Apple Extracts Prevent Stomach Damage Due to Aspirin

Apple polyphenol extracts protected rats from stomach damage due to aspirin in an Italian study. Aspirin, a nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drug (NSAID), can cause gastrointestinal problems such as bleeding and ulcers, even at the low doses given for cardiovascular health.

In this study, 45 rats underwent pretreatment with apple polyphenol extracts or no pretreatment, followed by administration of aspirin to produce stomach injury. Apple polyphenol pretreatment reduced microscopic and macroscopic stomach injury by 40-45% compared with untreated rats and prevented increases in cyclooxygenase-2 and other damaging substances. Protection was observed after both acute and chronic aspirin injury. Apple polyphenols did not interfere with gastric acid secretion or therapeutic blood levels of aspirin.

The apple polyphenol extract dosage given to the rats was equivalent to about two apples per day for a human. Using a natural food product with antioxidant effects may prove safer and cheaper than medications that inhibit gastric acid secretion, such as proton pump inhibitors.

—Laura J. Ninger, ELS


Anti-Aging Research Foundation Receives Charitable Status

The gap between anti-aging research and its medical applications moved closer recently by the granting of a new charitable status for the Biogerontology Research Foundation (BGRF) in the UK.*

The foundation, which was started with the help of some of the world's most prominent scientists and businessmen, actively pursues research projects that target the causes of age-related disease rather than just its symptoms. By developing biotechnological interventions to prevent or remediate the molecular and cellular deficits that accumulate with aging, the foundation addresses aging damage at its most fundamental level.

Using the entire scope of modern biotechnology, the foundation represents a valuable opportunity to produce effective and lasting treatments for the diseases and disabilities of aging. For more information on the BGRF and how you can donate to the foundation, please contact Dr. Alex Zhavoronkov at alex.zhavoronkov@bg-rf.org.uk.

—Bina Singh


Lutein, DHA May Prevent Age-Related Macular Degeneration

Supplementation with lutein, an antioxidant, and docosahexaenoic acid (DHA), an omega-3 fatty acid, promotes beneficial changes in the eye that may help prevent age-related macular degeneration.* Lutein and DHA are important components of the macular pigment and retina, respectively.

Participants were 49 women aged 60 to 80 years who were randomly assigned to take DHA (800 mg/day), lutein (12 mg/day), DHA + lutein, or placebo. The scientists chose this population because the risk of macular degeneration increases with age. The study outcome was macular pigment optical density measured in the eye after four months of supplementation.

Lutein supplementation increased macular pigment density in most subjects. DHA also enhanced macular pigment density, although in other regions of the eye. DHA may exert its effects in part by boosting blood levels of beneficial high-density lipoprotein (HDL), which facilitates uptake of lutein in the eye.

—Laura J. Ninger, ELS

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