



# Stay Healthy!

840 South Rancho Drive #14 • Las Vegas, Nevada

[www.stayhealthylasvegas.com](http://www.stayhealthylasvegas.com)

[contactus@stayhealthylasvegas.com](mailto:contactus@stayhealthylasvegas.com)

## Natural Insights for Well Being®

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### Curbing the Common Cold

Nutrients shorten duration, ease symptoms

#### Pycnogenol® shortens cold duration

Pycnogenol is a plant-based anti-inflammatory antioxidant. In the first part of this two-part study, 73 healthy volunteers took 50 mg of Pycnogenol, twice per day, or standard over-the-counter cold medication, at the first sign of a cold. Compared to OTC, colds were shorter by one day, and there were one-third fewer sick days in the Pycnogenol group.

In the second phase of the study, 196 people took standard OTC medication, or 100 mg of Pycnogenol with 200 mg of vitamin C or with 30 mg of zinc, or all three of these together, in two divided doses per day. After at least five days, compared to OTC, all three Pycnogenol groups had shorter colds. The best results came from the combination of all three nutrients, which saw 88 percent fewer cold complications, including lung infection, and averaged three less sick days.

#### Probiotics cut cold symptoms

Doctors said earlier studies found probiotics reduce the number, severity, and length of colds in the old, young, the healthy sedentary, and in highly trained athletes, but that no research exists on health-conscious, physically active men and women.

This study involved 465 healthy



adults who regularly engaged in a range of physical activities from daily walking to competitive amateur athletics. Participants took a daily dose of bifidobacterium lactis, with or without lactobacillus acidophilus, while a third group took a placebo. After 150 days from the fall through the spring, compared to placebo, those who took bifidobacterium lactis were 27 percent less likely to have developed an upper respiratory tract infection. Also, the placebo group caught cold sooner, with the probiotics group healthy about three weeks longer.

The group that took the combination of bifidobacterium lactis with lactobacillus acidophilus was able to be significantly more physically active than the placebo group.

REFERENCE: OTORINOLARINGOLOGIA; 2013, VOL. 63, NO. 3, 151-61

FEBRUARY'S

### Healthy Insight Probiotics for Colic

Babies that suddenly start crying, often after feeding, may have different gut bacteria than babies without colic. To explore this idea, doctors reviewed 12 probiotics studies covering 1,800 infants with colic and found mixed, but positive, results. Half the studies found probiotics reduced crying; three of five placebo-controlled studies found probiotics effective in breast-fed infants, and one study found probiotic benefits for infants fed formula.

In three small pilot studies, the probiotic *L. reuteri* reduced crying time. Doctors said evidence is still insufficient to support using probiotics to manage or prevent colic, particularly in formula-fed babies, but probiotics may be effective in breastfed babies.

REFERENCE: JAMA PEDIATRICS; OCTOBER, 2013, PUBLISHED ONLINE

### This Issue

NUTRIENTS LOWER BLOOD SUGAR, REDUCE CHANCES FOR TYPE 2 DIABETES	2
OMEGA-3 HAS BRAIN BENEFITS IN OLD AND YOUNG	2
NUTRIENTS REDUCE CHANCES FOR HEART TROUBLE, CHRONIC INFLAMMATION	3
EARLY-STAGE DISCOVERIES IN NUTRITION	3
MULTIVITAMINS MAY HELP WOMEN SURVIVE INVASIVE BREAST CANCER	4

# Progress on Diabetes

## Nutrients lower blood sugar, reduce chances of condition

### Antioxidants low-cost way to lower blood sugar

Doctors said there is a link between insulin resistance—when the body doesn't metabolize sugar efficiently—and oxidative stress, and wanted to see if lowering oxidation might help normalize blood sugar. In this study, 104 vegetarians with type 2 diabetes and insulin resistance who were taking oral diabetic drugs for at least six months took 300 mg of alpha lipoic acid per day, 180 mg of EPA with 120 mg of DHA per day, 400 IU of vitamin E per day, or a placebo.

After 90 days, all of the antioxidant supplements lowered fasting and long-term average blood sugar levels more than placebo. Long-term blood glucose levels improved most with the omega-

3s, but vitamin E was the most cost effective solution.

### Vitamin K reduces chances for type 2 diabetes

Earlier research found vitamin K improved glucose metabolism and insulin resistance. In this study, doctors measured vitamin K levels in 2,994 older men and women with greater chances of cardiovascular problems, and followed 1,069 of them who were free from diabetes at the start of the study. After 5.5 years, compared to those who did not, those who developed type 2 diabetes had begun the study with significantly lower levels of vitamin K.

Those who increased vitamin K over the 5-year period were 51 percent

less likely to develop type 2 diabetes compared to those who had not increased vitamin K. For each 100 mcg increase in vitamin K per day, chances for diabetes declined 17 percent, doctors concluded.

**REFERENCE:** ANNALS OF MEDICAL & HEALTH SCIENCES RESEARCH; 2013, VOL. 3, NO. 3, 442-6



# Healthy Brains

## Two new studies show omega-3 benefits for developing and older brains

### Omega-3 in infants improves brain health later

Most studies on omega-3s in childhood test cognition at 18 months, but doctors said young brains take more time to develop. In this study, from birth to 12 months, 81 children took



a placebo or one of three doses of the omega-3 DHA per day. The doses were as a percent of total fatty acids in the diet; 0.32, 0.64, or 0.96 percent DHA; plus 0.64 percent arachidonic acid.

At 18 months, the omega-3 groups were no different than placebo, but from three to six years, the DHA groups were better able to learn rules, had higher intelligence scores, and larger vocabulary. Doctors saw the benefits mostly in the lower-dose groups, except cognitive performance scores on one of the standardized tests were best in the higher-dose DHA group.

Discussing their findings, doctors said that, while small, this study may contribute to more sophisticated theories about the benefits of omega-3s for developing brains.

### Omega-3s improve brain function

Doctors said there is a link between oxidized lipids and impaired cognitive function. In this study, researchers compared 67 people with mild cognitive impairment to 134 healthy people. Mild cognitive impairment occurs as memory, language, thinking, and judgment decline faster than in normal aging.

Those with mild cognitive impairment had significantly higher levels of oxidized lipids compared to healthy people. Doctors said DHA may stimulate antioxidant enzymes that help decrease oxidative stress and, in an important new finding, as DHA and EPA levels increased, oxidative stress levels declined.

**REFERENCE:** AMERICAN JOURNAL OF CLINICAL NUTRITION; 2013, VOL. 98, NO. 2, 403-12

# Inflammatory Factors

## Nutrients reduce chances for heart disease and chronic inflammation

### Calcium helps lower homocysteine

Doctors said there may be a link between the inflammatory factor homocysteine and bone and artery disease in postmenopausal women. Recent research also suggests low calcium levels may increase homocysteine.



To find out, researchers in this study compared calcium and homocysteine levels in 713 postmenopausal Japanese women, average age 65. Compared to women with lower calcium levels, women who got at least 536 mg of calcium per day had lower homocysteine levels. Doctors also found a possible connection: as the levels of calcium in the diet increased, levels of homocysteine declined.

Researchers suggest placebo-controlled trials to confirm their observations from this study.

### Folic acid may reduce cardiovascular problems

People with chronic kidney disease are more likely to have heart disease, and vice versa. In this review, doctors analyzed nine folic acid studies covering

8,234 people with kidney disease. Overall, the chances for developing cardiovascular disease was 10 percent lower in those who added folic acid to their diets compared to those who did not add folic acid.

Doctors found certain people benefited most from taking folic acid including smokers, those with end-stage kidney disease, those with chronically higher levels of the inflammatory factor homocysteine, and people who did not eat grains fortified with folic acid. As of 1998, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration required all manufacturers of enriched breads, cereals, flours, corn meals, pastas, rice, and other grain products to fortify them with folic acid.

**REFERENCE:** CLINICAL NUTRITION; 2013, VOL. 32, No. 5, 722-7

## Ahead of the Curve

### Early-Stage Discoveries: CoQ10, Folic Acid, and Melatonin

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

#### CoQ10 improves performance in aging

CoQ10 helped older mice swim more efficiently, and reduced oxidative damage in the energy-producing proteins of the heart, liver, and skeletal muscle and, to a lesser degree, in brain-cell energy proteins. Doctors said this is the first study to use CoQ10 after age-related cognitive declines have begun.

#### Folic acid for a healthier future

When folic acid was deficient in grandparents, their grandchildren were more likely to develop health problems linked to low folic acid levels. Scientists said the finding in mice surprised them,

and that even great, great grandchildren could be affected, and that, “Our research shows that disease in general can be inherited through [multi-generational] means.”

#### Melatonin promotes healthy weight

Lean people tend to have more burnable fat than obese people. In this study, both lean and overweight rats got a placebo or oral melatonin in drinking water. Researchers did not know until after the study which group got the placebo or melatonin. After six weeks, melatonin converted less-burnable white fat into more-burnable brown fat

in both study groups. Also, melatonin increased fat-burning capacity during exercise. Doctors said melatonin appears to increase the ability of the body to generate heat, which may explain its metabolic benefits, and its anti-diabetic and lipid-lowering properties.

**REFERENCE:** AGE; 2013, VOL. 35, No. 5, 1821-34



Stay Healthy!  
840 S. Rancho Drive #14  
Las Vegas, NV 89106  
(702) 877-2494

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## Multivitamins May Help Women Survive Breast Cancer

Postmenopausal women taking multivitamins more likely to survive invasive breast cancer

### Large, new multivitamin study

Doctors wanted to know if multivitamin-mineral supplements would affect survival in women with invasive breast cancer, which spreads outside the milk glands or ducts and into breast tissue. In this study, doctors followed 7,728 women, aged 50 to 79, for seven years after being diagnosed with the disease.

At the start of the study, about four in 10 of the women were taking multivitamin-mineral supplements. To help increase their confidence in the findings, doctors first looked carefully at the women's lifestyle factors including

smoking, education, race and ethnicity, weight, depression, alcohol, and age at time of diagnosis, and adjusted for all these factors.

Women who took multivitamin-mineral supplements were 30 percent less likely to die from invasive breast cancer than women who didn't take multivitamin-mineral supplements.

Discussing their findings, doctors said multivitamin-mineral supplements may help older women with invasive breast cancer survive.

**REFERENCE:** BREAST CANCER RESEARCH AND TREATMENT; 2013, VOL. 141, NO. 3, 495-505

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