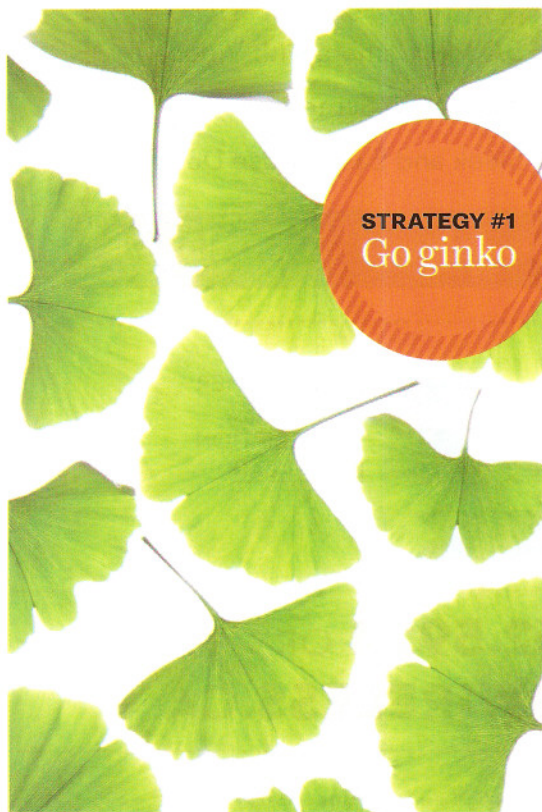
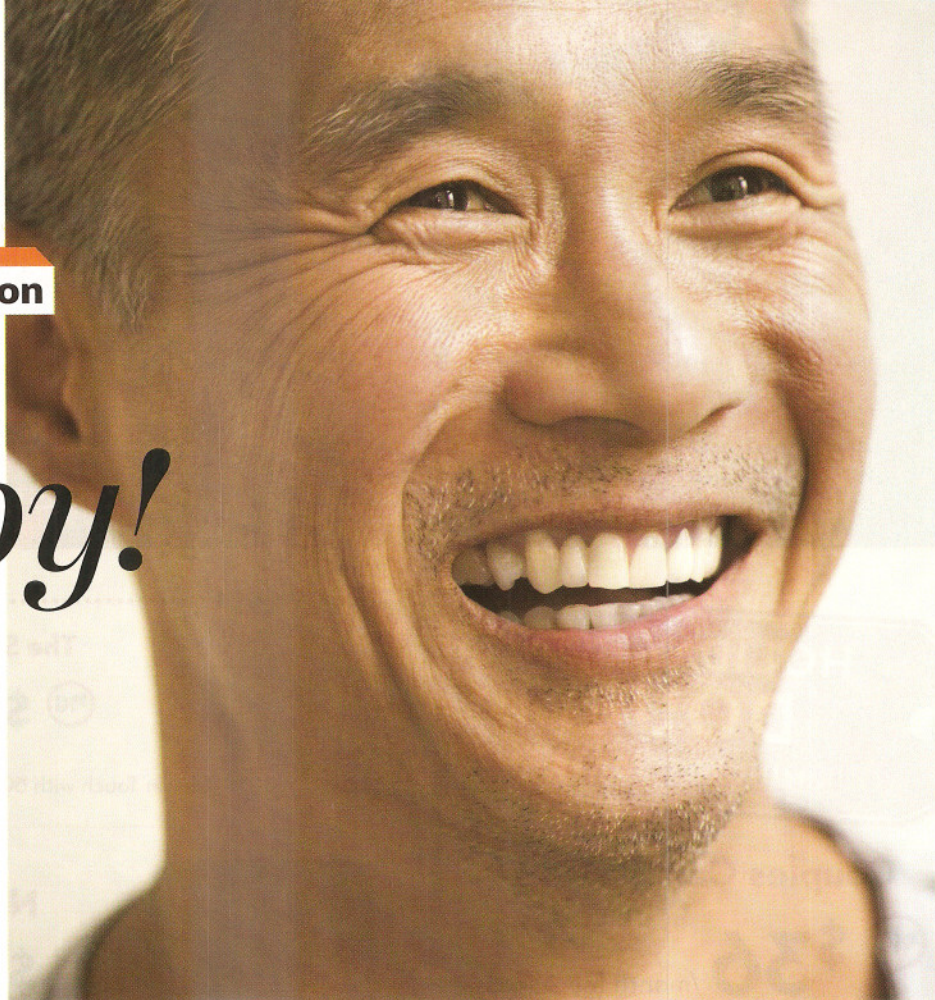


**Nutrition**

# Get *Happy!*

It seems, even when it comes to a feeling of joyfulness, you are what you eat. Take these three new strategies, incorporate them into your everyday diet and feel the bliss

By **Lisa Bendall**



**STRATEGY #1**  
**Go ginkgo**

**G**INKGO BILOBA IS CALLED a living fossil for a reason; this tree has been growing on Earth for at least 200 million years. In ancient times, it was considered to be an aphrodisiac. Maybe that's because it seems to make people so darn happy. There's good scientific evidence that the extract from ginkgo leaves can give a real lift to people with anxiety or depression, especially when the problem is caused by poor blood flow to the brain.

Ginkgo, after all, is known to boost blood circulation. It works by dilating vessels and keeping blood from clumping. "This is a well-studied plant," says Katolen Yardley, a Vancouver-based medical herbalist, noting that research on the benefits of ginkgo biloba dates back to the 1960s. She adds, because ginkgo is high in bioflavonoids and terpenoids – compounds with antioxidant properties – the herb can also fight damage from

free radicals. "It helps to minimize the effects of aging," she says.

Ginkgo may be good for us in other ways. It appears to help mental function and offer protection against memory loss, although research is mixed, and experts aren't yet sure who it helps and how. It's also been studied for glaucoma and macular degeneration, fatigue and even tinnitus. (Very unfortunately, tests on sexual function have proved it's no better than a placebo. Drat.)

Thinking of giving ginkgo a go? You may need to steer clear of it if you're on drugs or supplements that can thin the blood, including warfarin, ibuprofen or fish oil. On the other hand, says Yardley, if you've been advised to take daily Aspirin and you're concerned about stomach-related side effects, you might consult your health-care provider about this irresistible herb. "Taking ginkgo instead might be a fantastic option," Yardley notes. ►

# Wonderful to have good eyes

Madeleine wrote to us to tell her story of how Blue Berry™ has impacted her quality of life and helped her enjoy her favorite hobby: painting beautiful landscapes.



“My name is Madeleine Fournier. I am retired and live in Montreal. In my spare time, I enjoy spending time in nature, painting beautiful plants and landscapes.”

## Macular Degeneration

“In my later years, my eyes began to weaken. I was very sad about this, because I love painting, which is demanding on the eyes and requires accurate vision.

When I went to my optometrist, he diagnosed me as having age-related macular degeneration (AMD), and told me this unfortunately gets worse with time.”

## Read about Blue Berry™

“Then, in a magazine, I noticed an ad about Blue Berry, and read about a man who had used it to maintain his eyes. In hopes of getting the same results, I bought a box at my local pharmacy, and started the same day.

Now, I have been taking Blue Berry for almost a year, and I am very happy with the product. I am painting and my spirits have been lifted.

**I am very happy to have found this product from New Nordic, and recommend it highly to anyone who wants to take good care of their vision.”**

*Madeleine F., Quebec*



## Berries and carotenes are good for your eyes!

Blue Berry has been the no. 1 eye supplement in Scandinavia for over a decade. Based on high concentrations of blueberries and lutein, it provides carotenes to protect your eyes and help maintain your eyesight, even in conditions of AMD and cataracts.

Available at participating pharmacies and health food stores. For more information, visit our web site or call 1-877-696-6734.



ONLINE SHOP  
newnordic.ca



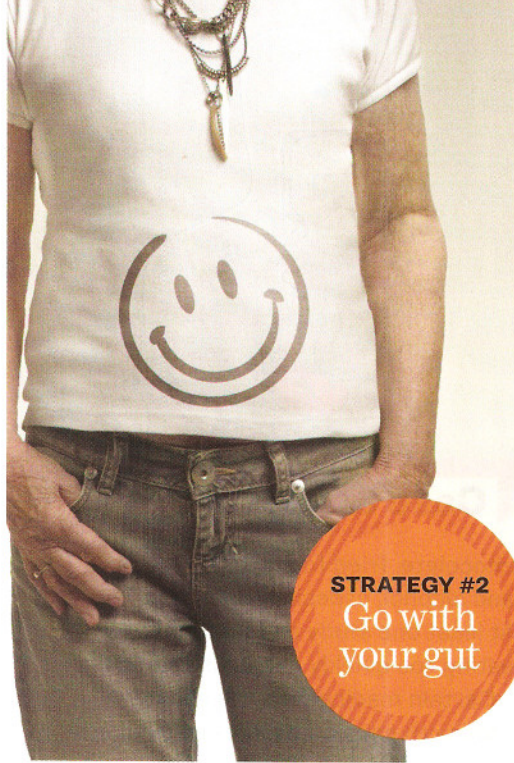
## Zooming HEALTH

**O**UR BODIES CARRY TRILLIONS of microorganisms. Many live in our gastrointestinal tracts, where they break down nutrients or produce useful compounds like vitamins. But you'd never expect the tiny bugs in your belly to shape your mood, would you? That's what the latest science is suggesting.

In experiments at McMaster University's Farncombe Family Digestive Health Research Institute, anxious mice became more confident after a transplant of gut microbes from bolder mice. And vice versa. “It suggests that our resident bacteria have the ability to alter the brain chemistry and the function of the brain,” says Dr. Stephen Collins, a gastroenterologist involved in the work, which is supported by the Canadian Institutes for Health Research. Collins' team has also changed anxiety levels of mice by giving them selected probiotics.

**I**T SEEMS FAT PEOPLE really are jolly. British researchers followed almost 2,000 overweight and obese people in their 50s and older. They discovered that, over a span of four years, the group (14 per cent) who lost weight ended up a lot less happy than their pudgier peers – even though their hearts were healthier. Unexpected? The researchers suggest the dieters could have become disappointed when their life wasn't magically transformed with the weight loss, and that day-to-day problems didn't disappear as the pounds came off. Plus, certain aspects of dieting, like avoiding temptation and even skipping social outings that revolve around food, can be frustrating.

The take-home message isn't to stay heavy, but rather to be realistic – and stay positive. “I suspect that the more people believe they're will-



**STRATEGY #2**  
Go with  
your gut

At the University of California, scans of humans have proven that when different bacteria species become dominant in the gut, there are changes in brain regions controlling emotion and sensation. Bacteria may be producing substances that travel


to the brain and affect its function – like tryptophan, which is used by the brain to make the mood stabilizer serotonin. The vagus nerve seems to be a potential pathway, and even our immune system may be involved. “There are multiple mechanisms,” says Collins.

The million-dollar question: can we alter our mental function by manipulating our microbes? Can better bacteria make us happier? Collins is now investigating people with irritable bowel syndrome who also have anxiety or depression. The conditions often go hand-in-hand, and he wants to find out if the selected probiotic bacteria that perked up the mice will improve the moods of this group.

It’s unlikely we can blame gut bacteria as the source of all psychiatric problems. But they may play a role, says Collins, and this research may help us develop new approaches to treatment. “It opens a number of possibilities.”

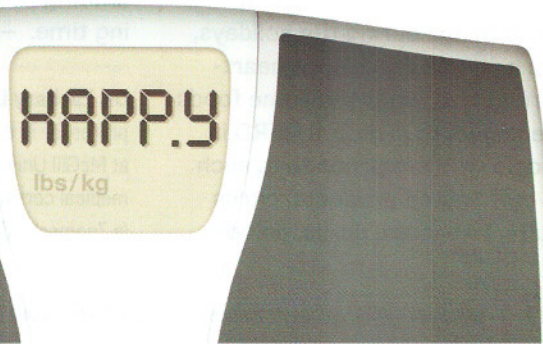
fully depriving themselves of something they want, whether it’s food, television or affection, the more bitter they become,” says Brian Wansink, a professor at the Dyson School of Applied Economics and Management at Cornell University in Ithaca, New York. Wansink co-lead an experiment that showed people who were primed to think negatively ended up reaching for more indulgent foods to console themselves. The reverse was also proven: people who think happy thoughts are more likely to make healthy food choices, and eat less.

This is a mind-over-matter technique that anyone can do, says Wansink. “Simply ask yourself just one or two things you’re really thankful for. As grumpy as we feel, there are always positive things that have happened,” he says.

“There are a lot of little tricks you can use,” adds Wansink, whose book, *Slim by Design: Mindless Eating Solutions for Everyday Life*, recently hit the shelves. But if you want to stay on a real high as your weight dips low, try a dose of gratitude right before meals. “That’s an easy intervention.” 



**STRATEGY #3**  
Go with  
what’s  
realistic  
for you



**Vitality**

# CHILL OUT

**IF YOU’RE OLD ENOUGH TO REMEMBER** the hit song “Wake Me Up Before You Go-Go” by Wham!,

then you’re probably old enough to be experiencing some variation of being woken up by night sweats – that lovely hormonal indicator of peri-menopause and menopause. Hooray! Not. In our quest for a dry night’s sleep we test-drove – or rather test-slept – a black nightie by sleepwear brand Lusomé that uses “DryLon moisture management fabric technology,” a bit of jargon that promises “advanced moisture management.” It works by an innovative weave of natural fibre blends that quickly wick moisture away from your skin and through the material where it evaporates.

Best part is that the collection ([www.lusome.com](http://www.lusome.com)) is sexy and perfectly fitted so you can dance to any ’80s pop tune in style and comfort. And if you buy before Dec. 31, a part of the proceeds from the Erin and Donna (below) styles will go to the Lusomé Cancer Research Fund. –Kim Izzo

