

Whole In The Wall

Herb Shoppe

Natural Insights for Well Being®

January

Brain

Ashwagandha and omega-3s benefit brain function

Ashwagandha for cognition

A single dose of ashwagandha improved executive function, attention, short-term and working memory. In this study, 13 healthy volunteers, aged 18 to 59, took a placebo or 400 mg of ashwagandha before taking a six-hour battery of cognitive tests. After four days' rest, participants switched placebo and ashwagandha and repeated the tests. All kept a food diary during the four days preceding each test.

During the ashwagandha phases, both groups saw improvements in working memory and attention, including reaction time and accuracy of sorting cards, reasoning, learning, executive control, responding to changing schedules of reinforcement, and impulsiveness.

Ashwagandha appears to have cognition-enhancing properties that may help sustain and preserve cognitive performance and memory throughout life, which suggests adults may benefit from regular supplementation, doctors said.

Omega-3s boost brain health in younger adults

Even at younger ages, it appears adding omega-3 fatty acids to the diet protects for most brain-aging factors. This study measured DHA and EPA



omega-3 levels and compared brain volume and cognitive function in 2,183 participants, average age 46, who were free from dementia and stroke. Some participants (22 percent) carried a gene, APOE4, that raises chances for heart, circulatory, and cognitive issues.

Overall, higher omega-3 levels were linked to better abstract reasoning, and to larger volumes of the hippocampus, which plays a major role in learning and memory. Carriers of the APOE4 gene who had higher omega-3 levels saw less small-vessel disease than those with lower omega-3 levels.

Those with lower levels of DHA tended to have smaller brain volumes and a vascular (blood vessel) pattern of cognitive impairment, even in those free of clinical dementia. "Intervening early to maintain the optimal Omega-3 Index value of at least 8 percent could play an important role in staving off cognitive decline, dementia, and Alzheimer's disease," doctors concluded.

REFERENCE: NEUROLOGY; OCTOBER, 2022, ARTICLE No. 201296

JANUARY'S

Healthy Insight

Pycnogenol for Legs

Restless legs syndrome (RLS) causes an uncontrollable urge to move the legs due to uncomfortable sensations, usually in the evening while sitting, lying down, or sleeping. In this study, 45 people with RLS continued taking standard management with or without 150 mg of Pycnogenol® per day.

After four weeks, Pycnogenol was at least three times as effective as standard management alone in reducing symptoms, including pulling, creeping, crawling, throbbing, aching, itching, swelling, electric shocks, and sleep problems. Those taking Pycnogenol were also less likely to need analgesics for pain, and had lower levels of oxidative stress compared to those taking standard management alone.

REFERENCE: PANMINERVA MEDICA; 2022, VOL. 64, NO. 2, 253-8

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Cognition and Age

Multivitamins and taurine promote healthy aging

Multivitamins improved cognition

To see if multivitamins could improve cognition in older adults, 2,262 men and women, aged 72 to 79, took a daily placebo or standard multivitamin-mineral while doctors followed up for three years. Once a year, participants took a standardized battery of cognitive tests administered by doctors over the phone.

After three years, those taking the multivitamin-mineral saw significant improvement in memory of everyday events, executive function, and in global cognitive function, which improved 27 percent compared to placebo. Participants with a history of heart and circulatory disease who had taken the placebo saw cognitive decline after

a year, while those who had taken the multivitamin remained stable. Compared to those with heart and circulatory conditions, those without had better cognitive performance regardless of placebo or multivitamin.

Taurine antioxidant effects

Aging causes oxidative stress to increase, impairing the structure and function of cells, tissues, and organs. In this study, 24 women, aged 55 to 70, took a placebo or .75 gram of taurine twice per day. Over 16 weeks, participants performed agility and dynamic balance tests and handgrip strength tests.

By the end of the study, those taking taurine saw a 20 percent increase in levels of the antioxidant superoxide

dismutase (SOD) compared to the start while the placebo group saw a decline of 3.5 percent. SOD protects cells from oxidative stress. A marker for oxidative stress, malondialdehyde, increased for the placebo group while remaining stable in the taurine group.

Commenting on the results, doctors said taurine is capable of controlling oxidative stress in the aging process.

REFERENCE: ALZHEIMER'S & DEMENTIA; SEPTEMBER, 2022, ARTICLE No. 12767

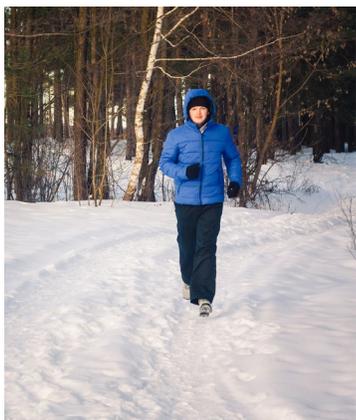


Colds

Nutrients cut colds in athletes and non-athletes

Black seed and fish oils reduce colds in marathoners

Intense exercise can disrupt the microbiome, allowing harmful bacteria to overpower beneficial bacteria, creating an imbalance, and suppressing immunity. In this study, 35 marathon runners took a placebo or 500 mg of



black seed oil plus 1,500 mg of omega-3 fish oil per day, beginning three weeks before an endurance run and continuing one week after.

After four weeks, those taking black seed and fish oil reported 62 percent fewer upper respiratory tract complaints, better overall health, and a 15 percent more positive mood compared to the placebo group. They also had a better microbiome balance and 37 percent lower levels of salivary cortisol, which the body releases under stress, suggesting a link between the microbiome, physical and mental health.

Soluble fiber reduces cold symptoms

A water-soluble dietary fiber, partially hydrolyzed guar gum (PHGG),

influences the immune system and may help prevent infection. In this study, 96 healthy adults took either a placebo or 5.2 grams of PHGG per day during the winter cold season.

After 12 weeks, those taking PHGG reported from 20 to 60 percent fewer symptoms compared to placebo, including fewer total days with runny nose, stuffy nose, sore throat, and chills. Levels of short-chain fatty acids, which increase when beneficial bacteria in the gut successfully ferment soluble fiber, rose in those taking PHGG compared to placebo.

Discussing the findings, doctors said PHGG supports immune function by promoting a healthy gut microbiome balance, reducing inflammation, and preventing infection.

REFERENCE: EC NUTRITION; 2022, VOL. 17, No. 7

Circulation

Cocoa and vitamin D protect circulatory health

Cocoa reduced BP and vessel stiffness

Cocoa flavanols lowered blood pressure (BP) and reduced arterial stiffness in tightly controlled clinical



settings, but this is the first study of people during normal daily life. In the study, 11 healthy men and women, younger than age 45, alternated a placebo or 862 mg of cocoa flavanols per day, in two four-day phases.

Participants wore a BP monitor, and a finger clip to measure pulse-wave velocity (PWV)—which gauges arterial stiffness. During the first 12 hours of the flavanol phases, systolic blood pressure decreased an average of 1.4 mmHg, and PWV slowed 0.11 meters per second, signifying 2 percent more flexible vessels.

The study put to rest concerns that flavanols could lower BP when it is not elevated: BP and arterial stiffness were lowered only in those who began the trial with elevated levels.

Moms' vitamin D, kids' BP

Childhood blood pressure persists into adulthood, and vitamin D has BP benefits. In this study, doctors measured vitamin D levels during early and late pregnancy, in the umbilical cord, and again in children at age five years, in 1,677 mother-child pairs.

Overall, higher vitamin D levels during pregnancy were linked to lower BP in children at age five compared to lower gestational vitamin D levels. Doctors described the optimal vitamin D level during pregnancy as greater than 75 nanomoles per liter of blood, or 30 nanograms per milliliter, to achieve the benefits in children at age five including healthy BP and metabolism.

REFERENCE: FRONTIERS IN NUTRITION; JUNE, 2022, ARTICLE NO. 886597

Bone

Calcium and dairy protein promote healthy bone

Early calcium may prevent osteoporosis

Up to age 20, bone mass increases gradually, peaking at about age 35, then beginning a slow decline. This review of 43 clinical trials covering 7,382 participants under age 35 compared calcium supplementation and bone mineral density (BMD).

Overall, boosting calcium intake earlier in life increased BMD throughout the body, including at the femoral neck of the thigh bone where it connects to the hip, site of most bone fractures later in life. Supplementing calcium between the ages of 20 and 35 had a greater benefit than in those younger than 20 years.

Discussing the findings, doctors said, “Instead of traditionally solving problems when they occur, such as

treating osteoporosis after it develops, these results suggest intervening earlier in life to prevent osteoporosis.”

Dairy protein during pregnancy supports bone maintenance

During pregnancy, mothers typically lose about 2 percent of whole-body bone mineral content as the body accommodates nutrient demands from the fetus. Even up to six months postpartum, lactating mothers can lose between 5 and 7 percent BMD at the lumbar spine.

In this study, 187 women between 12 and 17 weeks pregnant took standard care or an individualized high-dairy protein diet and walking exercise plan. The diet targeted 25 percent of total calories as protein, 50 percent from dairy.

From early pregnancy through six months postpartum, the dairy group had lower levels of bone resorption and higher levels of bone formation compared to the non-dairy protein group.

REFERENCE: EPIDEMIOLOGY AND GLOBAL HEALTH; SEPTEMBER, 2022, ARTICLE NO. 79002



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Eye

Omega-3s improve vision in AMD and Stargardt

Better corrected visual acuity and lower inflammation

Age-related macular degeneration (AMD) gradually decreases eyesight in the center of the field of vision, while Stargardt disease is a genetic condition where fatty material builds up on the macula, also reducing vision. In this study, 21 men and women with dry AMD or Stargardt disease, average age 60, took either a placebo or 3.7 grams of EPA/DHA at a 5:1 ratio per day.

After 24 weeks, while the placebo group had not improved, those taking EPA/DHA could identify 15 percent more letters in a visual acuity test compared to the start of the study. The ratio of omega-6 to omega-3 fatty acids

also improved, decreasing to 1.47:1 from 5.84:1, signaling low cellular inflammation.

Doctors also measured subjective mood and perceived vision, which improved 28.8 percent more for omega-3s than placebo. The dry form of AMD has normal blood vessels in the retina, and makes up about 80 percent of all AMD.

REFERENCE: INVESTIGATIVE OPHTHALMOLOGY & VISUAL SCIENCE, 2022, Vol. 63, 377



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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