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Anti-Inflammation

Nutrients reduce inflammation in obesity and type 2 diabetes

What is inflammation?

Inflammation is the immune system's natural response to help the body fight and heal from injury or bacterial infection. But low-level, chronic inflammation can lead to disease over the long term.

Aged garlic extract and obesity

Ancient civilizations used garlic to help maintain physical and mental health, and aging garlic stabilizes its sulfur compounds, allowing larger, more easily digestible doses. Extra weight can trigger inflammation, putting stress on body systems. In this study, 51 obese but otherwise healthy people, average age 45.6 years, took a placebo or 3,600 mg of aged garlic extract in three 1,200 mg doses per day. Doctors asked participants to maintain their regular diet and exercise schedule.

After six weeks, compared to placebo, the garlic group had significantly lower levels of two inflammatory factors: tumor necrosis factor alpha (TNF α) and interleukin-6 (IL-6). The garlic group also had lower levels of LDL—the “bad” cholesterol.

Discussing the findings, doctors said this may be the first study to test whether aged garlic extract may help prevent several chronic diseases linked to low-grade inflammation in



obese adults.

Vitamin D and type 2 diabetes

Doctors knew that chronic, low-grade inflammation precedes and exists in type 2 diabetes, and that vitamin D is a natural anti-inflammatory. This review of 20 placebo-controlled vitamin D studies covered 1,270 people with type 2 diabetes. The doses and forms of vitamin D in the studies varied, as did their durations.

Overall compared to placebo, those taking vitamin D had lower levels of the inflammatory factors C-reactive protein, TNF α , and fibrinogen, which causes red blood cells to stick together.

Commenting on the findings, doctors said chronic inflammation in type 2 diabetes triggers insulin resistance, imbalanced lipid levels, and circulatory problems, all of which vitamin D may be able to counteract by reducing inflammation.

REFERENCE: CLINICAL NUTRITION; APRIL, 2018, VOL. 24, 148-55

SEPTEMBER'S

Healthy Insight Probiotics for Cold & Flu

Probiotics stimulate the immune system and reduce cold and flu symptoms. In this study, 134 people with at least four colds or flu in the last year drank a placebo or a probiotic beverage containing lactobacillus paracasei, casei, and fermentium, for 12 weeks. Eleven in the placebo group reported a fever plus cough, nasal congestion, or headache, compared to three in the probiotics group. Symptoms also lasted longer for placebo. Doctors said blood tests suggest the probiotics benefit may come from an increase in interferon gamma levels, an immune response to viral and bacterial infections.

REFERENCE: SYNTHETIC AND SYSTEMS BIOTECHNOLOGY; 2018, VOL. 3, No. 2, 113-20

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Kids and Celiac

Nutrients may reduce onset of celiac disease and gluten intolerance

Vitamins A and D

In celiac disease, for those with a genetic predisposition, consuming gluten damages the small, fingerlike projections (villi) that line the intestinal wall, and that are responsible for absorbing nutrients into the body, eventually leading to nutritional deficiencies and often retarded growth. There is no treatment available other than observing a strictly gluten-free diet.

This study followed 102 children, aged 9 to 13, weighing between 36 and 50 pounds, about half of whom had celiac disease. Doctors measured levels of vitamin A and found 33 percent of kids with celiac disease were deficient compared to none of the healthy children. For vitamin D, 61.5 percent of the celiac kids were deficient compared to 4 percent for healthy kids, and nearly

all, 92.3 percent, of the celiac kids had insufficient levels of vitamin D compared to 18 percent of the healthy kids.

Probiotic immune support

In order to detect celiac disease, doctors measure levels of an autoimmune antibody called tissue transglutaminase IgA (tTGA). In this study, 78 children with a genetic predisposition to celiac disease took a placebo or the probiotics *L. plantarum* plus *L. paracasei*.

After six months, doctors found lower levels of tTGA in the probiotics group, while tTGA levels increased for placebo.

Discussing the findings, doctors said the probiotics had a “surprisingly consistent” effect of suppressing celiac

autoimmunity and gluten intolerance, and that probiotics appear to support the immune response and may delay the onset in children genetically predisposed to celiac disease.

REFERENCE: BMC PEDIATRICS; APRIL, 2018, PUBLISHED ONLINE



Mood

Omega-3s reduced symptoms of depression

DHA improves depression scores

This was a small pilot study, without placebo, that included 28 adults with major depression who had not responded to medication or psychotherapy. Participants took 260



mg or 520 mg of the omega-3 DHA per day.

After eight weeks, 54 percent overall saw at least a 50 percent reduction in depression symptom scores, and 45 percent were in clinical remission, regardless of the dose of DHA.

Discussing the findings, doctors said the study, although small, is important because the clinical benefit was large, and because it focused on the omega-3, DHA, while most other depression studies using omega-3s have focused on the omega-3 EPA.

Omega-3s plus healthy diet

Doctors wanted to know if adding fish oil supplements to a Mediterranean-style diet would reduce depression symptoms. In this study, 152 adults

self-reporting depression attended a Mediterranean cooking class every two weeks for three months. Half the group also received a food basket every two weeks with healthy foods, and took 450 mg of DHA plus 100 mg of EPA, twice per day, for six months.

After three months, those in the healthy food basket plus DHA with EPA group saw a 45 percent improvement in depression symptom scores, including anxiety and stress, compared to 26.8 percent for the group attending cooking classes with no dietary changes or omega-3 supplements.

Doctors said this is one of the first trials to show healthy dietary changes plus fish oil supplements can improve mental health in those with depression.

REFERENCE: NUTRITIONAL NEUROSCIENCE; 2018, VOL. 21, No. 3, 224-8

Heart

Nutrients increase heart and circulatory health, and longevity

Garlic extract

Garlic extract improved circulation and reduced chronic inflammation in obese individuals. In this study, 88 obese men and women, aged 25 to 60, with no history of high blood pressure, coronary artery disease, stroke, or congestive heart failure, took 400 mg per day of garlic extract, or a placebo.

After three months, while there was no change for placebo, arterial stiffness



had improved, becoming more flexible and lowering chances for a circulatory event. Also for garlic, levels of high-sensitivity C-reactive protein—an inflammatory factor—declined, as did LDL, the “bad” cholesterol, while total antioxidant capacity increased.

Discussing the findings, doctors said the results show, in obese individuals, garlic extract may improve arterial flexibility, reduce chronic inflammation, and lower chances for heart and circulatory events.

Selenium and CoQ10

This report is a follow-up two years after the end of a 10-year study published earlier. The initial trial followed 443 Swedish men and women,

aged 78 to 85 at the start, who took 200 mg of CoQ10 plus 200 mcg of selenium per day for the first four years. Doctors also followed a similar group of 222 individuals who did not take supplements.

After 12 years, chances of having died from a heart or circulatory event were 41 percent lower for the CoQ10-selenium group compared to the non-supplement group.

Discussing the findings, doctors said the results at 12 years validate the findings at 10 years; that even eight years after stopping supplementing, people who had taken CoQ10 and selenium were much less likely to have died from heart and circulatory factors.

REFERENCE: BIOMEDICINE & PHARMACOTHERAPY; 2018, VOL. 102, 792-7

Performance

Creatine, electrolytes, whey protein boost exercise performance, strength

Creatine and electrolytes for endurance

Body builders have used creatine for muscle growth, but new research suggests an endurance benefit as well. In this study, 25 male recreational cyclists, aged 19 to 33, took a placebo or 4 grams of creatine monohydrate plus four electrolytes: 114 mg sodium chloride, 171 mg calcium chloride, 286 mg magnesium chloride, and 171 mg potassium chloride, per day.

Before and after the six-week supplement period, the cyclists performed five short-duration sprints, resting two minutes between each. While there was no change for placebo, compared to the start of the study, those taking creatine plus electrolytes saw a 4 percent increase in overall, repeated peak power, and a 5 percent increase

in average power. The study is the first to observe an endurance benefit for creatine, doctors said.

Whey protein for older women

As the body ages, muscles naturally lose strength and mass. In this study, 70 older women took a placebo or 35 grams of whey protein before or after three resistance training sessions per week for 12 weeks. Prior to the study, the women had practiced resistance training to pre-condition their bodies.

Compared to placebo, women who had taken whey protein either before or after resistance training saw increases in skeletal muscle mass, lower limb lean soft tissue, muscular strength, and functional capacity.

Commenting on the results, doctors said taking whey protein before or after

resistance training may prevent loss of muscle mass and strength, and improve physical functioning in older adult women.

REFERENCE: JOURNAL OF THE INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY OF SPORTS NUTRITION; MAY, 2018, PUBLISHED ONLINE



Holly Hill Health Foods
1200 Welsh Road
North Wales, PA 19454
(215) 361-7770
www.hollyhillvitamins.com

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Avoiding Stroke

Folic acid may help prevent a first stroke

The blood-clotting factor

New findings suggest B-vitamins can reduce chances of stroke. In this study, doctors followed 10,789 Chinese men and women, average age 59.5 years, with high blood pressure—a factor in stroke—but who had never had a stroke. Participants took 10 mg of the blood pressure medication enalapril, with or without 800 mcg of folic acid per day.

Doctors also measured factors that can contribute to stroke: platelets, which help the body form blood clots after injury; and homocysteine, an inflammatory factor that influences circulatory health. Low platelet counts and high homocysteine levels increase chances for stroke, doctors said. None were taking anti-platelet drugs.

After 4.2 years, in the enalapril-only

group, as platelet counts decreased and inflammation levels rose, chances for a first stroke increased. For those taking folic acid with enalapril, compared to enalapril alone, chances for a first stroke declined by 73 percent for those with the lowest platelet counts and highest inflammation levels. Identifying those who would benefit most from taking folic acid supplements may be a simple, safe, and inexpensive way to reduce the chances of a first stroke.

REFERENCE: JOURNAL OF THE AMERICAN COLLEGE OF CARDIOLOGY; MAY, 2018, VOL. 71, NO. 19



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