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Life Extension Update Exclusive

Greater intake of some flavonoids linked with reduced cardiovascular and all cause mortality among women over a 16 year period

A report published in the March, 2007 issue of the *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition* described the finding of researchers at the University of Minnesota in Minneapolis and the University of Oslo that women whose intake of certain classes of flavonoids is high in comparison with other women have a reduced risk of cardiovascular and/or all cause mortality. Flavonoids are polyphenolic plant compounds that act as antioxidants, thereby helping to prevent the oxidation of LDL cholesterol. They may also benefit the heart by reducing inflammation, improving endothelial function, and inhibiting platelet aggregation.

The current study evaluated data from 34,489 postmenopausal participants in the Iowa Women's Health Study who were free of cardiovascular disease upon enrollment. Flavonoid intake from dietary questionnaires completed at the beginning of the study was classified, and the associated risk of death from cardiovascular disease, coronary heart disease, stroke, and all causes over a sixteen year period was calculated.

Dietary flavonoids were classified as flavonoids, which includes flavonols, flavones, flavanones, flavan-3-ols and anthocyanidins; proanthocyanidins, and isoflavones (from soy). Among women who reported consuming anthocyanidins (found in blueberries, raspberries and red wine), the risk of coronary heart disease mortality, cardiovascular disease mortality, and total mortality was significantly lower than that of women who reported no anthocyanidin intake. For subjects in the top one fifth of flavanone (hesperitin, naringenin and eriodictyol) intake, there was a 22 percent reduction in the risk of coronary heart disease mortality compared with those who consumed the least amount, and for flavones (luteolin and apigenin) a 12 percent reduction in total mortality was determined. Individual foods associated with significant mortality reduction included bran, apples, pears, red wine, grapefruit, strawberries and chocolate.

The study is the first of its kind, to the authors' knowledge, to report on total flavonoids and their seven subclasses. "Results from this study suggest that the intake of certain subclasses of flavonoids may be associated with lower coronary heart disease and total cardiovascular disease mortality in postmenopausal women," the authors write. "Furthermore, consumption of some foods that are high in flavonoid content or that are among the main sources of flavonoids in the diet of these study participants may have similar associations."

Health Concern

Coronary artery disease and atherosclerosis

For years, many people believed that atherosclerosis primarily affected men. In reality, however, heart disease is the leading killer

of women in the United States. Atherosclerosis tends to affect men and women differently and at different times in their lives. Before menopause, women suffer less from heart disease than men of comparable age. After menopause, however, the gap closes with age until eventually women become more likely than men to suffer from heart disease (Sans S et al 1997; LaRosa JC 1992).

Interestingly, only about half the people with coronary artery disease have more traditional risk factors, such as elevated cholesterol, smoking, high blood pressure, and obesity. Yet all patients with atherosclerosis suffer from endothelial dysfunction and the damaging effects of oxidized LDL, which provides an important building block for plaque deposits. Antioxidant therapy is therefore important to limit the oxidization of LDL and improve the health of the endothelium by limiting the damage caused by inflammatory cytokines.

Blood testing is a very important part of any risk-reduction program for coronary heart disease. Healthy adults should have their blood tested at least once a year. People who have heart disease or multiple risk factors should have their blood tested twice a year to monitor their progress. A comprehensive blood test will measure levels of blood lipids, C-reactive protein, homocysteine, fibrinogen, and other blood markers. Regular blood pressure monitoring is also important.

http://www.lef.org/protocols/heart_circulatory/coronary_artery_disease_atherosclerosis_01.htm

Featured Products

Life Extension Mix

Luteolin is a flavonoid found in parsley, artichoke, basil, celery and other foods. When measured against 27 other flavonoids, luteolin provided the best DNA protection. One favorable mechanism of luteolin is its ability to inhibit oxidative damage to cellular DNA. Another unique benefit is luteolin's ability to suppress excess levels of dangerous inflammatory cytokines such as interleukin-6 and interleukin 1B. Life Extension Mix contains a standardized dose of 8 mg luteolin.

<http://www.lef.org/newshop/items/item00935.html>



Citrus Bioflavonoid Capsules

Bioflavonoids are water-soluble compounds present in citrus fruits, rosehips, and other plants. In humans, bioflavonoids maintain resistance of capillary walls to permeation and change of pressure, and have synergistic antioxidant effects with vitamin C, making them potent free radical scavengers.

This product from Twinlab offers the highest bioflavonoid content from fresh lemon, orange, grapefruit, lime and tangerine concentrates.

<http://www.lef.org/newshop/items/item00069.html>



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If you've ever called Life Extension and been put "on hold," you may have had the opportunity to hear a recording of fascinating health information recently reported in medical journals, narrated by Dr Steven Joyal. In response to numerous requests by our members (some from callers who have actually asked to be placed back "on hold!"), Life Extension is now making this information available on our website for your listening enjoyment. Hear Dr Joyal speak on a variety of subjects, from antioxidants to zeaxanthin.

<http://www.lef.org/media>

If you have questions or comments concerning this issue or past issues of Life Extension Update, send them to

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