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Natural Insights for Well Being®

September

Memory

Nutrients preserve and improve memory

Flavanols reverse memory loss

Low levels of flavanols in the diet may drive age-related memory loss. In this study, doctors measured the diets and assessed memory and thinking skills in 3,500 adults, average age 71, who took a placebo or 500 mg of cocoa flavanols plus 80 mg of plant-based antioxidants, called epicatechins, per day.

After the first year of follow-up, those taking flavanols who had begun the study with a healthy diet and good flavanol levels saw memory scores improve slightly. Those taking flavanols who had begun the study with a nutrient-poor diet and low levels of flavanols saw memory scores increase an average of 10.5 percent compared to placebo, and 16 percent compared to the start of the study. Cognitive test scores also improved after the first year and continued through two more years.

Doctors concluded flavanol-rich diets or supplements may improve cognitive function in older adults.

Multivitamins improve memory in older adults

There are few strategies to slow cognitive decline, leading doctors to see if multivitamins could play a role beyond supporting general health. In this study, 3,562 older adults took a placebo or a daily multivitamin/mineral



while doctors gave yearly cognition tests over three years.

Beginning after the first year, and continuing through three years, compared to placebo, those taking the multivitamin/mineral had significantly better immediate and delayed recall of 20 words which they had to type out from memory. Nutrient levels in the multivitamin group, including vitamin B12, folate, and vitamin D, were slightly elevated.

Comparing the changes that took place yearly, doctors estimated the memory improvement for the multivitamin group compared to placebo was equal to 3.1 years of age-related memory change. Because multivitamins are safe and relatively inexpensive, doctors said they may be a sustainable way to improve cognition with age.

REFERENCE: NEUROSCIENCE; 2023, VOL. 120, NO. 23, E2216932120

SEPTEMBER'S

Healthy Insight Breast Cancer

Isoflavones are antioxidant flavonoids with anticancer and anti-inflammatory properties. This review covered seven studies that followed participants over time, and 17 studies that compared participants with and without breast cancer.

Overall, those who consumed the most isoflavones were 29 percent less likely to develop breast cancer compared to those who consumed the least. In the follow-up studies, each 10 mg per day increase in isoflavones reduced chances for breast cancer by 6.8 percent. In the comparison studies, each 10 mg increase reduced chances by 11.7 percent. Doctors said the findings suggest increasing isoflavones in the diet may reduce chances for breast cancer.

REFERENCE: NUTRIENTS; 2023, VOL. 15, NO. 10, 101097, NU2402

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Women

Hops and zinc support women's health

Hops improve postmenopausal bone health

Low estrogen contributes to osteoporosis, which led doctors to consider hop extract, a powerful phytoestrogen. In this study, 100 postmenopausal women with osteopenia, aged 50 to 85, took a placebo or hop extract daily. All participants took daily calcium and vitamin D supplements.

After 48 weeks, those taking hop extract saw total-body bone mineral density increase 1 percent compared to placebo, and 1.7 percent compared to the start of the study. Women in the hop group also had improved physical function scores and reported being better able to perform daily activities.

Discussing the results, doctors said hop extract may be preventive in

women with low bone mass that cannot be prescribed standard osteoporosis medications at this stage. Also, the high number of women who saw an increase of 1 percent or more suggests that hop extract may reduce chances of osteoporosis by a similar percentage.

Zinc preserves mother and child health

Good zinc levels are important for healthy pregnancy and childbirth. This study followed 160 women, aged at least 20 and average age 31, during the third trimester, some with and some without pregnancy-induced high blood pressure.

Zinc levels were 1.3 micrograms per deciliter lower in those with gestational high blood pressure compared to those without. Most (58.5 percent) of the women with high blood pressure were

insufficiently active compared to 7.5 percent for those without, and systolic blood pressure was also higher, 133.3 vs. 112 mmHg. Newborns weighed an average 6.4 vs. 6.89 pounds for high blood pressure vs. those without.

REFERENCE: NUTRIENTS; 2023, VOL. 15, NO. 12, 2688



Sleep

CBD, fennel, and valerian improve sleep, hot flashes

Low-dose CBD safely improved sleep quality

This is the first double-blind, randomized controlled sleep trial on CBD, and is the largest trial of cannabinoids in general. In the study, 1,298 men and women, average age 46.5, reported a range of sleep disturbances from mild to severe, and took a placebo or a 15 mg capsule of



CBD (cannabidiol), with or without 5 mg of melatonin, 15 mg of cannabidiol (CBN), or cannabichromene (CBC).

Doctors measured sleep in the first week before starting treatment, which lasted four weeks. Participants took one capsule per day with food before going to sleep and could increase to two capsules taken at the same time, but no more than two per day.

Overall, 15 mg of CBD or 5 mg of melatonin improved sleep quality significantly, and equally well. Adding CBN or CBC did not enhance the effects.

Fennel, valerian improve sleep, hot flashes

In this study, 70 postmenopausal women reporting sleep disturbances

and hot flashes took a placebo or 500 mg of a fennel-valerian extract capsule twice per day.

After four and eight weeks, compared to placebo, women taking the fennel-valerian combination reported fewer sleep problems on a standard Sleep Quality Index questionnaire. For hot flashes, the fennel-valerian group reported significantly lower frequency and severity than the placebo group. Doctors noted the duration of hot flashes increased in both groups, although they were fewer and less severe for the fennel-valerian group.

Doctors said fennel-valerian may be an alternative to hormone therapy for relieving sleep disorders and reducing hot flashes.

REFERENCE: JOURNAL OF THE AMERICAN NUTRITION ASSOCIATION; MAY, 2023, ARTICLE NO. 2203221

Muscle

Turmeric and L-carnitine support muscle after exercise

Turmeric reduces post-match muscle soreness

Turmeric contains curcumin, a polyphenol shown to reduce muscle damage and soreness after recreational exercise. Here, doctors wanted to test turmeric for its ability to support recovery between matches among elite



athletes. Throughout an eight-match season between October 2021 and April 2022, 24 professional soccer players took a placebo or 35 mg of turmeric, equivalent to 1,400 mg of curcumin, plus 10 mg of piperine, twice per day.

Doctors took the first baseline measurement of the inflammatory marker, C-reactive protein (CRP) after a 96-hour rest period, then again 64 hours after a soccer match. CRP had increased by 1,082 percent for those taking turmeric compared to 1,529 percent for placebo. The men reported whole-body and leg soreness, with the turmeric group scoring an average 36 percent less soreness compared to placebo.

L-carnitine speeds exercise recovery

Exercise can damage muscle and

trigger an inflammatory response that reduces physical performance. Earlier studies found L-carnitine reduced post-exercise muscle damage. In this review of 15 placebo-controlled trials, participants took L-carnitine from one to 26 days, before and during exercise.

Overall, compared to placebo, those taking L-carnitine had higher circulating levels of the nutrient, lower levels of oxidation, greater fat-burning to fuel muscles, and greater muscle stores of glycogen, a source metabolic fuel.

Discussing the findings, doctors said L-carnitine energizes muscle, reduces oxidation, and may be an effective supplement to accelerate muscle recovery after exercise.

REFERENCE: FRONTIERS IN NUTRITION; 2023, ARTICLE NO. 1175622

Kids

Phytochemicals and vitamin D support children's health

Plant-based phytochemicals reduce obesity

Childhood obesity is increasing in developed countries worldwide. In this study, doctors measured the diets of 1,196 boys and girls, average age four. On average, participants consumed 1,370 calories per day, with boys consuming significantly more than girls.

Doctors estimated the phytochemical content of the diets by measuring daily fruits, vegetables, legumes, nuts, seeds, and whole grains. While there was no significant link between dietary phytochemicals and obesity in girls, boys who got the most phytochemicals were 72 percent less likely to be obese compared to boys who got the least phytochemicals.

Reviewing the results, doctors said

they do not know why the link between phytochemicals and obesity existed only in boys, but suggest the balance of the gut microbiome may offer clues.

Vitamin D early in life supports cognitive health later

Vitamin D plays a role in early brain development, and doctors wanted to test if supplementing at higher-than-standard doses early in life could improve cognition later on. In this study, 346 infants received either 400 IU or 1,200 IU of vitamin D3 in daily oral supplements from the age of two weeks to 24 months.

Doctors followed up, with the latest monitoring point at six to eight years of age. Parents assessed their child's psychiatric symptoms via a

questionnaire. Overall, the higher dose of vitamin D reduced chances of the child internalizing problems at school age, with parents reporting less depressed mood, anxiety, and withdrawn behavior compared to parents' assessment of children receiving the lower dose of vitamin D.

REFERENCE: NUTRIENTS; 202, VOL. 15, NO. 11, ARTICLE NO. 2439



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Healthy Weight

Curcumin promotes losing weight safely

Antioxidant and anti-inflammatory effects

Curcumin, the bright yellow compound in turmeric, safely reduced body weight and waist circumference, especially in those with obesity and diabetes. This review of 50 random controlled clinical trials tested dosages of curcumin from 500 to 3,000 mg per day, in powder or capsule form, over various study periods.

Overall, those taking curcumin saw body mass index scores decline by an average 0.24 kg per square meter, body weight decline 1.3 pounds, and waist circumference by one-half inch. Results were stronger for those with polycystic ovary syndrome, non-alcoholic fatty liver disease, obesity, and diabetes.

Some of the formulations contained piperine to enhance bioavailability, with incrementally better results.

Reviewing the findings, doctors said supplementing with curcumin may promote weight loss and reduce complications related to obesity due to its antioxidative and anti-inflammatory effects.

REFERENCE: AMERICAN JOURNAL OF CLINICAL NUTRITION; 2023, VOL. 117, NO. 5, 1005-16



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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