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Natural Insights for Well Being®

November 2019

Metabolism & Diabetes

Nutrients help balance and preserve metabolic function

Amla reduced metabolic syndrome

People with metabolic syndrome usually have excess fat around the waist and abdomen plus several other factors including high blood pressure, blood sugar, and triglycerides, and low levels of HDL, the good cholesterol. Amla, from the Indian gooseberry tree, is popular in Ayurvedic medicine as an anti-inflammatory tonic that supports normal blood pressure.

In this study, 59 people with metabolic syndrome took a placebo or 250 mg or 500 mg of amla twice per day. After 12 weeks, while the placebo group had not significantly improved, the low- and high-dose amla groups saw 42 and 51 percent increases, respectively, in nitric oxide, the molecule that relaxes the smooth muscle lining the blood vessels. The inflammatory factor, high-sensitivity C-reactive protein, also decreased 40 and 54 percent, respectively. Triglycerides, and total and LDL cholesterols declined in both amla groups, and HDL increased 7.33 and 22.16 percent, respectively. Doctors said amla, along with lifestyle modifications, may help manage metabolic syndrome.

Vitamin D may slow diabetes

People with long-term type 2 diabetes have impaired metabolic



function. But those just diagnosed with type 2 diabetes, or in those with higher chances of developing it, vitamin D may help preserve metabolic function. In this study, 96 obese people newly diagnosed with type 2 diabetes, or with higher chances of developing it, took a placebo or 5,000 IU of vitamin D per day. Nearly half began the study deficient in vitamin D.

After six months, while the placebo group had not changed, vitamin D levels reached sufficiency in the vitamin D group. The function of beta cells, which produce insulin in the pancreas, improved significantly, and insulin sensitivity—the ability of the body to efficiently use insulin to metabolize sugars—also improved. Doctors concluded vitamin D may slow metabolic deterioration in newly diagnosed type 2 diabetes, and in those who may develop the condition.

REFERENCE: BMC COMPLEMENTARY AND ALTERNATIVE MEDICINE; 2019, S12906, PUBLISHED ONLINE

NOVEMBER'S

Healthy Insight Peppermint Oil Easy to Swallow

Some people have difficulty swallowing liquid or solid foods, and the non-cardiac chest pain that can accompany it. Peppermint oil relaxes the smooth muscle that lines the esophagus, and doctors wanted to test its effect on this condition, called dysphagia. In this study, 38 people with dysphagia and/or non-cardiac chest pain took two dissolvable peppermint oil tablets before meals and as needed for chest pain. Of those with both symptoms, 73 percent reported feeling better. Among those with just non-cardiac chest pain, 63 percent improved, and those only with difficulty swallowing, 53 percent improved. Those with the severest symptoms improved most.

REFERENCE: DIGESTIVE DISEASES AND SCIENCES; 2019, 05523-8; PUBLISHED ONLINE

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Exercise Recovery

Nutrients support muscle and immunity after exercise

Blackcurrant for recovery

The body needs time to recover oxidative balance after strenuous exercise. Antioxidants, such as the anthocyanins in blackcurrant, help reduce oxidation and speed recovery. In the first phase of this study, doctors wanted to see how quickly blackcurrant anthocyanins would enter the bloodstream. Thirty men and women took doses of blackcurrant extract ranging from 0.4 mg to about 1.5 mg per pound of body weight. Doctors took blood samples before and several times after dosing, and found anthocyanins began circulating after 30 minutes, with levels peaking at two hours.

In the exercise phase, 32 men and women took a placebo or the same dosage range of blackcurrant extract, waiting an hour before rowing for 30

minutes at 70 percent of maximum oxygen capacity. Those taking at least 0.8 mg of blackcurrant extract per pound of body weight had significantly lower oxidative stress levels two hours after rowing. Also compared to placebo, the blackcurrant group had higher immune white blood cell (neutrophil) counts, and lower heart rates.

Curcumin reduces muscle damage

In this study, 63 physically active, overweight men and women took a placebo, 50 mg, or 200 mg of curcuminoids per day for eight weeks before running downhill in a test designed to damage muscle.

Muscle strength and power, up to 24 hours after the test, declined for placebo and the low-dose curcumin

group, but remained stable in the high-dose curcumin group. All groups reported sore muscles, but the high-dose curcumin group recovered from soreness more quickly.

REFERENCE: FRONTIERS IN NUTRITION; 2019, 10.3389, PUBLISHED ONLINE



Mother and Child

Vitamin D, choline, and DHA preserve mother and child health

Vitamin D and youth blood pressure

Adults with high blood pressure (BP) are often low in vitamin D, raising the question, would low vitamin D levels at birth predict BP problems later?



In this study, doctors measured vitamin D levels and systolic BP in 775 children from birth through 18 years of age.

Doctors defined low vitamin D as less than 11 nanograms per milliliter of blood (ng/mL) or 27.5 nanomoles per liter (nmol/L) at birth. Compared to kids with adequate levels, those born with low vitamin D were 60 percent more likely to have elevated BP between the ages of six and 18. Kids whose vitamin D levels remained low through early childhood were twice as likely as kids with good levels to have elevated BP from ages three to 18.

The findings may prompt the American Academy of Pediatrics to recommend screening all pregnant women and young children for vitamin D levels to reduce BP later in life.

Choline, DHA, brain and eye health

New research suggests choline and DHA work together to support fetal brain and eye development in expectant mothers, and most people do not get enough of these nutrients. This large review of human clinical trials, animal models, and cell cultures, reveals expectant mothers need more choline with DHA for healthy fetal organ cell-membranes, eye photoreceptor cells, and brain nerve-cell development. Also, children with higher choline levels had better academic achievement, regardless of social class or family income. Doctors concluded choline and DHA interact to support brain and eye health.

REFERENCE: HYPERTENSION; JULY, 2019, 13120, PUBLISHED ONLINE

Active Women

Whey helps women gain muscle, and herbs aid breastfeeding

Whey protein builds muscle

The body loses muscle mass with age. Preserving muscle in women—



who naturally have less muscle mass than men—is particularly important. Whey protein has about four times more protein than the same amount of low-fat milk or a cooked egg, making it an ideal supplement for building muscle. But doctors hoped to answer the question, when is the best time to take whey protein, before or after exercise? In this study, 70 women, aged at least 60, alternated taking a placebo and 35 grams of whey protein, before or after training. A third group got a placebo both times.

“It didn’t seem to matter when women took whey protein,” doctors said, continuing, “Skeletal muscle mass, muscle strength, and functional capacity all increased regardless of timing.” Also, signs of oxidative stress decreased after taking whey any time.

Herbal combo boosts breastmilk

Even though breastfeeding is the best way to assure optimal growth and health in infants, many women aren’t able to exclusively breastfeed. In this study, 50 women, aged 20 to 40, one month post-partum and exclusively breastfeeding, took a placebo or an herbal combination containing 200 mg fenugreek seed, 120 mg ginger, and 100 mg turmeric, three times per day.

After two weeks, while the placebo group improved slightly, women taking the herbs saw milk volume increase 49 percent. At four weeks, milk volume had increased 103 percent, with the same nutrient and energy composition as before the study. Vitamin A also increased in herbal group breastmilk.

REFERENCE: SCANDINAVIAN JOURNAL OF MEDICINE & SCIENCE IN SPORTS; 2019, 13449, PUBLISHED ONLINE

NOVEMBER’S

Ahead of the Curve

Early-Stage Discoveries: Elderberry, Tocotrienols, Polyphenols, Green Coffee

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

Elderberry anthocyanins have antiviral effects

Doctors know that elderberry fights flu, but until now, didn’t know how it works. In the lab, doctors applied elderberry to cells before, during, and after infection with the influenza virus. Anthocyanins in elderberry, doctors believe, stopped the virus from infecting the cells, and were even more effective at slowing the spread of the virus once cells had already been infected. “Elderberry inhibited the early stages of infection by blocking key viral proteins that attach to and enter host cells,” doctors said. And elderberry stimulated cytokines, chemical messengers that help coordinate the immune response to pathogens.

Tocotrienols and green tea polyphenols

Muscles can atrophy in people with insulin resistance and elevated blood sugar levels. In the lab, mice on a high fat diet had improved insulin sensitivity after receiving tocotrienols or green tea. Both nutrients individually increased muscle weight in certain muscles, but not when the two nutrients were combined. It appeared green tea detracted from the beneficial effects of tocotrienols. However, both nutrients individually prevented muscle atrophy. Skeletal muscle absorbs glucose, and plays a role in reducing insulin resistance and promoting insulin sensitivity in type 2 diabetes.

Green coffee extract improves metabolics

Green coffee contains chlorogenic acid, an antioxidant which doctors believe is responsible for beneficial blood pressure effects. In the lab, rats got caffeinated or decaffeinated green coffee extract added to a high-carbohydrate diet, or got no green coffee extract. Compared to those that did not get green coffee, both green coffee groups had less body weight gain, less inflammation in the heart and liver, more normal systolic blood pressure readings, and better diastolic relaxation between heartbeats.

REFERENCE: JOURNAL OF FUNCTIONAL FOODS; 2019, VOL. 54, 353-60

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Sleep Well

Milk protein improves sleep quality

With nearly one in two people in the West having difficulty sleeping, doctors first try to modify daily behaviors, such as when and how much food to eat. After this, doctors often prescribe pharmaceutical hypnotics, which act fast but have side effects such as morning sleepiness and mental confusion that can lead to accidents. These drugs also cause physical dependency, with insomnia returning after stopping.

Earlier studies found a bioactive milk protein peptide, alpha-s1 casein hydrolysate (ACH), had anti-stress effects including helping to control blood pressure. In this study, 48 men and women, average age 49, with mild to moderate sleep disturbance, took a

placebo or 300 mg of ACH per day in two alternating four-week phases.

During the ACH phases, people got to sleep more quickly, stayed asleep longer, and woke up more efficiently after sleeping. Doctors confirmed these improvements by measuring brain waves, oxygen levels, heart rate, respiration, and eye and leg movements during sleep.

REFERENCE: NUTRIENTS; 2019, VOL. 11, No. 7, E1466;
PUBLISHED ONLINE



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.

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