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Does D-Mannose Really Cure UTIs?

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Capsule production process in a factory. *Photographer: Victor Plop / 500px/500px*

By Kristen V Brown
September 10, 2023 at 3:00 AM PDT

Hi folks, it's Kristen in the Big Apple. This week, a reader asks about rumors that a supplement can fight UTIs. But before we talk about that…

Today's must-reads

- An abortion-pill maker asked the US Supreme Court to uphold broad access to its drugs.
- Flu shots reduced people's risk of being hospitalized by about half.
- An Ozempic alternative will soon reach patients in the UK.

Can a supplement cure my UTIs?
There's all this buzz D-mannose can not only prevent UTIs but cure them. Can it really help? – Kelly, Los Angeles, California

In the simplest terms, D-mannose is a kind of sugar. It's found in fruits, including cranberries and tomatoes, and also occurs naturally in the human body. It's widely available as a supplement, and used to treat a variety of things, including a rare genetic disorder called carbohydrate deficient glycoprotein syndrome type 1b.

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In recent years, D-mannose (sometimes just called mannose) has also become an increasingly popular way to treat and prevent urinary tract infections. It's partly caught on because UTIs are so common, especially in women, and can becoming a recurring issue for some people. As a result, doctors are writing lots of prescriptions for antibiotics. And while the drugs are usually helpful, there's some concern that over time the bacteria causing UTIs develop resistance.

Some studies have indeed suggested D-mannose could be a useful tool in reducing our reliance on antibiotics. It may help keep E.coli – the bacteria responsible for the majority of UTIs – from sticking to cells in the urinary tract, therefore preventing infection.

In one study, people who received the supplement had a significantly lower risk of recurring UTIs than those who didn't receive it. Another review study concluded it seemed to have a protective effect. But yet another couldn't determine whether it really offered any benefit.

The existing body of evidence is comprised of studies that vary in quality, says Florian Wagenlehner, a urologist at the University of Giessen in Germany who has conducted research on the topic.

So far there's more data to suggest D-mannose can help prevent UTIs than cure them, Wagenlehner says. To truly understand its impact on these bedeviling infections, more research is needed.

In good news, Wagenlehner says there's not a lot of harm in trying it out. "Safety is not an issue," he says. The biggest risk is wasting money on a supplement that doesn't help.

So for now, if you suspect you have a UTI, don't rely on over-the-counter supplements. Go see your doctor. – *Kristen V. Brown*

The Sunday read
Some call it the "Area 51 of the East Coast." To others, it's rumored the origin point of Lyme disease. Or home to the Montauk monster.

For decades, Plum Island has been a subject of fascination: Scientists there study some of the most infectious pathogens known to man. Over its nearly 70-year history, these scientists have been at the forefront of protecting America's livestock industry, as well as the population at large.

Now, Plum Island is shutting down, to be replaced by a gleaming new facility smack dab in the middle of the US. It's the end of an era for biosecurity, Bloomberg's *Madison Muller* reports.

What we're reading

The unknown costs of addiction, from Longreads.

Selling supplements alongside misinformation, from STAT.

There are no drugs to treat the deadliest eating disorder, reports the Atlantic.

Ask Prognosis

Ask us anything – well, anything health-related that is! Each week we're picking a reader question and putting it to our network of experts. So get in touch via AskPrognosis@bloomberg.net.

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by Madison Muller

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Markets

Wall Street Fears a Too-Hot Economy as Recession Bets Plunge

- Asset prices are diverging from positive data in rare split

- S&P 500 sees 22% likelihood of contraction vs. 98% in October

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Feeney Expects a Fed Pause in September

By Denitsa Tsekova and Anchalee Worrachate
September 9, 2023 at 10:00 AM PDT

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As the odds of a recession collapse on Wall Street, markets are back to being vulnerable to any sign that the US economy is running too hot.

From high-yield credit to equities, the odds of an economic downturn priced into financial assets have fallen to the lowest since April 2022, according to JPMorgan Chase & Co. It's a big reversal from the doom and gloom of the past year, when a recession was effectively seen as a done deal.

That means markets are increasingly at the mercy of economic news that signals another bout of rampant inflation, spelling trouble for interest rate-sensitive strategies. For many investors, positive economic data – and its potential to spur more policy tightening – is the headwind they're fighting.

"I worry that current good economic data are likely to keep inflationary pressures bubbling under the surface," said Marija Veitmane, a senior multi-asset strategist at State Street Global Markets. "That would keep the Fed and other central banks from cutting rates, which would eventually break the economy."

Solid jobless claims figures on Thursday and service-sector activity topping all forecasts on Wednesday, for example, reinforced the case for the Federal Reserve to keep rates elevated, fueling a drop in equities.

Even investors in government bonds – one of the few markets where recession bets have run wild – are less glum these days, thanks to a string of stronger-than-expected data.

The dreaded inversion of the Treasury yield curve, a traditional economic warning sign, is easing at long last. And traders over the past two months have been paring their bets on how much the Fed will be forced to cut interest rates next year to fight a recession.

One way of thinking about just how sensitive the market is to fresh economic data: the link between the S&P 500 and Citigroup Inc.'s widely followed surprise index for the US economy.

That 40-day correlation has tumbled to the most negative on record, meaning that when big-picture readings from employment to manufacturing come hotter than economists expect, stocks fall. Conversely a downside surprise triggers a rally.

The relationship between Treasuries and data has also turned more negative, with economic strength suggesting weaker bond prices.

“We’re in the ‘bad news is good news’ part of the cycle and the reason is because the market is quite concerned about the Fed raising interest rates again,” Yung-Yu Ma, chief investment strategist at BMO Wealth, wrote in a note.

A sudden flurry of bad economic news clearly has the potential to cause global volatility. But for now, good news may be the bigger risk, bringing with it inflation and higher policy rates that would hurt corporate earnings, crimp business investment and threaten consumers with high debt loads.

> **What Bloomberg’s Strategists Say...**
> “And so we are left in a sort of economic and market purgatory, with the curve saying everything is going to hell but risky assets holding out hope of a nirvana-like soft-landing.”
>
> – Cameron Crise, macro strategist
>
> Click here for full report

For their part, Fed policymakers are doing their best to quash bets on a pivot to easier policy – and keep markets alive to the potential for rate hikes.

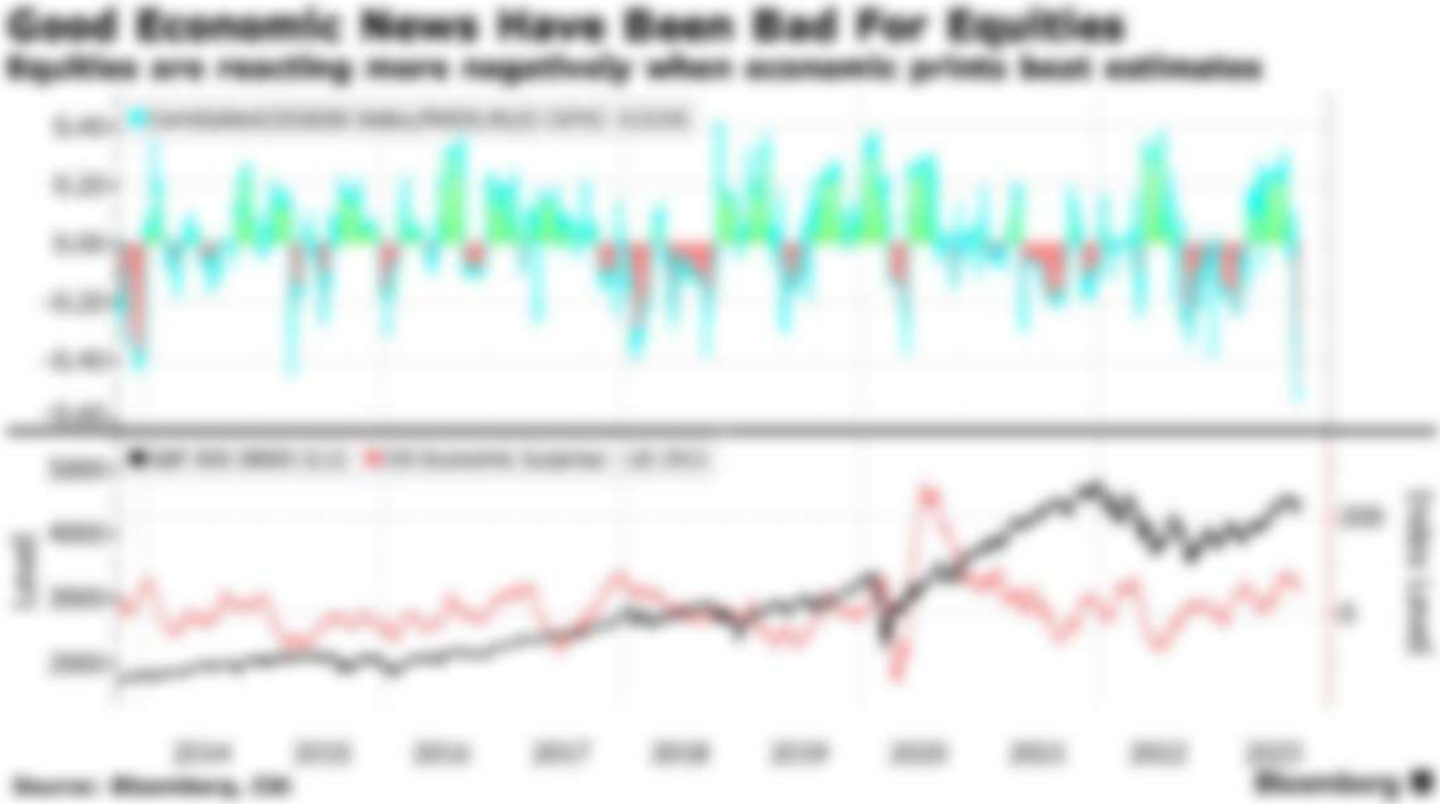
Traders have already pared the degree of Fed easing they see next year to about 100 basis points, down from well over 150 basis points early in 2023. The Fed is widely expected to hold rates at the range of 5.25% to 5.5% at its next meeting on Sept. 20.

With the US economy humming along at a clip of 2%, even Fed staff have written out a recession from their forecasts for this year. One widely-followed, unofficial tracker from Atlanta Fed has the US economy expanding 5.6% on an annualized basis in the third quarter.

“I think markets are going to be skeptical of recessions until they see the whites of its eyes,” said James Rossiter, head of global macro strategy at TD Securities. He now expects a US economic contraction early next year, after being caught out this year. “Too many times this last year or so, people like me have cried wolf on recession forecasts, only to see the world turn out better than feared.”

Like him, investors across assets are rethinking bets on a downturn. Equity, credit and rate markets together are assigning 16% probability to a US recession over the next six to 12 months, down from more than 50% in October, a JPMorgan trading model reveals.

The S&P 500 is assigning just 22% odds to recession, down from 98% in October while the market for junk bonds sees a 9% chance. The bank calculates the metrics by comparing the pre-recession peaks of various classes and their troughs during the economic contraction.



Some worry that the reversal has gone too far, with a hot economy driving consumer price pressures too high for Fed comfort. A soft landing, where rate hikes slow inflation and the economy without crashing it, has eluded policy makers for most of the past half century.

“Goldilocks is more likely a way station on the way to a better or a worse growth backdrop,” said Dan Suzuki, deputy chief investment officer at Richard Bernstein Advisors. “In a stronger growth environment, greater inflationary pressure should be a given, and the market will have to contend with more rate hikes.”

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Wealth

Ex-Google CEO Eric Schmidt Scraps $67.6 Million Purchase of Abandoned Superyacht

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The superyacht Alfa Nero *Photographer: Bing Guan/Bloomberg*

By Jim Wyss and Devon Pendleton
September 8, 2023 at 2:01 PM PDT
Updated on September 9, 2023 at 9:08 AM PDT

Listen 1:59

Former Google CEO Eric Schmidt has backed out of purchasing a superyacht that's been abandoned in Antigua for over a year, after the sale became mired in lawsuits.

Schmidt withdrew his $67.6 million winning bid for the Alfa Nero several days ago, said Ronald Sanders, Antigua and Barbuda's ambassador to the US. In June, Schmidt won an auction for the luxury vessel, but the deal was later challenged in court by the daughter of Russian fertilizer billionaire Andrey Guryev.

Eric Schmidt *Photographer: Eva Marie Uzcategui/Bloomberg*

"Schmidt, because of the legal wrangling, determined that we could not give him clear title of the ship," Sanders said in a Friday interview. "That's not accurate, because the ship belongs to us, it is owned by the government."

People close to Schmidt who asked not to be identified discussing the sale said any property subject to litigation isn't free and clear.

The 267-foot Alfa Nero, complete with a baby grand piano and a swimming pool that turns into a helipad, was abandoned in Antigua's Falmouth Harbour in March 2022, after the US Treasury sanctioned Guryev. While he denied he owned the superyacht, his daughter, Yulia Gurieva-Motlokhov, later stepped forward to claim it.

Read More: Superyacht Costs $112,000 a Month While Crew Play 'Call of Duty'

After the US lifted sanctions on the vessel, Antigua's government auctioned it off despite Gurieva-Motlokhov's attempts to block the sale. Since then, her lawyers have appealed to courts in Antigua hoping to void the transaction.

Sanders said Warren E. Halle, a developer from Maryland, was the runner-up on the Alfa Nero auction. Halle didn't respond to multiple requests for comment.

Schmidt, who served as Google's chief executive for about a decade, has an estimated net worth of $27 billion, according to the Bloomberg Billionaires Index. He's collected about $4 billion from the sale of Alphabet stock over the years, which has helped fund his investments in AI startups.

Read More: Eric Schmidt's $27 Billion Fortune Powers AI Influence Machine
– With assistance by Anna Edgerton and Anna Jean Kaiser

(Updates with description from people close to Schmidt in fourth paragraph.)

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