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Nutley Nutrition Center News



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Cognition

Polyphenols and spearmint improve memory

Grape, blueberry polyphenols

Doctors in this study included 215 healthy men and women, aged 60 to 70, with mild to advanced cognitive decline, excluding others with powerful recall abilities, those who consumed lots of polyphenols from fruits, tea, and dark chocolate, and those taking omega-3 supplements, all of which might improve memory. Participants took a placebo or 300 mg of polyphenol extract from grapes and blueberries, per day.

After six months, those taking polyphenols had improved their ability to recall random items from a list. Looking at participants with the most advanced cognitive decline, those in the polyphenol group were better able to recall the times, places, and emotions associated with events they had experienced.

Reference: Journals of Gerontology; Biological and Medical Sciences; July 2018

Spearmint

Memory naturally declines with age. In this study, 90 men and women, aged 58 to 60, with age-related memory impairment took a placebo, or 600 mg or 900 mg of spearmint extract containing 24 percent total polyphenols.

After 90 days, compared to placebo, those taking the 900 mg dose of spearmint saw a 15 percent improvement in working memory—the ability to remember and evaluate information in order to make decisions or reach conclusions. Participants also saw a 9 percent improvement in spatial memory—the ability to remember one's location or environment, a sort of cognitive map. The 900 mg group also reported better mood, ease of getting to sleep, and better alertness on waking.

Discussing the findings, doctors said they believe it is the antioxidant content of spearmint that may reduce cell damage in the hippocampus, the area of the brain responsible for memory.

Reference: Journal of Alternative and Complementary Medicine; 2018, Vol. 24, No. 1, 37-47

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The information herein is not intended as a substitute for medical diagnosis or treatment. Anyone who has a serious disease should consult a physician before initiating any change in treatment or before beginning any new treatment.

Stroke Update

Folic acid may help prevent a first event

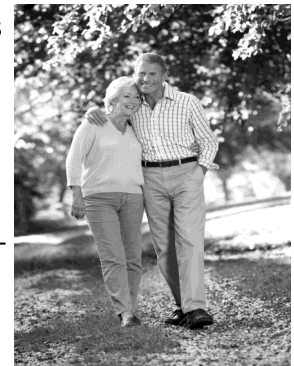
The blood-clotting factor

New findings suggest B-vitamins can reduce chances of stroke. In this study, doctors followed 10,789 Chinese men and women, average age 59.5 years, with high blood pressure—a factor in stroke—but who had never had a stroke. Participants took 10 mg of the blood pressure medication enalapril, with or without 800 mcg of folic acid per day.

Doctors also measured factors that can contribute to stroke: platelets, which help the body form blood clots after injury; and homocysteine, an inflammatory factor that influences circulatory health. Low platelet counts and high homocysteine levels increase chances for stroke, doctors said. None were taking anti-platelet drugs.

After 4.2 years, in the enalapril-only group, as platelet counts decreased and inflammation levels rose, chances for a first stroke increased. For those taking folic acid with enalapril, compared to enalapril alone, chances for a first stroke declined by 73 percent for those with the lowest platelet counts and highest inflammation levels. Identifying those who would benefit most from taking folic acid supplements may be a simple, safe, and inexpensive way to reduce the chances of a first stroke.

Reference: Journal of the American College of Cardiology; May, 2018, Vol. 71, No. 19



Lose Weight with Pre- and Probiotics

New findings show the brain and gut connect to help control appetite. In this study, doctors gave 105 men and women a placebo or 10 mg of the probiotic L-rhamnosus plus 210 mg of the prebiotic oligofructose and 90 mg of the prebiotic inulin during a 12-week moderate calorie-restricted diet, and then during another 12 weeks of supervised diet without calorie restriction. Women taking pre- and probiotics had fewer cravings, less hunger, were more satisfied after eating, and had higher body-esteem scores. Men felt more satiated and had better mental control of appetite.

Reference: Nutrients; 2017, Vol. 9, No. 3, E284

Probiotics for Cold & Flu

Probiotics stimulate the immune system and reduce cold and flu symptoms. In this study, 134 people with at least four colds or flu in the last year drank a placebo or a probiotic beverage containing lactobacillus paracasei, casei, and fermentium, for 12 weeks. Eleven in the placebo group reported a fever plus cough, nasal congestion, or headache, compared to three in the probiotics group. Symptoms also lasted longer for placebo. Doctors said blood tests suggest the probiotics benefit may come from an increase in interferon gamma levels, an immune response to viral and bacterial infections.

Reference: Synthetic and Systems Biotechnology; 2018, Vol. 3, No. 2, 113-20

Circulation & Metabolics

Nutrients calm anxiety in angina, improve biometrics

Lemon balm, mood, and sleep in angina

When the heart muscle does not get enough blood—often due to narrow or blocked arteries—the chest pain that can occur is called angina. In this study, 80 men and women, aged 40 to 75, with chronic stable angina, took 3 grams of lemon balm per day, or a placebo.

After eight weeks, those taking lemon balm reported greater decreases in anxiety, stress, and symptoms of depression, compared to placebo. Sleep duration, quality, and time in bed sleeping rather than lying awake, all improved.

Doctors believe lemon balm works by reducing levels of cortisol, the “stress” hormone, and by increasing gamma-aminobutyric acid (GABA), the major nerve-signaling compound in the brain that helps prevent overstimulation and promotes calm.

Reference: *Clinical Nutrition*; August 2018, Vol. 26, 47-52

Anthocyanin, insulin, lipids, and inflammation

In a review of 19 placebo-controlled clinical trials, doctors found those taking anthocyanins—the dark red, blue, purple, and black colored antioxidants in fruits and other plants—saw reduced insulin resistance and improved insulin production. When the dose of anthocyanins was greater than 300 mg per day, in trials lasting at least 12 weeks, total cholesterol levels, and levels of LDL, the “bad” cholesterol, also declined.

In a second review of 17 placebo-controlled clinical trials, those taking anthocyanin supplements saw significant reductions in triglycerides, and LDL cholesterol, as well as increases in HDL, the “good” cholesterol. Signs of inflammation, including tumor necrosis factor alpha (TNF α), interleukin-6 (IL-6), and high-sensitivity C-reactive protein (hs-CRP), also improved.

Reference: *Clinical Nutrition Journal*; July 2018, S0261-5614

Vitamins D & K for Kids’ Bones

Doctors cite “disturbing growth” in low-energy bone fracture—such as falling from a standing height or less—in healthy children and adolescents. Healthy kids may still be low in vitamins D and K, leading to poor bone development and early osteoporosis.

Recent studies show a majority of healthy pre-pubertal and pubertal children have excess circulating levels of inactive bone protein (osteocalcin)—instead of being in bone—signaling low levels of vitamins D and K, and especially vitamin K2 (menaquinone-7) which helps maintain calcium balance and a healthy skeletal system.

Reference: *Journal of the American College of Nutrition*; July 2017, Vol. 36, No. 5, 399-412



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