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Natural Insights for Well Being®

November 2017

Healthy Women

New studies find nutrients reduce menopausal symptoms

Fennel

Fennel, the licorice-flavored herb, has phytoestrogens that effectively treated menopause symptoms in earlier studies. In this study, 59 women within the first five years of menopause took 100 mg of fennel twice per day or a placebo.

After eight weeks, while the placebo group had not improved, women taking fennel saw menopause symptom scores cut in half, from 20 to 9.35, on the Menopause Rating Scale (MRS). The MRS considers symptoms including anxiety, depression, fatigue and irritability, as well as sweating, hot flashes, heart complaints, sleep disorders, and joint, muscle, urinary, and sexual symptoms. An MRS score of 44 means the most severe symptoms, and a score of zero is no symptoms.

Red clover and probiotics

The red clover plant contains isoflavones that have estrogenic effects on the body. Earlier studies found red clover may be beneficial in menopause heart and bone health concerns, but research on hot flashes has been inconsistent.

In this study, 59 peri-menopausal women, aged 40 to 65, who reported having five or more hot flashes per day, took a placebo or a liquid red clover



extract containing 34 mg of isoflavones plus a lactic acid probiotic, per day.

After 12 weeks, while the placebo group had not improved, for those taking red clover, doctors measured over a 24-hour period a significant drop in sweat gland activity on the skin; a primary sign of hot flashes. The women taking red clover also reported three fewer hot flashes per day compared to nearly no reduction for placebo.

Discussing the findings, doctors said that moderate doses of red clover isoflavones with probiotics can safely reduce the physical and self-reported symptoms of menopause.

REFERENCE: MENOPAUSE: VOL. 24, No. 9, 1017-21

NOVEMBER'S

Healthy Insight Safely Lose Weight

A natural soluble fiber, beta-glucan, helped overweight people safely lose weight and body fat. In this study, 100 mostly overweight adults took a daily dose of 4.4 grams of high-beta-glucan barley with rice, or rice and barley without beta-glucan. After 12 weeks, both groups had lower body-mass index scores, and smaller waist size, but the high-beta-glucan group had lost 1.5 square inches more abdominal—belly—fat area than placebo. Excess belly fat has a link to type 2 diabetes and insulin resistance. Beta-glucan fiber forms a gel in the small intestine that delays the absorption of nutrients and slows the release of glucose into the bloodstream, reducing the need for insulin.

REFERENCE: NUTRITION JOURNAL; OCTOBER, 2017, PUBLISHED ONLINE

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Protecting the Eye

Nutrients protect eyes from screen exposure and cataract

Carotenoids protect eyes

Blue light—the short light-waves from TV, computer and smartphone screens, fluorescent and LED lights, and the sun—has good and bad effects. It can make you more alert, but also disrupt sleep cycles, strain the eyes and neck, and give headaches.

In this study, 48 healthy young adults with at least six hours of daily near-field screen exposure took a placebo or a 24 mg combination of the carotenoids normally found in the macula of the eye—lutein, zeaxanthin, and meso-zeaxanthin.

After six months, while the placebo group had not improved, those taking the supplement had higher levels of macular carotenoids, better sleep quality,

less eye strain and fatigue, better visual acuity, and 34 percent fewer headaches.

Vitamin K reduces cataract

Chances for cataract increase with age and can lead to blindness. Recent evidence suggests inflammation and oxidative stress play a role, leading doctors to consider antioxidants as a preventative. In this study, 5,860 older men and women with higher chances of heart and circulatory problems told doctors their daily diets each year, over a six-year follow-up period.

Doctors were particularly interested in the antioxidant vitamin K1, found in green leafy vegetables, Brussels sprouts, and fermented dairy products. Measuring the amount of vitamin K1

in the diet, doctors found those who got at least 497 mcg of vitamin K1 per day were 29 percent less likely to need cataract surgery compared to those who got less than 250 mcg of vitamin K1 per day.

REFERENCE: FOODS; 2017, VOL. 6, NO. 7, 47, PUBLISHED ONLINE



Diabetes Update

Nutrients improve lipids, reduce diabetic kidney disease

Curcuminoids improve lipids

Those with type 2 diabetes are more likely to have heart and circulatory problems, and abnormal lipid levels.



Curcuminoids are natural compounds found in turmeric, and earlier evidence suggests anti-diabetic and lipid-regulating benefits, but few studies have measured the effect of curcuminoids on lipids in type 2 diabetes.

In this study, 118 people aged 18 to 65 with type 2 diabetes took a placebo or a daily supplement containing 1,000 mg of curcuminoids plus 10 mg of piperine; the fragrant compound in black pepper that helps improve absorption.

After 12 weeks, those taking curcuminoids saw total cholesterol decline by 21.86 mg per deciliter of blood (mg/dL) compared to 17.06 for placebo. Non-HDL cholesterol decreased by 23.43 mg/dL vs. 16.84 for placebo, and HDL, the “good” cholesterol, increased 1.56 mg/dL for curcuminoids while decreasing slightly for placebo.

Vitamin E reduces kidney disease

Oxidative stress plays a large role in developing and advancing diabetic kidney disease (DKD), a common complication in type 2 diabetes. Doctors wanted to know which antioxidants might slow DKD, and analyzed results from 15 relevant studies covering 4,345 DKD participants that looked at vitamins B6, C, and E, glutathione, lipoic acid, silymarin, and zinc, alone or in combination.

Overall, antioxidants reduced albuminuria; when the kidneys excrete excess levels of the protein albumin in the urine, an early sign of DKD. Vitamin E in particular was most likely to reduce early kidney damage, with those taking 480 mg to 1,200 mg of vitamin E per day having the best results.

REFERENCE: COMPLEMENTARY THERAPIES IN MEDICINE; AUGUST, 2017, VOL. 33, 1-5, PUBLISHED ONLINE

Better Performance

Nutrients improve energy efficiency and heart rate in exercise

L-citrulline and pomegranate aid recovery

Even well-trained athletes can get sore after strenuous exercise. In this study, doctors created four 7-ounce beverages to test the effects on muscle



soreness, and gave each in rotation to 19 young resistance-trained men, age 18 to 30.

To a base of watermelon juice, doctors added citrulline alone, citrulline plus pomegranate ellagitannins, pomegranate ellagitannins alone, or just watermelon juice as placebo. After each drink, the men performed an intensive squat exercise to induce muscle damage.

At one hour, 24, and 48 hours after each drink, doctors took blood samples and asked participants to rate muscle soreness. During the placebo phase, signs of muscle damage in the blood (myoglobin) were higher. Compared to placebo, all citrulline and pomegranate groups reported less muscle soreness, and none at all by 48 hours, evidence of more efficient waste clearing and energy production.

Astaxanthin lowers heart rate

Earlier studies found astaxanthin improved cycling performance in athletes. In this study, 14 male and 14 female recreational runners, average age 42, took a placebo or 12 mg of astaxanthin per day.

After eight weeks, while the placebo group had not improved, those taking astaxanthin saw a 10 percent lower heart rate during a long-distance run compared to the same test at the start of the study. While there were no effects in shorter, higher-intensity runs, during the long-distance portions of the tests, participants were able to cover the same amount of distance at a lower heart rate compared to their performance before taking astaxanthin.

REFERENCE: JOURNAL OF AGRICULTURE AND FOOD CHEMISTRY; 2017, VOL. 65, NO. 22, 4395-404

NOVEMBER'S

Ahead of the Curve

Early-Stage Discoveries: Spirulina, Yogurt Microbe, Green Pea

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

Spirulina reduced liver inflammation

Spirulina can modify microbes and activate the immune system in the gut, with possible liver benefits. In the lab, young and older mice got a standard diet, some with 5 percent spirulina. After six weeks, those in the spirulina group had signs of better immune function in the small intestine, and fewer signs of inflammation and oxidative stress in the liver, which can increase with age. Doctors said the findings suggest spirulina may help maintain a healthy gut microbiome with age.

Yogurt microbe reduced drug resistant bacteria

Widespread infectious bacteria, such as some strains of E. coli, can become antibiotic-drug resistant, making it harder for doctors to treat individual cases, and more difficult to reduce their spread, or eliminate them. In the lab, doctors extracted lactobacillus parafarraginis from yogurt and then tested on several infectious pathogens. The lactobacillus strain produced an antimicrobial protein that inhibited the growth of 14 different multi-drug resistant bacteria the researchers had obtained from infected hospital patients.

Green pea eased inflammation

Obesity raises chances for inflammatory bowel disease. Green peas are high in dietary fiber, polyphenolics, and glycoproteins, leading doctors to ask if green pea might help heal the condition. In the lab, mice ate a high fat diet, some with 10 percent green pea added. After seven weeks, those in the green pea group had less inflammation and fewer symptoms from induced colitis compared to the non-green pea group. Body weight was also lower for those on the green pea diet.

REFERENCE: NUTRIENTS; 2017, VOL. 9, NO. 5, 509

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Mushroom Barley Soup

While you are savoring this delicious soup, please see page 1 for a new study that found overweight adults safely lost weight and body fat after consuming high-beta-glucan barley as part of their diet over 12 weeks.

Ingredients:

1 c whole grain barley (hulled or hull-less)	1 lb white button mushrooms, sliced
1 tbsp olive oil	3 - 15 oz cans low sodium vegetable broth (or homemade)
1 medium yellow onion, diced	1 c water
2 cloves garlic	2 bay leaves
2 carrots, peeled and diced	2 tbsp fresh thyme
2 celery stalks, diced	Salt and pepper

Directions: Combine barley with 4 cups of water and bring to a boil. Reduce heat and simmer for 40-50 minutes or until barley is tender—the barley can be made ahead of time. Heat olive oil in a large pot over medium heat, add onion and garlic, and cook until soft. Add carrots and celery, and cook until tender. Add mushrooms, cook until soft. Add vegetable broth, water, bay leaves and thyme. Simmer 10 minutes. Add cooked barley and simmer another 15 minutes. Remove bay leaves before serving. Add salt and pepper to taste.

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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