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## Natural Insights for Well Being®

August 2022

### Calm

Nutrients reduce pain and stress

#### Magnesium in fibromyalgia

Fibromyalgia (FM), the chronic muscle- and joint-pain condition, can cause mental and emotional stress. In this study, 76 adults with a confirmed diagnosis of FM, and at least mild depression on the Depression Anxiety Stress Scale (DASS-42), took a placebo or 50 mg of magnesium twice per day.

After 28 days, those with mild to moderate depression who had taken magnesium saw DASS scores decrease to the normal, non-depressed range while scores in the placebo group increased. In those with severe to extremely severe symptoms, scores declined to the severe range for magnesium while not changing for placebo. All groups taking magnesium reported improvements in pain scores while the placebo group reported increased pain.

This is the first study to show daily magnesium improved stress and pain in fibromyalgia, which doctors said may help reduce the demand for usual drug treatment.

#### Magnesium, B-vitamins, rhodiola, green tea, L-theanine

In this study, 106 chronically stressed but otherwise healthy adults who reported at least moderate DASS stress scores, took a placebo or 150 mg magnesium, 700 mcg vitamin B6, 100 mcg vitamin B9, 1.25 mcg vitamin B12,



222 mg rhodiola extract, 125 mg green tea extract, and 50 mg L-theanine per day for 28 days.

Beginning at 14 days and continuing through 56 days—28 days after stopping treatment—DASS stress scores declined 3 points, from moderate to mild, in those taking the nutrient combination. There was a smaller improvement in the placebo group, which doctors attributed to the placebo effect.

Sensitivity to cold pain—a symptom typical in those with chronic stress—decreased significantly by day 28, and trended lower for warm pain, in those taking the nutrient combination. Also at 28 days, the nutrient group reported improvements in daytime alertness and less sleepiness, which persisted after treatment stopped through day 56.

REFERENCE: NUTRIENTS; 2022, VOL. 14, NO. 10, NU14102088

AUGUST'S

### Healthy Insight Hearts Love Cocoa

This is the first long-term test of the heart and circulatory effects of cocoa flavanols. In this six-year trial, 21,422 participants took 500 mg of cocoa flavanols with or without a multivitamin, or neither of these, per day.

When doctors analyzed those who most consistently took cocoa flavanols with or without multivitamins, they found 15 percent lower chances of heart or circulatory events, and 39 percent lower likelihood of dying from these conditions, compared to those who took neither supplement. Previous short-term trials found circulatory benefits for flavanols, but this is the first to show lower chances for heart and circulatory events.

REFERENCE: AMERICAN JOURNAL OF CLINICAL NUTRITION; 2022, VOL. 115, NO. 6, 1490-1500

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# Lipids

## Nutrients improved circulatory health

### Hibiscus lowered blood pressure, cholesterol

Many cultures worldwide have used antioxidant-rich hibiscus to lower high blood pressure. In this review of 17 hibiscus clinical trials, doctors found an average 7.10 mmHg reduction in systolic blood pressure, with greater effects in those who began the studies with elevated blood pressure.

Overall, hibiscus was effective in studies lasting more than four weeks, with doses greater than 1,000 mg of hibiscus per day showing consistent blood pressure lowering effects. Doctors also observed improvements in lipid levels in studies using doses between 500 mg and 1,000 mg, with decreases in total cholesterol, triglycerides, and increases in HDL, the beneficial cholesterol.

### Oat beta-glucan improved lipids

In 1997, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approved a health claim for oat beta-glucan (OBG) reducing chances for heart disease. OBG is a soluble fiber that forms a thick, gel-like substance that slows sugars entering the bloodstream and reduces the amount of cholesterol the body absorbs.

In this review of 13 clinical trials covering 927 participants, overall, OBG reduced total cholesterol by 0.24 micromoles per liter of blood (mmol/L); and LDL cholesterol by 0.27 mmol/L.

Discussing the findings, doctors said oat beta-glucan reduced total and LDL cholesterol in clinical trials of various lengths, at doses of at least 3 grams per day, the level recommended

by the FDA in its approved health claim, and that those with elevated cholesterol levels should consider taking OBG to reduce chances for heart and circulatory problems.

**REFERENCE: NUTRITION REVIEWS; 2022, VOL. 80, NO. 6, 1723-37**



# Muscle & Joint

## Nutrients increase muscle mass, joint flexibility

### Whey protein, L-leucine, vitamin D boost muscle mass

Nutrients preserved muscle and increased strength in age-related muscle loss, or sarcopenia. Age-related decline in estrogen, low physical activity,

and low dietary protein contribute to sarcopenia. In this study, 16 obese women with sarcopenia, aged 50 to 70, adopted a 1,000 calorie diet and took 18 grams of whey protein, 4.1 grams of leucine, and 200 IU of vitamin D each day at 5:00 p.m. Total vitamin D between diet and supplements was 600 IU per day.

After 45 days, the group had lost an average 4.6 percent body weight. Fasting insulin, insulin resistance, lipid profiles, and signs of inflammation all significantly improved. Hand grip strength increased to 21.2 kg from 15.3 kg, and in a test of lower-body strength and balance—the Short Physical Performance Battery (SPPB)—scores increased to 8 to 10 from 4 to 9 at the start of the study.

### Collagen improved knee range-of-motion

Range of motion naturally declines with age. In this study of the ability to flex and extend the knee, 96 active, healthy men and women, aged 20 to 55, took a placebo or 40 mg of undenatured type II collagen per day.

After six months, overall, knee flexion increased 3.23 and 0.2 degrees for collagen vs. placebo. In women, the increase for collagen was 4.79 vs. 0.32 degrees for placebo. In those over age 35, knee flexion increased 6.79 for collagen vs. 0.3 degrees for placebo. For knee extension, overall, the collagen group increased 2.21 vs. 1.27 degrees for placebo.

**REFERENCE: NUTRIENTS; 2022, VOL. 14, NO. 9, NU14091884**



# Mind & Body

## Nutrients preserve cognition, reduce cancer chances

### Vitamin K levels predict cognitive health

Earlier studies suggest a link between low vitamin K and cognitive impairment. Here, doctors used a simple measure to identify insufficient bone levels of vitamin K: ucOC—undercarboxylated osteocalcin.

In this study, 800 independently living adults, average age 76, took



a mental-state exam along with a ucOC test. Overall, 41.6 percent of participants had cognitive impairment. Compared to those with the lowest scores, those with the highest ucOC scores had impaired ability to spell words backwards, name objects such as a pencil and watch, and to keep track of time and location.

“As far as we know, this is the first report on the significant association of single ucOC measurement and cognitive impairment,” doctors said, and recommended using this simple, widely available test to identify vitamin K insufficiency.

### Vitamin D, omega-3, exercise reduce cancer

Age, diet, and exercise all influence

chances for developing cancer. This three-year study included 2,157 generally healthy, independently living adults, average age 75, from five European countries. Doctors administered a placebo, a simple home strength exercise alone, 2,000 IU of vitamin D with or without 1,000 mg of marine omega-3s per day, or these two with or without exercise.

Each of the therapies alone reduced chances for cancer between 24 and 30 percent compared to placebo. Any two therapies reduced chances 44 to 48 percent, and combining all three, exercise, vitamin D, and omega-3s, reduced chances for developing cancer by 61 percent compared to placebo.

**REFERENCE:** FRONTIERS IN NUTRITION; 2022, 811831, PUBLISHED ONLINE

AUGUST'S

## Ahead of the Curve

### Early-Stage Discoveries: Red Chili Pepper, Prebiotics, Wild Blueberry

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

#### Chili pepper boosts microbiome diversity

Beneficial bacteria produce short-chain fatty acids by fermenting fiber in the gut, which intestinal cells use as energy to absorb minerals, reduce inflammation, and aid metabolism. In the lab, doctors introduced chili pepper capsaicin into human gut microbiota and found regular capsaicin changed its structure by increasing diversity and certain short-chain fatty acids, particularly butanoic acid. Discussing the findings, doctors said “The microbiota changes may be responsible for the health benefits associated with consuming chili pepper capsaicin.”

#### Prebiotics boost iron absorption

In the lab, doctors gave iron-deficient rats the prebiotics fructo- and galacto-oligosaccharides (FOS, GOS) at no, 3, 5, or 10 percent of total calories. After 21 days, GOS doses over 5 percent improved iron status, with greater improvement at higher doses.

Doctors said, “For the first time, we show evidence that increasing doses of GOS improve iron absorption and gut microbiota, even with the less-bioavailable ferric citrate form of iron, suggesting a positive role for GOS in reducing iron-deficiency anemia in children.”

#### Wild blueberry speeds wound healing

An earlier study treating human umbilical cord cells with blueberry extract increased new blood vessels and sped cell repair. In this lab study, doctors treated open wounds in rats with a topical gel containing wild blueberry phenolic extract or a placebo.

Wild blueberry increased new blood vessels by 20 percent, and wounds closed 12 percent faster than placebo. Wild blueberry, which is all natural, inexpensive, and without side effects, may help heal chronic wounds by promoting new blood vessels.

**REFERENCE:** FASEB JOURNAL; 2022, VOL. 36, NO. S1, R3098

## Iced Cocoa-Cold Brew Coffee Banana Latte

While you sip this yummy, refreshing cold brew, please see page 1 for a new study that found those who regularly consumed cocoa flavanols were less likely to develop heart or circulatory problems.

Prep time: 5 minutes    Cook time: None    Servings: 1

### Ingredients:

1 to 2 tbsp raw cacao powder  
3 to 4 oz cold-brew coffee concentrate  
3 to 4 oz milk or non-dairy beverage  
½ organic banana  
1 cup ice  
A few fresh berries of your choice  
Sprigs fresh mint



**Directions:** Combine ingredients in a high-speed blender, blend until smooth. Serve over additional ice, and garnish with fresh berries, and a mint sprig.

## 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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