

# NATURE'S BIN

*Naturally*

## Natural Insights for Well Being®

May 2012

### Keys to Healthy Aging

Nutrients reduce cellular inflammation, improve blood sugar balance

#### CoQ10 & diet lowers inflammation

Doctors know that inflammation contributes to ill health and aging, and believe it begins within the manufacturing and transport centers of overworked cells. In this study, 20 healthy older adults ate a Western diet high in saturated fats, a Mediterranean diet high in unsaturated fats, or a Mediterranean diet plus 200 mg of coenzyme Q10 (CoQ10) per day. After four weeks, everyone fasted for 12 hours and then ate a breakfast typical of their study diet. Several hours later, doctors drew blood and found signs of inflammation and oxidative stress within cell manufacturing and transport centers were lower in the Mediterranean diet compared to the Western diet, and lowest of all in the Mediterranean diet plus CoQ10.

#### Resveratrol lowered blood sugar spikes, increased insulin sensitivity, after meal

Resveratrol may improve how the body handles blood sugar and uses insulin, but there are few human studies, doctors said. In this pilot study, 10 participants, average age 72, with higher-than-normal blood sugar levels—making them pre-diabetic—took 1, 1.5,



or 2 grams of resveratrol per day.

After four weeks, participants ate a meal with a standard mix of proteins, fats, and carbohydrates. Two hours later, doctors measured blood sugar levels and insulin sensitivity. Compared to the start of the study, in all three resveratrol groups, peak blood sugar levels after a meal were 10 percent lower, and insulin sensitivity—the capacity of the body to use insulin to metabolize sugar—improved.

Doctors said avoiding large spikes in blood sugar after a meal lowers stress on cells and organs—the primary cause of diabetic complications—and that resveratrol, along with diet, exercise and/or medication may help diabetics manage the condition better.

REFERENCE: THE JOURNALS OF GERONTOLOGY; 2012, VOL. 67, No. 1, 3-10

MAY'S

### Healthy Insight Berries Lower Blood Pressure

In this large blood pressure study, doctors followed 156,957 healthy men and women for 14 years. Overall, those who ate the most blueberries, cranberries, and strawberries were 8 percent less likely to develop high blood pressure compared to those who ate the least. The benefit increased to 12 percent for those over age 60. Researchers said the berries contain certain antioxidant flavonoids, called anthocyanins, which give the fruits their rich red and blue coloring and blood-pressure-lowering benefits. Because these fruits are common, everyone can easily add them to their diet.

REFERENCE: AMERICAN JOURNAL OF CLINICAL NUTRITION; 2011, VOL. 93, 338-47

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# Healthy Weight

## Nutrients help people lose weight safely

### Omega-3 may improve insulin sensitivity

Doctors said the chances of heart disease increase in those who are overweight and that omega-3 fish oils are anti-inflammatory and help protect



against heart disease. In this study, researchers tested a theory that omega-3s would raise levels of adiponectin, a hormone released by fat cells that promotes insulin sensitivity—the ability of the body to use insulin to efficiently metabolize sugar.

In the study, 50 overweight but otherwise healthy people took 1,100 mg of omega-3 fish oil per day, or an olive oil placebo. After six weeks, while there was no change for the placebo group, the omega-3 group saw a small but significant increase in adiponectin levels. Researchers said the positive results from this short-term, low-dose trial suggest longer term studies to test for the anti-inflammatory effects of omega-3 fish oils and to find the best dose.

### Green mate plus diet and exercise

In this weight loss study, 60 overweight but otherwise healthy women, aged 20 to 39, took 1,000 mg of green mate extract three times per day, or a placebo. During the six-week trial, the women got exercise counseling, instruction on how to maintain a balanced, 1,500 calorie daily diet, and recorded their daily exercise and food.

After six weeks, the placebo group had gained an average of 7 ounces of fat mass, and their percentage of body fat increased. The green mate group had lost more than a pound of fat mass and their percentage of body fat declined.

**REFERENCE:** NUTRITION RESEARCH; 2012, VOL. 32, No. 1, 15-23

# Better Memory

## Nutrients improve memory in older adults

### Omega-3s after recovering from depression

Doctors said there is a link between low levels of omega-3 fatty acids, cognitive impairment, dementia, and depression. In this study, researchers measured omega-3 levels in 132 people, average age 68, who had recovered from major depression.

Those who had higher levels of total omega-3s and eicosapentaenoic acid (EPA)—as well as lower levels of the omega-6 arachidonic acid compared to EPA—had better cognitive scores than those with lower omega-3 levels and higher omega-6 levels.

In participants with recurring depression, those with higher total omega-3 levels scored better on memory tests of immediate recall than those with lower omega-3 levels. Commenting on

the findings, doctors said omega-3 may play a direct role in immediate recall memory.

### Folic acid and vitamin B12

Memory declines with age, and low levels of folic acid and vitamin B12 can accelerate this process, raising the chances for dementia. Doctors said there is a link between late-life stress and poor memory, and wanted to see if taking folic acid and vitamin B12 over the long term could prevent cognitive decline.

In this study, 900 independently living adults aged 60 to 74, with psychological distress, took 400 mcg of folic acid plus 100 mcg of vitamin B12 per day, or a placebo. After two years, compared to placebo, those who had taken folic acid and vitamin B12 had better memory test scores for immediate

recall and delayed recall.

**REFERENCE:** AMERICAN JOURNAL OF CLINICAL NUTRITION; 2012, VOL. 95, No. 1, 194-203



# Lifelong Strong Bones

## Nutrients improved bone mineral density in postmenopausal women

### Genistein, calcium, vitamins D3 and K1

Many postmenopausal women want a non-pharmaceutical alternative to hormone replacement therapy to protect against osteoporosis, and researchers said that soy isoflavones, especially genistein, showed promise in earlier studies.

In this study, 70 postmenopausal women took 30 mg of genistein, 800 IU of vitamin D3, 150 mcg of vitamin K1, and 667 mg of eicosapentaenoic acid plus 333 mg of docosahexaenoic acid (EPA, DHA), per day, or a calcium placebo.

After six months, while the placebo group had a large decrease, those in the genistein group had maintained bone mineral density at the femoral neck, one of the narrowest and most

vulnerable areas at the top of the thigh bone, or femur. Scientists also saw an increase in signs of bone formation and re-mineralization in the genistein group, both compared to placebo and to the start of the study.

### Vitamins K2 and D3 with calcium

In this study, 78 women over age 60 took 15 mg of vitamin K2 three times per day, 400 IU of vitamin D3 per day, and 315 mg of calcium twice per day; or the vitamin D and calcium without the vitamin K. After six months, women who took vitamins K, D and calcium had significantly better bone mineral density in the lumbar spine compared to women who took vitamin D and calcium without vitamin K.

Researchers also found the quality and quantity of osteocalcin—a protein that helps regulate bone mineralization—improved and increased only in the vitamin K group.

REFERENCE: EUROPEAN JOURNAL OF CLINICAL NUTRITION; FEBRUARY, 2012, ELECTRONIC PREPUBLICATION



MAY'S

## Ahead of the Curve

### Chestnut, Luteolin, Cocoa Flavonoids & Cancer

Good results in the lab can lead to larger human trials. Here are some of the most promising recent findings.

#### Chestnut extract slows stomach cancer

Many cultures have used chestnuts to promote digestion and strengthen the stomach, and the starch in chestnuts is an easily digested, high quality sugar that contains enzymes that promote healthy gastric function. In this lab study, scientists found powerful free-radical scavenging activity in several forms of chestnut extract. Researchers exposed gastric cancer cells to the chestnut extracts, which slowed cancer cell reproduction and increased cancer cell death.

#### Luteolin and colon cancer

Luteolin is a powerful antioxidant flavonoid in fruits and vegetables such as artichoke leaf, celery, hot peppers, navel oranges, parsley, and spinach. In the lab, scientists exposed colon cancer cells to luteolin. Within two hours, luteolin had blocked the tumor-cell receptors for an inflammatory growth factor, halting cancer cell growth and inhibiting the cell-signaling pathways that cause the cancer to spread. Luteolin also increased cancer cell death by suppressing the normal cell division cycle.

#### Cocoa flavonoids and colon cancer

Researchers believe that flavonoids in cocoa keep tumors from forming by blocking cell-signaling pathways that promote cancer cell growth. In a lab, rats ate a diet with or without cocoa. Scientists introduced pre-cancerous molecules into colon tissue and found those on the cocoa-rich diet had far fewer tissue abnormalities, stronger antioxidant defenses, and a decrease in signs of oxidative stress.

REFERENCE: BIOMED CENTRAL; 2012, VOL. 12, No. 9, ELECTRONIC PREPUBLICATION



18120 Sloane Avenue  
Lakewood, OH 44107  
Phone: (216) 521-4600  
Website: [www.naturesbin.com](http://www.naturesbin.com)

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## Wheat-Free Berry Cobbler

What's more heavenly than fresh berry cobbler? Enjoy this scrumptious dish while you read—on page 1—about new research finding those who ate the most berries were less likely to have high blood pressure.

**Ingredients:**

1 tsp +  $\frac{1}{3}$  c organic shortening  
1 c gluten-free baking/pancake mix  
2 c fresh blueberries  
2 c fresh strawberries, sliced  
 $\frac{3}{4}$  c organic light brown sugar, packed  
1 tsp cinnamon  
Topping: yogurt or non-dairy frozen dessert



**Directions:** Preheat oven to 350 degrees F. Coat an 8 x 8-inch baking dish with one teaspoon shortening. Sprinkle a pinch of baking/pancake mix onto the berries and toss to coat. Place berries onto bottom of baking dish. Combine baking/pancake mix with brown sugar and cinnamon. Add shortening by hand, rubbing mixture between your fingers to form coarse crumbs. Place the crumbs over the berry mix. Bake about 30 minutes. Serve warm, topped with yogurt or non-dairy frozen dessert.

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