



October, 2011

# Nutley Nutrition Center

## NEWS



Better information for living, naturally



## Feeling Better

### Nutrients ease depression in healthy people and those with chronic disease



Men with good folate levels were less likely to be depressed, omega-3s eased depression in diabetes and Parkinson's disease, and coenzyme Q10 helped improve mood and reduce fatigue, in several new studies.

In a depression study, doctors measured blood levels of folate in 530 men and women. More than one-third in each group had depressive symptoms. While there was no link between folate and depression in women, men with the most folate were half as likely to have depressive symptoms as men with the lowest levels.

Doctors in a depression study said that type 2 diabetics may become depressed as a side effect of cardiovascular disease complications, and that anti-depressants improve symptoms only in about half of depressed diabetics. The scientists reviewed 17 depression/omega-3 studies and found that those with higher omega-3 levels were less likely to be depressed than those with lower levels, and believe that by reducing the chances of cardiovascular disease complications, omega-3s indirectly reduce depression.

Researchers in an omega-3 study gave 29 people, average age 64, with Parkinson's disease and major depression, omega-3 fish oil capsules or a placebo for three months. While there was no change for placebo, 42 percent of those in the omega-3 group cut depressive symptoms by at least half, and depression went into remission for 22 percent.

In another depression study, researchers compared coenzyme Q10 blood levels in 35 depressed people—who had not responded to anti-depressants—to 22 healthy people. More than half of the depressed group had lower levels of CoQ10 than the lowest levels in the healthy group. Doctors also found that those with lower CoQ10 levels were more likely to have chronic fatigue syndrome.

In a related study, researchers compared CoQ10 levels in 58 people with chronic fatigue syndrome to 22 healthy people and found that nearly half had lower levels of CoQ10 than the lowest levels in the healthy folks.

Reference: European Journal of Clinical Nutrition; January, 2010

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## Nutley Nutrition Center

David Okupniak

377 Centre Street Nutley, NJ 07110

973-667-9446

[www.nutleynutrition.com](http://www.nutleynutrition.com)

e-mail: [mail@nutleynutrition.com](mailto:mail@nutleynutrition.com)

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The information herein is not intended as a substitute for medical diagnosis or treatment. Anyone who has a serious disease should consult a physician before initiating any change in treatment or before beginning any new treatment.

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# Helping Our Furry Friends Feel Better

Omega-3 fatty acids, collagen, glucosamine, and chondroitin all improve symptoms of arthritis in dogs, in several new studies.



In an omega-3 study, veterinarians examined 38 privately-owned pet dogs with osteoarthritis and gave commercial food or a test food containing 3.5 percent omega-3 fish oil. After 90 days, dogs that ate the omega-3s could bear 5.4 percent more weight on the weakest leg compared to 0.4 percent for placebo. Measuring maximum resistance, 82 percent of the omega-3 dogs improved, compared to 38 percent for placebo. The omega-3 dogs also were much less lame compared to the start of the study.

In another omega-3 study, 127 pet dogs with arthritis in one or more joints ate a commercial dog food or a test food that contained much higher levels of omega-3s and had a lower ratio of omega-6s to omega-3s. After six months, the omega-3 dogs had much higher blood levels of omega-3s and lower levels of omega-6s. While there was no change for the commercial-food group, dog owners reported that the omega-3 dogs got up faster from a resting position, played more, and walked better than at the start of the study.

In an arthritis study, 20 arthritic pet dogs took 10 mg of undenatured type II collagen alone, 2,000 mg of glucosamine plus 1,600 mg of chondroitin alone, these two supplements together, or a placebo. After 120 days, while there was no change for the placebo group, dogs in all three other groups had much less pain overall and after limb manipulation, and much less lameness after exercise, compared to the start of the study.

Reference: *Journal of the American Veterinary Medical Association*; 2010, Vol. 236, No. 1, 67

## Reducing stress

**L-theanine**, an amino acid that occurs in green tea leaves, **reduced heart rate and lowered signs of stress** in a new study. In order to create a severely stressful situation, researchers gave a mental arithmetic task to 12 participants in four separate trials. In one of the four double-blind trials, participants took L-theanine at the beginning of the mental math task. In a second variation, participants took L-theanine halfway through the task. In a third trial, participants took a placebo at the beginning of the task, and in a fourth, nothing at all.

Compared to the placebo group, **those in the L-theanine group had lower heart rates and lower amounts of a stress marker in the saliva** (immunoglobulin), which the immune system releases as a response to foreign objects, such as bacteria or viruses.

The researchers theorized that **L-theanine suppresses the sympathetic nervous system**, which is the part of the involuntary (autonomic) nervous system that prepares the body to respond to acute stress or emergency situations. According to the scientists, **L-theanine blocks the chemical** (L-glutamic acid, or glutamate) **that is primarily responsible for carrying electrical signals** (neurotransmission) **from nerve cells to other cells in the body**. The doctors stated that L-theanine may influence both body (physiology) and mind (psychology) under stress, and concluded that taking an oral L-theanine supplement may reduce the effects of acute stress.

Reference: *Biological Psychology*; 2007, Vol. 74, No. 1, 39-45.

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# Stay sharp

Docosahexaenoic acid DHA, an omega-3 fatty acid), folate, ginkgo biloba, selenium, and vitamin B12 slowed—or lowered risk for—mental decline (dementia) in five new studies.

Published in the November, 2006, *Archives of Neurology*, researchers from Tufts University, Boston, followed 899 men and women, median age 76, for nine years and found that **those who had the highest blood-fluid (plasma) levels of DHA were 47% less likely to develop dementia and 39% less likely to develop Alzheimer's disease** than those with lower levels. Those with the highest DHA levels consumed about 180 mg of DHA per day, and ate an average of three servings of fish per week.



Researchers from the National University of Singapore studied 451 high-functioning, fully independent Chinese men and women without dementia, aged 55 or older, and found that **those with higher plasma levels of folate** (folic acid, or vitamin B9) **could more easily recall** a list of words immediately and after 30 minutes than could those with lower levels.

The *European Journal of Neurology* reported in September, 2006, that **ginkgo biloba treated dementia as well as the pharmaceutical drug Aricept®** (donepezil). The 24-week double-blind trial examined 76 patients, aged 50 to 80, with mild to moderate Alzheimer's disease who took 160 mg of ginkgo biloba per day, 5 mg of donepezil per day, or a placebo. Scientists determined the treatments reduced symptoms equally. **Four patients taking donepezil had adverse reactions, while no ginkgo biloba patients had adverse reactions.**

French researchers followed 1,389 men and women, aged 60 to 71, for nine years and found that **among those whose plasma levels of selenium decreased, those who lost the most selenium were more likely to have mental (cognitive) decline than those who lost the least selenium.** Selenium levels decrease with age.

In a vitamin B12 study, Welsh researchers examined 42 men and 42 women without dementia, aged 69 to 93, and found that 43% were deficient. **Those who were most deficient in vitamin B12 had more mental decline, were less able to understand language, and were less able to express themselves** than those with higher levels.

Reference: *Epidemiology*; 2007, Vol. 18, No. 1, 52-8.

## And Finally...

**Arginine, vitamin C, and zinc healed bed sores in hospital patients**, in a new study. Doctors noted that people with chronic bed sores (pressure ulcers) are often malnourished. Researchers gave 16 participants with bed sores, aged 37 to 92, a standard hospital diet alone, with a protein/energy supplement, or with the supplement plus 9 grams of arginine, 500 mg of vitamin C, and 30 mg of zinc, per day, for three weeks. At the end of the study, **those who had taken the arginine/vitamin C/zinc supplement had ulcers heal by an average of 73%**, while there were no significant changes in the other two groups.

Reference: *Annals of Internal Medicine*: 2007, Vol. 24, No. 7, 342-5.

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