



Natural Insights for Well Being®

April 2020

Digestive Health

Nutrients reduced chances of colorectal cancer and improved liver function

Omega-3 reduced colorectal cancer

Harvard Medical School's affiliate, Brigham and Women's Hospital, is conducting the VITAL study of vitamin D and omega-3 and chances of cancer. In this study, 25,871 people, including 5,106 African Americans, took the omega-3s EPA 460 mg and DHA 300 mg, plus 2,000 IU of vitamin D per day, for an average of 5.3 years.

While there was no clinical benefit that applied to the entire study group, those who began the study with low levels of omega-3s—no more than 2.5 percent in the blood—were 24 percent less likely to develop precancerous tumors. Also, African Americans were 41 percent less likely to develop the tumors after taking the omega-3-vitamin D supplements.

Doctors have begun using the Omega-3 Index to measure adequate levels of circulating omega-3s. Levels below 4 percent increase chances for adverse health outcomes, while levels of at least 8 percent predict good health outcomes.

Turmeric, chicory seed improve NAFLD

Non-alcoholic fatty liver disease



(NAFLD) occurs when fat deposits that build up in the liver have not been caused by alcohol. In this study, 92 men and women with NAFLD, aged 20 to 60, and overweight or obese, took a placebo or 3,000 mg of turmeric per day, 9,000 mg of infused chicory seed per day, or these two nutrients together.

After 12 weeks, compared to placebo, those taking turmeric combined with chicory seed saw significant decreases in triglycerides, and increases in HDL, the good cholesterol. The ratio of LDL—the bad cholesterol—to HDL, also improved. Doctors measured a decrease in an enzyme, alkaline phosphatase, indicating less liver damage. And those in the turmeric-chicory group had improved body mass index scores, and reduced waist circumference.

REFERENCE: JAMA-ONCOLOGY; NOVEMBER, 2019, 4587, PUBLISHED ONLINE

APRIL'S

Healthy Insight Zinc Slowed AMD

Many nutrients help slow vision loss in the early stages of age-related macular degeneration (AMD), where sight declines in the center field of vision. This study measured zinc in the diets of 547 people with late-stage, wet AMD, a more serious version of the condition, where new, weak blood vessels form under the macula, leak fluids, and make the macula bulge or lift.

Those who got less than 8.1 mg of zinc per day were more likely to have sub-macular fluid and greater central-macular thickness. Doctors said the zinc finding is promising for those with later stages of AMD, particularly the wet variety.

REFERENCE: CLINICAL & EXPERIMENTAL OPHTHALMOLOGY; 2019, CEO. 13644

This Issue

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Weight and Inflammation

Spirulina improves weight, folate reduces chronic inflammation

Spirulina and healthy weight

Earlier studies suggest spirulina can have beneficial effects on body composition. Here, doctors reviewed data from five clinical trials on spirulina and obesity covering 278 participants over different study periods.

Combined results of the five placebo-controlled studies revealed an average decrease in body weight of 3.4 pounds. The benefits appeared greatest in those classified as obese at the start of the study. Obese participants lost an average 4.5 pounds of body weight, while those who were overweight shed an average 2.8 pounds. Those taking spirulina also saw an average 1.02 percent reduction in body fat, and an average 1.4 percent decrease in waist measurement.

Doctors said spirulina safely reduced body weight, body fat, and decreased waist size, and is a useful addition to good diet and exercise.

Folate and inflammation

Low levels of folate are common in older populations, raising chronic inflammation levels and increasing chances for heart, circulatory, and other age-related health events. In this study, doctors measured folate in 300 adults aged at least 60, and found 35 percent had insufficient levels.

Those who were deficient in folate were seven times more likely to have elevated homocysteine levels—a chronic inflammatory factor—while those with a high waist-to-hip ratio, meaning they were overweight, were 2.5 times more

likely to have high homocysteine levels.

As levels of folate increased, levels of homocysteine decreased, body mass index scores improved, waist-to-hip ratios improved, diastolic blood pressure decreased, and high-density lipoprotein (HDL), the good cholesterol, increased.

REFERENCE: COMPLEMENTARY THERAPIES IN MEDICINE; 2019, VOL. 47, 102211, PUBLISHED ONLINE



Kids

Probiotics reduce colic, low calcium linked to eczema

Probiotic reduced colic

Doctors are beginning to suspect that gut balance has a link to colic, which appears as irritability and episodes of intense crying that can last a few minutes, or much longer. Infants with colic more often have pro-inflammatory, gas-producing gut bacteria compared to

healthy kids.

In this study, 80 infants with colic got a placebo or bifidobacterium BB-12. After 28 days, those taking the probiotic saw crying time reduced by 80 percent compared to the placebo group, where crying time declined by 32.5 percent. The number of crying incidents were 4.7 fewer for probiotics, and 2.3 fewer for placebo.

Daily stool frequency decreased in both groups, with a greater effect for probiotics than placebo. Doctors also measured increased fecal concentrations of immune markers, suggesting better gut balance for kids taking probiotics.

Kids with eczema had low calcium

Adolescents require adequate calcium as their muscles and bones are

developing rapidly. But when children experience allergies, one solution is to restrict certain foods from the diet. Milk, which is the most common source of calcium for children aged two to 18, is also the most common food children with eczema eliminate from their diets.

This study included 468 adolescents, some with eczema, some with food allergies, and some with both eczema and allergies. Compared to those without eczema, those with eczema got less calcium during adolescence. Girls with childhood eczema continued to get less calcium during adolescence than girls without eczema.

These patterns of low calcium in the diet persisted from childhood to adolescence regardless of chronic or transient eczema.

REFERENCE: ALIMENTARY PHARMACOLOGY AND THERAPEUTICS; 2019, APT. 15561



Breathe!

Omega-3s and catechins improve lung health

Omega-3 helps control asthma

Doctors are beginning to rely on the Omega-3 Index measurement to predict health outcomes. In this study, doctors measured omega-3 levels in 255 people with asthma and in 137 without.

Overall, those who reported better asthma symptom control had higher Omega-3 Index scores, meaning greater



circulating levels of omega-3s. Those whose Omega-3 Index scores reached 8 percent used a lower maintenance dose of inhaled corticosteroids.

Discussing the findings, doctors said this is the first study to their knowledge to report that a lower Omega-3 Index score is linked to poorer asthma control in adults. A higher score also meant a lower maintenance dose of inhaled corticosteroids. Adequate omega-3 levels could significantly reduce lifetime medication in asthma.

Catechins reduce URI

Green tea catechins have exhibited antiviral activity in acute infectious disease experiments, but results have been inconsistent. In this study, 270 healthcare workers took a placebo beverage, or a beverage with one 57 mg

dose of catechins plus 100 mg xanthan gum, or a beverage with three 57 mg doses of catechins plus 100 mg xanthan gum, per day.

After 12 weeks, rates of upper respiratory infection (URI) were similar for placebo and the low-dose catechins group, averaging about 27 percent. Those in the high-dose catechins group saw a 13.1 percent incidence of upper respiratory infection.

Discussing the findings, doctors said catechins with xanthan gum, at sufficient dosage levels, can effectively protect against upper respiratory infection. The results were particularly meaningful, as participants were active healthcare workers who were exposed to viruses as a standard part of their work.

REFERENCE: NUTRIENTS; 2019, VOL. 12, NO. 1, PII: E74

Heart & Circulation

Vitamin C low in gum disease and CAD, herbs reduce blood pressure

Vitamin C low in CAD

Vitamin C and antioxidants are critical for flexible blood vessels, and there may be a link between gum disease, or periodontitis, and coronary artery disease (CAD). In this study, doctors measured vitamin C levels in 36 participants with periodontitis, in 35 with CAD, in 36 with both these conditions, and in 36 healthy adults.

Compared to healthy adults and those with gum disease without CAD, in those with CAD, or with both gum disease and CAD, concentrations of vitamin C in the saliva and in circulation were much lower. Also other antioxidants, including beta-carotene, lutein, and alpha-tocopherol, were lower.

Those with lower vitamin C levels also had higher levels of the inflammatory factor, high-sensitivity

C-reactive protein.

Lavender, fennel, chamomile, and blood pressure

Common herbs such as lavender, fennel, and chamomile have a long history in folk medicine. Now, doctors from the University of California at Irvine believe they know how these herbs work.

The botanicals lower blood pressure by activating a specific potassium channel (KCNQ5) in blood vessels, which when activated, relaxes blood vessels.

Discussing the findings, doctors said “We found KCNQ5 activation to be a unifying molecular mechanism shared by a diverse range of botanical folk medicines,” including lavender, fennel seed, and chamomile. It is rather odd,

doctors continued, that no modern drug exists that takes advantage of the blood-vessel relaxing properties of KCNQ5 found in these common herbs, and that they may be an effective blood pressure-lowering therapy.

REFERENCE: NUTRIENTS; 2019, VOL. 11, NO. 12, 2956





300 Kings Mall Court
Kingston, NY 12401
Phone: (845) 336-5541

1955 South Road
Poughkeepsie, NY 12601
Phone (845) 296-1069

249 Main Street
Saugerties, NY 12477
Phone (845) 246-9614

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Cognition and Language

Collagen hydrolysate improves brain structure

Increased brain nerve-signaling

The good news is, we are living longer. Along with longer lives, however, more of us will experience declines in cognitive function. Earlier studies found the body quickly absorbs and retains collagen hydrolysates in circulation, and that the nutrient helped speed recovery from brain injury by promoting new blood vessels in the brain.

In this study, 30 healthy men and women, aged 49 to 63, took 5,000 mg of collagen hydrolysates per day. There was no placebo group. After four weeks, an MRI revealed increases in brain nerve-synapse activity, indicating improvements in brain structure.

Participants also improved in

recalling words from a memorized list, and orally pairing one word with its mate from a list of memorized pairs read aloud by the researchers. Doctors also saw a link between increases in brain nerve-synapse activity and improvements in the word memory tests. The high absorbability of the small proteins in collagen hydrolysate may be responsible for these brain benefits.

REFERENCE: NUTRIENTS; 2020, VOL. 12, No. 1, 50



Your Good News!®

We're dedicated to discovering the benefits of good nutrition and healthy lifestyle, and hope this issue of Natural Insights for Well Being® informs and inspires you to take an active role in your health. Please ask us to assist you with any natural products you would like to know more about.

These articles provide nutritional information only and do not replace professional medical advice.

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