

NATURE'S BIN

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Natural Insights for Well Being®

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Healthy Minds

Nutrients help maintain brain health in two new studies

Vitamin E – all forms are important

Doctors said each of the eight forms of vitamin E plays a unique role in human health. There are four tocopherols and four tocotrienols. Researchers measured vitamin E levels in 140 adults who were free from cognitive impairment at the start of this study.

After eight years of follow-up, doctors found, compared to those with lower levels, those with higher levels of all eight forms of vitamin E were less likely to develop cognitive impairment and had lower levels of two types of cell damage, oxidative and nitrosative—from oxygen and nitrogen—and were more likely to maintain cognitive health.

Discussing their findings, doctors said evaluating only alpha-tocopherol might not be the most accurate measure of vitamin E status in humans and recommended people maintain good levels of all forms of vitamin E.

Omega-3 and alpha-lipoic acid

Several earlier studies found eating more fish, which contains omega-3s with anti-inflammatory properties, may help delay cognitive decline. Those with Alzheimer's disease have abnormally high levels of oxidative stress, inflammation, and LDL cholesterol,



doctors said.

In this small pilot study, researchers measured cognition in 34 people with Alzheimer's disease before and after taking a placebo, or omega-3s with or without alpha-lipoic acid. The doses were 675 mg DHA, 975 mg EPA, and 600 mg alpha-lipoic acid per day.

After 12 months, while there were no changes in measures of oxidative stress in any of the groups, both the omega-3 and omega-3 plus alpha-lipoic acid groups had better scores in tests of math, memory, and orientation compared to placebo. Also, the omega-3 group tested better than placebo in carrying out activities of daily living, including chores such as housekeeping and shopping, which increased their chances of living independently longer.

REFERENCE: EXPERIMENTAL GERONTOLOGY; 2013, VOL. 48, NO. 12, 1428-35

MARCH'S

Healthy Insight Live Longer with Nuts

Nuts are rich in nutrients and healthy monounsaturated fats and prior studies have found various protective health benefits. In this largest study on nuts and lifespan, doctors followed 118,962 men and women over 15 years and found, compared to those who did not eat nuts at all, those who ate nuts less than once per week were 7 percent less likely to die from any cause.

Those who ate nuts more than seven times per week were 20 percent less likely to have died compared to non-nut eaters after 15 years of follow-up. As people ate more nuts, deaths from cancer, heart and respiratory diseases declined, and lifespan increased.

REFERENCE: NEW ENGLAND JOURNAL OF MEDICINE; NOVEMBER, 2013, PUBLISHED ONLINE

This Issue

NUTRIENTS HELP IMPROVE VISION IN AMD	2
VITAMIN D BENEFITS IN BOTH PNEUMONIA AND ASTHMA	2
NUTRIENTS REDUCE STRESS AND SYMPTOMS OF DEPRESSION	3
NUTRIENTS REDUCE CHANCES OF CANCER IN MEN, EXTEND LIFE IN WOMEN	3
ZING BARS	4

Protecting Vision

Nutrients help improve vision in AMD

What is AMD?

Age-related macular degeneration (AMD), which gradually reduces eyesight in the center of the field of vision, is the most common form of age-related blindness. Dry AMD, affecting 90 percent of those with AMD, is the most common type. In dry AMD, the layer of pigment cells that helps protect light-sensitive cells in the eye wears thin and breaks down.

Omega-3s improved vision

This was a small pilot study of omega-3s in those with dry AMD. Participants took 3,400 mg of EPA per day or 1,600 mg of DHA per day, with no placebo group. This was a six-month trial, but by the middle of the fourth month, all participants in both omega-3 groups had significant improvements in

visual acuity, seeing clearly at least one additional line in standard vision tests.

Doctors said these results are striking because there is no existing treatment for dry AMD and believe that the positive findings may be partly due to the higher dosage of omega-3s compared to prior AMD studies.

Lutein, zeaxanthin, and omega-3

The protective pigment in the macula of the eye contains lutein and zeaxanthin; carotenoids which must come from diet.

In this study, 145 people with dry AMD took a placebo or a combination of 10 mg lutein, 1 mg zeaxanthin, 100 mg DHA, 30 mg EPA, 60 mg vitamin C, 20 mg vitamin E, 10 mg zinc, and 0.25 mg copper, or double these dosages

per day.

After 12 months, macular pigment decreased in the placebo group but increased by 20 percent in the lower-dose supplement group, and by 28.4 percent in the higher-dose group.

REFERENCE: PHARMANUTRITION; OCTOBER, 2013, PUBLISHED ONLINE



Breathing Easy

New studies reveal vitamin D benefits in both pneumonia and asthma

Vitamin D reduces pneumonia

Recent studies have highlighted a link between low levels of vitamin D and pneumonia in older adults living independently. In this study, doctors measured vitamin D levels in 16,974 people, at least age 17, and compared



their histories of pneumonia. After adjusting for seasonal differences, body mass index scores, smoking, lung, heart and other chronic diseases, researchers found that those with vitamin D levels below 30 nanograms per milliliter of blood (ng/mL) were 56 percent more likely to develop pneumonia compared to those whose vitamin D levels were 30 ng/mL or more.

Doctors said that the optimal range may begin at 30 ng/mL rather than at 20 ng/mL for vitamin D.

More vitamin D, less asthma

Doctors said there are few studies of the effect of vitamin D on asthma severity in adults. In this trial, researchers separated 121 asthmatic adults into five groups based on levels of

circulating vitamin D.

Those whose vitamin D levels fell below 30 ng/mL were five times more likely to have severe asthma as were those whose vitamin D levels were 30 ng/mL or more. Researchers also found that, for every 1 ng/mL increase in circulating vitamin D, chances of being hospitalized or seeking emergency treatment for asthma declined by 10 percent.

Discussing their findings, doctors said vitamin D activates the immune anti-microbial response and helps reduce air-passageway inflammation and sensitivity to asthma triggers such as cold weather, dust, and smoke, easing symptoms and improving respiratory health.

REFERENCE: PUBLIC LIBRARY OF SCIENCE ONE; NOVEMBER, 2013, PUBLISHED ONLINE

Keep Calm and Carry On!

Nutrients reduce stress and symptoms of depression

Relora for stress

Two plant-based nutrients, from magnolia and philodendron bark, are traditional remedies for anxiety and stress. Doctors in this study measured cortisol, a hormone the body releases under stress, in 56 men and women with moderate levels of psychological stress. Participants took a placebo or 250 mg of Relora®, a magnolia-philodendron bark preparation, twice per day.

After four weeks, compared to placebo, cortisol levels in saliva were 18 percent lower in the Relora group. While the placebo group did not improve, the Relora group saw overall stress fall by 11 percent, and overall mood improve by 11 percent. Also compared to placebo, there were larger improvements in perceptions of tension,

depression, anger, fatigue, confusion, and vigor for those who took Relora for four weeks.

Vitamin D for depression and panic

There is some study evidence of a link between low levels of vitamin D and chances for depression and phobia



in middle-aged adults. In this study, doctors followed 5,966 participants from childhood to age 50. At age 45, researchers measured vitamin D levels while nurses surveyed mental health.

Compared to those whose vitamin D levels were less than 10 nanograms per milliliter of blood (ng/mL), those with vitamin D levels greater than 30 ng/mL were 43 percent less likely to develop depression and 67 percent less likely to have panic disorder.

Those who were more physically active, were not obese, did not smoke heavily, or who avoided watching TV or using a computer for more than three hours per day, were most likely to have the best mental health.

REFERENCE: JOURNAL OF THE INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY OF SPORTS NUTRITION; 2013, VOL. 10, No. 1, 37

Good News for Men and Women

Nutrients reduce chances of cancer recurring in men, extend life in women

Low fat diet plus fish oil in men

One of the key predictors of prostate cancer recurring is how quickly those cells replicate, a process known as cell cycle progression. In this study, men having their prostate removed ate a standard higher fat Western diet or a low fat diet with fish oil supplements. Doctors measured levels of a pro-inflammatory substance, leukotriene B4, they believe is linked to cell cycle progression; how fast cells replicate.

Compared to the Western diet, men who ate the low-fat, fish oil diet, had lower blood levels of leukotriene B4 and lower cancer cell replication scores. In a surprising discovery, doctors also found prostate cancer cells have a receptor for leukotriene B4 on their surface, which may lead to a breakthrough for

treatment in the future.

Calcium and vitamin D in women

Doctors recommend calcium and vitamin D for bone health, but the effect of calcium on heart health is unclear. In this study, researchers measured the diets of 9,033 men and women and followed up for 10 years.

While there was no effect in men, women who took calcium supplements were 22 percent less likely to have died than women who did not take calcium supplements. Compared to women who didn't take calcium, women who took calcium in doses up to 1,000 mg per day were 21 percent less likely to die prematurely. Compared to women who took neither calcium nor vitamin D, for

women who took calcium with vitamin D, the chances of dying prematurely were 23 percent lower.

REFERENCE: CANCER PREVENTION RESEARCH; OCTOBER, 2013, PUBLISHED ONLINE





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Zing Bars

Like nuts? You'll love this quick, easy recipe. And while you're enjoying munching, please see page 1 for a large new study on living longer with nuts.

Ingredients:

- 1 c peanuts (or your favorite nut or nut combination), raw or roasted
- 1 tbsp fresh ginger, grated or crystallized (if using dry, only 1/8 tsp)
- 2 tbsp hemp or sesame seeds
- 1 c raisins (or currants, dried cherries, dried cranberries, or prunes)
- 2 tbsp honey (or maple syrup or molasses)



Directions: Have fun with whatever ingredients you have on hand. Put everything except the honey into a food processor and grind until chunky, but not too fine. Add honey and pulse until blended. Press between sheets of wax paper to $\frac{3}{4}$ " thickness. Refrigerate at least one hour, remove wax paper, then cut into bite size squares. Enjoy!

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