

NATURE'S BIN

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Natural Insights for Well Being®

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Strong Women

Nutrients and exercise enhance strength and muscle mass in older women

Amino acid supplement plus exercise

Muscle mass and strength decline with age in a condition called sarcopenia. In this study, 155 women with sarcopenia, aged at least 75, took an amino acid supplement with or without exercise, took exercise alone, or received health education alone. The amino acid supplement contained 1,260 mg leucine, 420 mg lysine, 315 mg each of valine, isoleucine, and threonine, 210 mg phenylalanine, and 165 mg of other amino acids, twice per day.

After three months, while the health-education group had not improved, all three other groups could walk faster compared to the start of the study. The two exercise groups—with and without the amino acid—had greater muscle mass. But only the amino acid-exercise group also increased knee-extension muscle strength.

Omega-3s and muscle strength

In this study, 45 women, aged 62 to 65, took a 90-day strength training program. One-third of the women took 2 grams of fish oil per day during training, one-third took fish oil starting 60 days before and during training, and one-third did not take fish oil. Exercises included knee and hip flexion and extension, leg presses, and foot flexion.



After the 90-day training, the women took muscle-strength and body-function tests including sitting on the floor with legs straight and reaching for toes; getting up from a chair and walking around a marker and sitting back down as quickly as possible; and a six-minute walking-distance test. All three groups improved in all tests, but only the two fish oil groups improved more than 5 percent in the chair-rising test. The length of time taking fish oil did not affect the results.

Discussing their findings, researchers said fish oil may work by improving the fluidity of cell membranes, or may help initiate and accelerate muscle contraction, enhancing communication between the nerves and muscles, and improving quality of life.

REFERENCE: JOURNAL OF THE AMERICAN GERIATRICS SOCIETY; 2012, VOL. 60, No. 1, 16-23

JUNE'S

Healthy Insight Citrus Reduces Stroke in Women

In this large study, doctors collected diet information from 69,622 women every four years to try to find a link between the antioxidant flavonoids in fruits and chances of stroke. Stroke occurs when blood supply to part of the brain is cut off or reduced due to a blood clot or hemorrhage.

After 14 years of follow-up, while there was no link to total flavonoids in the diet, women who consumed the most flavonones from citrus fruits were 19 percent less likely to have had a blockage stroke compared to women who got the least. Oranges, grapefruits, and their juices are highest in flavonones.

REFERENCE: STROKE; 2012, VOL. 43, No. 4, 946-51

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Healthy Hearts

In women, nutrients reduce chances of heart disease, help lose fat

Taurine lowers heart disease

Taurine is an amino acid common in body tissue that plays a central role in heart function. In this study, doctors measured taurine levels in 14,274 healthy women. After 20 years of follow-up, 223 participants developed coronary heart disease (CHD). Researchers compared these to 223 other similar participants who had not developed CHD and found that, among women with high cholesterol levels, those who also had higher levels of taurine were 60 percent less likely to develop or die from CHD compared to women with lower taurine levels.

In discussing their findings, doctors said the taurine they measured came from natural sources, particularly dark-meat poultry, and that if future studies confirm the findings, the government

may recommend those with high cholesterol eat more dark-meat poultry.

Vitamin D improved cholesterol, fat

Vitamin D deficiency contributes to heart disease, according to doctors. In this study, 77 healthy but overweight or obese premenopausal women, average age 38, kept a food diary and took 1,000 IU of vitamin D3 per day, or a placebo. After 12 weeks, although total cholesterol increased in the vitamin D group and declined for placebo, the quality of cholesterol improved with vitamin D: HDL, the “good” cholesterol, increased while declining for placebo. For LDL, the vitamin D group had more of the type that is larger and less likely to stick to artery walls and cause plaque compared to placebo. In

addition, while the placebo group lost an average of about one pound, the vitamin D group lost an average of nearly 6 pounds of fat mass after 12 weeks.

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



Women’s Quality of Life

Red clover has many postmenopausal benefits

Red clover is a perennial herb that contains phytoestrogen-rich isoflavones.

Improving hair, skin, and mood

In this study, 109 postmenopausal women, aged at least 40, took 80 mg of



red clover extract per day, a placebo—or the reverse—in two 90-day periods. The women rested without taking any supplement for seven days in between the two 90-day trials. At the end of each 90-day period, while there was no change for placebo, women in the red clover group believed that the quality of their scalp hair and skin had improved. In addition, the red clover group reported increased libido, better mood, less tiredness, and more restful sleep.

Fewer hot flashes, night sweats

For the same group of 109 women over the same study period, doctors measured three additional symptoms: hot flashes, night sweats, and overall menopausal symptoms before the study, at 90 days, after a seven-day pause at 97 days, and at 187 days. Before the study,

all participants had similar intensity of hot flashes, frequency of night sweats, and overall menopause symptoms. After taking the placebo, the three symptoms improved by an average of less than 10 percent each. After taking red clover, each of the three symptoms improved by an average of more than 25 percent.

In discussing their findings, doctors said that women and their physicians are questioning conventional hormone therapy because the benefits are uncertain, leading to more individualized treatment focusing on alternative therapies. Phytoestrogens, such as those in red clover, have estrogenic effects that are less potent than hormone therapy, but may prove to be a more beneficial alternative.

REFERENCE: GYNECOLOGICAL ENDOCRINOLOGY; 2012, VOL. 28, No. 3, 203-7

Seeing Clearly

Nutrients may slow vision loss and improve eyesight in adults

Omega-3s help slow vision loss

Retinitis pigmentosa (RP) is an inherited disease of the retina of the eye that first reduces peripheral, and then central, vision, and makes it difficult to see at night. While there is no cure, doctors often prescribe vitamin A, which the retina needs to survive. In this study, researchers measured omega-3s in the diets of 357 adults with RP who had been taking 15,000 IU of vitamin A palmitate per day for an average of five years, under the care of a physician.

Compared to those who consumed low levels of omega-3s, those who got an average of at least 200 mg of omega-3 fatty acids per day saw acuity for distance vision decline 40 percent more slowly annually, and central field-of-vision decline 50 percent more slowly.

Doctors explained that omega-3s help proteins in the eye transport vitamin A to the retina.



Zeaxanthin and lutein improve vision in AMD

Age-related macular degeneration (AMD) is the loss of sight in the central field of vision, the most common form of blindness. In this study, 60 people, average age 75, with mild to moderate AMD, took 8 mg of zeaxanthin per day, alone or with 9 mg of lutein, or lutein alone. After one year, those taking zeaxanthin could read 1.5 more lines on a standard eye chart and had lost all blind spots. Those who took lutein could better detect subtle contrasts and recover from glare faster. Doctors concluded that zeaxanthin improves high-contrast vision, and lutein improves low-contrast vision and glare recovery in AMD.

REFERENCE: ARCHIVES OF OPHTHALMOLOGY; FEBRUARY, 2012, ELECTRONIC PREPUBLICATION

Improving Cholesterol

Nutrients reduce cholesterol, improve insulin sensitivity

Supplement reduces cholesterol, improves insulin sensitivity

Doctors said that 3 in 10 people discontinue taking statin cholesterol drugs after six months due to side effects. In this study, 80 people with high cholesterol, aged at least 75, who refused to continue taking statins or other pharmaceutical treatments, took a nutritional supplement or a placebo. The supplement contained 500 mg goldenseal, 200 mg red yeast rice, 10 mg policosanol, 2 mg coenzyme Q10, 500 mcg astaxanthin, and 200 mcg folic acid per day.

After 12 months, the supplement group saw 20 percent lower total cholesterol levels, 31 percent lower LDL cholesterol, and 10 percent less insulin

resistance. Doctors said the supplement was safe and there were no side effects.

Garlic reduces total cholesterol and triglycerides

Because people are more interested in finding alternative treatments for managing lipids in the blood, doctors analyzed results from 26 garlic studies. Doses in the studies included 600 to 900 mg of garlic powder, 8 to 15 mg of garlic oil, or 1.8 to 7.2 mg of aged garlic extract per day.

Those who began the study with higher total cholesterol levels, and who continued taking garlic over a longer term saw the most benefit. Garlic powder and aged garlic extract were more effective in reducing total

cholesterol levels, while garlic oil best lowered triglyceride, or total lipid, levels. Overall, compared to placebo, garlic in all forms reduced total cholesterol by 5.4 percent and triglycerides by 6.5 percent. Doctors concluded that garlic therapy should benefit those who have higher chances of heart disease.

REFERENCE: JOURNAL OF THE SCIENCE OF FOOD AND AGRICULTURE; JANUARY, 2012, ELECTRONIC PREPUBLICATION





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Dreamy Citrus Salad

Invite your favorite friend to join you for this refreshing and scrumptious dish! And, please see page 1 for new research on how citrus flavonoids helped women avoid stroke.

Ingredients:

1/4 c olive oil	1 c feta or bleu cheese, crumbled
1/4 c vinegar of your choosing	1 c pistachios, salted or unsalted, shelled, chopped or whole
Pinch oregano or marjoram	Optional:
1 head romaine lettuce, chopped	6 strips turkey or soy bacon, chopped
2 grapefruits, peeled, chopped	Other fruits: mango, papaya, kiwi, pineapple, strawberries, grapes, or other seasonal fruits
3 oranges, peeled, chopped	
3 avocados, pitted, chopped	

Directions: In a measuring cup, combine olive oil, vinegar and oregano (or marjoram) and mix well. Set aside. In a large bowl, combine lettuce, grapefruit, oranges, avocados, and toss until well mixed. Crumble cheese and sprinkle pistachios on top, and toss lightly with dressing. Add optional protein. Dream!

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