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Nutley Nutrition Center

NEWS

Better information for living, naturally

Everyday nutrients help women avoid cancer

In breast cancer, vitamin D, calcium, alpha- and beta-carotene, and vitamin supplements lowered the chances, several new studies reveal.

Doctors analyzed 21 studies on vitamin D and breast cancer and found that women who consumed the most vitamin D from diet and supplements were 9 percent less likely to have breast cancer than women who consumed the least. When researchers looked at levels of vitamin D reserves in the body, women with the highest levels were 45 percent less likely to have breast cancer than women with the lowest reserves. In analyzing 15 calcium studies, doctors found that women who consumed the most calcium were 19 percent less likely to have breast cancer compared to women who consumed the least.

In a carotenoid study, doctors measured the diets of 36,664 women and followed up for over nine years. While there was no link to overall chances of breast cancer, female smokers who consumed the most alpha- and beta-carotene were 60 percent less likely to have hormone-sensitive breast cancer than women who consumed the least.

At the 101st Annual Meeting of the American Association for Cancer Research, April, 2010, in Washington, D.C., researchers reported that, compared to women who did not take vitamin supplements, women who did were 30 percent less likely to have breast cancer, and those who took calcium supplements were 40 percent less likely. The study involved 268 women with breast cancer and 457 healthy women. Women who took vitamins had greater capacity to repair damaged DNA than those who did not. The vitamins and calcium supplements were not high-dose, "So this is definitely one way to reduce risk," doctors concluded.

Reference: Breast Cancer Research and Treatment; 2009, October, Electronic Prepublication

Hibiscus sabdariffa tea may help lower blood pressure

In a double blind study published in the Journal of Human Hypertension, sixty diabetic patients with mild hypertension who were not taking either blood-pressure-lowering or cholesterol-lowering medications were randomly assigned to drink either Hibiscus sabdariffa tea or black tea two times a day for a month. Their blood pressure (BP) was measured on days 0, 15 and 30 of the study. According to the study abstract, the average systolic blood pressure in the group drinking the Hibiscus sabdariffa tea decreased from 134.4±11.8mmHg at the beginning of the study to 112.7±5.7mmHg after 1 month. In the group drinking black tea "this measure changed from 118.6±14.9 to 127.3±8.7mmHg" in the same period.

The study concluded that consuming Hibiscus sabdariffa tea "had positive effects on BP in type II diabetic patients with mild hypertension", and that "This study supports the results of similar studies in which antihypertensive effects have been shown for ST (Hibiscus sabdariffa tea)"

Reference: *Journal of Human Hypertension* 23, 48-54 (January 2009) | doi:10.1038/jnh.2008.100

Nutley Nutrition Center

David Okupniak

377 Centre Street Nutley, NJ 07110

973-667-9446

www.nutleynutrition.com

e-mail: mail@nutleynutrition.com

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Preserving Youth

Telomeres may be a key to younger biological age

People with higher levels of omega-3s and men who drank the most green tea had longer telomeres, a sign of younger, healthier cells, new studies reveal.

Telomeres—the protective caps at the ends of chromosome DNA strands that contain our genetic code—are like the tip of a shoelace that keeps it from unraveling. When a cell divides, the new cell must take with it a complete copy of the DNA strand to function properly. Long, healthy telomeres on the ends of each chromosome allow the new cell to get a complete DNA copy. Age, stress, and poor nutrition can erode telomeres, eventually damaging chromosomes and any new cells. Doctors are beginning to gauge biological age by telomere length.

Doctors in a telomere study measured blood levels of omega-3s and the length of white-blood-cell telomeres in 608 outpatients with stable coronary artery disease and followed up for five years. Those who started the study with the lowest levels of docosahexaenoic and eicosapentaenoic acids (DHA and EPA) had the most rapid telomere shortening, and those with the highest DHA and EPA levels had the slowest telomere shortening. Researchers found a direct link: the higher the level of DHA and EPA, the less likely telomeres were to shorten. Doctors concluded that omega-3s may protect against cellular aging in those with coronary artery disease.

In another telomere study, researchers measured the diets and telomere length in 2006 Chinese men and women, aged at least 65. After adjusting for environmental and demographic factors, women who consumed more fats and oils had shorter telomeres compared to women who ate fewer fats and oils. Men who drank the most green tea, about 25 ounces per day, had much longer telomeres compared to men who drank the least. Doctors said the average difference in telomere length in the men equaled about five years of life.

Reference: Journal of the American Medical Association; 2010, Vol. 303, No. 3, 250-7

Feeling Better

Red clover extract helped reduce symptoms of depression and anxiety in postmenopausal women

Doctors in a depression study explained that red clover contains antioxidants known as isoflavones, or plant estrogens, and wanted to see how isoflavones would affect depression symptoms in women. In the study, 109 postmenopausal women diagnosed with depression and anxiety, average age 54, took 80 mg of red clover extract per day, or a placebo. After 90 days, the women switched red clover and placebo and continued for another 90 days.

At the beginning and after each phase of the study, the women rated their emotional, social, and physical experiences during the previous week, including the ability to perform everyday tasks. In addition, the women described the effect their symptoms had on overall mood, sensitivity, bodily well being, and physical activity.

Compared to the start of the study, after taking the placebo, women reported an average of 22 percent fewer symptoms of depression and anxiety, and after taking red clover, about 77 percent fewer symptoms.

Reference: Maturitas; 2010, Vol. 65, No. 3, 258-61

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Healthier Hearts, Longer Lives

Women with better nutrient levels had less heart trouble and greater lifespan

Those with higher levels of vitamin B6 had fewer heart attacks, and women with higher vitamin D levels lived longer and had less inflammation, in several new studies.

A study from the American Heart Association compared 144 women who had had a heart attack to 288 women of similar age and lifestyle who had not. Doctors measured levels of pyridoxal 5' phosphate, the active form of vitamin B6, and homocysteine, an amino acid, high levels of which raise chances of cardiovascular disease. Women with higher vitamin B6 levels consumed more B6, had lower body mass index, and lower homocysteine levels compared to those with lower B6 levels. Women with the highest B6 levels were 78 percent less likely to have had a heart attack than those with the least.

In a survival study, researchers measured vitamin D levels in 714 women, aged 70 to 79, and followed up for six years. Women with the highest vitamin D levels, more than 27 nanograms per milliliter of blood, were 60 percent less likely to have died from any cause compared to women with the lowest levels. Doctors believe vitamin D may help control inflammation, immunity, blood pressure, and hardening of the arteries.

In an inflammation study, researchers measured the diets and vitamin D levels in 69 healthy women aged 25 to 82, who had either high or low sun exposure. Vitamin D levels in the high sun-exposure group were 52 ng/mL compared to 30 ng/mL for low exposure. In the low-vitamin D group, one sign of inflammation was higher than in the high-vitamin D group, leading doctors to conclude that, "Low vitamin D levels negatively impact inflammation and immune response, even in healthy women."

Reference: *Circulation*; 2009, Vol. 120, 649-55



Zinc Improves Mood in Women

Doctors in a pilot study said zinc helps the brain develop and function and wanted to see if the nutrient could improve mood. Thirty young women took a multivitamin or a multivitamin plus 7 mg of zinc per day. After 10 weeks, compared to those who didn't take zinc, the zinc group had higher blood levels of zinc and better (lower) scores for anger, hostility, depression, and dejection. Researchers used the Profile of Mood States, or POMS test, which quickly and accurately measures the effects of different treatments, including subtle changes in mood. Doctors concluded zinc supplements may help reduce anger and depression.

Reference: *European Journal of Clinical Nutrition*; 2010, Vol. 64, No. 3, 331-3

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