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Natural Insights for Well Being®

July 2022

Circulation

Nutrients boost the circulatory system

Turmeric enhances brain blood flow

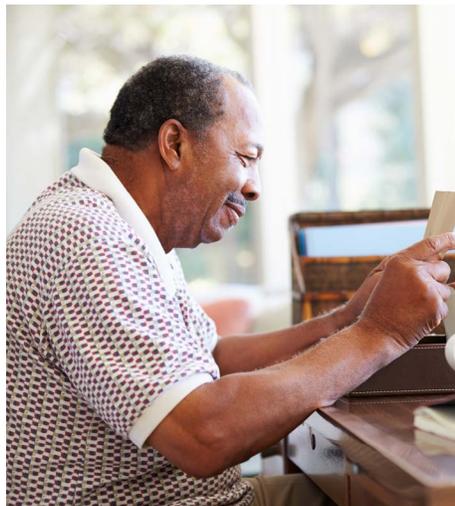
Blood flow to the brain declines with age. In this study, 12 healthy men and women, average age 70, took a placebo or 10 grams of turmeric extract. Before and two hours after, doctors measured heart rate and blood pressure, then administered a hand-grip test designed to activate the brain, before measuring brain oxygen levels and brain blood flow volume.

Hemoglobin is the oxygen transporting protein in red blood cells. To gauge the capacity to transport oxygen, doctors measured total hemoglobin, which increased 54 percent. Oxygen to the brain increased 42 percent. Pulse and blood pressure did not change significantly in either group.

Discussing the findings, doctors said the results indicate supplementing with turmeric/curcumin in older adults can increase brain blood flow during exercises designed to activate the brain.

Cranberry improves vessel function

How well vessels relax and dilate as blood flow increases is one way doctors gauge chances for heart and circulatory problems. In this study, 45 healthy adult men took a placebo or 9 grams of cranberry extract powder—equal to



about 100 grams of fresh cranberries and 525 mg of total polyphenols.

After one month, vessel dilation capacity had increased between 6.3 and 7.5 percent in the cranberry group while not changing for placebo. Doctors also measured polyphenol metabolite levels in blood plasma and in urine, and found significant increases at two hours, 24 hours, and after one month of taking cranberry, compared to placebo.

Doctors said the increases in polyphenols and metabolites in the bloodstream and the improvements in vessel dilation capacity after taking cranberry suggest an important role for this powerful antioxidant in preventing heart and circulatory conditions.

REFERENCE: INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF FOOD SCIENCES AND NUTRITION; 2022, VOL. 73, NO. 2, 274-83

JULY'S

Healthy Insight Avocado for Heart

This long-term study followed 110,487 nurses and health professional men and women over 30 years. At the start of the study all were free from cancer and any heart or circulatory conditions, and all participants reported their diets every four years.

Those who consumed two half-avocados per week to replace a like amount of margarine, butter, egg, yogurt, cheese, or processed meats were 16 to 21 percent less likely to have developed any adverse heart or circulatory conditions or events.

Doctors said these health benefits come from the mono- and poly-unsaturated fats in avocado that replace saturated fats. Avocado also provides fiber, folate, magnesium, and potassium.

REFERENCE: JAHA; 2022, VOL. 11, NO. 7, 024014

This Issue

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Digestion

Vitamin D and probiotics promote a healthy gut

Vitamin D reduced *H. pylori*

When vitamin D levels were adequate—meaning at least 20 nanograms per milliliter of blood (ng/mL) or 50 nanomoles per liter—chances for having the harmful gut bacteria, *H. pylori*, decreased significantly. In this study, doctors reviewed *H. pylori* tests in 258,626 people, half of whom tested positive.

During various seasons, but within one month of a prior *H. pylori* test among 27,077 of the participants, doctors found those with a negative test had an average vitamin D level of 20.1 vs. 18.6 ng/mL in those who had tested positive, in 80 percent of the seasons in the study. For each 1 ng/mL increase in vitamin D, chances for infection decreased by 1.5 percent.

Probiotics reduced diarrhea

Some people have chronic diarrhea with no apparent cause, and without pain. One common trait is elevated gut inflammation, which doctors measured by the gut inflammation marker, calprotectin. In this study, 24 people with elevated calprotectin levels and chronic diarrhea took a placebo or 10 billion colony-forming units of *Lactobacillus plantarum* per day.

After 60 days, nine in 10—or 90 percent—in the probiotics group saw a 30 percent decrease in the number of loose stools compared to the start of the study. Results for the placebo group were not as successful: five in 12 placebo participants, or 41.7 percent, reported a similar improvement in loose stools. Doctors also noted after 60 days

the level of the inflammatory marker, calprotectin, in the stool decreased significantly in the probiotics group compared to the start of the study.

REFERENCE: NUTRIENTS; 2021, VOL. 13, NO. 1, 278



Less Stress

Probiotics and lemon verbena reduced anxiety and stress

Probiotics helped manage acute stress

In one of the first studies to link probiotics with brain activity during



acute psychological situations such as stress, 22 healthy men and women, average age 24, took a placebo or a daily *Lactobacillus* probiotic combination for four weeks. All participants stopped for another four weeks, then switched groups.

In each of the probiotics phases, but not in the placebo phases, areas in the brain linked to the stress response showed reduced activity. Levels of the stress hormone, cortisol, were also lower in saliva during the probiotics phases. Doctors said probiotics could be a non-drug treatment for stress disorders in healthy people, and in those undergoing treatment for stress.

Lemon verbena for anxiety and sleep

In this study, 40 men and women,

average age 39, who reported no chronic illness but who had test scores showing moderate levels of stress and poor sleep, took a placebo or 400 mg of lemon verbena extract per day.

After eight weeks, those in the lemon verbena group reported 12.2 percent lower stress levels compared to the start of the study. Participants stopped treatment for four weeks, when doctors asked again, and found 25.9 percent lower stress levels compared to the start of the study for lemon verbena.

Sleep also improved in the lemon verbena group, with significant increases in time spent in deep sleep and in rapid-eye-movement (REM) sleep compared to placebo. Women had greater improvement than men in sleep measurements, which were based on Fitbit® tracking information.

REFERENCE: NUTRIENTS; 2022, VOL. 14, NO. 1, 218

Eyes

Curcumin, lutein, and zeaxanthin for vision and memory

Curcumin, artemisia, bromelain, and black pepper in type 2 diabetes

In diabetes, damage to the small vessels in the eye can cause fluid to leak into the retina, swelling surrounding tissue, including the macula. The condition is called diabetic macular



edema (DME). In this study, 56 men and women with type 2 diabetes, between ages 40 and 70, and with mild to moderate DME, took a placebo or 200 mg of curcumin, 80 mg of artemisia, 80 mg of bromelain, and 2 mg of black pepper per day.

After six months, doctors measured swelling by changes in retinal thickness, which had decreased 71.43 percent for the curcumin group compared to 10.71 percent for placebo. Doctors also measured changes in blood flow volume in the small vessels in the eye and found a 2.15 percent increase in the curcumin group compared to placebo.

Lutein and zeaxanthin improved visual memory

In this study, 90 volunteers, aged

40 to 70, who reported problems with memory or attention, took a placebo or 10 mg of lutein plus 2 mg of zeaxanthin per day.

After six months, doctors used standard tests to measure changes in episodic memory—those of everyday events such as times, places, and associated emotions—and in immediate and delayed word recall, location recall, learning recall, and word and picture recognition, all of which improved significantly in the lutein and zeaxanthin group compared to placebo.

Because of the relationship between visual memory and cognitive decline, doctors said lutein and zeaxanthin may help prevent this age-related condition.

REFERENCE: NUTRIENTS; 2022, VOL. 14, NO. 7, 1520

Diabetes Update

Probiotics, vitamin D, and omega-3s improve diabetes status

Probiotics reduced inflammation and glucose

Type 1 diabetes is an autoimmune disease where the body does not produce enough insulin to regulate blood sugar levels, and requires insulin injections. In this study, 56 people with type 1 diabetes, aged 6 to 18, got regular insulin injections with or without 10 billion colony-forming units of a probiotic combination.

After three months, fasting blood sugar levels in the probiotics group had decreased to 161.9 from 185.4 milligrams per deciliter of blood (mg/dL) while the placebo group registered 171.5 from 172.2 mg/dL. Long-term average blood sugar levels, or HbA1C, decreased to 8.5 from 9.3 percent for probiotics while remaining unchanged at 9.5 percent for placebo.

Treatment stopped after three months, but six months later, fasting and long-term average blood sugar levels remained near the lows seen at three months for the probiotics group.

Vitamin D and omega-3s

In the long-term VITamin D and Omega-3 TriaL (VITAL) study, 25,875 participants took a placebo or 2,000 IU of vitamin D plus 460 mg of EPA and 380 mg of DHA per day. Doctors in this follow-up study were interested in the race of the 14 percent of participants who had type 2 diabetes, and their chances of being hospitalized for heart failure. The average follow-up period was 5.3 years.

Overall in those with type 2 diabetes, 3.6 percent who had taken vitamin D plus omega-3s

had a first hospitalization for heart failure compared to 5.2 percent for placebo. For a second, or recurring, hospitalization for heart failure, there was a significant reduction for Black, but not for White, participants.

REFERENCE: FRONTIERS IN ENDOCRINOLOGY; 2022, ARTICLE ID 754401



Avocado, Black Bean, Corn, Lime Vinaigrette Summer Salad

While you enjoy this refreshing summer salad, please see page 1 for a new study that found those who substituted avocado for foods with saturated fats were less likely to have heart and circulatory conditions.

Prep time: 30 minutes

Chill time: 2-3 hours

Servings 6-8

Ingredients:

2 ripe avocados, cut into bite-size chunks	2 cloves fresh garlic, minced
2 15-oz cans black beans, rinsed and drained	1/2 c extra virgin olive oil
3 ears fresh cooked corn, kernels cut off cob	1-2 limes for juice and zest
2 fresh red bell peppers, chopped	6 tbsp fresh lime juice
	1 tsp lime zest (zest before juicing)
	1/2 c fresh cilantro, chopped
	Salt and pepper to taste

Directions: Combine all ingredients except avocado in a large bowl, mix well. Cover and chill for a few hours. Add avocado chunks just before serving. Garnish with more cilantro if desired and enjoy as a side dish or with corn chips.

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.

These articles provide nutritional information only and do not replace professional medical advice.

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