

# NATURE'S BIN

Naturally

## Natural Insights for Well Being®

February 2014

### Curbing the Common Cold

Nutrients shorten duration, ease symptoms

#### Pycnogenol® shortens cold duration

Pycnogenol is a plant-based anti-inflammatory antioxidant. In the first part of this two-part study, 73 healthy volunteers took 50 mg of Pycnogenol, twice per day, or standard over-the-counter cold medication, at the first sign of a cold. Compared to OTC, colds were shorter by one day, and there were one-third fewer sick days in the Pycnogenol group.

In the second phase of the study, 196 people took standard OTC medication, or 100 mg of Pycnogenol with 200 mg of vitamin C or with 30 mg of zinc, or all three of these together, in two divided doses per day. After at least five days, compared to OTC, all three Pycnogenol groups had shorter colds. The best results came from the combination of all three nutrients, which saw 88 percent fewer cold complications, including lung infection, and averaged three less sick days.

#### Probiotics cut cold symptoms

Doctors said earlier studies found probiotics reduce the number, severity, and length of colds in the old, young, the healthy sedentary, and in highly trained athletes, but that no research exists on health-conscious, physically active men and women.

This study involved 465 healthy



adults who regularly engaged in a range of physical activities from daily walking to competitive amateur athletics. Participants took a daily dose of bifidobacterium lactis, with or without lactobacillus acidophilus, while a third group took a placebo. After 150 days from the fall through the spring, compared to placebo, those who took bifidobacterium lactis were 27 percent less likely to have developed an upper respiratory tract infection. Also, the placebo group caught cold sooner, with the probiotics group healthy about three weeks longer.

The group that took the combination of bifidobacterium lactis with lactobacillus acidophilus was able to be significantly more physically active than the placebo group.

REFERENCE: OTORINOLARINGOLOGIA; 2013, VOL. 63, NO. 3, 151-61

FEBRUARY'S

### Healthy Insight

#### Peanut Butter for Breast Health

To find whether eating vegetable proteins and fats in adolescence would affect benign breast disease (BBD), a condition that raises chances for breast cancer later in life, doctors measured the diets of 9,039 girls, aged nine to 15 at the start of this study, and followed up 10 years later to see who had been diagnosed with BBD.

Girls who ate peanut butter or nuts two times per week were 39 percent less likely to have developed BBD compared to girls who never ate them. Other foods that tended to lower chances for BBD included beans, lentils, soybeans, and corn.

REFERENCE: BREAST CANCER RESEARCH AND TREATMENT; 2013, VOL. 141, NO. 2, 299-306

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# Progress on Diabetes

## Nutrients lower blood sugar, reduce chances of condition

### Antioxidants low-cost way to lower blood sugar

Doctors said there is a link between insulin resistance—when the body doesn't metabolize sugar efficiently—and oxidative stress, and wanted to see if lowering oxidation might help normalize blood sugar. In this study, 104 vegetarians with type 2 diabetes and insulin resistance who were taking oral diabetic drugs for at least six months took 300 mg of alpha lipoic acid per day, 180 mg of EPA with 120 mg of DHA per day, 400 IU of vitamin E per day, or a placebo.

After 90 days, all of the antioxidant supplements lowered fasting and long-term average blood sugar levels more than placebo. Long-term blood glucose levels improved most with the omega-

3s, but vitamin E was the most cost effective solution.

### Vitamin K reduces chances for type 2 diabetes

Earlier research found vitamin K improved glucose metabolism and insulin resistance. In this study, doctors measured vitamin K levels in 2,994 older men and women with greater chances of cardiovascular problems, and followed 1,069 of them who were free from diabetes at the start of the study. After 5.5 years, compared to those who did not, those who developed type 2 diabetes had begun the study with significantly lower levels of vitamin K.

Those who increased vitamin K over the 5-year period were 51 percent

less likely to develop type 2 diabetes compared to those who had not increased vitamin K. For each 100 mcg increase in vitamin K per day, chances for diabetes declined 17 percent, doctors concluded.

REFERENCE: ANNALS OF MEDICAL & HEALTH SCIENCES RESEARCH; 2013, VOL. 3, NO. 3, 442-6



# Healthy Brains

## Two new studies show omega-3 benefits for developing and older brains

### Omega-3 in infants improves brain health later

Most studies on omega-3s in childhood test cognition at 18 months, but doctors said young brains take more time to develop. In this study, from birth to 12 months, 81 children took



a placebo or one of three doses of the omega-3 DHA per day. The doses were as a percent of total fatty acids in the diet; 0.32, 0.64, or 0.96 percent DHA; plus 0.64 percent arachidonic acid.

At 18 months, the omega-3 groups were no different than placebo, but from three to six years, the DHA groups were better able to learn rules, had higher intelligence scores, and larger vocabulary. Doctors saw the benefits mostly in the lower-dose groups, except cognitive performance scores on one of the standardized tests were best in the higher-dose DHA group.

Discussing their findings, doctors said that, while small, this study may contribute to more sophisticated theories about the benefits of omega-3s for developing brains.

### Omega-3s improve brain function

Doctors said there is a link between oxidized lipids and impaired cognitive function. In this study, researchers compared 67 people with mild cognitive impairment to 134 healthy people. Mild cognitive impairment occurs as memory, language, thinking, and judgment decline faster than in normal aging.

Those with mild cognitive impairment had significantly higher levels of oxidized lipids compared to healthy people. Doctors said DHA may stimulate antioxidant enzymes that help decrease oxidative stress and, in an important new finding, as DHA and EPA levels increased, oxidative stress levels declined.

REFERENCE: AMERICAN JOURNAL OF CLINICAL NUTRITION; 2013, VOL. 98, NO. 2, 403-12

# Inflammatory Factors

## Nutrients reduce chances for heart disease and chronic inflammation

### Calcium helps lower homocysteine

Doctors said there may be a link between the inflammatory factor homocysteine and bone and artery disease in postmenopausal women. Recent research also suggests low calcium levels may increase homocysteine.



To find out, researchers in this study compared calcium and homocysteine levels in 713 postmenopausal Japanese women, average age 65. Compared to women with lower calcium levels, women who got at least 536 mg of calcium per day had lower homocysteine levels. Doctors also found a possible connection: as the levels of calcium in the diet increased, levels of homocysteine declined.

Researchers suggest placebo-controlled trials to confirm their observations from this study.

### Folic acid may reduce cardiovascular problems

People with chronic kidney disease are more likely to have heart disease, and vice versa. In this review, doctors analyzed nine folic acid studies covering

8,234 people with kidney disease. Overall, the chances for developing cardiovascular disease was 10 percent lower in those who added folic acid to their diets compared to those who did not add folic acid.

Doctors found certain people benefited most from taking folic acid including smokers, those with end-stage kidney disease, those with chronically higher levels of the inflammatory factor homocysteine, and people who did not eat grains fortified with folic acid. As of 1998, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration required all manufacturers of enriched breads, cereals, flours, corn meals, pastas, rice, and other grain products to fortify them with folic acid.

**REFERENCE:** CLINICAL NUTRITION; 2013, VOL. 32, NO. 5, 722-7

## Ahead of the Curve

### Early-Stage Discoveries: Grape, Blueberry, Ginger, and a Healthy Diet

We report some of the most promising findings from lab studies and the latest innovative theories.

#### Grape and blueberry for immunity

Linus Pauling Institute researchers studying 446 compounds found two in particular, resveratrol from grapes and pterostilbene from blueberries, which may boost the immune system. In plants, these compounds fight fungal pathogens and in the lab, when combined with vitamin D, significantly increased anti-microbial and anti-inflammatory immune activity in human cell cultures.

#### Ginger improves weight and lipid profile

Researchers followed overweight

rats on a high-fat diet with or without orlistat (Alli®) or ginger powder. After four weeks, compared to no treatment, both orlistat and ginger groups had lost weight, had lower total lipids, cholesterol, triglycerides and levels of LDL, the “bad” cholesterol. Also, orlistat decreased—while ginger increased—HDL, the good cholesterol.

#### Healthier diet means better aging

People who ate more whole grains, more vegetables than fruits, healthy fats, lean proteins, with less focus on calcium/dairy tended to have “ideal aging,” compared to those who ate a

more Western-style diet, with more bad fats, sweets, fried, refined, and highly processed foods. To determine ideal aging, researchers looked for a link between diet in midlife and future aging and overall disease. Those who most closely followed a healthier diet were far less likely to die from heart or other diseases, were in better physical and mental shape, and were twice as likely to age healthfully.

**REFERENCE:** MOLECULAR NUTRITION & FOOD RESEARCH; SEPTEMBER, 2013, PUBLISHED ONLINE





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## Peanut Butter Cocoa Bubbles

**Want a nutritious sweet you can make without cooking? Try this quick recipe, and please see page 1 for a new study of adolescent girls who ate peanut butter and reduced chances for benign breast disease.**

**Ingredients:**

1 c raw rolled oats  
1 c shredded unsweetened coconut  
 $\frac{1}{4}$  c cocoa powder, pre-sweetened  
 $\frac{3}{4}$  c natural peanut butter  
 $\frac{1}{4}$  c honey  
1 tsp vanilla extract  
 $\frac{1}{4}$  c mini chocolate chips  
Coconut oil as needed



**Directions:** Combine all of the ingredients in a medium bowl. The mixture may be very crumbly, so add coconut oil to help stick together. Scoop a palm-sized amount of mixture into your hand and pat and roll into ball-shaped treats. Store in refrigerator for up to a week, and eat anytime!

## Thanks for shopping with us!

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