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Lipids

Omega-3s and resveratrol improved lipid profiles

Omega-3s

People with high cholesterol levels may take statin drugs to manage the condition, but some still have elevated levels of triglycerides, the most common type of blood fat. Doctors wanted to see if omega-3s could lower triglycerides in those with elevated levels who were taking statin drugs.

Participants in the study took the statin drug rosuvastatin for four weeks. Then the 201 who still had elevated triglycerides continued on rosuvastatin alone, or added 4,000 mg of omega-3 fatty acids per day. After eight weeks, the omega-3 group saw a 26.3 percent drop in triglycerides, compared to 11.4 percent for rosuvastatin alone.

To more accurately predict chances of heart disease, doctors are beginning to total the two types of “bad” cholesterol—LDL and VLDL (very-low-density lipoprotein)—as a percentage of total cholesterol, excluding HDL, the “good” cholesterol. After the eight week study period, those in the omega-3 group saw a 10.7 percent decline in non-HDL cholesterol levels compared to a 2.2 percent drop for rosuvastatin alone.

Discussing the findings, doctors said omega-3s appeared to provide the greatest benefit in those whose triglyceride levels or non-HDL cholesterol levels were highest, and whose body mass index scores were low.



Resveratrol

This study followed 71 apparently healthy men and non-pregnant women, aged 20 to 65, who had just been diagnosed with imbalanced lipid profiles, including elevated total cholesterol and triglyceride levels. Those in the study had similar health status and history, and didn't smoke, drink, take lipid-lowering drugs, or supplements containing resveratrol.

Participants took 100 mg of resveratrol per day, or a placebo. After two months, while the placebo group had not significantly improved, those taking resveratrol saw total cholesterol levels decline to an average of 201.4 mg per deciliter of blood (mg/dL) from 220.6, and triglycerides decrease to 133.4 mg/dL from 166.7.

REFERENCE: CLINICAL THERAPEUTICS; 2018, VOL. 40, NO. 1, 83-94

DECEMBER'S

Healthy Insight Vitamin A Boosts Good Cholesterol

In this study, doctors measured the diets of 57 obese, but metabolically healthy, men and women, aged 18 to 62. As the level of vitamin A in the diet from food and supplements increased, so did the level of HDL, the “good” cholesterol.

In a second finding, as levels of vitamin A decreased, HDL levels decreased more in the women than in the men.

The body can synthesize vitamin A from retinyl palmitate found in animal foods such as dairy, eggs, liver, and fish; and from beta carotene found in colorful fruits and vegetables. Supplements can provide one or both forms of vitamin A.

REFERENCE: CHOLESTEROL; 2018, 8050512; PUBLISHED ONLINE

This Issue

NUTRIENTS IMPROVE CHOLESTEROL IN CHILDREN, ORAL HEALTH IN TEENS 2

OMEGA-3S REDUCE PRE-TERM BIRTHS, 2
5-MTHF BOOSTS FOLATE LEVELS

NUTRIENTS IMPROVED COGNITION IN AGING, AND MOOD IN IBS 3

NUTRIENTS REDUCE INSULIN RESISTANCE, IMPROVE HYPOTHYROIDISM 3

LUTEIN LEVELS LINKED TO GREATER PHYSICAL ACTIVITY IN ADULTS 4

Youth

Nutrients improve cholesterol in children and oral health in adolescents

Vitamin D improves cholesterol in young

Doctors aren't sure of the link between vitamin D and lipids in children, but imbalanced lipids are appearing more frequently in the young, perhaps due to unfavorable changes in diet and exercise. In this study, doctors



measured vitamin D levels and lipid profiles in 512 children, aged six to eight.

Children whose vitamin D levels were higher than 32 nanograms per milliliter of blood (ng/mL) had lower total cholesterol levels and lower LDL—the “bad”—cholesterol levels, compared to children whose vitamin D levels fell below 20 ng/mL—the level many doctors believe is the minimum for sufficiency.

Other factors might influence the relationship of vitamin D to cholesterol including genetic and hereditary factors, body fat mass, diet, physical activity, parental education, and time of year of the vitamin D blood sample, but none of these factors changed the link between higher vitamin D levels and lower cholesterol levels.

Probiotic improves oral health

In this study, 101 boys, aged 13 to 15, took two lozenges containing the probiotics *Lactobacillus rhamnosus* and *Bifidobacterium lactis*, or two placebo lozenges, per day. After four weeks, while there was no change in the placebo group, boys taking the probiotic lozenges had significantly lower levels of several bacterial strains in saliva and plaque that are linked to periodontitis, plaque, and gingivitis.

Discussing the findings, doctors said the probiotics improved gingival health and decreased microbial counts, and “may serve as a simple adjunct to standard oral care for promoting oral health in adolescents.”

REFERENCE: JOURNAL OF ENDOCRINOLOGY & METABOLISM; 2018, VOL. 103, NO. 7, 2670-9

Pregnancy

Omega-3s reduce preterm births, 5-MTHF boosts folate levels

Omega-3s

Carrying a pregnancy to full term increases chances of the child's survival, healthy brain development, and immunity later in life. In this study, doctors measured levels of omega-3s during the first and second trimesters in 376 women who gave birth very prematurely—before 34 weeks—and in 348 women who had full term births.

Women whose combined circulating levels of EPA plus DHA were 1.6 percent or less of total plasma fatty acids were 10 times as likely to have a preterm birth compared to women whose levels were 1.8 percent or higher.

Commenting on the findings, doctors said, “At a time when many pregnant women are hearing messages encouraging them to avoid intake of fish altogether due to mercury content,

our results support the importance of ensuring adequate intake of long-chain omega-3 fatty acids in pregnancy,” to help ensure a full term birth and a healthy child.

5-MTHF boosts folate levels

Mothers' folate levels are critical for avoiding neural tube birth defects in children, and a type of folate, L-5-methyltetrahydrofolate, or 5-MTHF, may be more effective for boosting folate levels than folic acid supplements.

In this study, 142 Malaysian women took a placebo, 1 mg of folic acid, or 1.13 mg of 5-MTHF, per day. The two doses were equivalent to 2.27 micromoles of nutrients each.

After 12 weeks, women taking 5-MTHF had folate levels 30 percent higher in red blood cells, and in plasma,

than those taking folic acid. Both groups also had about 16 percent lower levels of homocysteine, an inflammatory factor, compared to placebo.

REFERENCE: EBIOMEDICINE; 2018, S2352-3964, PUBLISHED ONLINE



Mind & Mood

Nutrients improve cognition in aging, and mood in IBS

Pycnogenol reversed mild cognitive decline

Doctors said there is no treatment for minimal cognitive decline, something they measure using a standard index of mental functions. In this study, 87 people, aged 55 to 75, with cognitive index scores indicating mild impairment, took a placebo or 150 mg of the antioxidant Pycnogenol® per day. All participants maintained healthy sleep habits, regular exercise, and a low-sodium, low-sugar diet.

After eight weeks, while there was no change for placebo, those taking Pycnogenol saw an average 18 percent increase in cognitive index scores, to 25.64 from 21.64 at the start of the study. A score above 24 indicates normal cognition. The Pycnogenol group remembered friends and family better,

where things were located, and learned gadgets and technology, managed money, and better dealt with people.

Probiotic improved mood in IBS

People with irritable bowel syndrome (IBS) often have symptoms of major depression. New evidence suggests managing the gut microbiome may be an alternative approach to reducing or preventing depression. In this study, 40 adults newly diagnosed with IBS took a placebo or bacillus coagulans 30 minutes before the morning meal.

After 90 days, while the placebo group had not changed, those taking probiotics saw significant improvements in depression index scores, and on questionnaires rating quality-of-life, gastrointestinal discomfort, and sleepiness.

Commenting on the findings, doctors said bacillus coagulans showed “statistically significant and clinically meaningful improvements” in symptoms of depression and IBS that suggest an important new treatment option for major depressive disorder in IBS.

REFERENCE: JOURNAL OF NEUROSURGICAL SCIENCES; 2018, VOL. 62, NO. 3, 279-84

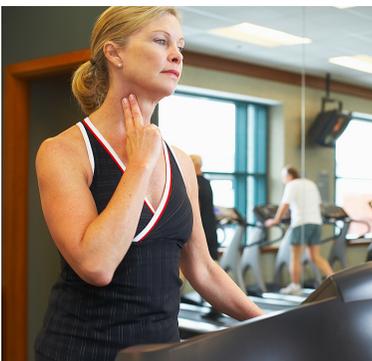


Good Metabolics

Nutrients reduce insulin resistance, improve hypothyroidism

Genistein and insulin resistance in NAFLD

The liver contains some fat, but when extra fat from diet builds up, impairing some metabolic functions, the condition is called non-alcoholic fatty liver disease (NAFLD). In this study, 82 people with NAFLD took a placebo or 250 mg of genistein, per day.



After eight weeks, compared to placebo, those taking genistein saw significantly lower levels of circulating insulin, and less insulin resistance. Triglyceride levels decreased to 191.59 mg per deciliter of blood (mg/dL) from 219.27 at the start of the study, and signs of oxidative stress and inflammation also improved. Waist size compared to the circumference at the hip declined, and the genistein group also saw an average decrease of 1.4 percent in body fat.

Inositol, selenium in hypothyroidism

When the body does not produce enough thyroid hormone, metabolism slows down. Women, especially those between age 30 and 50, are more likely to develop hypothyroidism. The most

common form is an autoimmune disorder known as Hashimoto's hypothyroidism. In this study, 148 women and 19 men with an early, mild form of the disorder took 83 mcg of selenium, with or without 600 mg of inositol, per day.

After six months, those taking selenium with inositol showed improvements in measures of the condition—including more normal levels of thyroid-stimulating hormone (TSH). Those taking selenium alone also saw improvement, but not as great as those in the selenium/inositol group. Doctors said selenium with inositol restored normal thyroid function in those with subclinical—early, mild—Hashimoto's hypothyroidism.

REFERENCE: CLINICAL NUTRITION JOURNAL; 2018, VOL. 37, NO. 4, 1210-15

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Staying Active

Lutein levels linked to greater physical activity in adults

The yellow carotenoid may also help prevent chronic disease

Doctors reviewed 17 studies that compared lutein levels to physical activity in adults. Studies that measured circulating lutein levels and physical activity found those with the highest lutein levels were 57 percent more active than those with the lowest levels. In several of the studies asking participants to report their diets and physical activity, higher lutein levels were linked to 20 to 600 percent greater levels of physical activity.

Doctors believe it is the antioxidants in lutein that help maintain the integrity of cellular DNA, preventing genetic mutations that can lead to disease,

and providing the benefits to physical activity. Physical activity also reduces the chances of developing chronic diseases.

Discussing the findings, doctors said, “If increasing lutein levels, or possibly also the levels of other carotenoids, is able to increase physical activity, this might be useful for improving physical activity to mitigate the chances of chronic disease.”

REFERENCE: NUTRIENTS; 2018, VOL. 10, No. 9, 1186



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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