

NATURE'S BIN

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May 2014

Easing Inflammation

Nutrients lower chronic inflammation and chances for heart problems

CoQ10 improved health factors

Coenzyme Q10 occurs naturally in the body and is a lipid-protecting antioxidant. In heart disease, many people take statin drugs to lower cholesterol levels, but statins reduce the body's production of CoQ10. Doctors said high oxidative stress levels and chronic inflammation contribute to heart disease.

In this study, 42 people with blockage in at least half of one major artery who were taking statins for at least one month took a placebo or 300 mg of CoQ10 per day. After 12 weeks, while there were no changes for placebo, levels of three of the most important antioxidant enzymes had increased significantly in the CoQ10 group, and two signs of inflammation had decreased.

Both groups had started the study with low CoQ10 levels, and in the CoQ10 group, levels increased by a factor of five times within four weeks. There were no side effects and doctors concluded that for those with heart disease, CoQ10 is safe and may be an effective treatment for decreasing inflammation and protecting lipids.

Curcumin lowers inflammation

In prior studies, curcumin reduced levels of the inflammatory



factor C-reactive protein, a strong and independent predictor of heart disease, but findings have been inconsistent. In this review, researchers combined results from six C-reactive protein studies covering 342 participants who took some form of curcumin or a placebo. Curcumin, from the culinary spice turmeric, is not easy for the body to absorb by itself, and some preparations add enzymes and other ingredients to aid absorption.

Overall, while the placebo groups did not improve, those who took curcumin saw C-reactive protein levels decline by an average of 6.44 mg per liter of blood. Doctors found the effect only in those studies where participants took a more absorbable preparation of curcumin for at least four weeks.

REFERENCE: NUTRITION JOURNAL; 2013, VOL. 12, NO. 142

MAY'S

Healthy Insight

Lose Weight with Mushrooms

Mushrooms are low in calories, fat, and sodium, and have no cholesterol. In this study, 64 women and nine men, average age 48 and all obese, replaced meat with one cup of mushrooms per day in a standard calorie-controlled diet. After one year, the mushroom group had lost an average of seven pounds, or 3.6 percent of body weight. Compared to a second group that ate the same diet with meat, the mushroom people got 123 fewer calories and 4.25 grams less fat per day. Body mass index scores also declined, waist circumference shrank by 2.6 inches, and total body fat was about one percent less.

REFERENCE: APPETITE; DECEMBER, 2013, VOL. 71, 379-87

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More Strength

Nutrients increase muscle strength, decrease pain and damage

Amino acids after intense exercise

Weekend warriors not used to strenuous exercise can damage muscles and become sore days or hours afterward. Several amino acids, the building blocks of protein, help maintain protein integrity in muscle. This study tested three “branched-chain” amino acids: valine, leucine, and isoleucine; plus another amino acid, taurine, which has anti-inflammatory and antioxidant properties.

Participants took a placebo, the branched-chain amino acids alone, taurine alone, or all four amino acids together, for two weeks before and three days after eccentric elbow flexor exercises. Doses were 3,200 mg branched-chain amino acids and 2,000 mg taurine, three times per day.

While there were no effects for placebo or for branched-chain amino acids alone or taurine alone, those who took branched-chain amino acids together with taurine had less muscle pain and lower levels of delayed muscle soreness and muscle damage.

Discussing their findings, researchers said taking the four amino acids together could help beginners stick to an exercise program and help competitive athletes train at higher levels.

Taurine boosts strength and recovery

In this study, 21 healthy-weight men, average age 21, took taurine or a placebo for two weeks before performing eccentric elbow flexor exercises. Doctors measured strength levels and signs of

muscle damage before, during, and after the supplement period.

Compared to placebo, those who took taurine had less muscle soreness and damage, and a greater increase in muscle strength.

REFERENCE: JOURNAL OF THE INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY OF SPORTS NUTRITION; OCTOBER, 2013, PUBLISHED ONLINE



Good News on Multiple Sclerosis

Nutrients may reduce symptoms and slow progress

What is multiple sclerosis?

In multiple sclerosis, the immune system mistakenly attacks the protective sheath surrounding nerve fibers in the central nervous system, distorting nerve impulses to and from the brain, causing a wide range of neurologic symptoms.

Early effects include decreased or double vision, tingling, numbness, fatigue, weakness, and balance problems, in intermittent episodes called relapsing-remitting multiple sclerosis, or

RRMS. Higher levels of oxidative stress may contribute to the disorder.

CoQ10 lowered oxidative stress

In this study, 45 people with RRMS took a placebo or 500 mg of CoQ10 per day. After 12 weeks, while there were no changes for placebo, researchers saw lower levels of oxidative stress and higher levels of antioxidant activity in the CoQ10 group.

Vitamin D may slow progression

Low vitamin D levels are common in multiple sclerosis, but doctors don't know how vitamin D may affect the progress of the disorder. In this study, researchers measured vitamin D levels

in 465 people with multiple sclerosis taking interferon beta-1b, a drug that suppresses symptom flare-ups.

Beginning with the first sign of symptoms, and continuing for five years, doctors tracked vitamin D levels, symptoms, and health factors. Compared to those with lower levels, people with adequate vitamin D had a 57 percent lower rate of new brain lesions, a 25 percent lower yearly increase in the size of lesions, and a 57 percent lower relapse rate.

Doctors said because vitamin D levels can safely and easily be increased, identifying and correcting vitamin D insufficiency should become part of standard care.

REFERENCE: INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF NEUROSCIENCE; 2013, VOL. 123, NO. 11, 776-82



Improving ADHD

Nutrients reduce symptoms, improve mood and behavior

Micronutrients reduce ADHD in adults

In this study, 80 adults with untreated attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) took a daily comprehensive combination of vitamins, minerals, amino acids, and antioxidants, or a placebo.



After eight weeks, compared to placebo, clinicians rated those taking the vitamin-mineral supplement as performing better at work, in social relationships, and in overall psychological function. Those in the vitamin-mineral group also reported better attention and less hyperactivity and impulsivity than those in the placebo group.

Measuring mood, participants who started the study with moderate to severe depression showed greater emotional improvement compared to placebo.

Omega-3s improve ADHD in kids

Doctors said measuring omega-3 concentrations in red blood cells is a better long-term indicator of omega-3 levels. In this study, 90 children with ADHD took omega-3s or a placebo in

three, four-month phases. One phase was 1,109 mg EPA plus 108 mg DHA; a second phase was 264 mg EPA plus 1,032 mg DHA; and a third phase was 1,467 mg of the omega-6 linoleic acid, per day, as placebo.

After one year, researchers found as levels of omega-3s in red blood cells increased, spelling, attention, cognitive problems, and hyperactivity symptoms all improved. Doctors also saw as levels of omega-6 decreased relative to omega-3s, ADHD symptoms eased.

This is the first study to directly compare the behavioral effects of increasing levels of EPA and DHA in red blood cells, doctors said, and that contrary to earlier studies, both are beneficial. Increasing omega-3s while decreasing omega-6s may also improve behavior, attention, and literacy in children with ADHD.

REFERENCE: BRITISH JOURNAL OF PSYCHIATRY; JANUARY, 2014, PUBLISHED ONLINE

Ahead of the Curve

Early-Stage Discoveries: Green Tea, Pea Protein, and Pomegranate

Here are some of the most promising recent findings from the lab and small pilot studies.

Green tea reduces sunburn

In this study, 14 healthy fair-skinned women took 540 mg of green tea catechins plus 50 mg of vitamin C per day for 12 weeks. Doctors exposed buttock skin to ultraviolet rays and measured sunburn. After taking green tea, inflammation from sun exposure was cut in half, and sunburn was also reduced. The dose of green tea catechins was less than two cups of green tea, making sun protection easily achievable.

Pea protein reduced cholesterol

In the lab, rats ate a high-fat diet alone or with combinations of pea

protein, oat fiber, and apple pectin. After 28 days, compared to the high-fat diet alone, all vegetable supplement groups had lower cholesterol levels. Those who got pea protein with oat fiber or with apple pectin had the best results compared to the high-fat diet alone, lowering cholesterol by 53 percent. There was also an increase in cholesterol-digesting enzyme activity in the liver.

Pomegranate protects blood vessels

Doctors gave pigs a normal diet or a high-cholesterol diet, each group with or without pomegranate extract containing 200 mg punicalagins per day. After

10 days, those on the high-cholesterol diet that got pomegranate extract had blood vessel function as healthy as those on the normal cholesterol diet. The pomegranate groups also had less lipid oxidation and coronary blood vessel DNA damage compared to the non-pomegranate groups.

REFERENCE: BRITISH JOURNAL OF NUTRITION; 2013, VOL. 110, No. 5, 890-900





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Mushroom Paradise

You'll have fun making this quick recipe, and your friends will beg for more! Please see page 1 for a new study on how mushrooms instead of meat helped people lose weight.

Ingredients:

½ c olive oil	2-4 cloves garlic, or small onion, minced
24 oz white button mushrooms, stems removed	Splash of mirin or soy sauce (optional)
½ c pitted Kalamata olives, chopped	¼ c pine nuts or sunflower seeds, chopped
¼ c parsley, chopped	16 oz cheese of choice, in bite size pieces
5 sun-dried tomatoes, chopped	¼ c fresh basil or mint, chopped

Directions: Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Put olive oil in a skillet over medium heat, add mushroom caps and sauté for one minute. Remove and place mushroom caps upside down in baking dish. In the skillet add olives, parsley, tomatoes, garlic or onion, and mirin (sweet) or soy sauce (savory). Cook while stirring for two minutes. Remove and place into a bowl, and add pine nuts or sunflower seeds to the mixture. Put a piece of cheese in each mushroom cap. Spoon olive/tomato mixture on top. Bake up to 15 minutes, until cheese melts. Sprinkle with fresh basil or mint and serve.

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