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Natural Insights for Well Being®

August 2017

Relief

Two new studies give hope for rheumatoid arthritis

What is rheumatoid arthritis?

Unlike arthritis from wear and tear, in rheumatoid arthritis (RA), the immune system mistakenly attacks the joints and inflames joint tissue.

Quercetin eases RA symptoms in women

In this first study of quercetin and RA, 50 women with RA took a placebo or 500 mg of quercetin per day. After eight weeks, while there were no changes for placebo, women taking quercetin had less morning pain and stiffness, less pain after activity, and fewer tender joints, compared to the start of the study.

Doctors also measured quality of life and sense of well-being, which improved for the quercetin group, with the disease in remission in a significant number of these women.

Pomegranate reduces RA activity in men and women

Earlier studies showed vitamins, minerals and phytochemicals from fruits and vegetables are able to slow the progress of RA, but this is one of the first to test pomegranate extract as a supplement. Pomegranate is rich in polyphenolic compounds that are antioxidant and anti-inflammatory.



In this study, 55 men and women with RA took a placebo or 500 mg of pomegranate extract, in two 250 mg capsules per day. After eight weeks, those taking pomegranate had significantly lower disease-activity scores in joint swelling, tenderness, pain, and morning stiffness, compared to placebo. Signs of inflammation were also lower, and levels of the powerful antioxidant glutathione were higher for those taking pomegranate.

Discussing the findings, doctors said pomegranate demonstrated beneficial antioxidant and anti-inflammatory effects in men and women with rheumatoid arthritis.

REFERENCE: JOURNAL OF THE AMERICAN COLLEGE OF NUTRITION; 2017, VOL. 36, No. 1, 9-15

AUGUST'S

Healthy Insight Chia Benefits in Diabetes

Chia seed is rich in fiber, healthy fat, minerals, and protein. In this study, 77 overweight or obese people with type 2 diabetes took 30 grams of chia seeds per 1,000 calories per day, or an oat bran placebo, while on a calorie-restricted diet.

After six months, the chia group had lost 4.2 pounds compared to less than 1 pound for placebo; saw a 2.1 inch reduction in waist size vs. less than 1 inch; and saw signs of inflammation decline and metabolism increase, compared to placebo. Doctors said chia is a safe way to help manage type 2 diabetes.

REFERENCE: NUTRITION, METABOLISM & CARDIOVASCULAR DISEASES; 2017, VOL. 27, No. 2, 138-46

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Healthy Women

Nutrients improve quality of life in women

Pycnogenol and perimenopause

As women transition through menopause, estrogen decreases, raising chances for heart and vascular events. In this study, 35 peri-menopausal women took 100 mg of Pycnogenol® per day. Doctors compared these women to 35 other women with the same heart and vascular factors who did not take Pycnogenol.

After eight weeks, 41 percent of the women taking Pycnogenol reported relief from hot flashes compared to 3 percent for the control group. The Pycnogenol group also improved significantly compared to controls with fewer night sweats and irregular periods. Levels of inflammatory homocysteine and C-reactive protein, and signs of oxidative stress also declined for Pycnogenol but not for the controls.

And while the controls did not improve, triglyceride levels, systolic blood pressure, and fasting blood sugar levels all declined for Pycnogenol, while mood improved.

Polyphenols and hormonal contraceptives

Women who take hormonal contraceptives tend to see increases in signs of systemic inflammation. In this study, 38 women using contraceptives, age 25 to 35, took a placebo or 3,000 mg of polyphenols per day. The supplement contained resveratrol, catechins, quercetin, chlorogenic acid, and cyanidin.

After 15 days, women in the placebo group saw signs of inflammation and oxidative stress increase, which doctors thought was due to the hormonal contraceptives. Women taking the

polyphenols did not show signs of increased inflammation or oxidative stress.

Discussing the findings, doctors said this is the first study to show that polyphenols such as resveratrol, catechins, and quercetin may lower signs of inflammation and oxidative stress in women taking hormonal contraceptives.

REFERENCE: MINERVA GINECOLOGICA; 2017, VOL. 69, No. 1, 29-34



Healthy Moms & Babies

Probiotics aid premature infants and reduce gestational diabetes

Probiotics and preterm babies

Babies born prematurely may lack enough beneficial bacteria to protect the intestinal tract from damage, a condition called necrotizing enterocolitis (NEC). In this review of 44 scientific papers, doctors determined that the probiotics *L. acidophilus* and *B. infantis* appeared most effective in preventing NEC and preserving life.

Among the major findings for premature infants, compared to placebo,



probiotics overall reduced chances of NEC by 50 percent, and premature death by 25 percent. In extremely low birth weight infants, meaning two pounds-three ounces or less, those that received probiotics tended to be less likely to develop NEC and had better chances of survival.

Doctors continue to discuss the most effective strains and appropriate doses of probiotics in preventing NEC in preterm infants.

Probiotics and gestational diabetes

Women who develop high blood sugar during pregnancy have gestational diabetes. Doctors aren't sure, but think hormones from the placenta block the

action of the mother's insulin, raising blood sugar levels. The excess sugar can flow to the baby, stimulating insulin and creating stores of fat and other complications.

In this study, 373 women between 14 and 16 weeks pregnant, took the probiotic *L. rhamnosus* or a placebo. Through birth, 6.5 percent of the women taking the placebo developed gestational diabetes compared to 2.1 percent for those taking the probiotic.

Discussing the findings, doctors said the probiotic benefits were greatest in older women and among those who previously had gestational diabetes.

REFERENCE: NEONATOLOGY; 2017, VOL. 112, No. 1, 644-7

Cognition

Lutein and zeaxanthin improve cognitive function

Not just for eyes

Most lutein and zeaxanthin studies have measured eye and vision health, but new evidence suggests these two carotenoids have cognitive benefits as well.



More efficient brain power

Doctors in this study thought lower levels of the carotenoids lutein and zeaxanthin would cause the brain to use more energy to function during normal tasks. In this study, researchers asked 40 adults, age 65 to 86, to recall pairs of words they had learned earlier. During the recall activity, doctors analyzed brain activity via functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI).

The fMRI revealed that those with higher levels of lutein and zeaxanthin needed less brain activity to complete the word-recall task compared to those whose lutein and zeaxanthin levels were lower.

“On the surface, it looked like everyone was doing the same thing and recalling the same words,” doctors said, “but there were significant differences in brain activity based on carotenoid levels.”

Better memory and executive function

In this large study, doctors measured cognitive function in 4,076 independently-living adults, age 50 and older. Those with higher levels of lutein and zeaxanthin had better scores on overall cognition, memory, and executive function—the ability to focus attention, control impulses, and remain mentally flexible. Zeaxanthin in particular improved processing speed.

Discussing the findings, doctors said this study is unique for its very large size, representing a broad sample of older adult populations. The researchers have also completed and plan to release later in 2017 a clinical trial testing the cognitive effects of lutein and zeaxanthin supplements in a population of healthy individuals.

REFERENCE: BIOMEDGERONTOLOGY; JANUARY, 2017, PUBLISHED ONLINE

AUGUST'S

Ahead of the Curve

Early-Stage Discoveries: Maple Syrup, Lychee Seed, Walnuts

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

Maple syrup is antimicrobial

Native populations in Canada have long used maple syrup to fight infections. In the lab, doctors isolated maple syrup phenolic compounds and combined them with common antibiotics. Exposing bacterial strains to the mixture, doctors were able to use 90 percent less antibiotics to get the same antimicrobial effect. Maple syrup made the bacterial membranes more permeable, allowing antibiotics to enter. Maple syrup phenolic extract also extended the lives of infected fruit flies and moth larvae.

Lychee seed boosts cognition

Chinese medicine uses lychee seed for its antiviral, antioxidant, anti-tumor, and liver-protective effects, but cognitive protection is so far unproven. In the lab, rats with Alzheimer's disease that received lychee seed saponins for 28 days performed better in spatial and memory tests than those that did not receive lychee. The lychee groups also performed as well or better than those taking Aricept®, the cognition enhancing drug. Doctors said lychee may protect against brain nerve cell damage.

Walnuts and sperm quality

Doctors believe walnuts improved sperm quality in this study by reducing oxidative damage in sperm cells. In the lab, doctors gave fertile and infertile male mice a walnut-enriched diet for 10 weeks. In the fertile group, sperm motility—the ability to move properly to reach the female egg—improved, as did sperm shape or form, called morphology. Morphology also improved in the infertile group, raising the chances of successful reproduction.

REFERENCE: 253RD MEETING OF THE NATIONAL CHEMICAL SOCIETY; APRIL, 2017

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Almond-Chia Granola

You'll love munching this healthy granola anytime. And while you do, please see page 1 for a new study that found chia seed helped safely manage weight in type 2 diabetes.

Ingredients:

2 c rolled oats	1/3 c honey
3/4 c raw almonds, roughly chopped	1/3 c coconut oil (melted)
1/2 c chia seeds	1 tbsp coconut sugar
1/2 tsp sea salt	1 tsp vanilla extract
1/2 c unsweetened, shredded coconut	2 tbsp egg white

Directions: Preheat oven to 300 degrees F. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper. Combine oats, almonds, chia seed, salt, and coconut. Separately, combine honey, coconut oil, coconut sugar, vanilla, and egg white. Mix well. Pour wet ingredients into the dry and combine well. Spread mixture onto baking sheet and bake for approximately 45 minutes, stirring about half way through to achieve even browning. Allow to cool completely. Serve with yogurt and sliced fresh fruit, and store remainder in an air-tight container.

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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