

LE Magazine August 1999

Late-breaking brief news items to life extensionists, as well as anyone interested in living a longer healthier life.

In The News

Americans Fail The Veggie Test

Nutrients that have antioxidant properties, such as the carotenoids lutein and zeaxanthin, have been shown to protect the body from the harmful effects of free radicals that ultimately damage healthy cells. Unfortunately, a recent study revealed that most Americans do not get enough of these essential nutrients.

According to a study released at the 1999 Experimental Biology Meeting, most people in the United States are not eating foods rich in lutein and zeaxanthin - antioxidants that may lower the risk of certain cancers. These and other carotenoids, found in dark green, leafy vegetables and red-, orange- and yellow-colored fruits and vegetables, may also play a role in protecting eyesight and reducing the risk of heart disease. Lutein in particular is heavily concentrated in the eye, which is why it is thought to prevent age-related macular degeneration - the leading cause of blindness of adults over age 65.

The study traced the dietary habits of 9323 men and women over the age of 20 in the United States - 4751 men and 4572 women. The results showed that, on average, the intake of lutein and zeaxanthin ranged from 923 to 1236 micrograms. While there is no official dosage recommendation for these two carotenoids, previous surveys have shown that Americans do not consume the necessary servings of fruits and vegetables required to obtain adequate amounts of nutrients. In addition to eating five servings daily of fruits and vegetables, supplementing with zeaxanthin, lutein and other carotenoids may provide the appropriate amounts of these essential antioxidants needed for disease prevention.



The Little Mineral That Could

Calcium has long been recognized as essential for maintaining bone health and possibly reducing the risk of osteoporosis. According to a study published in *The New England Journal of Medicine* (January 14, 1999), calcium supplementation may also reduce the risk of the recurrence of colorectal adenomas.

The study was conducted on 832 patients, 72% male, who were randomly separated into two groups: calcium supplemented (1200 mg of elemental calcium) and a placebo group. Over the four-year study period, those receiving the calcium supplementation had a 19% decrease in the risk of recurrence of any adenoma, and a 24% decrease in the number of adenomas, known as precursors of colorectal cancer.

The role that folic acid plays in the prevention of colon cancer has also been researched. In fact, when it comes to preventing colon cancer, nothing may work better than folic acid. A study published in the *Annals of Internal Medicine* (1998; 129:517-524) showed that supplementation with folic acid reduces the risk of colon cancer by as much as 75%. This study, involving 90,000 women, showed that folic acid obtained from supplements had a stronger protective effect against colon cancer than folic acid consumed in the diet. It was also found that the degree of protection against cancer is correlated with how long folic acid was consumed. It was the women who took more than 400 mcg of folic acid a day for 15 years who experienced the 75% reduction in colon cancer, whereas short-term supplementation with folic acid provided only marginal protection.

Colorectal cancer is the most common cancer in men and women. According to the American Cancer Society, colorectal cancers claimed the lives of 28,600 women and 27,900 men in the U.S. last year.

[Back to the Magazine Forum](#)

These statements have not been evaluated by the FDA. These products are not intended to diagnose, treat, cure or prevent any disease. The information provided on this site is for informational purposes only and is not intended as a substitute for advice from your physician or other health care professional or any information contained on or in any product label or packaging. You should not use the information on this site for diagnosis or treatment of any health problem or for prescription of any medication or other treatment. You should consult with a healthcare professional before starting any diet, exercise or supplementation program, before taking any medication, or if you have or suspect you might have a health problem. You should not stop taking any medication without first consulting your physician.