery can only be found in 20 percent of the cases. And unless it's blockage of the left main coronary artery, there are also no defin-

itive studies that show this invasive procedure can improve survival at five years or more, so why bother with such a major surgery?

To add insult to injury, up to 50 percent of "cabbage" recipients develop new blockages within five to 10 years—if they're still alive. Which means that conveyor belt keeps moving, because these people will be "required" to have more bypasses done after the first "cure-all"! It's a cash cow operation. (Do you notice a theme this month?)

What happens during bypass surgery is even more alarming. With over 500,000 "cabbages" performed in this country every single year, about 160,000 of those patients are left with irreversible dementia and memory loss! That's because while they're fiddling around in the chest cavity, there's some loss of blood flow to the brain.

We're not done yet. A patient goes in thinking they'll fix their heart, but actually risks suffering a heart attack or a stroke while on the operating table. And worst of all—one to two percent of patients will die as a direct result of the surgery.

Surgery is the absolute last option—it shouldn't be considered as the first or even a second option.

I am not trying to sound alarmist, but I do want to show the full picture—which a lot of doctors tend to sweep under the rug (a familiar refrain). Major surgery shouldn't be treated like a menu selection at a fast food drive-thru! There should be a specific, definite, life-saving benefit for risking it. And, good studies out of Harvard Medical School have shown that about

80 percent of patients recommended for surgery will do fine on medical treatment alone.

If you have heart disease, the horse is out of the barn and the correct use of well-supported medications is important. But please understand that proper management of heart disease covers many areas, which should be thought of first and foremost—even before drugs. Eat a heart-healthy Mediterranean type diet—which may be twice as protective as any drug on the market. And if you're not willing to exercise every day and normalize your body weight, there's no drug that can save you.

Take fish oil, at least 1,000 milligrams of total EPA plus DHA (3 capsules for most products). I also recommend taking Magnesium—it helps to relax blood vessels. Food sources are dark-green vegetables, all sorts of nuts, sunflower seeds, brown rice, spinach, and navy beans. Eat some of these foods every day, and you'll get enough. Otherwise add 400 to 800 mg of magnesium citrate, orotate, fumarate or malate. (Avoid the oxide form—it'll run right through you.)

When someone offers to cut you, don't walk away—run! Get a second opinion, and ask the doctor if non-surgical alternatives can be considered.

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