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Brain Health

Antioxidants, Alzheimer's disease, memory, and attention

Flavonols lower chances for AD

The green, orange, red, and yellow pigments in many plants contain powerful antioxidants called flavonols, some of which appear to lower chances for Alzheimer's disease (AD). In this study, doctors measured flavonols in the diets of 921 adults, average age 81, all of whom began the study without AD.

In each of six years, doctors asked participants to complete a food questionnaire and tested for signs of AD. During the six-year study period, those that got an average of 15.3 mg of flavonols per day were half as likely to develop AD compared to those who got the least, 5.3 mg per day. The results remained after adjusting for other health, lifestyle, income, and educational factors.

In an innovative result of the study, doctors broke down flavonols into four types: isorhamnetin, kaempferol, myricetin, and quercetin. All flavonols except quercetin had a link to reducing chances for AD.

Polyphenols improve student performance

Fruits are rich in antioxidant polyphenols. In this study, 30 healthy students took a placebo or an extract containing 600 mg of grape and blueberry polyphenols, then later,



repeated by switching treatment and placebo. Ninety minutes after each dose, students took an hour-long battery of cognitively demanding tests, including multiple subtraction tasks, rapid visual image processing, and responding with degrees of agreement or disagreement to a series of questions.

Overall, compared to placebo, during the grape-blueberry extract phases, students increased the total number of answers they achieved, increased the number of correct answers, and in the subtraction tasks, increased correct answers by 2.5 times as a percentage of the total.

Discussing the findings, doctors said, under cognitively demanding conditions, the students felt an alteration in mental fatigue, alertness, anxiety, and cognitive performance.

REFERENCE: NEUROLOGY; 2020, WNL8981, PUBLISHED ONLINE

JUNE'S

Healthy Insight Daily D and Calcium for Bones

This review of 28 studies covering over 120,000 people found those who combined 800 IU of vitamin D per day along with 1,000 to 1,200 mg of calcium per day, for approximately six years, were 6 percent less likely to have any bone fracture, and were 16 percent less likely to have a fracture of the hip. Doctors said the benefits depended on consuming D and calcium daily, not intermittently.

Also, each increase in circulating vitamin D levels of 10 nanograms per milliliter of blood reduced chances of any bone fracture by 7 percent, and by 20 percent for hip fracture.

REFERENCE: JAMA NETWORK; 2019, ARTICLE No. 2757873, PUBLISHED ONLINE

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Healthy Men

Pycnogenol and omega-3s boost men's health

Pycnogenol improved ED

Men with erectile dysfunction (ED) often have other health issues, such as lack of sleep and stress, and men with type 2 diabetes are three times more likely to develop ED than men without. In this study, 53 men with ED, 32 with type 2 diabetes and 21 without, took a placebo or 120 mg of Pycnogenol® per day.

After three months, among those taking Pycnogenol, men with diabetes reported a 45 percent improvement in ED symptoms vs. a 22 percent improvement for men without diabetes, both significant improvements.

Also, LDL cholesterol levels declined for those taking Pycnogenol: 20 percent for men with diabetes and

14 percent for those without. Men with diabetes taking Pycnogenol also saw 22 percent lower glucose levels. There were no significant changes for any of these measures in the placebo group.

Omega-3s improved heart and circulation

Keeping a healthy flow of blood to the brain helps maintain cognitive function with age, but being sedentary, overweight, or obese can reduce cerebral circulation. In this study, 152 sedentary, overweight, and obese participants, aged 50 to 80, took 2,000 mg of DHA plus 400 mg of EPA per day; 160 mg of curcumin per day, or combined the omega-3s and curcumin.

Curcumin alone had no effect,

but after 16 weeks, those taking the omega-3s with or without curcumin saw significant improvement in cerebral artery flexibility, a 3 percent average decline in heart rate, a 24 percent decline in triglycerides, and an 8 percent increase in HDL, the “good” cholesterol.

REFERENCE: BRATISLAVA MEDICAL JOURNAL; 2019, VOL. 120, No. 12, 941-4



Be Younger, Feel Better

Selenium increases telomeres, chili boosts metabolism

Selenium increases telomere length

During their lifespan, cells divide and replicate a limited number of times. The limiting factor is telomeres, the protective material at the end of each strand of chromosomes that help maintain genetic integrity. Each division shortens telomeres, eventually leaving chromosomes unprotected, unable to reproduce properly. Longer telomeres suggest a younger biological age. Earlier studies found telomeres are susceptible to oxidative stress and inflammation.

In this study, doctors measured white blood cell telomere length in 3,194 men and women, aged at least 45, and found those that got the most selenium had longer telomeres compared to those who got the least. Each 20 mcg increase in daily selenium corresponded to 0.42 percent longer telomeres.

Discussing the findings, doctors

said selenium has proteins and enzymes with strong antioxidant and anti-inflammatory effects, which is what led them to explore a connection to telomere length.



Chili pepper boosts activity, reduces body fat

Earlier studies found capsinoids from chili peppers improved metabolism and reduced body fat mass. In this study, 69 men and women, average age 74, took a placebo or 9 mg of capsinoids per day, in divided doses.

After three months, while there were no changes for placebo, those taking capsinoids significantly increased physical activity and oxygen consumption compared to the start of the study, burning 562 calories per day, up from 481 calories.

Also in the capsinoid group, participants saw a significant decrease in waist size, and had lower levels of abdominal fat. In participants over 80, capsinoids reduced unexplained chills, a finding consistent with earlier studies.

REFERENCE: CLINICAL NUTRITION; 2020, S0261-5614, PUBLISHED ONLINE

Liver & Kidney

Vegetable compound and vitamin E aid liver and kidney

Indole improves fatty liver

Indole is an anti-inflammatory compound in cruciferous vegetables such as Brussels sprouts, cabbage, cauliflower, and kale. Non-alcoholic fatty liver disease (NAFLD) develops when diets have too many unhealthy fats and sugars. In one study, doctors measured indole levels in 137 people



and found those who were clinically obese had lower indole levels and higher fat deposits in the liver compared to healthy-weight participants.

In a separate lab study, indole significantly decreased fat accumulation and inflammation in the liver. And in a cell study, indole reduced the amount of fat in liver cells, and also acted on intestinal cells, which sent out anti-inflammatory signals to the body.

Discussing the findings, doctors said indole exists in gut bacteria, and the link between the gut and liver suggests a promising dietary approach to treating or preventing NAFLD.

Vitamin E improves diabetic kidney function

Chronic high blood sugar levels in

type 2 diabetes contribute to kidney dysfunction. In this multicenter study, 54 participants with type 2 diabetes and elevated long-term average blood sugar levels (HbA1c, or A1C) took a placebo or 200 mg of tocotrienol-rich vitamin E.

After 12 weeks, those taking vitamin E saw a significant decrease in creatine levels, and an increase in creatine filtering through the kidney—meaning improved kidney function—while the placebo group deteriorated in these two measures.

Doctors followed participants six to nine months after the treatment period and found creatine levels remained stable in the vitamin E group while fluctuating 13 times more for placebo.

REFERENCE: AASLD HEPATOLOGY; 2020, 31115, PUBLISHED ONLINE

Digestion

Probiotics calm and heal the digestive system

Probiotics reduced H. pylori

About half the world's population carries the H. pylori bacteria, most without the symptoms that can lead to ulcers. Side effects of standard antibiotic and antacid treatments are common and increasing, while the treatments' effectiveness is decreasing.

In this analysis of 40 studies covering 8,924 people with H. pylori, overall, 81.5 percent of those that took probiotics eradicated H. pylori compared to 71.6 percent for placebo.

After an average of two weeks, 92.6 percent of participants taking probiotics were free of H. pylori. When doctors added antibiotic and antacid treatment, 99.9 percent in the probiotics groups were H. pylori-free. Side effects, which are common with standard antibiotics and antacids, were 18.9 percent for

probiotics, and 39 percent for placebo. Lactobacillus and multiple probiotic strains were most effective.

Probiotics for acid reflux

Gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD) occurs when stomach acid backs up into and irritates the esophagus, creating a variety of indigestion symptoms including regurgitation and heartburn. In this review of 14 studies lasting from one to 12 weeks, single or multi-strain probiotic doses ranged from 50 million to 46 billion colony-forming units per day.

Eleven of the 14 studies reported positive results for probiotics reducing symptoms or eradicating GERD. Probiotic strains in the studies included bifidobacterium (B.) animalis, B.

bifidum, B. lactis, and lactobacillus (L.) acidophilus, L. casei, L. gasseri, L. plantarum, L. reuteri, and L. rhamnosus.

There is little research on probiotics for upper gastrointestinal health, and these beneficial findings suggest larger and longer studies to determine the best approach.

REFERENCE: MEDICINE (BALTIMORE); 2019, VOL. 15, E15180, PUBLISHED ONLINE



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Lemon Balm for Postpartum

Herb from the mint family eases pain

Improves quality of life after childbirth

Natural childbirth comes with painful postpartum contractions in eight out of 10 women, and can interfere with breast feeding and mother-child bonding. Lemon balm has sedative and anti-spasmodic properties.

In this study, 110 women began taking the NSAID medication mefenamic acid or 395 mg of pure lemon balm extract after delivery, repeating each six hours during the first 24 hours.

There were no significant differences in pain intensity between the two groups after the first dose, but after the third and fourth doses, those taking lemon balm reported lower

pain symptom severity scores. Overall, pain symptom scores decreased in both groups, but decreased more for lemon balm, with average pain severity less for lemon balm at all times after delivery.

Discussing the findings, doctors said lemon balm was superior to mefenamic acid in reducing the severity of pain post-delivery and eliminated the need for pharmaceutical pain relievers.

REFERENCE: JOURNAL OF CARING SCIENCES; 2019, VOL. 8, No. 3, 129-38



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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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