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Skin

Vitamin D reduces skin sensitivity,
speeds burn healing

Less dust mite allergy

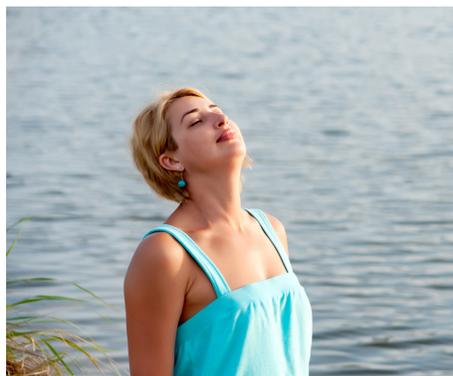
People with skin allergy, or dermatitis, often have weak immune systems that overreact by producing antibodies that cause an allergic reaction and raise skin sensitivity. Because vitamin D plays a role in immunity, doctors wanted to test for a link between vitamin D levels and sensitivity to house dust mites, a skin irritant. In this study, doctors measured levels of vitamin D and immune antibodies in 80 men and women with mild to severe atopic dermatitis.

All participants were deficient in vitamin D, with levels below 20 nanograms per milliliter of blood. Those with severe dermatitis had nearly eight times the level of antibodies compared to those with mild dermatitis.

Discussing the findings, doctors said people with dermatitis who are also low in vitamin D are more sensitive to dust mites, and that raising vitamin D levels may reduce sensitivity to dust mites and ease dermatitis symptoms.

Faster burn healing, less scarring

Major burn injury draws on the body's vitamin D stores, reducing vitamin D levels. In this first-of-its-kind study, over one year, doctors followed 38 people recovering from severe burns



averaging 42 percent of the surface area of the body.

Compared to those with lower levels, those with higher vitamin D levels were more likely to survive, had fewer complications, faster and more complete wound healing, and less scarring. Those with lower vitamin D levels were more likely to develop serious infections.

Discussing the findings, doctors said that clinicians treating burn patients generally overlook vitamin D levels, and that supplementing with high doses of vitamin D immediately after burn injury would boost tissue-specific antibacterial function and improve the body's wound-healing response. Raising the circulating level of vitamin D by supplementing with high vitamin D doses may greatly improve health outcomes in burn patients.

REFERENCE: ANNALS OF DERMATOLOGY; 2017, VOL. 29, No. 4, 400-6

JUNE'S

Healthy Insight Magnesium Boosts Vitamin D

People who take vitamin D supplements but who have low magnesium levels may not be getting a vitamin D benefit. Without enough magnesium, vitamin D stores in the body remain inactive, and taking vitamin D supplements when magnesium is low can raise circulating calcium and phosphate levels, possibly leading to blood vessel calcification.

When magnesium levels are good, the body needs less vitamin D to reach adequate D levels, and inactive vitamin D stores become active. Also, when magnesium and vitamin D levels are optimal, chances for bone thinning (osteoporosis) and bone fracture are less.

REFERENCE: JOURNAL OF THE AMERICAN OSTEOPATHIC ASSOCIATION; MARCH, 2018, PUBLISHED ONLINE

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Moms and Babies

Mothers' supplements reduce infant allergy, improve cognition

Probiotics and omega-3s reduce allergy

In one of the largest research reports on diet during pregnancy among 15,000 women, doctors found that those who took omega-3 fish oil supplements beginning at 20 weeks pregnant and continuing through the first four months of breastfeeding gave birth to children 30 percent less likely to have an allergy to eggs. Peanut allergies were even less likely: 38 percent lower in children whose moms took omega-3s compared to those whose mothers did not.

Doctors also studied probiotics. Women who began taking probiotics at 36 to 38 weeks pregnant and continuing through the first three to six months of breastfeeding gave birth to children 22 percent less likely to develop skin allergy

(eczema) compared to women who did not take probiotics. Avoiding potentially allergenic foods such as dairy, eggs, and nuts did not make a difference in the children's chances for allergy.

Choline improves processing speed

The body needs choline to form essential cell membrane lipids. In this study, 24 mothers in the third trimester of pregnancy took 480 mg or 930 mg of choline per day until delivery. Doctors tested the children at four through 13 months of age to see how quickly they responded to an image on the edge of a computer screen; a measure of intelligence.

Information processing speeds were significantly faster for kids whose moms took the higher dose of choline—about

double the recommended amount. Also, kids whose moms took the low dose for longer had faster processing speeds than kids whose moms took choline for a shorter time.

REFERENCE: PLOS MEDICINE; FEBRUARY, 2018, 1002507, PUBLISHED ONLINE



Sports Recovery

Chlorella increases immunity, curcumin eases pain, after exercise

Chlorella boosts immune defenses

Lengthy, strenuous exercise increases chances for upper respiratory infections (URI) in athletes, as the immune salivary system secretes fewer protective antibodies. In this study, 34 healthy, physically active men and women took a placebo or 6 grams of chlorella per day, beginning four weeks

before and continuing two weeks after two days of intense exercise training.

By week four, protective immune antibodies in mucous secretions were increasing for the chlorella group, but not for placebo, and continued to increase during training and afterwards at rest. Both groups reported a similar number of URIs, but doctors believe chlorella would provide effective protection from respiratory infection by taking the supplement longer.

Curcumin better than anti-inflammatories

Rugby is an intense, high-impact physical sport. In this pilot study, 50 male rugby players complaining of muscle and joint pain from injury and exertion overload took a standard

analgesic anti-inflammatory or 1,000 mg of curcumin every 12 hours for up to 10 days.

Doctors measured pain and physical function before, during, and 10 days after the end of the supplement period. Both groups improved in pain and physical function compared to the start of the study, but 16 percent of those taking the standard analgesic complained of gastrointestinal side effects compared to 4 percent for curcumin.

Discussing the findings, doctors said even though the study sample size was small, curcumin appears to be a safe and effective remedy for relieving muscle and joint pain from intense, high-impact physical activity.

REFERENCE: EUROPEAN JOURNAL OF NUTRITION; AUGUST, 2017, PUBLISHED ONLINE



Healthy Lipids

Ginseng and melatonin improve lipid profiles and other health measures

Ginseng improves cholesterol in type 2 diabetes

Ginseng is an adaptogen—a substance that helps the body respond to stress, that has been used in Asia for centuries. American ginseng, native to North America and cultivated in China, is in such high demand that some U.S. states have declared it an endangered species.

In this study, 24 men and women



with type 2 diabetes, overweight with elevated long-term average blood sugar levels (HbA1C), took a placebo or 1,000 mg of American ginseng per day, in alternating eight-week phases.

While the placebo group did not improve, during the ginseng phase, LDL, the “bad” cholesterol, decreased an average of 12.3 percent, and the ratio of LDL to HDL, the “good” cholesterol, decreased 13.9 percent. Long-term and fasting blood sugar levels also declined, by 0.29 percent and 12.78 milligrams per deciliter of blood, respectively. Systolic blood pressure also declined by an average of 5.6 mmHg for ginseng.

Melatonin lowers cholesterol

Melatonin is a naturally occurring

hormone in the body best known for regulating the natural sleep-wake cycle. Recent research has expanded to include cognitive, musculoskeletal, and metabolic health. In this review, doctors analyzed findings from eight placebo-controlled trials of melatonin and lipids covering people aged 16 to 74.

Overall, those taking melatonin saw an average reduction in total cholesterol of 18.48 milligrams per deciliter of blood (mg/dL), and 32.54 mg/dL lower triglycerides. The best results occurred in studies lasting at least eight weeks that used doses of melatonin of at least 8 mg per day.

REFERENCE: EUROPEAN JOURNAL OF NUTRITION; FEBRUARY, 2018, PUBLISHED ONLINE

Stroke Update

Folic acid and ginkgo biloba help prevent and recover from stroke

Folic acid

Doctors in this large review analyzed findings from 11 placebo-controlled studies of 65,790 people with cardiovascular disease. Participants took a placebo, or folic acid alone or with other B-vitamins in doses ranging from 500 mcg to 5 mg per day, over 12 to 87 months.

Overall compared to placebo, those taking folic acid were 10 percent less likely to have experienced a stroke. In men and women who had at least a 25 percent reduction in the inflammatory factor homocysteine, those taking folic acid were 15 percent less likely to experience a stroke.

Discussing the findings, doctors said high levels of homocysteine increase chances for heart and circulatory problems, and that folic acid and other B-vitamins appear to reduce

homocysteine levels, lowering chances for stroke and other circulatory events.

Ginkgo biloba preserves executive function

Doctors in this study followed 330 people who had experienced an acute stroke caused by a blockage (ischemic) within the past seven days. Participants took 100 mg of aspirin per day, alone or with 150 mg of ginkgo biloba extract three times per day, along with standard therapy to control blood pressure, sugar, lipids, and protect the nervous system.

After six months, compared to placebo, those taking ginkgo biloba had higher scores on tests of cognitive skills, including memory, command and control functions, and greater improvement in muscle strength, reflex response, and speech.

Doctors monitored participants for two years, finding ginkgo biloba with aspirin alleviated cognitive and neurological deficits without increasing chances of another stroke.

REFERENCE: AMERICAN JOURNAL OF THE MEDICAL SCIENCES; 2017, VOL. 354, NO. 4, 379-87



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Gallstone Update

Vitamin E's antioxidant power is key

What are gallstones?

Gallstones are hardened deposits of digestive fluid (bile) in the gallbladder, ranging in size from a grain of sand to a golf ball, often forming with no symptoms. Causes include the gallbladder not emptying completely, excess cholesterol in bile or red blood-cell waste from the liver forming into bile crystals and eventually into stones, among other reasons.

Link to absorbing fat-soluble vitamins

Earlier studies found people with gallstones were less able to absorb vitamin E, and that gallbladder problems had a link to fat-soluble vitamin deficiency. In this study, doctors

measured vitamin E levels in 582 men and women, average age 62, then used ultrasound to detect gallstones.

Eight percent of participants had gallstones, were older, had lower circulating levels of alpha-tocopherol vitamin E, and lower alpha-tocopherol-to-cholesterol ratios than those without gallstones.

Discussing the findings, doctors said the results suggest higher levels of alpha-tocopherol vitamin E may protect against gallstones, and that supplementing with vitamin E may prevent gallstone formation.

REFERENCE: NUTRIENTS; 2018, 10(2), 133, PUBLISHED ONLINE

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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