

## Metformin: First pill that purportedly treats age-related illnesses in review for approval for trials

In recent decades, we've come leaps and bounds in treating and preventing some of the world's [leading age-related diseases](#), such as coronary heart disease, dementia and Alzheimer's disease.

But some research takes an entirely unique view on the role of science in easing the burden of aging, focusing instead on trying to prevent it, or drastically slow it down. This may seem like an idea reserved mainly for cranks and science fiction writers, but it's not.

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The drug metformin, usually prescribed to manage type 2 diabetes, has also been touted as a way to delay the onset of a range of [age-related diseases](#), thus increasing "health-span" (how long we remain healthy).

Nir Barzilai, director of the Institute for Aging Research at Yeshiva University's Albert Einstein College of Medicine, is seeking approval from the US Food and Drug Administration for the [first clinical trial](#) of [metformin](#) to "treat" aging.

But other researchers are [concerned](#), as metformin intake has been associated with a higher risk of [B vitamin](#) deficiencies. [Some studies](#) suggest this can result in [cognitive dysfunction](#).

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Would a "cure" for aging be abused by the wealthy? Would knowing we had longer to live decrease our motivation in life?

Perhaps it's a good thing we won't be diving into the fountain of youth any time soon—if ever.

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