



# Stay Healthy!

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## Natural Insights for Well Being®

August 2013

### Keeping Eyes Healthy

The latest results from several large, long-term studies

#### Long-term antioxidants reduce AMD chances

Age-related macular degeneration (AMD), where sight deteriorates in the center of the field of vision, is the most common form of age-related blindness. Doctors believe antioxidants can slow the disease, and several long-term studies tested the effects of these supplements.

The basic eye supplement included 500 mg of vitamin C, 400 IU vitamin E, 15 mg beta-carotene, 80 mg zinc, and 2 mg copper per day.

In the first study, 3,549 participants with early-stage AMD took the antioxidant supplement, with or without the zinc, or a placebo. After 10 years, those who had taken the antioxidants, with or without zinc, were 25-30 percent less likely to develop advanced AMD. Also, those who did take zinc were less likely to have passed away, especially from circulatory diseases.

In the second study, 4,203 participants who were more likely to progress to advanced AMD took the basic antioxidant formula, with or without beta-carotene, plus 10 mg of lutein and 2 mg of zeaxanthin; 350 mg of DHA with 650 mg EPA, these four antioxidants together, or a placebo.

After five years, while there was no overall effect on advanced AMD, those



who had taken lutein and zeaxanthin instead of beta-carotene were slightly less likely to have advanced AMD compared to those who had taken beta-carotene.

Also, former smokers in the study who had taken beta-carotene had a higher incidence of lung cancer than those who had not. Doctors concluded lutein and zeaxanthin could be an appropriate substitute for beta-carotene in the antioxidant eye formula.

#### Lutein and zeaxanthin reduce cataract surgery

In a separate analysis of the second study, above, doctors ranked the 4,203 participants according to lutein and zeaxanthin in the diet. Those who got the least lutein and zeaxanthin from their diets were 32 percent less likely to need cataract surgery after adding lutein and zeaxanthin supplements.

REFERENCE: OPHTHALMOLOGY; APRIL, 2013, ELECTRONIC PREPUBLICATION

AUGUST'S

### Healthy Insight Melatonin Reduces Cell Damage

Certain nerve conditions like multiple sclerosis (MS) involve cell damage from high levels of inflammation. In this study, 16 people with gradually worsening MS who were not taking any immune system medications, hormones, or vitamins, took 10 mg of melatonin per day, as did 13 similarly-aged healthy people. After 30 days, a sign of antioxidant activity increased twice as much in the MS group as in the healthy group, and a measure of oxidative cell damage did not change in the healthy group, but declined by 15 percent for those with MS. The nerve-protecting benefits of melatonin may help treat those with MS, doctors said.

REFERENCE: JOURNAL OF NEUROIMMUNOLOGY; 2013, VOL. 257, No. 1-2, 97-101

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# Healthy Women

## Nutrients improve metabolism, reduce chances of fibroids

### Vitamin A and thyroid

The thyroid releases hormones that stimulate metabolism in every cell in the body. Vitamin A helps regulate thyroid hormones and doctors wanted to test its effect on obese individuals, who commonly have low thyroid function, or hypothyroidism.

In the study, 28 non-obese healthy premenopausal women took 25,000 IU of vitamin A (retinyl palmitate) per day while 56 obese healthy premenopausal women took the vitamin A or a placebo. Doctors measured levels of thyroid-stimulating hormone, which is higher when the thyroid is underactive and lower when thyroid function is normal.

After four months, both obese and non-obese women who had taken vitamin A had much lower levels of thyroid-stimulating hormone, and

higher levels of circulating thyroid hormones. Doctors concluded that vitamin A may reduce early-stage hypothyroidism in premenopausal women.

### Vitamin D and fibroids

Fibroids are non-cancerous tumors that form a mass in the uterus of premenopausal women. In this study, doctors measured vitamin D levels and sun exposure in 1,036 black and white women, aged 35 to 49, and used ultrasound to detect uterine fibroids.

Half of the white women had sufficient levels of vitamin D, which doctors said was at least 20 nanograms per milliliter of blood, while 10 percent of black women had sufficient levels.

Compared to those whose vitamin D levels were low, women with sufficient

circulating vitamin D levels were 32 percent less likely to have a fibroid, regardless of race.

In 2011, the U.S. increased its recommended dietary allowance for vitamin D to 600 IU per day for most people.

REFERENCE: EPIDEMIOLOGY; 2013, VOL. 24, No. 3, 447-53



## Breast Health

### Nutrients may improve breast health and reduce cancer chances

#### Antioxidant carotenoids

Many earlier studies have found carotenoids, the colorful red, orange, and yellow pigments in plants and other food sources, reduce chances of breast cancer. In this analysis, doctors reviewed eight studies covering more than 80 percent of published investigations worldwide, including 3,055 women with breast cancer and compared to 3,956 similar healthy women.



Overall, compared to women with the lowest carotenoid levels, women with the highest circulating levels of all carotenoids were 19 percent less likely to develop breast cancer.

For individual carotenoids, compared to those with the lowest levels, women with the highest circulating levels of alpha-carotene were 13 percent less likely to develop breast cancer, for beta-carotene, 17 percent less likely, lutein and zeaxanthin, 16 percent, and lycopene, 22 percent.

#### Isoflavones

Isoflavones are plant based nutrients. In this review, doctors analyzed findings from several studies covering 3,101 postmenopausal women with breast cancer and compared them

to 3,471 similar healthy women. The studies included low and high doses of isoflavones from soy, red clover, garlic, and evening primrose, together or separately.

Overall compared to placebo, women who took isoflavones for at least five years were 25 percent less likely to develop breast cancer. Women who took average doses lower than 25 mcg per day saw no benefit, while women who took at least 676 mcg per day had 28 percent lower chances of developing breast cancer, improving to 43 percent lower after five years. Isoflavones do not increase breast cancer chances and may help reduce postmenopausal breast cancer, doctors said.

REFERENCE: BRITISH JOURNAL OF CANCER; 2013, VOL. 132, No. 6, 1439-50

# Major Magnesium Benefits

## Better blood sugar, insulin levels, and less severe stroke

### An essential nutrient

Magnesium is the fourth most abundant mineral in the body, involved in more than 300 biochemical reactions that help maintain normal muscle and nerve function, heart rhythm, and a healthy immune system.



### Blood sugar and insulin levels

Doctors analyzed 15 studies covering 53,000 non-diabetic men and women. For every 50 mg per day increase in magnesium, fasting levels of glucose and insulin were measurably lower. Doctors saw the magnesium benefits regardless of age, gender, alcohol or calorie consumption, smoking, or body weight.

Doctors also looked at genetic differences, since earlier studies found certain variations in DNA can affect glucose, insulin, and magnesium metabolism. But researchers found the glucose and insulin benefits regardless of DNA variations, suggesting magnesium works independently of genetics.

### Reducing stroke severity

Researchers in this study analyzed the lifestyles, heart health history, and

conducted a complete physical exam on 1,493 people with acute ischemic stroke, where blood supply to part of the brain is decreased. Those with more severe stroke symptoms, or who later died from stroke, had lower blood levels of magnesium than those with less severe stroke symptoms or survivors.

Compared to those with the lowest levels, those with the highest circulating levels of magnesium were 53 percent less likely to have a severe stroke or to pass away from stroke. Researchers found that the benefits of magnesium persisted regardless of age, gender, blood levels of calcium, potassium, or any other circulating blood factors, and extended to those with better-than-average levels of magnesium.

REFERENCE: JOURNAL OF NUTRITION; JANUARY, 2013, ELECTRONIC PREPUBLICATION

## Ahead of the Curve

### Early-Stage Discoveries: Vitamin C, Vitamin D, Krill Oil, and Zinc

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

#### Vitamin C magnifies radiation therapy

Researchers gave high-dose vitamin C just prior to brain cancer radiation therapy, which dramatically increased DNA damage and cell death in radiation-resistant cancer cells but left healthy cells undisturbed.

#### Vitamin D reduces eye aging

Doctors gave older mice vitamin D or a placebo for six weeks and found less inflammation, fewer protein deposits, and better retina function for vitamin D. Researchers also found fewer protein deposits in blood vessels, suggesting vitamin D may help prevent a range of age-related health issues.

#### Krill oil improves colitis symptoms

Colitis spasms can shorten the colon, but rats fed krill oil had normal-length colons and far fewer signs of protein oxidation, a factor in colitis.

#### Zinc regulates immune response

The immune system must work in strict balance, first creating an inflammatory response to infection, then stopping the response before it damages healthy cells. To do this, the immune response also turns on a gene that helps transport zinc from the bloodstream to the infected cells, where the zinc binds to a protein to halt

further inflammatory activity. Using human cells overwhelmingly inflamed and infected, researchers were able to demonstrate the zinc “shutdown” effect.

REFERENCE: CELL REPORTS; 2013, VOL. 3, NO. 2, 386-400



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## Vitamin E is Safe, Expert Says

### Study sheds new light on essential nutrient

#### Most important issue is low levels in the diet

Dr. Maret G. Traber, professor of health sciences at Oregon State University, a director at the Linus Pauling Institute and an internationally recognized expert on vitamin E, has published a new report detailing how the body metabolizes vitamin E.

Two systems in the liver help control vitamin E levels and excrete excess amounts. “Unlike some other fat-soluble vitamins such as A and D, it is not possible for vitamin E to accumulate in the liver or other tissues,” Traber said.

“I believe that past studies which have alleged adverse consequences from vitamin E have misinterpreted the data,” Traber stated, continuing, “Taking too

much vitamin E is not the real concern. A much more important issue is that more than 90 percent of people in the U.S. have inadequate levels in their diet.” The doctor recommends taking a multivitamin with the full adult RDA of vitamin E, 22.4 IU per day.

**REFERENCE:** JOURNAL OF LIPID RESEARCH; MARCH, 2013, ELECTRONIC PREPUBLICATION



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