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Natural Insights for Well Being®

February 2017

Better Circulation

Nutrients protect against heart disease in type 2 diabetes, and stroke in the general population

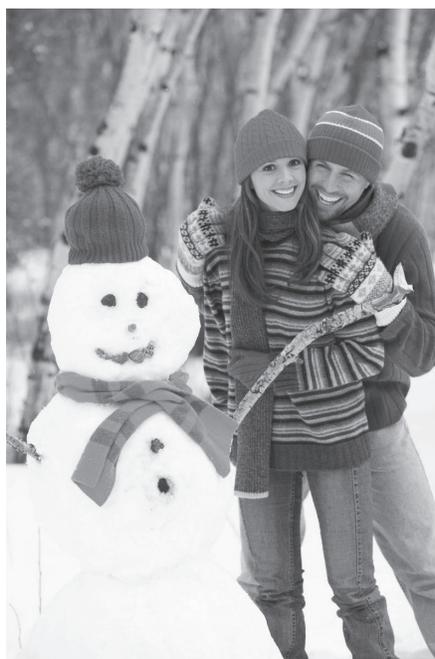
Zinc benefit in type 2 diabetes

Earlier studies found zinc health benefits in type 2 diabetes, but its effect on heart disease in diabetics needs more study. Doctors reviewed 14 scientific papers covering 91,708 people with cardiovascular disease and another 334,378 with type 2 diabetes to find a relationship between zinc levels and heart disease.

Overall, those who were less healthy, including people with circulatory problems or type 2 diabetes, were less likely to have cardiovascular disease when zinc levels were higher. One study found those with type 2 diabetes and zinc levels below 14.1 micromoles per liter of blood were 37 percent more likely to have a heart attack compared to those with higher zinc levels. Another study found those with poor circulation and zinc levels below 11.9 micromoles per liter were more likely to die from heart disease than similar people with higher zinc levels.

Folic acid, stroke, and heart disease

Doctors wanted to know what effect folic acid supplements have on those seriously ill, and reviewed 30 placebo-controlled studies covering 82,334 participants with pre-existing high blood pressure, cardiovascular or kidney



disease, or complications from diabetes.

Overall, those taking high doses of folic acid under strict medical supervision were 10 percent less likely to have a stroke, and 4 percent less likely to develop cardiovascular disease compared to those who did not take folic acid supplements. In 23 of the studies, those taking folic acid supplements saw levels of the inflammatory factor homocysteine decrease by 10.9 to 57.7 percent. High levels of homocysteine can lead to hardening and thickening of the arteries, raising chances for stroke, doctors said.

REFERENCE: NUTRIENTS; 2016, VOL. 8, NO. 11, 707

FEBRUARY'S

Healthy Insight Açaí Aids Circulation

Açaí fruit is rich in polyphenols that may improve circulation. In this study, 23 healthy overweight men, age 30 to 65, drank an açaí smoothie containing 694 mg total phenolics, or a placebo smoothie, along with a high-fat breakfast. Two hours later, blood vessel function and flexibility had improved by 1.4 percent for açaí and 0.4 percent for placebo, compared to the start of the study.

Açaí drinkers also had fewer signs of oxidative stress. Doctors said a 1 percent improvement in circulation may lower the chances of a heart or circulatory adverse event by 15 percent.

REFERENCE: AMERICAN JOURNAL OF CLINICAL NUTRITION; SEPTEMBER, 2016, PUBLISHED ONLINE

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Better Mood

Nutrients help ease symptoms of depression

Nutrients complement antidepressant effects

A high percentage of those who have depression do not reach remission after one or two courses of antidepressant medication, and hundreds of millions currently take these drugs worldwide. To see if a nutritional approach might improve results, doctors reviewed 40 clinical trials that used vitamins and other nutritional supplements along with standard antidepressants.

Overall, those treating depression with antidepressants who added omega-3 fish oil supplements, SAME, methylfolate—the bioactive form of folate—or vitamin D had better results than those taking antidepressants alone. The strongest finding was for omega-3, which had a statistically significant effect over placebo.

There were no major safety

concerns in combining antidepressants with nutritional supplements, and the findings suggest there is great potential to improve the mental health of people who respond inadequately to antidepressants alone, doctors concluded.

Flavonoids reduce depression in women

In this long-term study of 82,643 women, age 36 to 80, who began the study without depression, doctors measured total flavonoids in the diet every two to four years, and chances for depression.

Women who consumed the most flavanols, flavones, and flavanones were 7 to 10 percent less likely to develop depression over the course of the study, with those at least age 65 at the start of the study showing the greatest benefit.

Those who got two or more servings per day of citrus fruit or juice were 18 percent less likely to develop depression compared to women who got less than one serving per week. Flavones and proanthocyanidins were most effective in lowering chances for depression, doctors said.

REFERENCE: AMERICAN JOURNAL OF PSYCHIATRY; 2016, VOL. 173, No. 6, 575-87



Healthy Skin

Nutrients protect skin in children and adults

B-vitamins reduce infant eczema

Doctors are beginning to think that eczema may start in the womb, with evidence increasing of a direct link to maternal diet. In this study, researchers

measured levels of nicotinamide, a form of vitamin B3, in 497 pregnant women, and then determined chances of their children developing eczema.

While the effects of nicotinamide in mothers' diets did not appear when doctors tested the babies at six months, by 12 months of age, infants whose moms had higher levels of nicotinamide during pregnancy were less likely to have developed allergic, or atopic, eczema compared to infants whose moms had lower nicotinamide levels.

Lycopene, lutein protect from sun damage

In this study, 65 volunteers, age 18 to 60, took 20 mg of a tomato nutrient complex per day, 20 mg of lutein per

day, or a matching placebo for each of these supplements, in two alternating phases. Doctors exposed areas of the skin to ultraviolet-A1 light at the start and end of each 12-week phase.

Those taking lycopene had lower levels of oxidizing enzymes that break down collagen and elastin. Those taking lutein also saw lower levels of inflammatory response to UV-A1 light.

Discussing the findings, doctors said taking lycopene and lutein can inhibit oxidative stress on the skin in general from UV-A1 radiation, and can protect against photo-aging, skin rashes and skin cancer specifically when skin is exposed to UV-A1 light.

REFERENCE: CLINICAL & EXPERIMENTAL ALLERGY; 2016, VOL. 46, No. 10, 1337-43



Multiple Sclerosis Update

Nutrients reduce symptoms and protect against MS

Mediterranean diet protects against MS

In the first study of its type, doctors examined the link between the Mediterranean diet and chances of developing multiple sclerosis (MS). In the study, researchers compared the diets of 70 men and women with MS to 142 people without MS.

Overall, men and women who



consumed more fruits or vegetables were more than 70 percent less likely to develop MS compared to those who got less fruits or vegetables. Doctors also found a link to refined grains: those who consumed more refined grains were more likely to develop MS.

Fruits, vegetables and whole grains are good sources of fiber, and fiber-rich foods play an important role in preventing chronic diseases because of the bioactive, antioxidant, and anti-carcinogenic properties these foods possess, doctors said.

Vitamin D reduces MS lesions

Low levels of vitamin D appear to increase chances for MS and speed its progression. In this study, doctors

measured vitamin D levels in 1,482 people with MS, and monitored them every three months for at least two years, with magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) to track progress annually for 10 years. Participants were taking interferon- β as standard treatment.

Overall, the higher the level of vitamin D, the lower the number of new, active neural lesions forming between the start of the study and the last MRI scan. Each increase in vitamin D of 50 nanomoles per liter of blood reduced the rate of new lesions by 31 percent. Those whose vitamin D levels were 100 nanomoles per liter had the lowest rate of new lesions.

REFERENCE: ASIA-PACIFIC JOURNAL OF CLINICAL NUTRITION; 2016, VOL. 25, NO. 2, 377-84

Ahead of the Curve

Early-Stage Discoveries: Xylitol, Boysenberry, Green Soybean Extract

Good results in the lab can lead to larger human trials. Here are some of the most promising recent findings.

Xylitol reduced oral bacteria

In the lab, doctors simulated the oral cavity environment, with a tooth-like calcium surface, and a continuous flow of artificial saliva. Doctors exposed the cavity to three strains of *S. mutans* bacteria and one strain of streptococcus sobrinus bacteria, then washed the cavity with sucrose or xylitol. Sucrose increased the bacteria count and xylitol reduced bacteria count, even in the sucrose environment, potentially reducing the chances for cavities and gum disease.

Boysenberry improved lung function

Polyphenol-rich fruits improve lung function, but doctors don't know how. In the lab, doctors gave boysenberry to

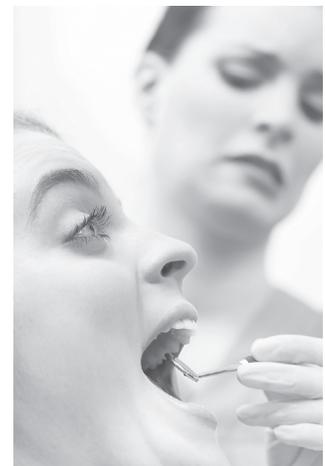
mice with asthma and chronic airway inflammation. Boysenberry appeared to activate two agents: arginase which regulates lung inflammation, and metalloproteinase-9 which helps lung tissue remodeling. Boysenberry also activated immune cells that assist in the tissue-repair process.

Green soybean extract improved memory

The brain is highly sensitive to oxidative damage, and green soybeans contain isoflavones, proteins, phytoestrogens, oligosaccharides, fiber and minerals which doctors believe act synergistically. In the lab, older mice that got green soybean extract had less beta-amyloid accumulation, a factor

in dementia, and less DNA oxidative damage in the cerebellum. Green soybean reduced learning time, and after one month, improved memory.

REFERENCE: ARCHIVES OF ORAL BIOLOGY; OCTOBER, 2016, VOL. 70, 39-463



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FEBRUARY'S

Recipe

Simple Açaí Smoothie

While you enjoy this easy-to-make, easy-to-drink smoothie, please see page 1 for a new study that found overweight men who took açaí had better circulation.

Ingredients:

- 1 c coconut or almond milk
- 3.5 oz frozen açaí puree, or
 - 1 tbsp açaí powder, or
 - 2 tbsp açaí juice
- 1 banana, fresh or frozen
- 1 tbsp raw cacao powder
- 1 tbsp coconut oil
- 1-2 tsp honey, stevia, or maple syrup (optional)



Directions: Combine all ingredients in a blender, blend on high speed until smooth, and serve immediately.

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.

These articles provide nutritional information only and do not replace professional medical advice.

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