

WELLNESS THROUGH BALANCE NEWSLETTER



Natural Medicine for Optimal Health

Wellness Through Balance

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Cholesterol reduction and walnuts

Add walnuts to your diet to protect your heart and reduce cholesterol.

Walnuts are the richest plant source of Omega 3 essential fatty acids, essential for heart health. Marine sources of omega-3s have historically been in the spotlight. But while seafood is rich in omega-3s, it's not the only fish in the sea. Plant foods, including walnuts, are also teeming with this important, health-enhancing fat. In fact, walnuts are one of the highest concentrated plant sources of omega-3s. Their versatility is also unmatched. Just imagine the crunch and flavor a handful of walnuts can bring to a bowl of breakfast cereal, salad or stir-fry.

Walnuts are unique among nuts because the healthy fats they contain are a primarily polyunsaturated source of omega-3s. Mounting scientific evidence indicates that omega-3s lower blood cholesterol levels and reduce heart arrhythmias, thereby dramatically reducing heart disease risk. Other

Weight Management Tips

Eating 1/2 of one grapefruit before meals reduces insulin levels and encourages weight loss

Insulin assists with the regulation of fat metabolism. Therefore, the smaller the insulin spike after a meal, the more efficiently the body processes food for use as energy and the less it is stored as fat in the body. Grapefruit may possess unique chemical properties that reduce insulin levels, which promote weight loss.

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research suggests omega-3s may protect against certain cancers and help to ease the symptoms of rheumatoid arthritis.

Just one ounce of walnuts – a handful – is all it takes to meet the dietary recommendation of 1.6 and 1.1 grams per day of alpha-linolenic acid (an omega-3 fatty acid) for men and women respectively.

A growing body of research shows that eating walnuts on a regular basis packs a powerful health punch. While the omega-3s seem to be at the heart of their health benefits, walnuts contain a host of other important vitamins, minerals and phytonutrients, including antioxidants.

Cinnamon for Diabetes

Cinnamon may be more than a tasty spice, and have a medical application in preventing and combating diabetes. It may help by playing the role of an insulin substitute in type II diabetes, according to studies at the University of California (UCSB), Iowa State University and the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Cinnamon itself has insulin-like activity. It can also boost the activity of insulin, which could be important in treating those with type II diabetes.

Marybeth Keener's Note:

Traditional Chinese Medicine has had an Herbal Formula called Cinnamon Twig Formula that they have used for thousands of years for diabetes

CHICAGO --- Chronic back pain, a condition afflicting many Americans, shrinks the brain by as much as 11 percent — equivalent to the amount of gray matter lost in 10 to 20 years of normal aging, a Northwestern University research study found.

Loss in brain density is related to pain duration, indicating that 1.3 cubic centimeters of gray matter (the part of the brain that processes information and memory) are lost for every year of chronic pain, said lead researcher A. Vania Apkarian, associate professor of physiology at Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine and a researcher at the Northwestern University Institute of Neuroscience.

The study, the first to examine brain changes in chronic pain conditions, was published in the Nov. 23 issue of *The Journal of Neuroscience*.

At least 25 percent of Americans suffer from back pain; in one fourth of these individuals, back pain is chronic and unremitting.

Although chronic pain greatly diminishes quality of life and increases anxiety and depression, it previously had been assumed that the brain reverts to its normal state after chronic pain stops.

Apkarian and co-researchers used structural magnetic resonance imaging brain scan data and two automated analysis techniques to contrast brain images from 26 participants with chronic back pain with those from matched normal subjects.

All participants with chronic back pain had unrelenting pain for more than a year, primarily localized to the lumbosacral region, including buttocks and thighs, with or without pain radiating to the leg.

The participants were divided into neuropathic — exhibiting pain because of sciatic nerve damage — and non-neuropathic. Brain scans showing gray matter volume were compared.

In earlier research, Apkarian and colleagues found that back pain sustained for six months or longer is accompanied by abnormal brain chemistry, indicated by chemical changes in the area of the brain known to be important in making emotional assessments, including decision-making and for controlling social behavior. Based on these results, Apkarian's laboratory group embarked on the brain atrophy study.

It is possible that some of the observed decreased gray matter shown in this study reflects tissue shrinkage without substantial neuronal loss, suggesting that proper treatment would reverse this portion of the decreased brain gray matter, Apkarian said.

The atrophy also may be attributable to more irreversible processes, such as neurodegeneration. Other research has shown that spinal cord neurons undergo apoptosis — cell death — in rats with neuropathic pain.

"Given that, by definition, chronic pain is a state of continuous persistent perception with associated negative affect and stress, one mechanistic explanation for the decreased gray matter is overuse atrophy caused by excitotoxic and inflammatory mechanisms," Apkarian said.

The researchers hypothesize that atrophy of brain circuitry involved in pain perception may dictate the properties of the pain state, such that as atrophy of elements of the circuitry progresses, the pain condition becomes more irreversible and less responsive to therapy.