

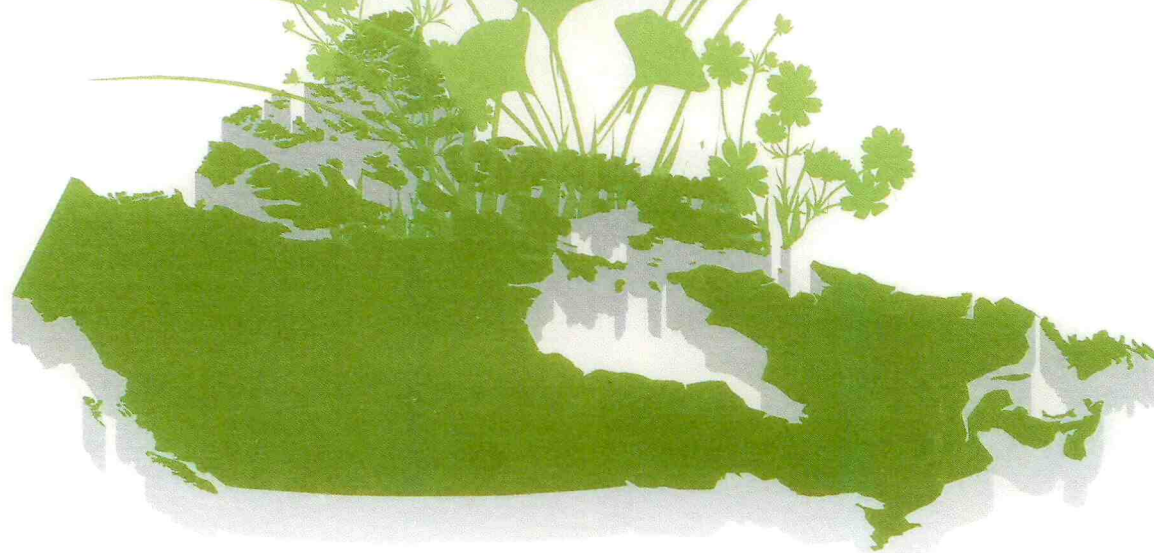
✚ *Canada's dirty* WATER TREATMENT SECRETS

# alive

CANADA'S NATURAL HEALTH  
AND WELLNESS MAGAZINE

NOVEMBER 2008

## THE POLITICS OF NATURAL HEALTH



SPOTLIGHT ON  
**DIABETES**

CANADIAN NATURAL  
HEALTH RETAILERS SUPPORT  
*vitamin angels*

BLACK GOLD  
*the tar sands blight*

### Banffshire Club

- cinderella pumpkin soup
- date and pecan venison
- caramelized pear phyllo

## ALLERGY OR SENSITIVITY?



*Professionals answer your questions about natural medicine*

**RESTLESS LEGS**

**CATARACT OPTIONS**

**THE SALT SOLUTION**



**Dr. Serenity Aberdour, ND,** is a naturopathic physician practising in Vancouver, BC. [serenitynd.com](http://serenitynd.com)



**Melina Roberts, ND,** practises in Calgary and is a licensed and board-certified naturopathic physician. She is a leading authority in treating chronic disease with European biological medicine. [melinaroberts.com](http://melinaroberts.com)



**Joanne Carr, RHN,** has 12 years' experience as a registered holistic nutritionist. She has lectured at natural health product seminars across Canada and also contributes to various health publications.

**Q** | *For the past several months I've been suffering with severe leg cramps, mostly at night but sometimes during the day. They prevent me from having a good night's sleep. What can I do to stop them?*



**A** **Serenity Aberdour, ND:** It sounds as though you may suffer from restless leg syndrome (RLS), characterized by an uncomfortable feeling in the legs (such as cramping or aching) and an irresistible urge to move the legs. Movement provides temporary relief, and symptoms are generally worse at night. Many people also have symptoms during the day, which worsen with prolonged sitting or standing still.

About half of RLS sufferers have a family member with RLS, suggesting that genes play a role in at least some cases. Other research has linked RLS to various chronic diseases, nutrient deficiencies, and/or neurotransmitter imbalances. The key to finding relief is finding and treating the underlying factor(s) involved in each case. Consider the following:

- **Iron deficiency:** Some RLS sufferers have low iron levels and pumping up dietary and supplemental iron intake may help.
- **Magnesium:** Many sufferers report improvement in their RLS symptoms with use of supplemental magnesium. I have seen this particularly in cases of RLS that arise during pregnancy. Oral magnesium supplementation can be helpful

in these cases; intravenous magnesium therapy may be helpful in other cases.

- **Dopamine:** Various movement disorders, including RLS, are believed to be related to levels or function of dopamine, a neurotransmitter that helps to regulate our body movements. Drugs that increase availability of dopamine can help to reduce RLS symptoms and are considered a first line of treatment when prescription drugs are used. On the other hand, disorders or drugs that interfere with dopamine levels should also be investigated when determining the cause of RLS symptoms.
- **Chronic disease:** RLS symptoms have been reported in a number of chronic diseases, including liver or kidney disease, multiple sclerosis, and diabetes. Treating the underlying illness can help to improve overall symptoms, including RLS symptoms.
- **Stimulants:** Caffeine from all sources, tobacco, and other substances that affect the sympathetic nervous system can aggravate RLS.

Determining the underlying cause of your restless legs will improve your chances of finding the most appropriate treatment for relief from your symptoms. >





**Q** *My elderly mother may require cataract surgery. Are there effective nonsurgical alternatives she could try first?*

**A** **Melina Roberts, ND:** Cataracts are the leading cause of blindness worldwide. Cataracts occur when the normal, clear lens of the eye becomes cloudy, which impairs vision and can lead to blindness. This clouding of the lens can be caused by free-radical damage related to issues such as age, overexposure to UV rays, disease, and others.

Recent Russian studies are demonstrating that the naturally occurring dipeptide N-acetylcarnosine (NAC), when used as eye drops, may be an effective, nonsurgical way to treat and prevent cataracts. While the studies are limited in their scope, NAC has shown promise in gradually improving visual acuity and clarity of the lens, with no reports of adverse effects or worsening of vision.

NAC eye drops are broken down into L-carnosine inside the eye's aqueous humour, delivering a high dose directly to the lens. L-carnosine is an excellent antioxidant that protects the lens from oxidative stress and plays a major role in treating and preventing cataracts.

Antioxidants are substances that prevent oxidative damage by neutralizing free radicals. Consuming antioxidants is essential for treating and preventing cataracts. Individuals who report higher dietary intakes of vitamins C and E, selenium, and carotenes have been shown to have a lower risk of developing cataracts. Specifically, studies have demonstrated that supplementing with vitamin C can slow the progression of cataracts, and in some cases, significantly improve vision.

Glutathione deficiency is often evident in people with cataracts. Glutathione also plays an important role in maintaining a healthy lens by acting as an antioxidant and in detoxification. Therefore, supplementation with glutathione may be beneficial.

Flavonoid-rich extracts such as bilberry, *Vaccinium myrtillus*, and flavonoid-rich foods such as dark-pigmented berries, along with vitamin E, have been shown to be helpful in slowing the progression of cataracts and improving vision.

In advanced cases of cataracts, surgery may be necessary, but in some cases it may be beneficial to first try NAC eye drops and to consume a diet high in antioxidants. >

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