

About Integrative Medicine & Wellness

A Guide to Self-Care and Support | Summer 2026

CHIEF'S NOTE



Jun J. Mao, MD, MSCE
Chief, Integrative Medicine & Wellness

Summer is here! We wish you a season filled with longer days, meaningful time with family and friends, and opportunities to care for yourself.

In this issue, we share new research on how adults are using dietary supplements and what it may mean for your health. We also highlight special moments from our Survivorship Celebration: Resilience in Motion. Dr. Urvi Shah, an oncologist and nutrition researcher, offers practical tips for eating well during and after cancer treatment. In addition, we take a closer look at the evidence behind apple cider vinegar.

Our [Integrative Medicine & Wellness Service](#) is dedicated to supporting patients with evidence-based approaches that address the whole person—mind, body, and overall well-being. We trust you will find this newsletter informative, practical, and empowering as you explore ways to support your health and well-being this summer.

Be well,
Jun

A New Look at How Americans Use Dietary Supplements

By “Jason” Chun Sing Lam, PhD

Many Americans take dietary supplements – such as vitamins, minerals, botanicals, probiotics, and products marketed for specific health goals. A new study from researchers at MSK looked at 25 years of national survey data to understand how supplement use has changed.

The study, published in [JAMA Network Open](#), included more than 63,000 adults in the United States between 1999 and 2023. Researchers found that supplement use has become much more common over time. About half of adults reported taking supplements in 1999-2000 compared with nearly 6 in 10 adults in 2021-2023. The biggest increase was seen in those aged 65 and older, with use rising from 62% to 78%. This is important because older adults are more likely to have chronic medical conditions and take multiple medications, which can increase the risk of interactions with supplements.

The kinds of supplements people use have also shifted. Fewer people take standard multivitamins. Instead, more people are using individual vitamins, minerals, and specialized supplements aimed at specific health concerns. Supplements that have grown in popularity include vitamin D, zinc, vitamin K, turmeric (curcumin), probiotics or prebiotics, collagen, and elderberry. These products are often promoted for immune support, reducing inflammation, improving digestion, or supporting skin and joint health.

As supplement use continues to grow, [Dr. Jun J. Mao](#), Chief of Integrative Medicine & Wellness, emphasizes the importance of reliable information: “For more than 20 years, MSK’s [About Herbs](#) resource has been a trusted source of unbiased, evidence-based information on herbs and dietary supplements. It empowers patients and their families to learn about these products and discuss their use with health care providers.” He adds, “It is important to remember that ‘natural’ does not always mean risk-free. Supplements can cause side effects or interact with medications you may be taking.” Always tell your health care team about any dietary supplements or herbal products you use, especially if you take prescription medications.

To learn more about herbs and dietary supplements, download the About Herbs app for Android via [Google Play](#) and iOS via [the App Store](#)SM.



MSK Survivorship Celebration 2026 – Resilience in Motion

By Christina Seluzicki, MBE

MSK's 2026 Survivorship Celebration: Resilience in Motion, held on June 12, received nearly 500 registrations from patients and caregivers. It was an inspiring and uplifting virtual event focused on thriving after cancer. The program celebrated the courage, strength, and resilience of survivors while sharing practical tips and resources to support long-term health, wellness, and quality of life.



Cardinale Smith, MD, PhD

The event opened with welcome remarks from [Dr. Cardinale Smith](#), MSK's Chief Medical Officer, who reinforced that survivorship is a vital part of the cancer care journey. She highlighted MSK's ongoing commitment to supporting patients not only during treatment, but throughout the years that follow, helping survivors live well and move forward with confidence.

In a featured presentation on exercise and survivorship, [Dr. Jessica Scott](#), Director of MSK's Exercise Oncology Program, shared the powerful role physical activity can play in reducing treatment-related side effects and improving energy, mood, and overall well-being. Survivors also joined the conversation, sharing personal stories about overcoming obstacles, building healthy habits, and discovering the benefits of movement, offering inspiration and practical encouragement to fellow participants. Dr. Scott shares, "Exercise is a safe, evidence-based way to reduce the short- and long-term side effects of cancer and may also help lower the risk of recurrence. It's inspiring to see that even small steps can make a meaningful difference in both physical and mental health."



Jessica Scott, PhD

Participants also engaged in interactive wellness sessions, including an energizing mindful movement and a supportive dance experience. These activities demonstrated simple, accessible ways to stay active, reduce stress, and reconnect with the body—regardless of fitness level or experience.

A panel discussion featuring MSK survivorship experts, "Thriving After Cancer," explored key topics including follow-up care, emotional well-being, support services, and navigating life after treatment. Patients heard valuable insights and learned about resources from both care team members and fellow survivors, underscoring the importance of staying connected, seeking support, and embracing the next chapter of survivorship.

A recording of the event is now available here: <https://youtu.be/BNGMKO44cCE>.

If you're interested in future survivorship and wellness programs, visit the MSK subscription page here: <https://c.mskinfo.org/subscriptionpreferencecenter> to sign up and stay informed about upcoming opportunities.



Can Diet Make a Difference in Cancer?



By Urvi A. Shah, MD, MS, DipABLM

Dr. Urvi Shah is a lifestyle medicine certified cancer doctor at MSK. She studies how dietary patterns, and other modifiable factors may affect cancer risk, treatment and survival. She leads the [NUTRIVENTION](#) trials.

Many patients hear that diet may affect cancer—what does research tell us?

We know that cancer is influenced by genetics, aging, and environmental exposures, but lifestyle also plays an important role. According to the American Cancer Society, about 40% of cancers in the U.S. are attributable to modifiable risk factors of which diet is one of them. The strongest evidence supports overall dietary patterns rather than individual foods or supplements. Diets rich in whole plant foods are

associated with better health, and research suggests diet can influence the gut microbiome, metabolism, inflammation, and immune function. Early emerging data also connects high fiber diets to improved response rates and better survival in cancer.

What are a few simple nutrition habits patients can try?

I encourage patients to focus on simple, sustainable changes. Since less than 5% of the U.S. population gets enough dietary fiber, I first recommend adding more whole plant foods such as fruits, vegetables, beans, whole grains, nuts, and seeds to increase fiber intake to at least 25-30 grams per day. A cup of beans will give you 15 grams per day. Second, eat a variety of plant foods (>30 types per week) to support a healthy gut microbiome. Finally, limit ultra-processed foods and sugary beverages. Nutrition is one piece of the puzzle, alongside physical activity, sleep, and stress management.

What excites you most about this area of research?

Patients frequently ask what they can do to improve their health, and nutrition offers an opportunity for them to play an active role. I'm

especially excited that our clinical trials have the potential to lead to development of personalized dietary approaches that improve quality of life, reduce inflammation, and possibly enhance cancer outcomes. We are beginning to understand how diet, microbiome, metabolism, and the immune system interact in cancer as well. We have six [NUTRIVENTION](#) trials that are studying this and the results from the first one are published in [Cancer Discovery](#). We also have trials in [newly diagnosed multiple myeloma](#) and [clonal hematopoiesis](#) that are currently enrolling.

Upcoming Wellness Programming

Integrative Medicine & Wellness Service offers a regular schedule of in-person and online classes, workshops, and series. Register online today to join an upcoming wellness program. Scan the QR code with your phone to sign up online or call **646-449-1010**.



ABOUT HERBS FEATURE

Apple Cider Vinegar

By Jyothirmai Gubili, MS



Apple cider vinegar (ACV) is made by fermenting apple juice. It is widely used to flavor and preserve foods. Recent claims of benefits include weight loss, sore throat, indigestion, glucose control in diabetes, arthritis, and skin conditions such as acne, eczema and dandruff.

Small studies have shown that ACV may help regulate blood sugar in patients

with diabetes and manage weight in overweight adults. Larger trials are needed to confirm these observations.

ACV is also promoted as an alternative treatment for skin cancer. But there is no scientific evidence that it can prevent or cure skin or any other type of cancer.

For more details about ACV, see our [full write-up](#) on the About Herbs website or download the About Herbs app (available for Android via [Google Play](#) and iOS via [the App Store](#)SM).

