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How My Puppy Survived Parvo

By Linda Townsend

For those who have dogs, you know that Canine Parvovirus is not something you want your dog ever to get. It is deadly and quick. Just a day or two or even as little as a few hours after symptoms are recognized as severe, the dog can die from dehydration. The treatment is usually a week in veterinarian care costing between \$800 to \$2,000 and usually less than 50% of the dogs, even with professional care, will make it. Dog owners are told the *responsible* thing to do is get all the puppy vaccines for Parvo.

For those who do not have dogs, you are probably wondering how this topic could be relevant to you. I have long been an advocate against vaccinations of all kinds, but until I was faced with the *so-called* preventable and deadly Parvovirus, my convictions had not been truly tested.

What is Canine Parvo?

Until 1978, there was nothing called Canine Parvovirus. It is believed that it was a mutated strain of Feline Distemper that jumped species. It was so contagious that Parvo spread within two years to effect all canines around the globe, including wild dogs like wolves, foxes, and dingos. It can affect dogs at any age, but the most susceptible are puppies and senior canines.

Parvo itself is a virus that attacks the villi of the small intestines impairing the absorption of nutrients. The body, trying to rid itself of the problem, responds by drawing too much of the body's fluids to the intestines to flush out the virus. This is evident by vomiting and diarrhea, which actually becomes projectile in nature on both ends. Blood is usually in the stool as well. By the time symptoms show up, the virus has the upper hand. The virus itself rarely is the cause of death, but rather it is the dehydration. The dog will not eat or even drink on its own and becomes lethargic, usually with a fever.

Because it is a virus, a vaccine has been developed, but antibiotics are ineffective. Veterinarians recommend that puppies receive a minimum of three vaccines for Parvo, but I have heard of many vets recommending four.

Some little known facts that have surfaced about Parvo is that 28% of vaccinated puppies still get Parvo and it kills a higher percentage of vaccinated puppies than unvaccinated. So, it comes down to two choices and their possibilities:

1. Vaccinate and your dog *may* be less likely to suffer from Parvo, although 28% still get it (like our first German Shepherd), but be aware that the dog is more likely to die from it and, if it survives, is more likely to suffer detrimental long-term health effects.
2. Do not vaccinate and your dog will most likely get Parvo, but some research shows that as high as 95% are more likely to survive it, which can be possible without expensive vet bills and with less risk of long-term consequences. You can read more about the research, percentages, and specifics of the home care treatment at dogsnaturallymagazine.com and wolfcreekranch1.tripod.com/heal_parvo.html.

Our First Experience with Parvo

Just under twenty years ago, our first German Shepherd, Sasha, got Parvo between his first vaccine, which was done by the breeder, and before he would have been scheduled for the next round, which we were not planning on doing anyway. We had no prior experience with Parvo, did not even know much about it, but we have made a point to know a great deal about it since.

When Sasha first began having symptoms of vomiting and diarrhea, I gave him homeopathic remedies for diarrhea for a couple of days, thinking that was all it was. Sasha's symptoms improved, he even started eating and drinking on his own and had energy, but either I stopped the treatment too soon or was not aggressive enough with it because he relapsed. Before I knew it, he had projectile diarrhea and vomiting the next morning, and by the afternoon he was so dehydrated that he could not stand up.

We had a vet, now retired and moved away, who combined holistic with conventional medicine. When he took one look at Sasha, he recommended for us to put him down saying he was just too far along. We asked what would be done if we had brought him in at the first signs: IV with vitamins and electrolytes, as well as some antibiotics that would only fight against secondary bacterial infections, not the virus itself. We asked him to start treatment and told him we would be back in the morning. I began researching Parvo, but there was very little in alternatives at that time. I did find a few mentions of colloidal silver, which I had some experience with for other things, like feline distemper which is a very similar virus to Parvo.

The next day I brought a bottle of 10 ppm colloidal silver. The vet was unfamiliar with it yet open to trying it (probably because he thought the dog was a goner anyway). He said Sasha would not keep it down orally. I told him I understood that and I wanted it injected under the skin. He did his muscle testing as he did for homeopathics and herbal treatments. The dosage was to be 5cc three times a day, which he mentioned was a lot, but then it is not a concentrate like most medicines being only 10 parts per million. He gave Sasha the first dose while I was there that Saturday. The office was closed in the afternoon and the next day, but I got through to one of the caretakers on Sunday. Not only was Sasha still alive, but he had pulled out his IV twice by noon that day, and they reported that he was up barking, eating, tipping over his food dish, and biting at the cage—he always hated being penned.

I went to see Sasha on Monday morning. He was energetic and ready to go home, but the vet wanted to see a stool and since there was nothing much in him that took another day. Everyone at the vet's office called him the miracle puppy. Even the vet admitted he had never seen any dog recuperate from Parvo so quickly and rarely ever at all; the only thing he had done differently was the colloidal silver.

Our Latest Experience with Parvo

When we decided to adopt Mishka last September, I began looking into home treatments for Parvo, knowing that it was inevitable that our puppy would be exposed to it regardless of how careful we were to avoid where other dogs go. It was not a matter of "if" but "when" and the older Mishka gets, the better. At about 15 weeks old, the Parvo symptoms began, but we were supplied with proven natural herbal products that support the body while it fights Parvo and we were mentally ready also. I supposed if it had been our first battle with Parvo, we could have been more intimidated, but now that we understood it, we knew that the hardest part of the battle was just keeping Mishka hydrated (even if that meant enemas) and supporting his immune system while his body fought the virus. This also meant 24-hour care.

We were fortunate, because we recognized the symptoms early and began treatment immediately. Mishka would not eat and stopped drinking, but he would take water with electrolytes orally when given in a oral syringe. He only vomited twice, so he was able to keep the herbal formulas and colloidal silver down, and we did not have to go the enema route at all. He never got to the point that he had blood in his stool, although it is said there is a strain of Parvo that does not present blood in the stool. He did become very lethargic and had urgency in having to go out, but he did not have any accidents in the room where he had been penned. In fact, he began getting up and drinking a little water now and then on his own by the first evening, and he even ate a little.

My husband and I took turns so one of us was with him all day and all night. By the second day, Mishka had a normal stool, but we were still cautious because of our first experience with Parvo where Sasha seemed better and then had a bad relapse. The third day we stopped his treatments, but then he had diarrhea. We believed this was probably due to not being able to fully digest his food, but we began treatments again, just in case, and besides they were supportive of the digestive tract. Mishka was still quite energetic as he ate light meals and drank on his own, and his stool was normal the next day.

The best part is now Mishka has a natural immunity to Parvo. That is not to say he will never get it again, because it is a virus that mutates (kind of like colds), but that if he does, it is unlikely that it will be life threatening.

Standing Firmer on No-Vaccinations

We all second guess ourselves, especially when faced with something that we or others think is preventable, but I have personally experienced and witnessed vaccine failures and the side effects that few believe will happen to them or their children or even their pets. I have detoxified adopted pets from their previous vaccines and watched their bodies cure themselves of what was thought to be incurable. I willingly admit that there is risk either way, but if the immune system is supported rather than injured, stressed, or hindered by vaccines, I believe we have a greater advantage in fighting illnesses naturally, especially with our knowledge about germs and using diligence with hygiene to reduce the risk of secondary infections that further tax the immune system. I believe if we stop trying to *help* the body with vaccinations that it can do what it was designed to do . . . restore itself to a healthy state with natural immunity.

Linda Townsend is a freelance writer of health-related issues and can be contacted at 4biohealth@gmail.com.

The Keto Diet

By Sarah Townsend

Recently, a friend of mine started a diet from which she lost about ten or fifteen pounds. She and I went out to eat together, and she was able to have normal-sized meals. I watched her enjoy a lot of food within the Ketogenic Diet. How it works is that you eat fewer carbohydrates so that your body goes into a state called Ketosis, where the body produces something called ketones.

Ketones are an alternative energy source used when blood sugar is in short supply. They are produced if you eat very few carbohydrates and moderate amounts of protein. They are made in the liver from fat, meaning that your entire body switches its fuel supply to run almost entirely on fat and therefore, burning it off.

This is great if you are trying to lose weight, but there are also other benefits. In many cases, studies have proven that it can possibly reverse Type 2 Diabetes, normalize blood sugar, and even control epilepsy. It may lessen acne, increase your physical endurance, stop heartburn, and lessen stomach problems. One major

thing it does is increase mental focus. In fact, some people only go on the diet for the mental focus it provides. Of course, results may vary.

What foods are recommended for the diet? Natural fats, fish and seafood, meat, eggs, cheese, and vegetables that grow above ground. My friend even found ice cream that was within the diet's standards. Only rule is that you cannot eat more than fifty grams of carbohydrates per day. Ideally, you would eat no more than twenty grams; the fewer the better.

So, if one of your New Year's Resolutions is to lose weight or increase your concentration, why not consider this?

Sarah Townsend is a teenager keen on healthy living and the daughter of Linda Townsend, a regular contributor to *The Life Line*. You can contact her at 4biohealth@gmail.com.

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Age Well

By Linda Townsend

I have two older women in my life, my aunt and my mother-in-love. They are just months apart in age both approaching their mid-eighties. My aunt lives a few states north, while my mother-in-love lives in Florida. Both have some things in common because of the era in which they grew up and yet both also have much in which they differ because of circumstances and choices they made during their lives.

My aunt was not supposed to live beyond childhood. She was a very sickly child particularly after she had rheumatic fever, which left her with a weakened heart. She often would describe herself like this: "On a day when I would feel good, I would try to do everything I could not do on the other days I was too weak to get out of bed. I would keep going even when my mother told me to take a nap until I was so tired I could barely stand and then I would run to the couch as fast as I could and as soon as my head was on the pillow I was asleep."

Fortunately, my aunt beat the odds and not only survived, but thrived particularly after it was suggested to her father to get her a pony. She fell off the pony more than a few times, but she always got right back on and she continued to ride horses into her sixties. Every bit the stereotypical red-head, whose passions run high along with her determination, her traits captured my uncle's attention and his heart. She also has been a very practical mother of four, a business partner, a college graduate in her forties, and quite active in her community and church during their nearly 65 years of marriage.

Because of her fight to regain health in her tender years and her many experiences with horses, including some injuries, my aunt had a different attitude towards growing old. She did not fear it. In fact, she welcomed it with practicality. Once when her doctor asked if she had any aches or pains, she quipped, "Of course, I do! I'm old." My aunt never expected to get through the aging process without having some challenging health issues and she truly is thankful to have *lived* beyond her childhood—believe me, she has lived a very active and fulfilling life. About ten years ago, she began warning me that she is not the aunt I knew, but even then she could still outwork most people. Although she tires out much more now and has memory problems, I have no doubts that with her determination she will sprint in her very last moments.

In contrast, my mother-in-love warns everyone, "Don't grow old!" as if that is something a person can or even should choose to avoid. Her views on aging are probably more common: unpleasant and feared. She was a stay-at-home mother and used to have a small seasonal business of selling crafts, mostly her handmade dolls and Christmas ornaments, but she gave that up some years ago. Realizing that she cannot do all the things she used to do as quickly or that such things tire her more has affected her attitude differently when compared to my aunt. She seems to want to just give up on doing things like preparing her meals, doing laundry, and housekeeping, even though she had been physically able to do those things. She would sit in the sunlight in front of the garage with its door open (a Florida thing) in the afternoon to talk with any neighbors who might stop by on their walks. In the last few years, my mother-in-love has nearly died from septic shock twice; as I write this, she is currently recuperating from the last time.

One of those life choices that these two women made that is in contrast to each other is that my aunt and uncle accepted their son's offer to sell their homes and build a house in which they could live together on a few acres in the country. In that way, my aunt could still have her last remaining horse and her milking goats, which kept her active. We offered to move my mother-in-love nearer to us after her husband died six years ago, but she replied that she wanted to live in her house for as long as she could every time we asked, even though she is lonely without any family around.

Unfortunately, my mother-in-love tripped twice last year. In July, her fall resulted in a compression fracture in one vertebra in her back. In December, she fell on her knee and became septic. My husband told her that now there was the question of whether she *should* continue to live alone considering these two falls being just six months apart. The most heartbreaking part though is as she seemed to finally warm to the idea of selling her property and moving into a larger house together with us where she would have the master suite on the main floor, we began to realize that moving her now is inadvisable for many reasons. She is not recuperating well and will most likely need more care than we hoped.

I am writing about this because I am sure you have or will have an aging loved one in your life and because we are all growing older every day. We often do not foresee how our choices today will affect our lives and the lives of people who love us later on. We can choose to approach aging with a heart of appreciation that we have lived and are still living or with dread of what may yet come. We can choose to continue to share our lives with our families and friends or be lonely. We can be young in our hearts and open to new experiences or be set in our ways and unwilling to accept change.

Since I was in my twenties, I began preparing for my old age . . . really, for the rest of my life because all my life I have been aging. I chose to change my diet. I chose to eat organic foods as much as possible. I chose to try to stay as healthy as I would know how to without compromising the ability to enjoy my life. I chose to encourage natural healing every day, because when healing is impaired there is disease. So far, I have avoided diabetes, heart disease, obesity, and cancer that are so common on both sides of my family.

No matter how much I have worked towards a healthy old age, I am not in denial that I probably will have some challenges that I would not be looking forward to having, however I have also learned that fearing the aging process does not stop it and while I am aging, I *am* still living, still making choices. I want to appreciate life and I also want to be appreciated when I am old and more limited in what I can do. I have learned that my good attitude and accumulated knowledge may be the only things I have left to contribute to others.

While I believe that I am currently benefiting from my choices, I cannot prove that they have added even one year to my life, but I can say that I am living in good health at an age when nearly all the members of my family were not in such good health. I firmly believe that the choices made today, make a difference in tomorrow. I say to choose life is to choose to age and you can choose to age well.

Linda Townsend is a freelance writer of health-related issues and can be contacted at 4biohealth@gmail.com.

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That Gut Feeling

By Linda Townsend

Have you given much thought to your gut microbiome lately? Most people do not. In fact, most people just expect food to be digested and waste eliminated without even wanting to think much about how it all works, but I find it fascinating that we all have these tiny living creatures inside of us, inside our guts, and when they are happy, we are happy...perhaps *literally!* Maybe we really do have gut feelings?

"Probiotics" was not a known term prior to 1965 when it was coined by D.M. Lilley and R.H. Stillwell to describe "substances secreted by one microorganism that stimulated the growth of another." However, the discovery of probiotics has been credited to Nobel Prize winner and Russian scientist of the Pasteur Institute in Paris, Élie Metchnikoff, around 1907. He was fascinated with how some Bulgarians lived so long and found that they were drinking a fermented yogurt daily, from which a common probiotic strain we know as *Lactobacillus bulgaricus* comes. It was not until 1974, that R.B. Parker redefined the meaning of "probiotics" to "...organisms and substances which contribute to intestinal microbial balance," which is how the term is similarly used today.

Research on probiotics is still ongoing, but recent studies suggest that probiotics play a much bigger role than gut health alone. In the last few years, researchers have been studying noticeable improvements in the ability of rats to cope with stressful activity, such as swimming, when diets are supplemented by specific gut microbiota. Imagine swallowing a specific species of little creatures for the purpose of having them live in your gut to help your emotional state—it sounds like the makings of a sci-fi movie or one of the most amazing medical

breakthroughs of our lifetime!

How would probiotics living in the gut possibly influence our moods? There is a connection between the gut and the brain, which is called the gut-brain axis. Although most people tend to think of the gut being just the stomach and intestines, it is simply another term for the gastrointestinal tract starting at the mouth and ending at the anus. The gastrointestinal system is controlled by a major division of the nervous system forming a mesh-like network of neurons that is called the enteric nervous system. The enteric nervous system is often referred to as the *second brain* and it utilizes several of the same neurotransmitters as the Central Nervous System, including serotonin and dopamine. Actually, the gut produces hundreds of neurochemicals and is found to have over 90% of the body's serotonin and about 50% of its dopamine, both known for their mood balancing benefits.

Currently, experiments being done in trying to understand this incredible gut-brain axis have been done with lab animals, but the evidence is convincing enough to see possibilities in *psychobiotics*, treating mental health through improving gut health. Although inconclusive currently on the effectiveness in human beings, this area of research is still in its infancy.

While researchers are working to prove that probiotics may be key in improving emotional states, you could be improving your microbiome just because it makes sense that a healthy gut contributes a health benefit to the entire body, which make you feel better and that alone enhances your attitude. We begin naturally creating our microbiome from the time of birth. Babies receive probiotics through their mother's breast milk, which makes it more challenging for babies on formula to get a good start with probiotics. Fortunately, we continue to add to our probiotic colony all our lives

naturally. Over 100 trillion microorganisms of 400 different species can flourish in a healthy gut, crowding out harmful bacteria and making our gut an important defender of our immunity. However, probiotics can also be killed off by antibiotics, corticosteroids, NSAIDs, birth control pills, chlorine in drinking water, hydrogenated fats, and stress.

Taking probiotic supplements is not always enough, we also need to know what helps them thrive. The food fibers that sustain probiotics, yet we do not digest, are being called prebiotics. The list of prebiotic foods is surprisingly diverse: foods with inulin, like jicama (yacon), Jerusalem artichoke, and chicory root; raw allium foods, like garlic, onion, leeks, chives, and scallions; leafy greens, like spinach and dandelion greens—with a whopping 25% prebiotic fiber; pulses, like lentils, split peas, beans, and chickpeas; foods made from wheat, like whole grain wheat breads, sprouted grain breads, and wheat germ; oats; avocados; peas; soybeans; asparagus; potato skins; bananas; blueberries; apples; apple cider vinegar; chia and flax seeds; and even dark chocolate—believe it or not!

Remember this was all sparked over a century ago from a scientist's curiosity of why people were living noticeably longer by having yogurt every day and along with those probiotics, they probably also ate prebiotics without knowing they were ingesting and feeding helpful little creatures living in their gut. We can do the same and have a good gut feeling about it!

Linda Townsend has been a member of the Life Grocery Co-op for 20 years and is a freelance writer of health-related issues. She can be contacted at 4biohealth@gmail.com.

Valerian

Even though I have been doing piano performances on stage since I was four, a few years ago I started getting nervous about it. My hands would shake making it very hard to play. Then, my mom introduced me to one of her favorite herbs, valerian. She has used it for anxiety and nervousness for many years. I started taking a couple of capsules before a performance and, thankfully, the shakiness would go away entirely. *Thanks, Mom!*

This amazing herbal root is mainly used for stress and as a sleep aid. It increases the amount of GABA in your brain, which is an inhibitory neurotransmitter that helps you relax. I particularly like it because it helps soothe jumpy nerves without making me feel drugged.

By Sarah Townsend

Valerian not only has a sedative effect that can encourage sleepiness for insomnia, it is also known to be an antispasmodic, meaning it acts as a natural muscle relaxer and can ease muscle cramps. It might be beneficial after a heavy workout to diminish shakiness.

What I also like about valerian, at this time of year with final exams, is that it can be very helpful for students who have test anxiety, like me.

Valerian root capsules can be found in the herbal supplement aisle at Life Grocery.

Sarah Townsend is a teenager keen on healthy living and the daughter of Linda Townsend, a regular contributor to The Life Line. You can contact her at 4biohealth@gmail.com.

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Is It Really Still Organic If ... ?

By Linda Townsend

I tend to be a fairly trusting person when I see the USDA Organic label, but when it comes to produce . . . there are so many ways what was grown organically can be contaminated at wholesale distribution centers and retail grocery stores. Ways that you may not have considered, but since so many large retail grocery stores are now vying for your patronage by offering organic produce, you might want to take a closer look in their handling of the organic fresh foods.

Let's consider all those stores that carry both conventional and organic grown produce. The USDA has standards about handling, but is everyone working in the produce section trained properly or do they follow through with that training? Have you ever seen the person stocking the produce handling both conventional and organic at the same time? There is no need for them to change their gloves switching from organic to conventional grown, but have you seen them change their gloves after handling the conventional before working with the organic produce?

I rarely shop in large grocery stores as I try to avoid them, but I have noticed the few times I happened to catch the produce being stocked that the same gloves were used for both the entire time while the person was stocking back and forth between organic and conventionally grown fresh foods. I suspect that this kind of contamination happens occasionally because of customer handling, but the grocery store personnel should know better.

You probably wash off all your produce, which is always advisable, and the store probably has a misting system to keep the produce fresher, so that some of that contamination may be washed away but . . . to where? Water always goes downward and some stores have conventionally grown foods under the organic horizontal section, which is ideal in the situation of having both available, but others do not. Some stores have a vertical organic section where the mist would wash down from possibly "contaminated organics"—an oxymoron—from improper handling to add more contaminants to the organics that are under them. Although I rarely see this now, some stores were placing organic produce kind of willy-nilly amongst conventional with such misting systems!

When you shop at stores that have both organic and conventionally grown produce, you absolutely must see the USDA label. Many of those stores carry the exact same items from both. For instance, they may have two bins of Gala apples, one with an organic sign and the other, not. If any apple in the organic bin does not have a label that starts with the number 9, do not trust that it is organic! The label could have come off, *but* then it could be a conventional grown apple misplaced and contaminating the other organic apples! How could you be certain?

Organic produce also should not ever be placed in containers that have been used for conventionally grown fresh foods, so when the produce section gets rearranged, you might wonder if contamination

is occurring. Have you ever wondered if the organic produce is being handled properly in for-organic-only containers in the places you cannot see like the back room?

Buying organics means that you are committed to your health and trusting the label, but you also are trusting the grocery store. The defining question to ask yourself is which do you trust more: a grocery store that added organics in their conventional produce department to build their business or a store that has been committed to carrying organic produce for over 20 years and has high standards about the handling of them because they strongly believe in preserving the integrity of the USDA organic label?

If you want commitment to organic fresh foods, you definitely want to shop at Life Grocery! You will never need to wonder if any item in the produce department is organic or not because every single one is organic and there are no concerns about cross contamination from conventional pesticides and herbicides at Life Grocery.

Linda Townsend has been a member of the Life Grocery Co-op for 20 years and is a freelance writer of health-related issues. She can be contacted at 4biohealth@gmail.com.

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Preserving and Storing Food - Part 1

By Linda Townsend

I remember my grandmother's fruit cellar, a small and naturally constantly cool room just off the main basement that kept her preserves and canned foods for some years after she had passed away. Canning was just a way of life for her and we enjoyed her jams and tomatoes until they were all used up.

Thankfully, food is plentiful, affordable, and available in the United States. In fact, refrigeration and better packaging has allowed food to be shipped from all over the world, so that we can have some fresh produce like apples, bananas, tomatoes, and lettuce year round! Because of this, few families actually grow their own food and appreciate the labor necessary to fight off weeds and pests—particularly if the food is organic. Average consumers probably put more thought into planning a vacation than planning their lives around planting, harvesting, and preserving food. Even fewer know the properties of food or find it a necessity to have long term storage of food.

I think I could write an entire book on my experiments with raising food over the years in three states differing greatly in climates and soils, from planning with limited space to soil preparation to preserving. For instance, for two years I grew cherry tomatoes in Florida's poor, sandy soil with some compost, but while the tomatoes were sweet and ripened quickly the plants always had a sickly yellow appearance that would not grow up the net past my shoulder. They also would be decimated in one night by tomato hornworms. The last two years we installed a misting system with a timer (much like in the produce section of Life Grocery) and added a polarizing energy source, plus I would give the plants a deep watering with hydrogen peroxide added on the days it did not rain. Then the healthy green plants grew up over our roof and tomato hornworms were very rarely seen. I planted just two plants instead of five in the same area the second year and yields were even better than before.

I always like having fresh foods, but when I grow food and everything goes well, I usually find that I have too much when it is in season and

too little when it is not. When we actually grow our own food, we understand that preserving food was not just an art for our ancestors, it was a necessity, and we have far more choices than they did, like modern refrigeration that helps keep food fresher longer. But what if the refrigerator goes out? Mine did this a few months ago and then the new one delivered did not work either so we did not have a working refrigerator for a week! Fresh produce on ice in a cooler does not look so fresh in just a couple of days.

The first decision about preserving food should be how much to have on hand. Every family should have enough food for an extra week to cover short term difficulties, but having enough to feed your family for a month to three months is better. People who have lived through disasters or in areas that are prone to have food shortages because of extreme weather or inability to get to a store weekly tend to have reserves for six months to a year.

Knowing how much you want to have on hand helps determine what kind of storage system you should do. However, most people do not rely on just one method. That is because the properties of the foods cause them to do better with some kinds of preservation and not others. Other considerations are preference, costs, storage space, and length of time you hope the food will last.

Storing extra food will require a bit of extra work also, because you will need to rotate everything, placing the oldest in front of the newer, but it is not about when you made the purchases. Most processed foods and some packaged produce usually have had "sell by" dates based on their expected shelf life and when they were packaged. That is the deadline for the item to be sold from the store, although that does not mean the food has expired and should not be eaten, because it allows extra time from the time that it is purchased to be consumed. In fact, that labeling has caused so much confusion for the consumers that the food industry is moving more toward "use by" or "best if used by" dates, which is easier for the consumer to understand. It is always better to rotate your food by the dates on the jars and packages. You can even have a shelf for just the older items so that you easily see what you need to use soon and plan your

meals accordingly. Most of those dates are either hard to see or in different places on different packages. I usually use a marker to circle the ones easy to see or write the dates on the tops of cans and the front of packages.

Food in cans and jars with vacuum seals seem to last well past the suggested dates, but I have noticed that processed organic or foods with oils as an ingredient and natural preservatives that are stored in original bag packages, such as chips, crackers, cereals, and cookies, tend to taste off stale or worse not too long after the "use by" date because the oils become rancid. This is because they are packaged for short term storage and do not protect the food from oxygen as they would need to be for long term storage. Placing these items in air tight containers after opening helps, but that is not solution for long term storage.

Another reason to store foods is that it can save you some money, because you can buy in bulk when the items are on sale. However, some methods of food storage can be costly so it is something to keep in consideration. The question is if it is about saving money more than saving the quality of the foods or the other way around. For me, it is a balance between the two because my goal is to have enough food in long term storage that my family could survive a long term disaster and perhaps be able to help out a few of my friends and family as well.

In the second part of this article, I will be discussing the advantages and disadvantages of the different methods to preserve foods and their nutrients for longer terms.

Linda Townsend is a freelance writer of health-related issues and can be contacted at 4biohealth@gmail.com.

Linda Townsend has been a member of the Life Grocery Co-op for 20 years and is a freelance writer of health-related issues. She can be contacted at 4biohealth@gmail.com.

What's with The Yogurt, Mom?

By Sarah Townsend

Yogurt is one of my mom's favorite foods. She eats it for lunch several times a week because it is filling and stops her sugar cravings. Our refrigerator probably has about fifteen or twenty small yogurts peacefully residing inside waiting to be the next chosen one. With all of the yogurt I see whenever I open the door to the tall silver box of chilliness, it has gotten me curious about what the benefits of yogurt are.

Yogurt contains calcium, potassium, magnesium, vitamin B-2, vitamin B-12, and protein. It also has probiotics, which is probably

the greatest benefit yogurt has. Probiotics are friendly bacteria that can possibly boost immune system and promote a healthy digestive tract, which helps with lactose intolerance and Inflammatory Bowel Disease. Yogurt has also been proven to help prevent Osteoporosis and reduce risk of high blood pressure. Another cool thing is that it can help you lose weight by making you feel fuller faster with very few calories (about 100-200 calories per serving).

Besides having some pretty great health benefits, you can use it as a substitute for things in

baking. You can use unflavored or a complementary flavor of yogurt to replace oils and butters needed for muffin, brownie, and cake mixes. You can use it in place of sour cream for other things as well.

After looking at these benefits, I guess I should be eating yogurt, too.

Sarah Townsend is a teenager keen on healthy living and the daughter of Linda Townsend, a regular contributor to The Life Line. You can contact her at 4biohealth@gmail.com.

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- LaColombe Draft: Cold Pressed Espresso Latte
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- Zevia Energy Drinks: Grapefruit, Kola, Mango
- Choice Organic Teas: Reishi Detox, Shiitake Mate, Shiitake Turmeric

- Pukka Organic Tea: Turmeric Gold, Matcha Green, Supreme Matcha, Three Ginger
- Traditional Organic Herbal Tea: Mountain, Moringa
- Yogi Organic Tea: Green
- Blackberry Moringa, Mango
- Teccino Dandelion Tea: Turmeric, Caramel, Mocha, Red Chai
- Artisan Tropic: Plantain Strips

- Lundberg: Ground Red Rice & Quinoa Tortilla Chips, French Onion, Pink Himalayan Salt, White Cheddar, Ancho Chia
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- Zema's: Black Bean Brownie Mix, Sweet Potato Pancake/Waffle Mix

- Kuli Moringa Bars: Black Cherry, Crunchy Almond, Dark Chocolate
- Emperor's Kitchen Organic Garlic: Chopped, Puree (In both original and Ginger)
- RX Protein Bars: Maple Sea Salt, Mint Chocolate, Pumpkin Spice
- Schaar: Gluten Free 10 Grain Artisan Bread, Ladyfingers, Pizza Crust

Preserving and Storing Food - Part 2

By Linda Townsend

I am still learning about preserving and storing food, because so much that my grandmother knew was not taught to me. In her childhood, the “ice box” actually meant a block of ice in a wooden box! My grandfather delivered such blocks of ice as his first job as a teenager. Most meals had to be made from scratch and families went to neighborhood stores and farms nearly every day for fresh food items.

Today we have so many conveniences and ways to preserve food. Each of them have their pros and cons. One of the easiest and most convenient is refrigeration. We are very fortunate in the United States to have reliable power sources so that our refrigerators work 24/7 and it works great for keeping foods fresher for short terms. However, refrigeration is rarely for long term storage, unless the food has been preserved by salting, fermentation, or pickling, as well, or foods just do not spoil easily, like breads.

Fermented foods are quite nutritious. Some types of fermented foods may not need to be refrigerated or even should not be, but many need a dark place, like my grandmother’s fruit cellar. Since we have such modern conveniences, the art of fermentation is not something most people find necessary to learn. I have to admit that my own experiences with fermentation have been limited to sourdough bread and homemade yogurt, but I find the process of friendly bacteria or yeast fermentation with their own contributions of nutrients fascinating.

I have found that most foods that are vacuum-sealed last far longer in the refrigerator, whether in bags or special containers designed for that purpose. I have had tender spring lettuce mixes stay fresh and crisp for over two to three weeks in a vacuum container and cheese seems to last indefinitely, as long as it is vacuum packed after every use. Generally, vacuum sealing adds days to weeks and, in the case of cheeses, possibly months.

Freezing is another way of preserving and storing some foods for longer periods than refrigeration. Generally what will only last a week or two in a refrigerator can last four to eight times as long in the freezer. However, that also depends on how the food is prepared, as in raw meats tend to last for less time than cooked. How well packaged or sealed the food is makes a difference, also. Again, I have found that vacuum-sealing adds months. The downside is that some foods should never be frozen as the

process breaks down the consistency of the food (mayonnaise and yogurt are among those) and vacuum-sealed bags can be damaged when re-positioning them in the freezer, thus losing the seal. Many dairy products can be frozen like butter and cheese, but cheese can be more crumbly afterward. Even eggs can be frozen, but not in the egg shell. Personally, I do not bother to freeze eggs.

As convenient as refrigerators and freezers are, they require electricity and, if we have learned anything recently from the storms that have hit our country, your home may have little damage from a storm, but still be without power for a long time. Unless you have fuel in reserve and a generator, you could be without a working refrigerator and freezer for longer than the food will stay cold.

For canned and pre-packaged foods that do not require refrigeration, I have a nice size pantry for storage. Several months ago though I found that a rodent coming in from outside thought all those packaged foods were rather convenient too. We then added five gallon buckets with lids for grains and bulk items and a metal locker with shelves for the packages that can be eaten through...and gave my cats notice about how they were not doing their job. Preserving and storing food is not just about keeping food fresh, but also protected from pests, including bugs. I freeze all my flour until I open it and then it goes into a sealed container for that reason.

Many foods can be preserved by canning, but as much as my grandmother must have liked it, it is not my favorite way to preserve food, mostly because it has to be heated to boiling, which kills off enzymes and reduces the available vitamins. That is not to say I am against all canned foods, but that the canned foods I have are foods I plan to heat in preparation of a meal anyway.



Dehydrating is another way to preserve some foods. This is a great method to preserve jerky and fruits. Vegetables also can be dehydrated, but most need to be blanched first, which is not difficult to do, but another step. Although I love dehydrated fruits as a snack or to add to granola, dehydrating also requires warming, but afterward they do not need refrigeration. The dehydrated foods are still somewhat moist or sticky and some probably should be well sealed to keep better and protect them from pests.

Similar to dehydrated foods, freeze dried foods are even better for longer term storage (think years) without the need of refrigeration because all the moisture is removed and then they are sealed

with low levels of oxygen or vacuum sealed. Until recent years, freeze dried foods could only be purchased prepared, as it was not something people could do at home. When small freeze drier units became available for home use, they were very expensive, but the prices have been coming down to almost half, so I have included this as a home method. In freeze drying, the food is frozen then warmed while being vacuumed so that the ice sublimates, which means it goes from ice to gas without becoming liquid. This entire process takes hours depending on the moisture content of the food. The benefit is that far more nutrients are preserved and all that must be done is to add water to rehydrate the food, although some eat the crunchy fruit and vegetables as a snack without rehydrating. Freeze drying is particularly good for raw meats, fruits, and vegetables. Afterward the food is sealed in mylar bags with oxygen absorbers or vacuum sealed. The bags can then be placed in a pantry or in bucket containers with lids to keep protected from pests. Foods that do not freeze dry well are those with high fat content, such as butter. Freeze dried cheese, which tends to powder, can be heated in cooking, but does not rehydrate with water like other foods. Freeze dried meats, however, dehydrate and rehydrate beautifully and keep for years without refrigeration or freezing. The downside of freeze dried foods is that water is required to rehydrate and in some cases there can be a severe shortage of water also.

As you can see, we have a greater number of choices in how to preserve food than people did just a hundred years ago. Some are ancient arts and some are modern technology. Each has its good points and its limitations and its costs. My hope is that we all have food and water stores in preparedness for any unexpected needs. When I began writing the first part of this article, there were no storms threatening our country, but we have seen what such tragedies can do. We can never be *fully* prepared, but we can be *better* prepared to have food on hand for our loved ones when there is the need.

Linda Townsend has been a member of the Life Grocery Co-op for 20 years and is a freelance writer of health-related issues. She can be contacted at 4biohealth@gmail.com.

 <p>Coconut Bliss All Flavors pint \$4.99</p>	<p>PRIMAL kitchen</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mayo with Avocado Oil 12 oz \$7.69 • Vinaigrette 8 oz \$4.69 • Avocado Oil 16.9 oz \$9.99 • Extra Virgin Avocado Oil 8.5 oz \$9.99 	 <p>Bone Broth</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Beef • Chicken • Chicken and Mushroom <p>16.2 oz \$6.49</p>
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