

Hot Topics

What's buzzy in the world of natural health

Food Genes *Get Edited*

The idea of gene-edited crops and livestock may leave some people feeling uneasy, but for those involved with CRISPR technology, genetically altered foods are believed to be a clear and solid path toward a healthier, more sustainable future. Gene-edited foods will be disease-resistant, drought-tolerant, hardier, and more delicious. But will these foods truly be healthy? That, like most hot-button topics, is up for debate. Proponents of CRISPR technology see it as a solution to problems arising from world climate issues, while non-believers just want people to stop disrupting the natural state of their food. Think this all sounds a bit too sci-fi and futuristic? There's buzz that a Minnesota-based supplier is already using gene-edited oils in their foods. The future, it appears, is now.



Probiotics *Get Sudsy*

Touted as a healthier way to wash dishes, a new type of dish soap that contains probiotics is popping up on the countertops of health-savvy consumers across the country. Apparently, the probiotics are as beneficial for your dishes as they are for your gut health. The friendly bacteria the soap promises to deliver is believed to continue cleaning your plates for three to five days post-washing. Other claims include the soap's ability to break down garbage disposal buildup and wipe out unpleasant kitchen odors. The trend of adding probiotics to soap is a direct reaction to years of antibacterial overuse in many household products. These antibacterial agents have been shown to wipe out beneficial bacteria in our homes and on our bodies. Products that include probiotics may help bring balance back to your skin's microbiome and enhance your overall health in the process.



Gut Health *Gets Personal*

Speaking of probiotics, the unique microbiome that lives in your gut may be getting some personal attention in the coming years. Because the balance of your gut bacteria is associated with innumerable diseases and health conditions, some scientists believe that knowing the exact makeup of your intestinal flora might be a game-changer in the preventative-medicine arena. Technology that will give you the personal information you need to optimize your individual gut health is currently in development. Researchers hope this will provide you with the knowledge to prevent a slew of health conditions you might not even realize you were susceptible to.

The CDC *Gets Serious...About Sleep*

Sleep deprivation is now considered a public health epidemic, as declared by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Lack of quality sleep is linked to a number of chronic health conditions, including heart disease, type 2 diabetes, depression, and obesity. It also contributes to cognitive and mental health decline, sometimes leading to mistakes at work or school, motor vehicle accidents, and more.

So how can you make sure you're catching the best zzz's possible? Fitbits, Apple Watches, and most phones now have the ability to detect the quantity and quality of your sleep. If yours could use some improvement, try a meditation app to calm anxiety and promote deep sleep, stop using electronics at least an hour before bedtime, and seek out botanicals known to increase energy during the day (like red ginseng) and relaxation in the evening (like lemon balm and lavender). ■

