

Health Insights Today

A SERVICE OF CLEVELAND CHIROPRACTIC COLLEGE

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Nutrition Update

When reading reports on new research, it is important to remember that no single study should be seen as providing the whole truth. The following reports offer helpful clues but in most cases further research is needed before firm conclusions can be drawn.

Tomato Extract Helps Treated But Uncontrolled Hypertension

Researchers at Ben Gurion University of the Negev in Israel have found that a standardized tomato extract significantly decreases blood pressure in patients with moderate hypertension whose blood pressure is uncontrolled despite taking hypertension medications. Tomato extract when added to patients treated with low doses of ACE inhibitors, calcium channel blockers or their combination with low dose diuretics, had a clinically significant effect-reduction of blood pressure by more than 10 mmHg systolic and more than 5 mmHg diastolic pressure. No side-effects to treatment were recorded and the compliance with treatment was high. The significant correlation between systolic blood pressure values and level of lycopene (the red pigment in tomatoes) suggest the possibility of cause-effect relationships.

Paran E, Novack V, Engelhard YN, Hazan-Halevy I. The Effects of Natural Antioxidants from Tomato Extract in Treated but Uncontrolled Hypertensive Patients. *Cardiovasc Drugs Ther.* Dec 4 2008.

Antioxidant Supplements Fail to Prevent Cancer

The fact that higher antioxidant content in foods is associated with lower incidence of cancer and other diseases does not mean that supplements containing these nutrients will have a preventive effect. Most research has failed to demonstrate such a benefit. As reported in the *Journal of the National Cancer Institute*, the Women's Antioxidant Cardiovascular Study tested supplementation for 8–10 years with beta carotene (50 mg daily), vitamin C (as ascorbic acid, 500 mg daily), and vitamin E (as RRR-alpha-tocopherol, 600 IU every other day) in more than 7600 women who at study entry were at least 40 years old and at elevated risk of cardiovascular disease. The investigators concluded that the vitamins had no effect, singly or in combination.

Lin J, Cook NR, Albert C, et al. Vitamins C and E and Beta Carotene Supplementation and Cancer Risk: A Randomized Controlled Trial. *J. Natl. Cancer Inst.* 2009;101(1):14-23.

Albanes D. Vitamin Supplements and Cancer Prevention: Where Do Randomized Controlled Trials Stand? *J. Natl. Cancer Inst.* 2009;101(1):2-4.

Omega-3 Fatty Acids Helpful for Psychological Distress of Menopause

In what is apparently the first randomized controlled trial of omega-3 fatty acid (FA) supplementation in the treatment of psychological distress and depressive symptoms in middle-aged women going through menopause, a combination of omega-3 FAs EPA (1.05 g/day) and DHA (.15 g/day) for 8 weeks improved depressive symptoms in those who had not previously experienced a major depressive episode before the study.

Lucas M, Asselin G, Merette C, Poulin M-J, Dodin S. Ethyl-eicosapentaenoic acid for the treatment of psychological distress and depressive symptoms in middle-aged women: a double-blind, placebo-controlled, randomized clinical trial. *Am J Clin Nutr.* 2009;89(2):641-651.

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Fruit and Vegetable Compounds Lower the Risk of Hip Fracture

In a study that followed men and women for 17 years as part of the landmark series of studies done in Framingham, Massachusetts, a clear relationship was noted between the higher dietary intake of carotenoid and lycopene and lower rates of hip fracture by the time the individuals reached their 70s.

Sahni S, Tucker KL, et al. Protective Effect of Total Carotenoid and Lycopene Intake on the Risk of Hip Fracture: A 17-Year Follow-Up From the Framingham Osteoporosis Study. *J Bone Miner Res.* 2009; Jan 12; [Epub ahead of print].