

# Polson's

## NATURAL FOODS

## Natural Insights for Well Being®

February 2012

### Memory, Mind, and Mood

Nutrients improved cognitive function and symptoms of depression in older adults

#### B vitamins

In earlier studies, B vitamins reduced homocysteine—high levels of which are a factor in Alzheimer's disease—and slowed brain atrophy, a symptom in those with mild cognitive decline. In this study, 133 people over age 70 with mild cognitive impairment took a daily high-dose B-vitamin supplement containing 800 mcg of folic acid, 500 mcg of B12, and 20 mg of B6, or a placebo. After two years, compared to placebo, homocysteine levels had decreased 30 percent, and executive mental function was stabilized. Those who started the study with the highest homocysteine levels benefited most.



more likely to develop dementia, and doctors said omega-3s may alleviate both cognitive decline and depression. In this study, 50 people over age 65 with mild cognitive impairment and depressive symptoms took a supplement containing mostly docosahexaenoic acid with eicosapentaenoic acid (DHA/EPA), the reverse, or an omega-6 linoleic acid placebo. After six months, compared to placebo, depressive symptoms improved in both omega-3 groups. In addition, the DHA/EPA group also had better verbal fluency and better self-reported physical health. The DHA/EPA supplement contained 1,550 mg DHA plus 400 mg EPA.

REFERENCE: INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF GERIATRIC PSYCHIATRY; 2011, ELECTRONIC PREPUBLICATION

#### Ginkgo biloba

In this study, 410 people with mild to moderate dementia took 240 mg of ginkgo biloba extract per day or a placebo. After 24 weeks, while there was no change for placebo, the ginkgo group improved greatly in symptoms of apathy and indifference, sleep and nighttime behavior, sudden shifts in emotion, abnormal body movements, and overall mood.

#### Omega-3

Those with mild cognitive impairment who become depressed are

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### Healthy Insight

### Valerian Improves Sleep in Women

During menopause, declining hormone levels can disrupt the natural sleep/awake cycle, and about half of all post-menopausal women experience sleep disturbances, doctors said. In this study, 100 post-menopausal women with sleep disturbances, between age 50 and 60, took a placebo or 530 mg of valerian extract twice per day. After four weeks, while just 4 percent in the placebo group had improved, 30 percent of the women who took valerian reported significant enhancements in the quality of their sleep. Doctors said the results of this study suggest valerian may provide safe, effective relief from sleep disturbances in post-menopausal women.

REFERENCE: MENOPAUSE; 2011, VOL. 18, NO. 9, 951-5

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# Breast Health

## Nutrients lower chances of developing breast cancer, and increase survival in those with the disease

### Vitamin D

Doctors said earlier studies suggest breast cancer chances increase when vitamin D levels are low. In this study, researchers measured vitamin D in the diets of 3,101 pre- and post-menopausal women with breast cancer, aged 25 to 75, and compared them to 3,471 cancer-free women of similar ages, backgrounds, and menopausal status.

Overall, while there was no link between breast cancer and vitamin D from food, pre- and post-menopausal women who took a vitamin D supplement of more than 400 IU per day were 24 percent less likely to develop breast cancer compared to women who did not take a vitamin D supplement.

Although the study could not measure vitamin D in adolescence, researchers suggested that taking a vitamin D supplement during these formative years may be the most important factor in preventing breast cancer.

### Lignan phytoestrogens

Flax and other seeds, vegetables, and wheat contain lignan phytoestrogens, hormone-like compounds which earlier studies found protected against cancer. In this study, researchers measured enterolactone, the form lignans take in the blood, in 1,140 postmenopausal women with breast cancer. After six years of follow-up, compared to those

with the lowest levels, women with the highest lignan levels were 42 percent more likely to have survived, and their cancer was similarly less likely to have progressed.

**REFERENCE:** JOURNAL OF CLINICAL ONCOLOGY; 2011, VOL. 29, No. 28, 3730-8



## The Vitamin D Debate

### New research explores raising levels to increase longevity and reduce disease, and tailoring recommendations to specific populations

#### Raising levels worldwide may prolong life

In a review of worldwide vitamin D and major disease studies, researchers estimated that by raising blood levels of vitamin D to 44 nanograms per milliliter of blood (ng/mL) from 20 ng/

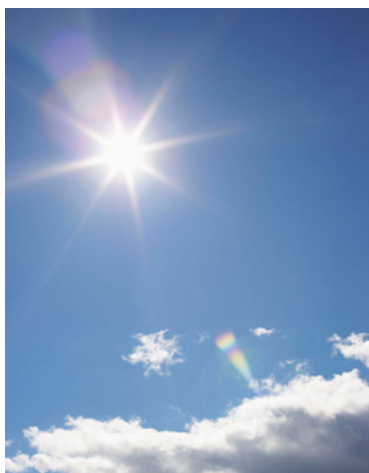
mL currently, annual worldwide deaths from major diseases would decrease by 20 percent, and increase average life expectancy by two years. According to study authors, vitamin D lowers chances of and increases longevity in the five major disease groups that account for over half the world's mortality rates. These include cancer, cardiovascular disease, diabetes, tuberculosis, and respiratory diseases and infections. Doctors said to raise vitamin D levels, manufacturers should fortify foods, and people should take vitamin D supplements and get more sunlight.

#### One size doesn't fit all

Doctors said that recommendations to prevent vitamin D deficiency should consider physical and environmental factors. In this study, researchers

measured vitamin D levels in 492 men aged 40 to 79, living in Chicago, a low-sunlight region, and found that 93 percent of African American men and 70 percent of European American men were deficient, with levels below 30 ng/mL. Doctors said that the melanin in dark skin blocks ultraviolet rays, reducing the amount of vitamin D the body can produce from sunlight. Because there are many special populations in the U.S.; those with darker skin, those who customarily cover their skin, and those who live in low-sunlight areas, the government should provide more than one recommendation for the proper dietary level of vitamin D, researchers concluded.

**REFERENCE:** EUROPEAN JOURNAL OF CLINICAL NUTRITION; 2011, VOL. 65, No. 9, 1016-26



# Cancer Update

## Nutrients lower chances of cancer and inhibit cancer growth

### Glucosamine

Inflammation plays an important role in developing lung cancer, and previous studies have linked anti-inflammatories such as glucosamine, chondroitin, and non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) to lowering the chances. In this study, researchers asked 76,904 people to report the glucosamine, chondroitin, and NSAIDs they had taken during the previous 10 years. Doctors found no links to chondroitin or NSAIDs, but compared to those who did not take glucosamine, those who had taken glucosamine at least four days per week for at least three years were 51 percent less likely to develop lung cancer (adenocarcinoma).

### Curcumin

Researchers thought curcumin might work in the mouths of people with head and neck malignancies to reduce activities that promote cancer growth. In this pilot study, 21 people with head and neck cancers gave saliva samples before and after chewing two curcumin tablets containing a total of 1,000 mg of curcumin. Curcumin suppressed a signaling process that tells cancer cells to grow, and reduced inflammatory molecules in the saliva that promote cancer growth.

“The curcumin had a significant inhibitory effect, blocking two different drivers of head and neck cancer growth,” doctors said, going on to suggest that

curcumin could combine with other treatments such as chemotherapy and radiation to treat head and neck cancers, and might help prevent these cancers in tobacco smokers and chewers, as well as help prevent the recurrence of oral cancers.

Although turmeric, which contains curcumin, is a common cooking spice, the dosage to achieve a clinical effect is much higher. Researchers are planning a longer study, beginning a few weeks before cancer surgery, to see if curcumin produces a larger inhibitory effect.

REFERENCE: CANCER CAUSES AND CONTROL; 2011, VOL. 22, NO. 9, 1333-42

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## Ahead of the Curve

### Early-stage nutrition discoveries: Inflammation, Fertility

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

#### Inflammation

When injured, the body starts an inflammatory process that releases enzymes to clean up damaged tissue. But chronic inflammation creates too many of these enzymes, breaking down healthy tissue. In this study, researchers measured the anti-inflammatory effects of *Boswellia frereana*, a type of frankincense Somalians have traditionally used to treat arthritis. In the lab, scientists first induced cartilage tissue breakdown, then exposed some of the damaged cartilage to frankincense for 28 days. Frankincense inhibited the breakdown of collagen fibers by reducing inflammatory molecules. Doctors determined the active ingredient in frankincense is Epilupeol,

which they believe may lead to new treatments for inflammatory arthritis and osteoarthritis.

#### Infertility – a new theory

Doctors said that oxidative stress is a common link between infertility and circulatory problems, commenting, “If oxidative stress is an underlying factor causing infertility, which we think the evidence points to, we should be able to do something about it.” Oxidative stress reduces nitric oxide, a naturally occurring chemical that blood vessels need to relax, dilate, and allow adequate blood flow. Antioxidants such as vitamins C and E, lipoic acid, and the polyphenols in vegetables, chocolate, and tea, help control oxidative stress,

doctors said, and are calling for more study.

The researchers believe further study is important not only for infertility. Infertility often precedes degenerative diseases such as atherosclerosis, high blood pressure, and congestive heart failure, and nutritional therapies that treat infertility may also alleviate these problems.

REFERENCE: SCHOLARS ARCHIVE AT OREGON STATE UNIVERSITY; 2011, FACULTY RESEARCH PUBLICATIONS



Polson's Natural Foods  
960 Main Street  
Antioch, IL 60002  
Phone: (847) 395-0461  
website: www.polsonsnatural.com

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*Saturday: 9:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m.*  
*Sunday: Closed*

## Better Energy

### Multinutrient helped older adults perform better

Exercise combats inflammation and aging, but intense exercise produces inflammation. Researchers wanted to test anti-inflammatory B vitamins, plant extracts, and muscle-building amino acids. In the study, 31 healthy men and women, average age 54, took a daily multinutrient\* or a placebo, in two 28-day phases, and kept a weekly exercise diary.

While there was little change during the placebo phase, during the nutrient phase, both men and women had more energy, and large drops in the signs of inflammation that increase with intense exercise. In men, general and joint pain decreased, and vertical jump power and grip strength increased. Feelings of anxiety and physical balance improved in women.

\* The multinutrient contained: 250 mcg vitamin B12, 6 mg vitamin B6, 20 mg vitamin B5, 400 mcg folic acid, 2,000 mg leucine, 500 mg isoleucine, 500 mg taurine, 500 mg valine, 100 mg cat's claw, 100 mg quercetin, 50 mg green tea extract, and 25 mg grape seed extract.

REFERENCE: NUTRITION JOURNAL; 2011, ELECTRONIC PREPUBLICATION



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