



'Health, Wellness & More...'

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Snippets

Unplug.

A digital detox (24 hours with no computer, phone, internet—anything) is like a magical cure-all for an instantly healthier, happier life. It can improve your posture, slash your stress, fix your insomnia, boost your self-esteem, and make you more empathetic, focused, and creative.

No Gym? No Problem.

Try body weight exercises which involve using your own mass as resistance in a workout. They're convenient because they require no equipment and can be done almost anywhere.

Pace yourself!

When we eat quickly, our bodies may not realize how full they are, which causes overeating. Most foods take at least 20 minutes to digest. So enjoy what you have, slow down, pause before you grab seconds, and stop eating when you feel full.

5 TIPS TO CARE FOR YOUR BRAIN

1 STRESS IS POISON FOR THE BRAIN. AVOID IT.

PRACTISE MEDITATION 2

3 PICK UP NEW SKILLS

GET 7 - 8 HOURS OF SLEEP EVERYDAY 4

5 EAT A RAINBOW DIET; INCLUDE FRUITS & VEGETABLES OF DIFFERENT COLOURS



Past diplomat Benoit Labrique's inspiring journey through illness and wellness

A Belgian in Bengal

'Jal na kheyee gachh more, bhalobasha manush' (Tree will not survive without water, neither will man without love)

The words were spoken in perfect Bengali by Mr Benoit Labrique, as he was reminiscing on a life spent in Bengal, his home for more than 35 years. The gentleman from Belgium was in Medica recovering from a health setback that had left him bedridden. In Kolkata visiting relatives, Mr Labrique who is suffering from cancer in his spine, all of a sudden collapsed and could not move. Arrangements had to be made to air evacuate him to Belgium where he was undergoing treatment, but before that he had to be stabilized. He was brought to Medica and admitted under the care of the Neuro team led by Dr Harsh Jain (Senior Neuro & Spine Surgeon).

With the mellow early afternoon light falling on him, and in the company of his wife Patricia and son Alain, he recounted a life extraordinaire. Mr Labrique's unusual story began in the early 1967 in Belgium where as a university student he discovered a love for Indian and Buddhist philosophy. Fascinated by everything Indian, particularly the languages, he started a class in Sanskrit. Around this time he read the book, 'India before the Storm' by French journalist Francois Gautier, who firmly believed that the country with its widely different (politically and culturally) states could not survive as a unit and would soon explode into

different countries. Young Benoit's interest was piqued and he began to plan a visit to India. The interest turned to an urgent need soon after, when he watched the Bengali movie Pather Panchali. Apu's story touched a chord deep within and that, he says, was what brought him to Bengal.

He came to Calcutta as a student of English. "I was lucky to be introduced to a 'gram-er masteemoshai' (village school teacher) by a fellow student, who taught me the basics of Bengali". And that was the beginning of his romance with Bangla that would last a lifetime. It was, however, his second teacher, a chance acquaintance in Kolkata, who told him that the best way to learn the language was to read newspapers and books in Bengali. "Don't worry about the meaning, just read and when you come across words that are getting repeated then look up the meaning in the dictionary", he advised. And one day a miracle happened. "I could understand everything I was reading!" And Benoit could not

stop reading! Tuntunir Boi, Bindur Chhele and Rajkahini were among the first Bengali books he read and he was hooked. "I took to travelling in trams, because that gave me more time to read. But even they seemed to be moving too fast for me!"

"I have met many interesting people in my journey, but some have stayed in my memory as people who made a difference in my life. I met Gopinath Das in Kolkata and he invited me to his home." Benoit Labrique was touched by the warmth he received from the gentleman's wife and four daughters. He fondly remembers the utter lack of inhibition with which the young girls would question him about himself and his country.

Meeting Mr Sarkar in early 1968 was a watershed moment in Benoit's life. The 70-year-old gentleman who belonged to the famous Sarkar family of Anandabazar (newspaper) House, was a former student of Santiniketan.

► Continued on P 4



PATIENT SPEAK - Patricia & Benoit Labrique



Medica came into my life bringing hope when circumstances were slowly pulling me down toward despair. The moment I arrived at Medica, I realized that I was in very good hands. I was surrounded by excellent doctors, nurses and other professional caregivers who helped me to restore my confidence. Generally, it is difficult to associate a stay in any hospital, even the most advanced and technically equipped one, with an enjoyable experience. In my case, I can say without hesitation that the eight days spent in Medica were pleasant thanks mainly to the quality of the nursing. I shall always remember the nurses' friendly smiles whenever they entered my room.

My gratitude towards the people at Medica cannot be contained in any written or spoken word. We shall remain friends of Medica always.

Ask Us

1. What are the signs of a stroke?

Symptoms of stroke include trouble walking, speaking and understanding, as well as paralysis or numbness of the face, arm or leg, especially on one side of the body.

2. What is Transient Ischaemic Attack?

If your symptoms go away after a few minutes, you may have had a transient ischaemic attack (TIA). Although brief, a TIA is a sign of a serious condition that will not go away without medical help. Unfortunately, because TIAs clear up, many people ignore them. But paying attention to a TIA can save your life.

3. What are the common Nervous system diseases?

Alzheimer's disease, Bell's palsy, Cerebral palsy, Epilepsy, Motor neuron disease, Multiple sclerosis, neurofibromatosis, Parkinson's disease etc.

4. What are the warning signs of a Brain Tumour?

Seizures, Clumsiness, Numbness, Changes in memory or thinking, Nausea, Vision changes, unusual headaches.

5. What are Spinal Tumours?

A spinal tumour is an abnormal mass of tissue within or surrounding the spinal cord and/or spinal column. Spinal tumours can be benign (non-cancerous) or malignant (cancerous). Primary tumours originate in the spine or spinal cord, while secondary tumours result from cancer spreading from another site to the spine.

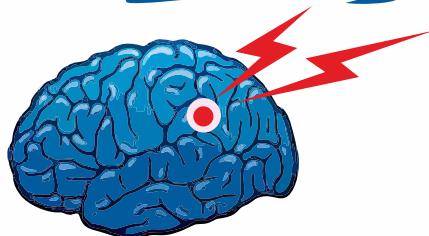
A good laugh and a long sleep are the two best cures for anything

SCAN TO DOWNLOAD THE

MEDICA
App



Brain power



The brain itself can't feel any pain:

Ever wonder how brain surgeons are able to perform surgeries on patients while they're awake? Even though the brain contains layers of coverings and blood vessels that contain pain receptors, the brain itself has none.

The brain is greedy:

Your brain might account for only about 3 percent of your body weight, but it receives about 30 percent of the blood being pumped by your heart.

Brain waves are even more active while you're dreaming:

When awake, people utilize alpha and beta waves, which gives us day wakefulness. Sleep, however, especially in the initial stages, uses Theta activity, which is greater in amplitude than Beta.

Almost half of a child's energy goes to fuel his brain:

In the preschool years, when a child's brain development is faster, physical growth is slower, possibly to save more energy for the developing brain. Conversely, during puberty, when physical growth is faster, brain development is slower—which may come as no surprise to parents of teenagers!

Exercise is just as good for your brain as it is for your body:

Professional athletes know how important fueling their brain is to ensure



they're able to put maximum effort and energy into their workouts. This is because a healthy cardiovascular system means better plumbing for the brain.

When you're awake, your brain produces enough electricity to power a small light bulb:

A robot with a processor that is virtually as intelligent as the human brain would

require at least 10 megawatts of electricity to operate properly. Neurons in the brain do make enough electricity to run a light bulb—100 billions cells generate this amount of energy. And the brain works fast too, speedier than the world's greatest computer.

The brain waves of two musicians can synchronize when performing together:

There's a scientific reason why your favourite bands and musicians blend together harmoniously. A team of scientists used electrodes to record the brain waves of 16 pairs of guitarists as they played the same musical sequence. Even though the two individuals in each pair played different parts, their brain waves synchronized.

Your brain activity is as unique as your fingerprints:

Research suggests that a person's brain activity may be as unique as his or her own fingerprints. This could have implications on how brain scans might be used in the future to help individualize care for each unique person.

Your brain is mostly fat:

Your thinking cap is the fattiest organ in your body, consisting of a minimum of 60 percent fat. This is why a diet rich in healthy fats, such as omega-3s and omega-6s, is vital for brain and overall body health. Fat stabilizes the cell walls in the brain and carries, absorbs and stores fat-soluble vitamins in your bloodstream. It also reduces inflammation and helps the immune system regulate and function properly.

While we slow down as they age, much of our brain stays intact:

Even with ageing, the mind that stays active and exercises, will not show the decline that others may show. Of course, this involves exercising the brain daily, which is why crossword puzzles and games like Sudoku can be incredibly



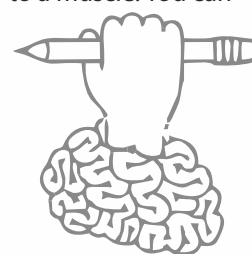
helpful for the elderly.

Your brain's storage capacity is virtually unlimited:

There's no such thing as knowing too much—or learning so much that you can't retain any more information. Your brain doesn't get 'used up' like the data storage in your computer or smartphone. There is endless brain power! However, lack of sleep can affect your brain's ability to create more memories.

Use it or lose it:

The brain is similar to a muscle. You can build up your brain's innate ability to get a job done, through different types of learning, and/or through new experiences. People with a stronger and healthier cognitive reserve—one that's been strengthened with learned experience—have been shown to be more capable of coping with unexpected life events.



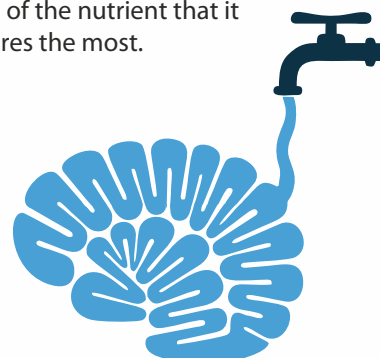
Short term memory generally lasts around 20 to 30 seconds:

Ever wonder how you can say something, get distracted briefly, and then completely forget what you were about to say? This has to do with your brain's capacity for holding small amounts of information in the active mind. It keeps it in an available state for easy access, but only does so for a period of around half a minute. When recalling numbers, specifically,

most people hold memory for around 7.3 seconds on an average and for letters the second count is 9.3.

The Brain is Mostly Water:

That's right. The man brain is made up mostly of water. This is why people often feel dizzy, light headed, or can't remember anything when they are dehydrated. This saps the brain of the nutrient that it requires the most.



Impression

This sleep disorder puts people at 'very high risk' of Parkinson's



Research has linked a particular sleep disorder called rapid eye movement (REM) sleep behavior disorder with a diagnosis of Parkinson's disease. What characterizes this sleep problem, and can its presence be a good way to predict Parkinson's risk?

Data from the National Institutes of Health (NIH) indicate that every year, approximately 50,000 people in the United States learn that they have Parkinson's disease, a neurological condition that affects a person's motor function and exposes them to other neurodegenerative problems, such as Alzheimer's disease.

Researchers still do not fully understand exactly what causes Parkinson's disease, but they have identified a few risk factors that can predispose a person to develop this condition.

These include a person's age and sex as well as some genetic factors. Still, it remains a challenge to establish early on who is likely to develop Parkinson's disease at some point in their life.

However, a team of researchers from McGill University in Montreal, Canada decided to see if one particular factor — a sleep disorder called REM sleep behavior disorder (RBD) — could be a good predictor of risk.

This sleep problem is called RBD because it occurs during the REM phase of sleep, in which a person's body becomes effectively paralyzed. This inability to move prevents the person from physically acting out any dream that they may be experiencing and thus stops them from potentially harming themselves or others.

People with RBD do not have this paralysis, which means that they end up acting out their dreams without any notion that they are doing so.

Research has shown that many people with RBD go on to develop Parkinson's disease, so the McGill University team decided to find out whether an RBD diagnosis could accurately predict Parkinson's risk.

As lead author Dr. Ron Postuma and colleagues explain, establishing that this sleep disorder is a good predictor of Parkinson's could, in the future, allow specialists to identify at-risk people and offer them experimental therapies that could delay or prevent the onset of this neurological condition.

Source: medicalnewstoday

Fasting boosts metabolism and fights aging



The latest study to explore the impact of fasting on the human body concludes that it increases metabolic activity more than previously realized and may even impart anti-aging benefits.

Woman drinking water in the street

A recent study takes a look at how fasting influences metabolism. Studies have shown that intermittent fasting can help certain people lose weight.

Although researchers are still debating exactly how effective fasting can be for weight loss, new research hints at other benefits.

In rats, for instance, studies show that fasting can increase lifespan.

Although exciting, evidence of this in humans has yet to be seen.

The most recent study — which the authors have now published in the journal Scientific Reports — takes a fresh look at fasting in humans and provides new insight.

"Recent aging studies have shown that caloric restriction and fasting have a prolonging effect on lifespan in model animals," says first study author Dr. Takayuki Teruya, "but the detailed mechanism has remained a mystery."

In particular, scientists at the Okinawa Institute of Science and Technology Graduate University in Japan examined its impact on metabolism.

By understanding the metabolic processes involved, the team hopes to find ways of harnessing the benefits of fasting without the need to go without food for prolonged periods.

To investigate, they fasted four volunteers for 58 hours. Using metabolomics, or the measurement of metabolites, the researchers analyzed whole blood samples at intervals during the fasting period.

Source: medicalnewstoday

Experimental drug may prevent Alzheimer's disease

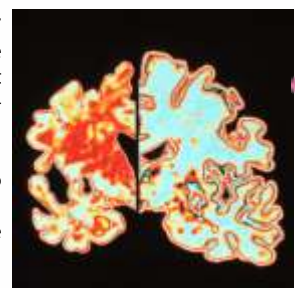
A drug that scientists are currently developing to treat stroke survivors might also help stave off Alzheimer's disease.

Alzheimer's disease is the most common form of dementia. According to the Alzheimer's Association, 5.7 million people in the United States are living with the condition. Current medications can only relieve some symptoms of the disease, and there is not yet any way to halt its progression. The neurodegeneration that occurs in people with Alzheimer's results from the buildup of a protein called beta-amyloid in the brain. Beta-amyloid is present in the healthy brain, but incorrectly folded proteins can accumulate to form amyloid plaques. These plaques reduce blood flow to the brain, leading to the breakdown of brain cells.

Over the years, researchers have investigated many pharmacological routes to tackle these plaques, but, to date, none have led to the development of effective drugs.

Recently, researchers from the University of Southern California (USC) in Los Angeles explored an innovative new compound that the scientific community is already scrutinizing.

Source: medicalnewstoday



A Belgian in Bengal

They had a unique way of communicating with each other. Mr Sarkar would try his newly acquired French language skills on Benoit who would respond in Bengali! "He found it difficult to pronounce my name and asked me the meaning. I told him it comes from the Latin word Benedict that means blessings. He said that is 'Ashish' in Bengali. So now I had one more name!" Dr Sarkar urged him to go to Santiniketan, not to get a degree but as a free student. Benoit joined a special class which had only two other students, one from Germany and the other from Tamil Nadu. Santiniketan was a completely different experience. He loved the way teachers were addressed here – "it was Bhudeb da, Jayanta da, Amit da, and not Mr or Ms so-and-so that I was used to back in Belgium. In fact I did not even know the second names of my teachers there". This was a wonderful time for Benoit. He moved around the campus on his bicycle, visiting his teachers whenever he wanted. He felt liberated. But the good times did not last long. The scenario started changing when the effects of the Naxalite Movement that had overtaken Bengal, began to be felt in Santiniketan also. Disturbances and disruptions became rampant. It was time to move on.

Back in Kolkata, he started looking for a teaching job. This was when he met Patricia, and his life changed forever. The Bengali teacher would later become his wife and companion for life. Around this time a friend informed him that

Gorakhpur University in Uttar Pradesh was looking for a French teacher. He applied and was called for an interview. Travelling to Gorakhpur on a train, he realized now it was time for him to learn Hindi. But all he heard on the train to Varanasi, and then on to Gorakhpur, was Bengali! He had a breakfast meeting with the Chancellor of the Gorakhpur University and was hired. He would spend the next three years teaching French in a city in UP, learning a new language and culture.

Though it was an experience he

India! He had heard from his friends that all over the country foreigners were receiving such notices, but he had a valid visa and never thought he would also be asked to quit India. By this time he was engaged to Patricia and could not tolerate the thought of separating from her. He thought of appealing, but his lawyer friends told him if his appeal got rejected then he would have no other option but to leave.

He wrote to his country's Ambassador in Delhi asking for his help. Belgium was about to open an Embassy in Dhaka and

hoardings, advertisements. Benoit Labrique married Patricia on 7th July 1973, and traveled with his young bride to Dhaka to take charge of the newly set up Belgium Embassy. Bangladesh was to be his home for the next 25 years. His two children, a son and a daughter were born here. "The birth of our son Alain was another difficult episode in our lives. He was born with a life-threatening complication that needed immediate treatment. Unfortunately, the antibiotic prescribed was not available anywhere in Bangladesh. Luckily we came to know that a Russian diplomat was travelling to the Russian embassy in Bangladesh, we requested him to carry the medicine". Alain lived and was given the

University, he continues to work towards health sector reforms in Asia, particularly in Bangladesh and India

Mr Labrique was the only constant presence in the Belgium Embassy in Bangladesh, as Ambassadors kept changing. It was not a favoured place by diplomats and people posted wanted to get out as soon as possible. Finally in 1998 the embassy closed its doors and Benoit Labrique was transferred to Mumbai, which again was a completely different experience. The professionalism and sense of purpose here was in stark contrast with his earlier postings. His tenure as a diplomat came to an end in 2002 when he turned 65 and retired from his post. So after 35 years spent in the Indian subcontinent, Benoit Labrique travelled back to Belgium.

His strong connect with Bengal, both East and West, however, remained. Since leaving he has made a number of trips back, to Bangladesh to be with his son, and to India to meet friends and relatives. But one place he never went back to was Santiniketan. "I wanted to keep my memories of the place as I had left it. I am told the place has changed a lot since my last visit."

My friend's wife once said to me, "Ashish tumi nishchoi kono ager jonme bangali chhile (Ashish you must have been a Bengali in a previous life)"

Now back in Belgium, recovered and back on his feet, Mr Labrique is all praise for the warmth and care he received at Medica - "My gratitude towards Medica cannot be contained in any written or spoken word." We at Medica thank him for stopping with us for a while on his extraordinary journey, and wish him good health and happiness.



enjoyed, and he made new friends, his heart was in Calcutta. He travelled to the city frequently to meet Patricia. As per the prevalent law he had to keep the local Police Station informed about his movements. The police officers became his friends, and on one of his visits, informed him that they had received a notification that Benoit Labrique had to quit

since Benoit could speak fluent Bangla, the Ambassador felt he could find a place for him there. On his first visit to Dhaka with his Ambassador to meet the President, he was struck by the predominant 'Banglaness'. Everywhere he looked Bengali letters stared back at him – name boards on shops, directional signage and all promotional material like

nickname 'Mritunjoy' (the one who defeated death) by his grateful father. He spent the first 18 years of his life in Bangladesh before moving to the US for higher studies. Alain came back to Dhaka in 2001 and spent another eight years there before finally moving on to the States as a Professor at John Hopkins University. And as a representative of the

Be Posture Smart!

Know how to use your body properly.
Movements that twist or strain your back can be harmful.

- ☑ **Stand smart.** Don't slouch. If your job needs you to stand for long periods, improvise by placing one foot on a low footstool – alternating the feet - to take some of the load off your lower back. Good posture reduces stress on back muscles.
- ☑ **Sit smart.** Choose a chair with good lower back support and armrests, a swivel base would be ideal. Placing a pillow or rolled towel in the small of your back will help maintain its normal curve. Keep your knees and hips level. Frequent changes in position (at half-hour intervals) help the back.
- ☑ **Lift smart.** Try to avoid lifting heavy objects; if you have to then let your legs do the work. Keep your back straight and bend only at the knees. Hold the load close to your body. Ask for help to make the job easier.



NICU (Neuro Intensive Care Unit)

KNOWLEDGE SERIES



A neuro-ICU is an intensive care unit devoted to the care and close monitoring of patients with immediately life-threatening neurological problems. A patient may be admitted to a neuro-ICU for post-operative brain tumor, ischaemic stroke, haemorrhages, traumatic brain injury, Guillain-Barre syndrome, subdural hematoma, myasthenia gravis, spinal trauma etc. Neuro-ICUs are multi-disciplinary. Neurologists, neurosurgeons, intensive care specialists, and anesthesiologists often work very closely with teams of highly trained nurses, respiratory therapists, nutritional experts, and more.

Compared with general intensive care units, neuro-ICUs have been associated with lower mortality and shorter hospital stays for disorders like stroke, cerebral haemorrhage, and traumatic brain injury. The length of stay in the Neuro ICU depends on complications of surgery, condition and progress.

MEDICA KOLKATA HELPLINES

Health Check-up:
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Swasthya Mitra:
8981092010

Corporate Desk:
9230011834

Physical Therapy & Rehabilitation:
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(Home Service)

Home Collection Service:
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Pharmacy Home Delivery:
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Medica Home Care Services:
8100500100

Emergency & Ambulance:
033 66520100