



# Natural Insights for Well Being®

March 2020

## Circulation

Nutrients improve circulation and cognition in heart disease & type 2 diabetes

### Aged garlic, microcirculation & wound healing

When arteries narrow due to buildup of plaques, chances increase for adverse heart events. People with this condition, and those with diabetes, have poor circulation in the smallest blood vessels in the skin, which impairs wound healing. Increasing blood flow by improving vessel health lowers chances for adverse events and improves wound healing. In this study, 122 men and women with higher chances for adverse heart events took a placebo or 2,400 mg of aged garlic extract per day.

To measure changes in blood flow to the smallest vessels, doctors restricted blood flow at the arm with a blood pressure cuff for three minutes, then released the cuff to gauge the increase in blood flow. After 12 months, blood flow to the smallest vessels in the skin increased by 30 percent more for those taking aged garlic extract compared to placebo.

### Omega-3, memory & hand-eye coordination

Plaques can build up on the walls of arteries that serve the heart, increasing chances for adverse heart events, but also increasing chances for cognitive decline. In this study, 250 cognitively healthy people with arterial plaque buildup, took



a placebo or 3,360 mg of marine EPA and DHA per day.

After 30 months, while the placebo group did not improve, those taking omega-3s had improved hand-eye coordination and better verbal fluency. Both those with and without type 2 diabetes improved, but non-diabetics began improving at 12 months.

Doctors use the Omega-3 Index, which measures levels of circulating omega-3 fatty acids, to gauge chances for adverse heart events. The cognitive benefits in the study emerged as circulating levels of omega-3s reached four percent. Doctors said the study findings show that marine omega-3s can improve cognition even in those with normal cognitive function, before cognitive decline begins.

**REFERENCE:** INTERNATIONAL WOUND JOURNAL; 2019, VOL. 16, No. 6, 1487-93

MARCH'S

## Healthy Insight Ginkgo for Tinnitus

People with tinnitus hear noise or ringing in the ears when no external sound is the source. One cause may be low blood flow to the brain. Because ginkgo biloba can increase blood flow, doctors gave 33 participants 240 mg of ginkgo biloba extract per day, a hearing aid, or both. Participants had tinnitus symptoms in one or both ears for at least three months. After 90 days, all three groups reported significant improvements in loudness and severity. Hearing aids were more effective in those with more recent tinnitus, while ginkgo was effective in recent and long-term cases.

**REFERENCE:** BRAZILIAN JOURNAL OF OTORHINOLARYNGOLOGY; 2019, PII: S1808-8694, PUBLISHED ONLINE

### This Issue

|   |   |
|---|---|
| PROBIOTICS AND VITAMIN D PRESERVE MUSCLE AND BONE                 | 2 |
| LUTEIN IMPROVED BEHAVIOR, PROBIOTICS CUT COLDS, IN KIDS           | 2 |
| L-THEANINE AND DHA PROMOTE RESTFUL SLEEP                          | 3 |
| VITAMIN E AND ALPHA-LIPOIC ACID IMPROVE BLADDER AND KIDNEY HEALTH | 3 |
| ASTAXANTHIN IMPROVES MOOD AND BOOSTS ENERGY                       | 4 |

# Muscle & Bone

## Probiotics and vitamin D preserve muscle and bone

### Probiotics, postmenopausal bone density

In 2009, doctors in this study theorized that the gut microbiome could influence bone mass through the immune system, launching a new field of study, osteomicrobiology. In this new, multi-center trial, 243 healthy women with healthy weight, average age 59, and



in early menopause, took a placebo or a multi-strain lactobacillus probiotic. At the start, none of the women had severe bone loss, or osteoporosis, and fewer than half had low bone density, known as osteopenia.

After one year, the placebo group had lost 0.72 percent bone mass measured at the lumbar spine while those taking probiotics had no bone loss. Lactobacillus' protective effect was specific to the lumbar spine, something study doctors would like to explore further.

### Vitamin D preserves muscle function

One of the most important factors in living independently longer is maintaining skeletal muscle. Resistance exercise preserves muscle function, and

new evidence suggests good vitamin D levels also protect muscle.

In this study, doctors measured vitamin D levels in 4,157 independently living adults, average age 70. Those who were deficient in vitamin D were nearly twice as likely as those with sufficient vitamin D levels to have muscle weakness, and three times as likely to have impaired muscle performance. Doctors defined vitamin D deficiency as levels below 30 nanomoles per liter of blood (nmol/L), or 12 nanograms per milliliter (ng/mL), and sufficiency as at least 50 nmol/L or 20 ng/mL.

Because vitamin D deficiency can be corrected, doctors recommend focusing public health policy on supplementing older populations with vitamin D.

**REFERENCE:** THE LANCET; 2019, P115 2665-9913, PUBLISHED ONLINE

# Child Behavior & Health

## Lutein improved behavior, probiotics cut colds, in kids

### Mothers' lutein improved behavior in offspring

Recent research reveals most of the carotenoids in young brain tissue is lutein, and while lutein promotes cognitive function in adults, little is known about prenatal lutein, when the brain develops most rapidly. In this study, doctors measured lutein in the diets of 1,126 mothers during the first and second trimesters, then followed up when their children reached eight years of age.

Using a food frequency questionnaire, doctors determined mothers got an average of 1.8 mg of lutein per day during the first and second trimesters. Compared to those who got less lutein, mothers who got more lutein while pregnant reported

fewer behavioral problems in their children at age eight. The improvements in behavior increased as the amount of lutein in the diet increased, and accelerated as mothers continued lutein into the second trimester.

### Probiotics reduced kids' colds

In this study, 106 healthy children, aged one to six years, attending daycare during cold season, took a placebo or a multi-strain lactobacillus probiotic of one-billion colony forming units, per day.

During the 30 day study period, children who caught a common cold and took probiotics had less nasal congestion and runny nose than kids in the placebo group. Overall, on a standard cold-symptom questionnaire,

symptoms were less severe for kids in the probiotics group, with a symptom-severity score 46 percent lower than for placebo. Also, kids taking probiotics needed to take less cold medication, missed fewer days at daycare, and cried less.

**REFERENCE:** JOURNAL OF THE ACADEMY OF NUTRITION AND DIETETICS; 2019, VOL. 119, No. 10, A131



# Slumber

## L-theanine and DHA promote restful sleep

### L-theanine for adult mind and rest

“Our findings suggest that L-theanine has the potential to promote mental health in the general population with stress-related ailments and cognitive impairments,” said doctors conducting this study of nine men and 21 women, average age 48. Participants had no major psychiatric illness, but were interested in reducing stress and improving sleep quality.

Over a four-week period, men and women took a placebo or 200 mg of L-theanine per day. Participants self-rated their symptoms of depression, anxiety, and sleep quality. Those taking L-theanine got to sleep sooner, woke up less during the night, and took less sleep medication, compared to placebo. Symptoms of depression and anxiety

also improved more for L-theanine than placebo, as did verbal letter fluency; the ability to list words beginning with a specific letter. Doctors said L-theanine stimulates alpha brain waves for a relaxed but alert mental state.

### DHA for adolescent sleep

Adolescents often have trouble falling and staying asleep. In this study, doctors measured omega-3 levels in 405 girls and boys, average age 14, and monitored sleep through a wrist-mounted sensor for seven days.

As levels of DHA increased, length of time sleeping also increased, with kids with the highest DHA levels sleeping 32 minutes longer than kids with the lowest omega-3 levels. Higher DHA also helped kids get to sleep earlier on weekdays and weekends; 45 minutes

earlier for those with the highest DHA levels.

Discussing the findings, doctors said adding DHA supplements along with maintaining regular bedtime routines could benefit sleep during adolescence.

REFERENCE: NUTRIENTS; 2019, VOL. 11, No. 10, 2362



# Bladder & Kidney

## Vitamin E and alpha-lipoic acid improve bladder and kidney health

### Vitamin E and bladder cancer

Vitamin E has anti-cancer benefits, mainly due to its potent antioxidant properties. Here, doctors reviewed 11 bladder cancer trials covering a total of 575,601 people who took vitamin E or a placebo over various study periods.



Overall, those consuming the highest levels of vitamin E during studies of all lengths were 11 percent less likely to develop bladder cancer compared to men and women who got the lowest amounts of vitamin E.

Discussing the results, doctors said the findings suggest adding vitamin E can lower chances for bladder cancer, and recommend other preventive steps including stopping smoking and eating more fruits and vegetables which are naturally high in antioxidants.

### Alpha-lipoic acid in hemodialysis

The kidneys filter waste and extra fluid in the body, helping maintain the proper balance of minerals and salts. Kidneys also produce hormones

that regulate blood pressure and make red blood cells. When kidney function deteriorates by 15 percent, doctors administer hemodialysis, which temporarily replaces the kidneys' filtering function.

In this study, 43 men and 20 women on dialysis, ages 22 to 79, took a placebo or 600 mg of alpha-lipoic acid (ALA) per day. After eight weeks, levels of important antioxidants: superoxide dismutase, glutathione peroxidase, and catalase, had increased significantly in the ALA group, reducing oxidative stress.

Doctors said by reducing oxidative stress, ALA lowered chances for heart and circulatory disease, which is the main cause of death in those on dialysis.

REFERENCE: INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL FOR VITAMIN AND NUTRITION RESEARCH; 2019, VOL. 89, No. 3-4, 168-75



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## Mood

### Astaxanthin improves mood and boosts energy

#### Less depression and mental fatigue

Astaxanthin, an anti-inflammatory antioxidant, has been widely studied in the lab and in human trials, with benefits including nerve and eye health, heart and circulatory function, exercise endurance, and immune support. Here, doctors were interested in its effects on mood.

In this study, 28 healthy people ranging in age from 26 to 63, took a placebo or 12 mg of natural astaxanthin per day. After eight weeks, while the placebo group had not changed, those taking astaxanthin saw significant improvements in scores on a standard mood-state profile, including 57 percent fewer feelings of depression, 36 percent

improvement in mental fatigue factors, and an overall 11 percent increase in mood state. Those taking astaxanthin also tended to see improvements in tension, anger, and mental confusion.

Discussing the findings, doctors said that while participants did not have a clinical diagnosis of depression, even healthy people may have feelings of depression, which improved in the study.

**REFERENCE:** E CRONICON EC NUTRITION; 2019, 14.3, 239-46



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## 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.

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