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Natural Insights for Well Being®

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Better Mood with Omega-3s

New studies find omega-3s reduce chances and symptoms of depression

EPA key to reducing symptoms of major depression

Doctors in this review said that prior studies revealed a link between abnormal fatty acid levels and increased chances of major depression. Researchers analyzed 28 depression studies that measured omega-3s and depressive symptoms and found that eicosapentaenoic acid (EPA) in particular had a significant antidepressant effect. Also, scientists found that omega-3 supplements were more effective in treating major and bipolar depression rather than milder forms. Doctors believe that supplementing with omega-3s, and specifically with EPA, helps normalize fatty acid levels, reducing symptoms of major depression.

Omega-3s as effective as antidepressants in depression without-anxiety

In a study of major depression, 423 adults who reported depressive episodes lasting at least four weeks took 1,050 mg of EPA plus 150 mg of docosahexaenoic acid (DHA) per day, or a placebo. About 40 percent were also taking antidepressants. After eight weeks, compared to placebo, those who took omega-3s tended to have fewer depressive symptoms. In



a subgroup whose symptoms did not include anxiety, omega-3s reduced depressive symptoms as effectively as antidepressants.

Omega-3s eased depression and improved quality of life in older women

Doctors in this study said that older people may needlessly have poor quality of life due to undiagnosed depression. In the study, 46 depressed women, aged 66 to 95, took 1,670 mg of EPA plus 830 mg of DHA per day, or a placebo. After eight weeks, compared to placebo, the omega-3 group had far fewer depressive symptoms, and better self-reported physical and mental well being. The women faithfully took their daily dose of omega-3s, doctors said, because blood levels of omega-3s rose significantly by the end of the study.

REFERENCE: JOURNAL OF CLINICAL PSYCHIATRY; 2010, ELECTRONIC PREPUBLICATION

DECEMBER'S Healthy Insight Pycnogenol® Improved Kidney Function

Doctors in this study said Pycnogenol, an extract of pine bark, promotes healthy blood pressure and wanted to see if it could also improve kidney function. Fifty-five people with high blood pressure and early signs of impaired kidney function took the anti-hypertension drug Ramipril with or without 150 mg of Pycnogenol per day. After six months, protein in the urine—a sign of impaired kidney function—had nearly returned to normal in the Pycnogenol group while remaining elevated in the Ramipril-only group. Blood pressure and inflammation were also much lower with Pycnogenol and blood flow to the kidneys had improved.

REFERENCE: JOURNAL OF CARDIOVASCULAR PHARMACOLOGY AND THERAPEUTICS; 2010, VOL. 15, No. 1, 41-6

This Issue

NUTRIENTS HELP PREVENT OSTEOPOROSIS IN MEN AND WOMEN	2
NUTRIENTS REDUCE CHANCES OF SEVERAL GUT DISEASES	2
NUTRIENTS LOWERED CHANCES OF CANCER	3
NUTRIENT FOCUS: GREEN TEA CATECHINS	3
BETA GLUCAN REDUCED RESPIRATORY INFECTION AND LOWERED STRESS	4

Preventing Osteoporosis

Nutrients help postmenopausal women, astronauts, and the bedridden

Calcium and vitamin D helped postmenopausal women retain bone

In this bone study, 35 postmenopausal women, aged 55 to 65 years, took dairy products fortified with 1,200 mg of calcium plus 300 IU of vitamin D per day for the first 12 months, then calcium plus 900 IU of vitamin D per day for the next 18 months, along with dietary counseling. A similar group of 31 women got neither supplements nor dietary counseling. After 30 months, compared to the non-supplement group, the calcium-vitamin D group had better bone mineral density in the arm, total spine, and total body.

Omega-3s helped prevent osteoporosis

The weightlessness of space flight and weightlessness effects of bed rest both can trigger a type of inflammatory immune response that speeds bone loss and may lead to osteoporosis. The immune inflammatory factor, called NFkB, can weaken muscle and bone. Researchers in this review analyzed four types of studies: short-flight space shuttle crews, cell culture, bed rest, and long-term space station crews.

In astronauts returning from short space-shuttle flights, researchers drew blood at landing and found NFkB activity was elevated and remained high for two weeks, evidence that the

body adapts to zero gravity through inflammatory processes.

In the cell culture studies, omega-3 fatty acids slowed NFkB activity.

Bed rest mimics some of the effects of weightlessness and in this study doctors found that, among people bedridden for 60 days, those who consumed less omega-3 fatty acids had more bone loss compared to those who consumed more omega-3s.

In the final study, researchers measured bone mineral loss in astronauts who were in space for four to six months. Those who consumed less fish during flight lost more bone mineral than those who ate more fish.

REFERENCE: BRITISH JOURNAL OF NUTRITION; 2010, VOL. 104, NO. 1, 100-7

Good Health Starts in the Colon

Nutrients reduce symptoms and likelihood of several gut diseases

People with Crohn's disease lack vitamin B12, folate

Crohn's disease inflames the lining of the digestive tract and can have severe symptoms. Researchers in this study compared blood levels of vitamin B12 and folate in 45 people with Crohn's disease to levels in 53 healthy people. Those with Crohn's disease were three times more likely to be deficient in vitamin B12 and seven times more likely to be deficient in folate. Vitamin B12 levels were 18 percent higher, and folate levels were 20 percent higher, in healthy people compared to those with Crohn's disease. Doctors believe that vitamin B12 and folate—the active form of folic acid—help control inflammation by lowering homocysteine levels.

Omega-3 reduced rectal polyps

Certain people inherit the tendency to develop cancerous colon polyps,

familial polyposis (FP), and must have their colon removed to prevent cancer. After the operation, polyps can form in the remaining rectal tissue. In this study, 55 adults with FP who had their colon removed took 2,000 mg of eicosapentaenoic acid (EPA) per day, or a placebo. After six months, the number of polyps increased 10 percent in the placebo group while decreasing in number and size by more than 20 percent in the EPA group.

Probiotics relieved symptoms of diverticulosis

In diverticulosis, the intestinal lining weakens, forming pouches that bulge outward and symptoms that can include constipation, diarrhea and abdominal pain. In this study, 45 men and women with diverticulosis, average age 63, took 10 ml of *Lactobacilli acidophilus* and *bifidobacterium* three

times per day. Symptoms subsided during the study, and after six months, 68 percent of participants were still completely symptom free, with 78 percent of all participants saying probiotics were effective, or very effective, in reducing symptoms compared to the beginning of the study.

REFERENCE: EUROPEAN JOURNAL OF INTERNAL MEDICINE; 2010, VOL. 21, NO. 4, 320-3



Nutrients Reduce Chances of Cancer

More vitamin B6, methionine, less lung cancer

Doctors believe B vitamins may help prevent the DNA damage and gene mutations that can lead to cancer. In this study, researchers took blood samples from 385,747 people and followed up for 10 years. Scientists compared 899 people who developed lung cancer to 1,815 similar people who did not.

For vitamin B6, doctors found that compared to those with the lowest levels, people with the highest blood levels of vitamin B6 were 56 percent less likely to develop lung cancer.

For the essential amino acid methionine, compared to those with the lowest levels, those with the highest levels of methionine were 48 percent less

likely to develop lung cancer.

In both findings, results were similar for current, former, and non-smokers.

Calcium reduced digestive system cancers

Researchers in this study analyzed the diets of 492,810 men and women. Over seven years of follow-up, men who consumed the most calcium, about 1,530 mg per day, were 16 percent less likely to develop digestive system cancers compared to those who got the least calcium, about 526 mg per day.

For women, those who consumed an average of 1,881 mg of calcium per day were 23 percent less likely to develop these cancers compared to women who averaged 494 mg of calcium per day.

Milk thistle improved liver function in chemotherapy

In this study, 50 children with acute lymphoblastic leukemia who had signs of liver toxicity from chemotherapy took milk thistle or a placebo. After 56 days, compared to placebo, children who had taken milk thistle showed signs of improved liver function and less liver toxicity, without interfering with chemotherapy.

REFERENCE: JOURNAL OF THE AMERICAN MEDICAL ASSOCIATION; 2010, VOL. 303, NO. 23, 2377-85



DECEMBER'S

Nutrient Focus

Green Tea

Green tea contains catechins, strong polyphenol antioxidants with anti-inflammatory properties that may inhibit the formation, proliferation and growth of tumors. Here are some recent findings.



Green tea slowed chronic lymphocytic lymphoma (CLL)

In this study, 42 people with early-stage CLL took an extract of green tea containing epigallocatechin gallate (EGCG), and were not taking any other treatment. One-third of those who took EGCG had at least a 20 percent drop in leukemia cell counts, and 70 percent saw lymph node size shrink by at least half.

AMERICAN SOCIETY OF CLINICAL ONCOLOGY ANNUAL MEETING; CHICAGO, JUNE, 2010

Green tea reduced chances of lung cancer

Doctors in this study compared the diets, smoking habits, and family health histories of 170 people with lung cancer to 340 healthy individuals. Those who did not drink green tea were more than five times as likely to develop lung cancer compared to those who drank at least one cup of green tea per day. Comparing smokers only, those who did not drink green tea were more than 12 times as likely to develop lung cancer as those who drank at least one cup of green tea per day.

AMERICAN ASSOCIATION FOR CANCER RESEARCH JOINT CONFERENCE; JANUARY, 2010

Green tea reduced chances of heart disease in those with metabolic syndrome

In this study, 35 people with metabolic syndrome, average age 43, drank four cups of green tea extract per day, took two capsules of green tea extract per day, or no green tea. Both forms of green tea were decaffeinated and provided about 450 mg of EGCG. After eight weeks, compared to placebo, both green tea groups had lower levels of an inflammatory protein, amyloid alpha, which is linked to heart disease.

NUTRITION JOURNAL; 2010, JUNE, ELECTRONIC PREPUBLICATION



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Fewer Colds and Less Stress

Beta glucan reduced respiratory infection and improved well being in stressed-out people

Researchers in this study explained that chronic stress suppresses the immune system, making people more vulnerable to illness. Beta glucan, doctors believe, helps activate macrophages—the “armed security guard” white blood cells of the immune system that trap and destroy invading bacteria and viruses. In turn, macrophages help launch other immune responses, “T” and “B” cells, that target, kill, and produce protective antibodies against future invaders.

In the study, 150 men and women under chronic moderate to high stress, aged 18 to 65, took 250 mg or 500 mg of beta glucan per day, or a placebo. During the four week study, compared

to placebo, both beta glucan groups reported less tension and fatigue, fewer upper respiratory tract infections, and better overall health.

REFERENCE: AGRO FOOD INDUSTRY HI-TECH; 2010, VOL. 21, No. 1, 21-4



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